Voussoir Bridges

Refining the cornerstone of art education – the effect of culture shock on intercultural learning.

Elaina Josefsson

Konstfack, Institutionen för bildpedagogik
Magisterskurs i bildpedagogik 91-120 hp 2012 / 2013
Examensarbete: 30hp
Handledare Anette Göthlund
Kursledare: Ulla Lund
Opponent: Maria Lindskog Kraznai
Date of examination: 2014-04-15
ABSTRACT

What does it mean to educate and equip today’s students for all working eventualities and technological changes at the collective level of a globalized world? The steering document of Skolverket, The Swedish National Agency for Education, alludes to the need of an international perspective in vocational training. To support this process, a number of international exchange programmes are provided for schools; Athena being one of them aiming for internationalization of vocational training. The question is to what extent a costly exchange can educate and equip students that teaching in a secure classroom cannot.

This reflexive ethnographic study follows a group of construction students from a Swedish 6th Form College on an exchange to the Turkish province of Hatay, close to the Syrian border. The study focuses on analyzing the narrative in a created 3D memorial, a gestaltning, which two students produced with the aim of visualizing their learning experience. It explores when their professional eye, social practices and aesthetic learning processes encounter a diverse new culture. Moreover, the study tries to understand theoretical learning processes and didactic principles of international experiential learning, as presented in the professional visual expression of the students.

The theoretical framework of the study constitutes of semiotic analysis, narrative theory and culture shock. An overview of previous research on experiential learning shows that little research has been done on vocational experiential learning in international exchange.

The students transformed their visual impression from the exchange in Turkey into a gestaltning; a mosaic city with ten different motives and a life giving river in the middle. The mosaic city reflects, but is not modeled by, the city of Antakya, as the motives incorporate more than meets the eye.

The interpretation of the narrative in the gestaltning shows how it was coloured by the diversity of architectural impressions, a greater understanding of historical and current events and the meeting with students and teachers in a relationship centered culture so different to their own. The narrative in the gestaltning told a story of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. It demonstrated reflection over the importance of appropriate material, combining familiar material with new into their design.

Moreover, the study deducts models and principles for future international experiential learning. It points to the importance of exposing students to cross cultural diversity, without the use of inhibiting pastoral powers. The study emphasizes the need to utilize expertise in the preparation and follow up of the exchange, to establish a forum for regular reflection, to make use of a multi modal approach to visualize the learning experience and to have clear learning outcomes that are embraced by all participants. The study asserts that a well-executed international experiential learning can educate and equip students beyond what is possible within the confines of the classroom.

Key words: internationalization, diversity, the good eye, the professional eye, problem solving, culture shock, gestaltning, experiential learning.
# Table of Contents

1 **Introduction**  

2 **Background**  
   2.1 The Vocational Programme  
   2.2 Culture shock  
   2.3 The Athena exchange project  
   2.4 Gestaltning  
   2.5 Purpose  
   2.6 Thesis Question  

3 **Material and Method**  
   3.1 Method  
   3.2 Field study  
   3.2.1 Sweden  
   3.2.2 Turkey  
   3.3 Area of research  
   3.4 Ethnographic selection and limitation.  

4 **Theory and frames of interpretation**  
   4.1 Semiotic analysis  
   4.2 Narrative theory  
   4.3 Culture shock  
   4.4 Previous research on experiential learning.  

5 **Analysis of the result**  
   5.1 Semiotics and motifs  
   5.1.1 The water wheel  
   5.1.2 The summerhouse  
   5.1.3 French courtyard house with side balcony  
   5.1.4 The hybrid castle-butress or religious structure.  
   5.1.5 The river  
   5.1.6 The bridge  
   5.1.7 Cement Mountain  
   5.2 Chaos  
   5.3 The professional eye.  

6 **Interpretation of the result**  
   6.1 The Professional Eye meets the unfamiliar  
   6.2 Principles for international experiential learning  
   6.2.1 Paths, bridge building  
   6.2.2 Diverse and challenging task  
   6.2.3 Reflection  
   6.2.4 Learning expressed visually  
   6.2.5 Simplification  
   6.2.6 Expertise  
   6.2.7 Clear goals  

7 **Final Discussion**  

Bibliography
1 Introduction

The illustration on the cover page is part of a collection of satirical illustrations of life in the 14th C (Cagman, 2005). It belongs to an era of the nomadic entrepreneurs of the Silk Route, who used the latest technology in design; paper memorials of diversity in time, space and relationships. The divergent culture of the nomadic entrepreneurs was continually on display from their textile pavilion homes, to the porous lime walls of caves, underground libraries, universities and planetariums. Via Constantinople’s bridge in the west, to the fairy chimneys and labyrinth of volcanic caves of Cappadocia, they sailed across the Ari Lake of Central Asia, or trekked across the Gobi desert to the underground oasis, then onto the forbidden palaces of China.

The nomadic entrepreneurs left behind their monuments using whatever material they could find; metal, rocks, clay or paper. Professionals and users of the latest tools and technology, they transported their ideas, from one urban city to the next, on white Bactrian camels together with their beloved Takhi horses and Golden eagles. “Nomads” today however have come to mean something entirely different, often referred to as hippies, fortunetellers, free spirited or gypsies.

Mobility and the exchange of innovative ideas in both employment and leisure, still continues today. The Silk Route, which once began in China, is predicted today to be the next superpower or - global village (Lundgren, 2009) and will transform our Western countries from nation states to civilization states (Jacques, 2012). So what does this have to do with the Professionalization in education Swedish Sixth form College?

Antakya, at the end of the Silk Route, is the focal point of an exchange program between students of the construction programs at a Swedish and a Turkish vocational college. Antakya is nestled in a wide valley, where the Orontes River runs through the city and remains of roads filter out into the mountainside. Not only is the city in all its diversity a collaboration of the latest ideas as East
meets West (Burns, 1999), but also it has an ancient and architecturally noteworthy infrastructure. Ancient Roman architects planned and designed the city so that cooling winds from the Orontes valley flowed along the roads during the hottest months of the summer (Ataman, 1996). It was here that the Romans built memorials to their conquest with their inventions of concrete and voussoir arches.\(^1\) There are many of these bridges dotted all around the world wherever the Roman have invaded and left their mark. What is special about this tiny 2000 yr. old bridge is the way in which it has been designed and constructed. The foundation stone is the most important stone in the arch; Roman engineers and architects have designed it. Local stonemasons have worked together chiseling, jamming and shaping the stones to fit perfectly and tightly together. It has withstood wars, floods and earthquakes without any cement or mortar and even until this day it can take the weight of tourists walking on it.

This study follows Swedish constructions students in how their encounter with the diversity of the culture and architecture in Antakya affect their good and professional eye. They were given the task of building a memorial of the exchange, using the intercultural learning and specialized knowledge acquired from the encounters in Antakya.

### 2 Background

After a number of years working overseas with developmental work, my family and I returned to Sweden with the purpose of bridging–the-gap between cultures.\(^2\) Certain educational institutions showed an interest for a more specialized expertise in the area of international pedagogy and cross-cultural understanding. Intercultural pedagogical competence (Hellsten, Reid, 2010) asks questions about specialized artistic knowledge and looks for common or new areas of learning. The study began at the local 6\(^{th}\) form college in Sweden where I worked as an English teacher and became involved with the last year of a four-year ongoing exchange program between the Turkish and Swedish vocational college.

#### 2.1 The Vocational Programme

Like any vocational program, the Building and Construction program combines practical experience with theoretical learning. Between the ages of 16-19 year, students are trained in craftwork, and interior design as well as the behavior of materials. Furthermore, the educational content should be broad enough to briefly cover the vast area of construction and installation of

---

2. [www.grafting.se](http://www.grafting.se)
infrastructures. Students should study all core subjects as well, in order to be prepared for higher education, which includes basic knowledge about the planning of a city.

Figure 3. Construction students at work at an upper sixth form college in Småland. Photo: Elaina Josefsson

The description of the Silk Road and the Vousoir Bridge is used as an analogy to describe an effort to broaden competence in the area of international pedagogy. In the same way that the professional craftsman has the painstaking task of constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing; educators must find methods of refining, redefining and merging old methods with the new. Experiential learning has been considered a tool for learning (Oakes, 2006). I have chosen to focus on the construction program where 3 years training in the area of professional expertise have centered around the infrastructure of the city; buildings, bridges and roads. The principles of teaching are the focus of this paper.

As the Swedish education is under reconstruction; this paper looks at the discourse around internationalization, innovation, social practices and what is considered professionalism or expertise in education. The Swedish national school curriculum encourages students’ interests, self-development and preparation for changes in the industry. The Educational Act\(^3\) states that authorities responsible for the upper secondary school educational should collaborate with local businesses in society. The Educational Law also states that the focus and demand of a systematic assurance work must be met and documented, therefore specialist teachers from the community must be brought in, to provide expert, vocational training. “Profession-driven” education should provide students with a career that has options.

\(^3\) [http://www.riksdagen.se/sv/Dokument-Lagar/Lagar/Svenskforfattningssamling/Skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800/?bet=2010:800#K15]
Entrepreneurship or developing new ideas is a further requirement by the Educational Act, hence the site of production is important to develop broadened learning. Construction, deconstruction and reconstruction are a continual challenge to the ever-changing requirements of industry. Students in the program are expected to draw on knowledge such as varied texture and materials; develop expertise in visualizing hybrid solutions and incorporate cross over concepts. Theories such as Concept-Knowledge Design (Hatchuel, 2010) and Hybrid modernity have been developed and used to describe the processes or catalyst, foreseeing things differently in order to develop creativity and solve problems producing deeper understanding. Akabane (2012) refers to “the third eye” as the ability able to see things differently.

Collapsed modern structures, due to faulty design and cutting corners are a regular occurrence. It can be risky experimenting or using initiative to create something new. Local as well as global demands, however, stipulate what should be built and what materials are needed for the construction of e.g. bridges, junctions and tunnels. Therefore, all visual expertise, spatial and perspective awareness in the areas of form, shape and depth are skills that have to be trained up. As well as the ability to design and create new solutions in order to meet supply and demand. Is it possible that other factors act as catalysts and have the same effect as hybrid modernity or concept knowledge Design? Rose (2012), talks about the compositional ‘good eye’, which follows geometrical rules of perspective, work chronologically and provides satisfaction.

There is, however, another perspective which is the focus of this study, referred to as the Professional Eye. Instructors refer to the professional eye for developing expertise in visualizing, copying and following verbal and oral blueprints or manuals. Just like the good eye, mental imagery such as visualization in 3-D / 2-D / 1-D, is developed for mathematical precision and accuracy. Expertise that calls for attention to detail, perspective, accuracy, health and safety assurance as well as developing the ability to problem solve and think in new ways is a requirement applicable to all areas of pedagogy. The difference, however, with the professional eye is that it bypasses readymade solutions, it is flexible and thrives off intercultural diversity and the chaos generated by culture shock.

### 2.2 Culture shock
Culture shock (Ting-Toomey, 2005. Savovar et al, 2009. Liu et al, 2013) is used to describe the reactions a person faces when thrust outside of their comfort zone and faced with an unfamiliar, diverse and chaotic environment. Where there are already well-established traditions, change and

---

4 The expression is used among instructors at the construction program, which I have developed further.
new thinking can be a slow and energy consuming process. One of the tasks given to the Swedish students during their time in Turkey was to build a gazebo together with the Turkish students – a joint exercise of the exchange. The original idea was to give them something practical to avoid language barriers. The task and time focused Swedish students, struggled to include the more relation centered Turkish students in the work process. The Swedish construction students expressed miscommunication and limited knowledge about the local material as the most stressful event in the process. A shopping trip to the local hardware shop, nestled in the labyrinth of the oriental bazar, added to the excitement and stress of having to adapt to unfamiliar locally used tools and material. Moreover, the sense of being outside their comfort zone was enhanced by the awareness of the media painted harsh war situation in neighbouring Syria. This stood in stark contrast to the welcoming, affirming, close to intruding reception the Swedish students received from their Turkish hosts.

2.3 The Athena exchange project

Two years ago, at the request of the headmaster, the local construction program made an application to the Athena exchange program. Athena is a part of an internationalization effort by the Swedish Council for Higher Education. As well as being an approved vocational student exchange project, the Athena program provides a well-financed change of visual and tactile environment, away from the classroom to develop experiential learning. The exchange in November 2012 took place between a local vocational college in Turkey and construction students at the 6th form college in a quiet little town in the heart of the forests of Småland in Sweden.

The procedure for the exchange is as follows; four teachers and 16 students from four vocational programs in Sweden would travel to Turkey to an equivalent vocational college. The closest comparison to the Swedish vocational 6th form college system in Turkey is the vocational college. The first year Turkish students are already one year older. During the two week period in November, students follow the regular Turkish schedule, un-chaperoned. The same process was applied in April when the Turkish students came to Sweden.

The selection process of Turkish students of the vocational college for the exchange program was as follows. Students’ from the electrical, building and construction, children and leisure and nursing programs were selected. From a group of around 100 applicants five students from each program were selected. It was decided that each student was obliged to prepare for a difficult

---

5 [http://www.programkontoret.se/Templates/KnowIT/Pages/News.aspx?id=1700&epslanguage=sv](http://www.programkontoret.se/Templates/KnowIT/Pages/News.aspx?id=1700&epslanguage=sv)
English exam and students with the highest grades were selected. This study is limited however to the building and construction program in Sweden. The process of selection for the Swedish construction program is as follows. From a class of 30 students, a selection of 18 male and two female students from the building and construction applications, applied in a letter motivating their reasons for wanting to go on the trip. Four male students and one female student were chosen from the 20 applicants by teachers of the construction program to participate in an exchange program.

Prior to the exchange, where previous years had been fairly quiet, political events in Syria took a turn for the worse. This profoundly affected the preparation of the project. Suggestions were raised to cancel the trip, as Antakya is located just 40 km from the Syrian border, fearing a spillover of the chaos. However, after consulting the Swedish Consulate in Istanbul and the project partners in Antakya, decision was made to go ahead with the exchange. While in Antakya, only the health program students came in direct contact with the chaos across the border as they met war casualties during their placement at the hospital.

### 2.4 Gestaltning

The method of this research was to use a triangulation process in an ethnographic study (Davies, 2008). Prior to the exchange and on a volunteer basis the Swedish students had been given the creative freedom to construct a joint concept of a *Gestaltning.* The complicated concept Gestaltning has its roots in the German word *gestalt,* but should not, however, be confused with Gestalt Psychology (Göthlund & Eriksson, 2012). The idea of gestaltning embodies many things such as processes artistic expression or shape of artistic activity. It can also have a transformative function in design, leaning towards a humanistic focus. In order to simplify the task for the students, it was suggested that a memorial was built, which would communicate their professional learning experience from an international perspective. One of the responses by the students to the exchange experience had been to create a joint blog. All were invited to contribute with images and texts to describe and tell their story of their experiences. The referential meaning of the motifs and their meaning to the students became apparent to me as participant observer (Davies, 2008). The informants explained that inspiration for their design came from their time in Turkey. An example would be the unusual shaped windows, which were inspired from the day in Istanbul. The element water, which symbolizes life in certain philosophies, is reflected in the river – the Orontes that flows through the city of Antakya. A combination of several bridges, a feature in the Antakya region, became the focus of the
gestaltning and the life of the city. The constructed 3-D artifact came to represent empirical material for my analysis.

Figure. The gestaltning of the life of the city. Photo: Hasan Cicekli.

During the course of analysis, a narrative began to emerge which was reflected in the gestaltning, a story of the city, of construction, destruction and reconstruction. Using a combination of semiotic and narrative theory, I will comment on the narrative of the three dimensional motifs in the memorial, and the effects of culture shock on the professional eye. The gestaltning reflects how the accurate perspective of the houses, which the Swedish students have been trained to see, have been distorted. The old city happened to be one of the subjects for painting when we visited the local university’s faculty of art during lectures on perspective and color. The Swedish students pointed out how exactly those parts of the old city with slanting and earthquake affected houses had affected their gestaltning. The ran-shackled old city is a re-occurring theme (Novak, 2008) in many cultures and continues to hold a charm and allure that fascinates. This visual analysis of the students could be interpreted as a violation of “their professional eye”.

2.5 Purpose

This ethnographic study explores the expression of a 3-D design, a gestaltning, by two students from a Swedish sixth form college, sprung from the experience during a cross cultural exchange. It explores when their professional eye, social practices and aesthetic learning processes encounter a diverse new culture. Moreover, the study tries to understand theoretical learning
processes and didactic principles of international experiential learning, as presented in the professional visual expression of the students.

### 2.6 Thesis Question

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What happens to the professional eye of two exchange students when faced with culture shock and an unfamiliar visual culture during an international exchange?
2. What models or didactic principles for future international experience based learning can be applied from this ethnographic study?

### 3 Material and Method

#### 3.1 Method

Whilst ethnography is the study of people, this choice of critical qualitative study applies a theoretical and analytical depth to the research, based on the principles of human freedom and wellbeing. My positionality as researcher’s voice is only vaguely referred to in this research from a didactic viewpoint, in an effort to understand the students’ learning according to the requirements of the national curriculum (Kullberg 2004). The lack of a sense of belonging and unclear pedagogical role I experienced, however, serve as a platform for an effective use of skills and privileges as both observer and participant in the research. (Madison 2012). The process of looking back on self, otherwise known as reflexive ethnography, was used as a method to aim for objectivity in the process of the research (Davies, 2008). This Ethnographic research includes fact-finding, field observations during the exchange and visual documentation and analysis of a gestaltning. It also includes social interaction with two informants prior to, during and after the exchange.

#### 3.2 Field study

**3.2.1 Sweden**

The first geographical field of study is the province of Småland in Sweden at the 6th form college construction hall. The province is dominated by agriculture and forest industry and has a reputation for high level of church participation as well as a strong affinity to the naturalist Carl von Linneus. The region is covered with forests, making wood, particularly pine, a natural resource used in house building. Between the forests are many small lakes and rivers, historically
making water feature as an energy source. Wooden water wheels powered flour and saw mills scattered all around the towns and villages in the province.

The preparation, interviews and photo elicitation are carried out in the 6th form college building and construction program. The construction hall, where the artistic artifact is planned, prepared and executed, has a continual flow of students coming and going. Alongside all the core subjects, students at the construction program are given theoretical lessons, which cover the infrastructure of a city, buildings, roads, bridges, water supplies and telecommunication. Furthermore, courses are given in planning, safety, logistics - basically everything to do with the flow and operation of a city. They are taught to read plan views about interior design of floors, ceilings and walls.

Crafts such as carpentry, stone masonry, tessellation or tiling and brickwork are part of the practical training. Over the three-year course, students learn about the use of a variety of materials, sheet metal work, wallpapering, paint, wood and more recently, concrete, because of its more global uses. A large section of training includes working 2 and 3 D in the construction of 3 dimensional objects. They learn to work from blueprints; only in their final year do they start to work 3-D with computer-aided design (CAD).

Initially, the idea for the gestaltning was presented to five students, prior selected for the exchange and their project leader. Circumstances changed within the selected group decreasing it to two students, whom we from now on will refer to as Robin and Mike. They were provided an opportunity to show their social practices and demonstrate some of the skills learnt during their three year training program in giving form to their learning experience during the exchange - a memorial to the joint Athena project.

3.2.2 Turkey
The second geographical area for ethnographic studies and experiential learning is Turkey.

Having failed to enter EU, Turkey is now focusing on strengthening economic ties with China. It has experienced an economic boom in the area of industry with an annual increase of BNP over 5% over the past decade.

The field study included one day in Istanbul and the rest of the two week period in Antakya. This was the place for inspiration and learning and preparation for the artifact.

The location of the vocational school is in Hatay, which in its cultural mosaic mixes Turks, Arabs and Kurds; Sunnis and Shia Alevis Muslims; Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian minority groups. Vernacular architecture in Antakya relies on material such as marble, flagstone, terrazzo
or scaliola, and is quarried from the surrounding mountains or recycled from older structures. There are at least nine castles in the Antakya region, from Byzantine, Crusaders, Mongols and Mamluk civilisations alone (Cimok, 1994). The location of the vocational college is in Antakya which lies in the Arabic/Turkish speaking province and is estimated to have a growing population of around 250 000. The center of the city is made up of concrete apartments. Government policies allow for mortgages and tax loopholes so that apartment blocks are left unfinished. The overnight building of shacks are legal and have sprawled out into the mountainsides. The city lies on an active fault line, where three tectonic plates meet, which makes it vulnerable to earthquakes. The city has experienced a number of major earthquakes over the ages, the biggest in 526 AD, with quarter of a million casualties (Cimok, 1994) and the latest in 1996, which I happened to experience, but with minimal damage.

We documented the two weeks in Turkey, using photographs from a student's personal and joint blog, architectural resource books and my own visual documentation of our observations together with the construction students on the exchange. Documentation included; photographs of official trips to schools and universities, museums, the infrastructure of the city, historical and contemporary buildings such as mosques, churches and building sites. Preparation material for the ethnographic study included preparatory informative lectures about construction in the host region given by teachers in Hatay, which were translated from Turkish to English.

### 3.3 Area of research

The area of research is experiential learning during a study trip within the Athena exchange program, which aims at continual professional development in the area of vocational education. The multimodal study uses Gestaltning concept in a combination of various visual means of analyzing the complicated and abstract concept. In a previous study (Josefsson, 2009), I show how Charles Dickens uses illustration with comedy and irony to simplify stereotypes and thereby enhancing the didactic objectives of his writing. This inspired me to research and explore to what extent the visual tool of a gestaltning can complement the students effort to communicate their international experiential learning.

Robin, Mike and I decided that it would make most sense working 3 dimensionally, using skills from their three-year training. The idea for building a memorial was developed together with the project leader and the one-year Master’s program in Visual Arts and Education program, in an
effort to highlight and develop innovative and international design. The program headmaster and Athena exchange project leader approved the memorial project.

Prior to the project, the following books were made available to the informants as preparation and background information; *Turks – A journey of a thousand years, 600-1600* (Cagman, 2006) and *Islamic Art at the Musée du Louvre* (Makariou, 2010), and finally *Antakya through the ages* (Demir, 1996), a book on architecture, which they chose. During my research, Robin found a new APL (ArbetsPlatsförlagt Lärande - Placement work), working for a company that fixed roofs and Mike also found APL working for a small company that fitted bathrooms. Skills required for creating mosaic floors and walls are otherwise known as tiling or tessellation.

### 3.4 Ethnographic selection and limitation

The five construction students who had been accepted onto the exchange were approached and asked if they were interested in building a memorial for the exchange. Initially all five students were interested. They agreed to take photos with their mobiles, which they downloaded to their computer and later put out on Facebook. I had worked with the students briefly the previous year, researching contemporary translation theories.

My observations included weekly preparatory courses during school hours in cultural understanding about the host country, provided to the exchange participants by the project leader. Preparatory information about the artifact was also given in prior to the exchange in November. Observations and documentation during the period of the construction of the artifact were made with the help of photographs and photo elicitation. The students in this study were given a couple of months to prepare, gather information and plan the gestaltning. During work with the artifact in the construction hall, I continued with documentation of activities using a recording of interviews during photo elicitation.

Among the two informants, Robin is most articulate. Mike often agrees with his friend Robin, but is not afraid to give his own opinion. They work well together and spend a lot of time together outside of school. They are conscientious workers and worked round their busy schedule so that they were able to find time for the project.

Photo elicitation, photo documentation and photo essays all use photographs as distinctive visual methods of research chosen for this study (Rose, 2008). Visual materials are particularly useful in urban research, which is why I have chosen a multi modal method to analyze the 3-D model.
constructed by the informants. Other visual material used in the analysis is the photos taken by students and teachers during the exchange, which were published on a joint blog.

Alongside the photo elicitation, interviews are used together with the visual material. The first interview with the informants took place in the group room in the construction hall, where they were working. Here, the interview was videoed using an Ipad and a digital Dictaphone. I asked prepared questions in the second part of the interview, which was carried out in the construction hall where the memorial stood in the view of class mates. Comparison questions, as well as other questions, were added as the interview progressed. The informants often omit the subject and object in their sentences in the interview, referring to shared experiences, which I, as participant observer, have chosen to add my own description.

The limitations and constraints of positionality could be affected by age and gender in a male dominated program, as I experienced. Knowledge about the program, the skills and interests of the students will also affect positionality (Vallgårda, 2013). Positionality of power, such as the customer or client relationship or power distance, played an important role in my positionality. Other considerations were communication, such as Swedish, English and Turkish languages skills. Both the students and I were limited in visual skills such as sketching, photographing or filming. Moreover, my own role in relation to the informants and in the exchange was not completely clear. These are the reasons for my choice of reflexive ethnography.

Limitations of the design environment and the 6th form education system are not easily translated internationally, nor are they very well researched areas, yet there is a natural link to visual design. The construction hall, where the process of creating the gestating took place, is a large teaching environment, filled with varied construction activity. The work of the gestaltning is in full view of first, second and third year students and it goes without saying that this will also have influenced the results.

The two students were in the process of completing core subjects and APL, ready to graduate in June. APL can involve working in cold temperatures and often involves travelling long distances across the country, so Robin and Mike were happy for the chance to work indoors. After the two weeks exchange in Antakya in November, the informants worked periodically over five months on the gestaltning until its completion in April.
4 Theory and frames of interpretation

4.1 Semiotic analysis

The inherent need to see and survey the world has been proven over history to be part of the visual culture (Rose, 2012). There are many ways of seeing, the gaze, the glance, the window to the soul, the evil eye, all which embody power (Eriksson & Göthlund, 2012). The tradition of fine art, which pays attention to high art, depends on what Irit Rogoff calls “the good eye” (Rose, 2012). The good eye you could say focuses on the social practices of the present day era, what is the latest trend, what’s going on in the here and now. It is free, not limited by time, place or relational expectations, where beauty is in the eye of the beholder. According to Ware (2013), a computer psychologist, ways of seeing are understood to be more like graphical representations. In other words, what you see is what you get. While the good eye is a connoisseur of what is considered good art, “the third eye” (Ave, 2008) is perhaps the more intuitive way of perceiving. Traditionally, the good eye is appreciative of understanding the composition of an image. Hence, the principles of interpretations used in this research are related to the purpose of the exchange to increase knowledge in the students’ area of study.

The second principle of interpretation includes a semiotic analysis of the exchange experience by making connection to the student’s narrative of the learning experience of chaos and diversity during the exchange. This includes analysis using semiotic interpretation of the narrative of the motifs in the artifact made by the students. The narrative of the artifact is the focus of analysis, together with the narrative given by the informants in an interview with the help of artifact / photo elicitation.
The choice of analyzing the artifact for semiological study rests on Barthes notion of mythology and meaning making (Lindgren, 2009). The interpretation of mythologies requires a broad understanding of a cultures dynamics, which in this study is construction and vernacular architecture. Linguist Saussure argues that the sign is the basic unit of language. The sign of a ruin, for example, can embody a concept such as imperialism or nationalism. The signifier or, in other words, the image of a ruin describes the inevitable deterioration of a building, which is never permanent (Rose, 2012). Mythological signs are therefore ideologies of a visual culture. This is exemplified in the representation of buildings and ruins as presented in the gestaltning of the students, as each motif has a personal and public meaning.

**4.2 Narrative theory**

Intertextuality is the way in which discursive image or text depends on the meanings carried by other images and texts (Rose, 2012), for example, discussion around cultural understanding and architectural public spaces. The narrative text in an interview, together with the visual narrative of the artifact, gives further information about experiential learning during an exchange experience.

Ancient public storytelling text of the Silk Route describes the migratory lives of the Mongolian golden eagle hunters. Storytelling may appear irrelevant, dated and restricted to age, ethnicity and gender, but humans are ultimately storytellers and act as moral agents, moulded by cultural narrative form and content. According to Burr (2003), they are the authors of their own narrative. Narrative perspective enriches cultural texts and popular culture where there is no voice. The narrative is interpreted in time sequences and shows us how to act as well as gives an explanation about changes (Lindgren, 2009).

Narratology does not interpret the individual story, but looks at the nature and mechanisms of storytelling, the story and plot. According to Barry (2003), a professor of English literature and author of literary theory, post structuralistic narratology tries not to impress us with learnedness or technicality. Language used by practitioners about an art or craft tends to be down to earth. So what mechanisms are used in the textual narrative of the gestaltning of the students? Branches of literary theory are New Historicism, which looks at cultural practices around the city. Ecocriticism explores the relationship between the permanency and impermanency of time and space and its relationship to the city and nature (Jörgensen, Phillips, 2000:171). Discursive psychology (Burr, 2003) looks at behaviour and the narrative of self in dialogue, in other words, history cannot be told without a story. The buildup in traditional storytelling is that the hero is sent on a quest (Lindgren, 2009). Kupferberg (Lindstrand, Selander, 2010) describes the process
as creative chaos striving to find creative and meaningful answers and solutions and discourse around the narrative. Madison (2012) says that humans are ultimately storytellers and typically use the hero, the villain, cultural narrative form and content. In storytelling, there needs to be an explanation or a meaning to explain an experience, it comments on the oral history, memory and cultural performance (Madison, 2012), as illustrated in the gestalt of the students.

Gengiz Khan and Alexander the Great feature as reoccurring motifs of imperialism in the narratives of castles or the fortress, visited during the exchange. In his paper on storytelling and Russian identity, Paksoy (1989) discusses how collective narrative is used to create national identity. He gives examples from the Central Asian narrative Alpaymish, which follows traditional mechanisms, described by Barry (2003), of the hero, enemy and the ownership of land. Pulp fiction such as Harry Potter and The Hunger games follow similar mechanisms of storytelling, but have included contemporary technological inventions and language in the plot. Telling a story is a performance and the oral narrative in itself is a gestalt, which includes all the senses; the visual, tactile, olfactory, and aural in relationship to kinesics, artifacts and proxemics (Barry, 2003). It is concerned with the sensual dynamics. The plot in a book may be chaos in the order of a fictional story, but American author Oscar Wilde (2012) once said, “Life imitates art”. The story unravelling in the gestalt of the students is one of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction as their professional eyes meet the chaos of an unfamiliar but appealing culture, which they try to capture in the narrative of the mosaic city.

4.3 Culture shock
International pedagogical research describes cultural diversity on the one hand as a valuable resource, but, on the other hand, also has the potential to highlight and exacerbate pedagogic problems (Hellsten, Reid, 2010). Intercultural learning can be misleading in its assumption that intercultural contact with another culture leads to automatic learning, something that progressive teaching has implied.

In artistic circles, the acquisition of visual input when faced with an unfamiliar culture is described as the tourist gaze (Rose, 2012). Cross-cultural theorists (Ting Toomey, 2006) develop this idea even further, describing the initial reaction, or even trauma, to absorbing a new culture as culture shock. The two-way path of a successful visual experience with a new culture is called entry and reentry. The process can be nicely plotted in a graph starting with a predicted honeymoon period, followed by culture shock and culminating in a resolved readjustment period back home. This theory of reasoning, nevertheless, is based on a social constructionalistic
viewpoint that all cultures have a compatible overlapping area, which is universal (Burr, 2003). Perhaps it would be fair to say that culture shock occurs to varying degrees when faced with any unknown culture. This cultural meeting could be anywhere from an ethnic tradition of men in grass skirts jumping up and down carrying spears, to the process of trying to grasp a new grammatical rule. What steps need to be made to enable the professional eye of the students to make use of the biological responses to culture shock beyond the tourist gaze in a way that enhances learning? A monitoring didactic forum may be needed to create a path or bridge towards innovation and new ways of seeing. This will help the students translate their perception into an expression of what has been seen.

4.4 Previous research on experiential learning

John Dewey (Oakes, 2006) pioneered the concept of learning by doing in experiential education; a cycle of reflection, analysis and problem solving. Picking up Dewey’s educational philosophy, international education advisor Ken Robinson (2006), following progressive teaching, claims that schools kill creativity and he suggests that the educational system be removed from the individual’s control to create something new.

Similarly, educational researcher Sugata Mitra’s (2012) research shows through his “Hole in the wall” experiment how informal learning in the shifting classroom in an Indian village takes place through self-instruction and peer shared knowledge. Learning took place without the interference of a teacher. Yet, it was important to find out what the students felt they had learnt from the experience, a monitoring didactic forum lead by Mitra himself after the experiential learning period. Hence, there is a creative tension between freedom by the individual to learn by doing themselves and the external powers imposed by the curriculum and the educational system.

Whilst Robinson and Mitra attempt to remove power from the equation, the French philosopher Foucault (2009) has shown that society cannot exist without the use of power at all levels, different forms of power. Pastoral power, which is relevant for this study, is described in his lectures as one of several forms of power that are exercised from the individual level that circulates to form networks. It is a figure of speech for a kind of power that describes the state as a provider of a service, with the intention that leads to security. Pastoral power presents rules and principles how society functions. In the context of the exchange, this is exemplified in the guidelines from the Athena exchange program, the rules from the construction program in
Småland how to build correctly, the curriculum of the two vocational schools, travel recommendations of the Swedish Ministry of foreign affairs or the blog where the students posted pictures assuring parents at home of their wellbeing. As much as pastoral power can interfere in the process of experiential learning, so can the absence of power prevent the right learning conditions to emerge.

The International Program Office (IPK), who coordinates a great variety of EU and government well-funded student exchange programs, including the Athena program, states that the goals of the exchange program are to "broaden knowledge in the chosen field of vocational study" (Sandahl, 2013). However, to what extent does the pastoral power exercised by IPK result in experiential learning? IPK’s own research "Vad blir det av eleverna?" (Benon, 2012) lacks qualitative research into the listing of success stories and positive response from students and teachers to their exchange experience. What was it that they actually learnt during their exchange?

Little research has been done on experiential learning in international exchange. One example, though, is Björkquist and Jonsved (2007), who carried out a research as part of a SIDA sponsored program, developing their knowledge in the field of art. In their paper Invisible aesthetics: art as a catalyst for dialogue, they have explored how the embodied art experience could be used to disturb the production of power. Their work has been built on Art Historian Deutsche’s question of democracy and an understanding of public space as a place where people declare rights. This ethnographic study, therefore, searches for models or didactic principles for future international experience based learning.

5 Analysis of the result

The study explores what happens to the professional eye of two exchange students when faced with culture shock and an unfamiliar visual culture during an international exchange. The study has been limited to the process of creating a visual memorial, a gestaltning, of the cross-cultural experience.
5.1 Semiotics and motifs

Robin and Mike explained that they had decided to construct a model mosaic city with lighting and electricity. The reason for this choice was that as part of the learning experience, the Turkish teachers had taken the five construction students together with the rest of the Swedish group to the mosaic museum of Antakya. The museum is filled with some of the best examples in the world of wall, floors and ceiling mosaics from the Roman period. Mosaics require professional stone masonry skills, using small square pieces of coloured stone, which replicate patterns or pictures of fictional and non-fictional characters in religion and philosophy.

Figure 5 Antakya Museum. Photo: Elaina Josefsson

Robin calls the cast off tiles mosaic stones. From now on, I refer to the gestaltung as the mosaic city.

When I asked about the choice of colors and material, this was their explanation:

Robin (Informant 1): Yes, eeh, well, we had to use the material that was available here, so that ... the colours we could probably not determine so much, but it ...

Mike (Informant 2): There is a lot of concrete.

R: We have tried to make it as much like ... a bit darker colours like it generally is.

The colors they have used are earthy and harmonious and similar to the pastel beige, brown and cream stones in the mosaics in the museum.
We talked about the mosaic city, and what their thoughts were.

M: There were mainly houses and buildings ...
R: ...yes, old buildings and a water wheel and mountains and ...
M: ...then we thought of old Antakya ... those parts ...
R: ...and the river ....
M: ...and then that there was a river that divided the city.

There are altogether 10 motifs of buildings and structures we had seen together in the mosaic city;

![Motifs](image)

**Figure 6 Motifs from the Mosaic City.** Photo: Elaina Josefsson

5.1.1 The water wheel
Viewed from the side, the tallest motifs gradually become smaller down to the lowest structure, the water wheel. It is these buildings that appear to have been marked as important and meaningful. When I point to the wooden wheel, they comment:

R: That was what divided the city … in to two parts.
M: That’s the way it was in Antakya, a river that run through the city.
R: We probably got most inspiration from that when we were there … the river.
M: There was a water wheel in the book about Antakya, wasn’t there?

The architectural book describes 18 water wheels built along the Orontes in the Hatay region, which supplied the agricultural plains with water. This photograph is the only remaining documentation of the last wheel in the region; all others were destroyed. These metal and wooden structures ran through Syria and were considered advanced engineering technology in their time. Escalating water shortages in the region of the Euphrates basin and natural gas supplies in Cyprus are predicted to cause great conflicts in the future (Kleyn, 2012).

Back in the students’ hometown in Småland, there are abundant water wheels scattered all over the region, once used as a source of energy. Göran, who teaches at the construction program, helped build the wheel to the right, which was used to grind flour. It is now a tourist attraction at the edge of a natural forest reservation. There were discussions with the electricity program on how to include solar driven energy to drive the water wheel. The Swedish trainee electricians, however, felt the work was too advanced for their area of knowledge.

5.1.2 The summerhouse
The head of the construction department in Antakya invited the group of teachers and students from Sweden to their summer cottage in the mountains. The afternoon was spent in the log cabin

Figure 7 Postcard of water wheel along the Orontes. (Demir, 1996)

Figure 8 Waterwheel in Småland along the Emån. Photo: Elaina Josefsson
by the open fire dancing and grilling. Peacocks, deer and rabbits wandered freely on their grounds where one of their private projects was to build a hotel.

5.1.3 French courtyard house with side balcony
Several of the buildings that Mike and Robin have chosen to represent in their gestaltning reflect

M: Just those cracks (in the walls) and slanting balconies and then there was ... we got a bit inspiration from ... we went, didn’t we, to look at the old part of Antakya and the old houses and they looked quite old, so then we wanted to include that ... the slanting ...

Mike goes on to explain the motif of French buildings in the old city, where they walked nearly every evening. The area was once occupied by the French in the 1800s and had been renovated causing local deforestation. The intricate wooden structures, which are still standing, had not been able to withstand the decades of climate of intense heat, flooding and earthquakes. This is the explanation given by the vocational school teachers in Antakya for the chaotic decay of the material and uneven structures. In contrast to French architecture, the cobbled Roman streets play a large part in the infra-structure of the city, directing the flood waters through the labyrinth of streets into the Orontes river which is the focal point in Robin and Mike’s gestaltning. Roofing in construction is an important part of education and the leaking roof would have been a disturbing sight for an expert eye.

5.1.4 The hybrid castle-buttress or religious structure

The student’s blog documents an outing to the mountains and an old castle. The castle is part of the history of Public storytelling text of the Silk Route describes the migratory lives of the Mongolian golden eagle hunters. In the story of Alpaymish, the protagonist is sent to prison to pine away in the dungeons for seven years. In Dede Korkut’s literature (Lewis, 2011), performers describe their “yurt” (tent like textile homes) as “gold capped pavilions, tents of many colors, or the beautiful home of white pavilions.”

6 http://antakyaresan.blogg.se/
Robin and Mike included unusual shaped windows in their design, which is documented in their Antakya blog. Just behind the mountains was the UN camp for Syrian refugees. They carry on with their explanation.

\[ R: \] We saw a picture in the book where there were two castles ... where there was a crossing bridge, so it was probably that which ... and that... there had been a city there before.

The trip to the castle in the mountains, I know, was very much appreciated. It was a highlight. After the first week of so many impressions, as well as trying to understand lectures in Turkish, the students expressed great relief to be able to get out into the peace and quiet of the mountains and the castle ruins. No more celebrity attention or photo shooting from the Turkish students. In the interview, when I ask them if they have taken any pictures and what they have done with them, they told me:

\[ M: Yes, some pictures are on Facebook. \\
R: I haven’t uploaded any. Not you either, have you? \\
M: No, I haven’t uploaded them, but there are others. I know that ‘I’ has uploaded some on Facebook ... and then there are many over there that have uploaded ... (giggle) ... who took pictures. \\
R: Yes...
\]

They laugh when they refer to people over there. By over there they mean students in Antakya. There had been a lot of photographing during their visit, they were treated like celebrities and had had their pictures taken frequently and there was a long queue to become Facebook friends. Robin and Mike gave a huge sigh of relief. It was a welcome break from all the attention. They were not used to the tone and way in which the teachers controlled the class. It had been stifling. Now, they were free to spend time exploring, taking in the scenery, laughing and joking with the otherwise strict Turkish teachers. Through translation they listened to stories and legends about dungeons and conquerors via translation from the relaxed and now chatty teachers.

5.1.5 The river
The Fertile Crescent has earned its name from the Mediterranean coastal climate with hot and dry summers and wet winters. The main river Orontes runs from the mountain of Lebanon.

---

through Syria into the Hatay province through Antakya, separating the old city with its French Mediterranean architecture from the new section of built up concrete apartments. The motif of a river passes between the buildings in the gestaltning. One of the photos taken by Mike is of a Hellenistic river god,\(^8\) the centre of life in the city.

5.1.6 The bridge
The first of a number of bridges is the old vassiour bridge, which I refer to in the introduction. This bridge lies in a sleepy little fishing town on the sea coast and is a favorite with previous students. No one can resist walking across it, trying it out to see if it will still hold one more person. The second bridge is a fusion of a number of bridges downtown, bridges that students often crossed when going from the new city to the old city, where shacks that have been built overnight sprawl up into the mountainside.

5.1.7 Cement Mountain
Hatay is a mountainous region from which green marble and white sandstone is mined as well as iron and steel. Mike and Robin showed me a simple sketch of a plan of their idea; a round city with mountains around.

\[
R: \ldots \text{to make it look mountainy because that's what it looked like down there.}
\]

However, they were not sure if it practically would work out and concerned if their idea would meet my assumed expectations for a memorial.

They abandoned the idea of focusing on the mountain. Mike laughs, he was disappointed that the pile of cement block, which was supposed to be the mountain, hadn't quite work out as he

planned. Instead they focused on making a moving river running through the city, the focal point of the memorial.

5.2 Chaos

A period of time had elapsed since the exchange and I began the interview by asking what they remembered about the exchange. They begin with their strongest memory

R: Ehh.
M: We remember most things.
R: Yes, but in the beginning when we had the (preparation) meetings, there was a lot of talk about the situation in Syria.

The unravelling situation in Syria had, naturally, affected the preparations of the exchange, involving parents and headmasters in the process of deciding whether the trip would go ahead. One area of discussion was how to interpret the travel recommendations from the Swedish ministry of foreign affairs. In order to keep everyone informed about the progress of the exchange, all participants were invited to write about their experiences in a blog, having access to the password and freedom to write what they wanted.

There had been one particular day when the students came back talking excitedly about a local shopping trip to a building warehouse in the bazars of the old city. There was a lot to discuss, the prices and amount of wood, other material, familiar and unfamiliar equipment, the content and layout.

R: Here ehh.
M: We had the opportunity to experience all the events ourselves.
R: Yes...
M: ...and learn about their culture, that is be there ... take part in ...
R: ...and kind of get to know them personally ... how they live ...
M: ...cause, you don’t get that as well if you are there just on a holiday.
R: No, you don’t.
M: ...so...trips like these are...
R: I mean, this wasn’t kind of a touristic town. There were generally only those who lived there who were there, in a way.

One student in particular suffered badly from homesickness. I asked Robin and Mike how they had felt about the chaos surrounding the trip.
R: Yea, before we travelled, it felt so, but once we were down there, it was nothing that we noticed.
M: True.
R: At least not we.

When the trip was nearly cancelled, the students expressed disappointment. It was a dilemma for teachers to know whether to accept the protective nurturing role of the school or to embrace the chaos and risk of diversity. There had been information in the meetings prior to the exchange that this was not a classic tourist package holiday.

R: We hadn’t received any real information about what we were supposed to do, more than that we were going to build something.
M: So, the expectations weren’t that high. That probably made the trip so good.
R: Yes, I agree. For it (the trip) was much better than I thought.

Their audience is the comings and goings in the hall. Robin laughs when I ask him what people thought of what they were doing.

M: Yes, there were many that wondered what the whole thing was about.
R: When we sat there in the beginning, we didn’t really know anything... those that didn’t know what would become of it. Then it might have appeared a bit strange.

Comments and responses from teachers and fellow students who had not experienced the exchange might have influenced Robin and Mike in their work.

5.3 The professional eye

The first question I asked concerning this research was how the professional eye is affected by chaos and diversity in time, space and relationships during an exchange program. The purpose of the exchange had been to increase knowledge in the area of chosen study. Comparing building traditions between Sweden and Turkey, Mike expressed it this way:

M: Yes, what I first and foremost think of is the great difference between how they build down there and how we build here in Sweden.

The differences stretch from material; concrete instead of wood, external influences; earthquakes and heat instead of cold, mold or fire, to building safety and labour rights.

When you look at the way in which the stones are placed, they highlight deviation using vertical and horizontal placement, with decorative alternating grey and cream patterns. When it was
explained to me that the motif of the castle / religious structure and the decorative elements had come from the mosque we had visited in Istanbul, I asked if they had worked with tiling before.

M: Nah, we have tried it out here (in the construction hall), but we have never worked with it (on the sites).

This, they explained, was the fiddly parts of doing mosaics. The decorative tasks of cutting, shaping and piecing the tiling around the doors windows and facades was time consuming work more suitable for girls, Mike joked.

Simplification and representations are common processes of visual thinking in design. Robin expressed it in this way:

R: Well, it was just so ... ehh, the most convenient so that it would look like houses so then we had our "plyfar" (plywood) and nailed them together as boxes and then we dressed it with mosaic stone ... so it would be like a covering.

For the students, a model city was a natural choice from a social historical context. House building is at the center of their training.

We went on to discuss what was left to do, lighting. They had left an electrical path finding view of the city, to allow electricity circuits for lighting and the pump.

R: It is the electricians ...
M: ...that the electricians should do their part.
E: Will you discuss with them, or...
M: Yes, we have discussed a bit and they know approximately what they ... what we want them to do. They will try to implement it.
R: So, they will try to get this (water) wheel to turn and then streetlights need to be put up.

The interview was given in English. There was discussion back and forth between the electricians and the builders. In the end amidst the chaos, it was decided because of safety reasons, the older more experienced Turkish electricians would work under the close guidance of the admired and experienced electronic teacher. When the return exchange of the Turkish students took place in April, the gestaltning stood ready to be displayed for the whole school.

6 Interpretation of the result
The process around the creation of the gestaltning, the mosaic city, shows in this reflexive ethnographic study that the professional eye of the Swedish construction students is affected by the encounter with the unfamiliar culture in a corner of the Middle East. Their narrative was coloured by the diversity of visual impressions, a greater understanding of historical and current events and the meeting with students and teachers in a relationship centered culture so different to their own. From this process that the international exchange brought about, a number of didactic principles for experiential learning can be derived.

6.1 The Professional Eye meets the unfamiliar

The gestaltning looked unfinished, unlike anything that a conscientious Swedish builder would produce. The construction of structures which have to support humans has to be accurate and responsible; otherwise there will be disastrous effects. Robin and Mike had seen damaged crooked buildings, as well as unfinished representations of buildings, that apparently had made an impact on them. Their understanding of the context in which they were still standing, historically as well as contemporary, made Robin and Mike appreciate them. The mosaic city described something about the chaos in diversity which would not have been possible to describe correctly in a formal setting of a classroom.

On one level, the narrative of the motifs represents buildings, for the most part structures that are decaying, uninhabited or no longer exists in its original form. Only the river is living and moving. This suggests that the pastoral power of the educational institution, which Foucault writes about, was removed and, thereby, the loss of control and foreknowledge contributed to new ways of seeing.

From the interviews, Robin and Mike expressed that they had new concepts to think about; earthquake proofing and solar energy. They were able to incorporate vernacular Turkish construction material, such as small mosaic stones and concrete together with the familiar carpentry to create a hybrid design. Using skills from their three years of vocational training in roofing and tiling, they applied free interpretations and design into the gestaltning.

With the coming and going of the audience in the hall, the model may have been simplified and adapted from the more complex original idea to communicate to first and second year students. Simplification and representations are common visual thinking design processes used to save time. Like Dickens (Josefsson, 2009), they added humor and irony to their visual illustration. This is a strategy of the visual designer to transform data and extract properties so that it appears like a common environment (Ware, 2013).
In the students' own words, the diversity, together with the chaotic nature of the exchange experience, increased knowledge and played a greater role in ways of seeing. There were so many factors that were different compared to package holidays, which are designed to reduce diversity, emulate and replicate comfortable safe conditions at home. According to the students, APL in the home environment apparently did not reflect new ways of seeing. The choice representation of ruined buildings, such as the Byzantine and Crusader castles, the Roman vossiur bridge and the French courtyard house in the gestaltning, demonstrate a visual understanding of the historical, religious and political impact of architecture in the region. In the students' own words, this kind of experiential learning is hard to reproduce within the classroom.

The Students skipped 2 D design and translated their increased knowledge from the experience into 3 D design. This Transformation design could have many uses. For example, in computer graphics, where the simplification of the environment, such as the surfaces of buildings, trees, grass or animals could be used for more authentic reproduction. Most computer art avoids the textured look as the technology has still not been developed, despite the many tricks which can be played with lighting, contrast and colour to reproduce spatial awareness. The advantage with working 3 dimensionally is that texture is more developed and the patterns can be used to create variety. The good eye, which Rose (2012) refers to, uses lighting to set the focus and tone of the narrative and sets the tone of the evening river walk with colourful underwater lighting. This is useful in developing spatial and compositional organization, geometrical perspective and 3-D printing in architecture.

6.2 Principles for international experiential learning

This ethnographic study seeks to deduct models or didactic principles for future international experience based learning.

6.2.1 Paths, bridge building
The graph below illustrates the learning process that takes place between different cultures. Some cultures naturally overlap; others have little or no common ground. This study explores the paths and bridges created to broaden learning. Some of those paths are reciprocal and occur naturally; others require the construction of a bridge. For example, if culture 1, 2 and 3 were various construction cultures like those in Turkey or Sweden, there ought to be a lot of common ground in the area of architecture. However, in the area of vernacular material or in the environmental condition for construction, there are significant differences as illustrated in culture
5 or 10. The further away from each other, the more complicated the learning path would be to build. Yet, the complexity of the bridge building can in itself broaden learning, even though the risks for failure are greater.

6.2.2 Diverse and challenging task
In order for the students to discover cultural bridge building, they were given the practical experience of building a gazebo together with the Turkish students. The materials they were used to working with were not available. Therefore they had to adapt to unfamiliar vernacular material and tools. They also had to relate to advice from the Turkish construction teacher (using concrete instead of wood), advice that was different from what they were used to. The students felt that the project was the most stressful experience of the exchange. Yet, the choice of vernacular material featured most in their gestaltning, showing that the project had been a learning experience. The didactic principle that can be drawn from this is to expose students to culturally diverse and challenging tasks that can risk failure without interfering pastoral pampering. An overprotected group of students will remain in the comfort zone of culture 1, no matter in how far away country the exchange takes place. On the other hand, when the professional eye and
social practices of a group of students are exposed to a diverse new culture, unique aesthetic learning processes can take place, even if the working task in itself fails.

6.2.3 Reflection
In order to consolidate the learning bridges (paths) that had been constructed; a forum for reflection took place every evening during the exchange, where everyone contributed by talking about the positive and negative experiences; events and observations of the day. By this, the students were helped by their peers to put into words the learning experiences. Because they were exposed to a diverse culture, they were prompted to spontaneous reflection. This was true for the participating teachers, who also to a certain extent were out of their depth and therefore limited in exerting pastoral power. Exposure to a diverse culture generates a level of learning reflections that scarcely can be matched in the secure classroom at home. Therefore, a forum for regular and structured reflection during international exchange is an important didactic principle for experiential learning.

6.2.4 Learning expressed visually
Words, written in a report or spoken in a gathering, are not the sole way of communicating a learning experience. The Antakya Blog9 became an important visual means for the students to express their reflections once they had been discussed. However, the purpose of the blog became more an exercise in pastoral power, both by the input of the teachers and the need to put the minds of worried family at ease. A more multi modal approach, such as video or photo diary and access to the participants’ social media, would have strengthened visual communication. This should have been established during the preparation period. This study has shown that the gestaltning became a clear expression of a complex level of learning by the students. However, the exhibition of the gestaltning was limited to the Construction hall and the Open Day at the school for parents and school mates to see. The gestaltning could have been exhibited to other cultures outside the school; exposed to a broader public.

6.2.5 Simplification
One of the semiotic strategies of the students in the gestaltning was to simplify a complex visual experience. In a globalized, divers, multicultural classroom it might be important to apply the same strategy. A valid criticism from Athena on the final exchange report was that too many

---

9 http://antakyaresan.blogg.se/
programmes had been involved in the exchange. This exemplifies the danger of involving too many cultures, where a lot of energy is consumed in building cultural bridges. Streamlining the participants, both in the number of programmes and how the participants were selected, would make the learning processes more effective.

6.2.6 Expertise
A crucial factor for successful learning is to utilize expertise in preparation and follow up of the exchange. A combination of expertise in visual art, cross cultural understanding and specialized vocational skills are necessary for successful international exchange. The active participation of all three in the preparation and the follow up of the exchange would considerably strengthen the learning processes. The constructive input by the Turkish electronic teacher guided the Turkish students in putting the final touches to the gestaltning. Their process was fast and effective and demonstrated the professional eye.

6.2.7 Clear goals
A successful exchange is aided by clearer objectives and learning outcomes, embraced by everyone involved. That will help the participants, both students and teachers, to be fully committed. Five students selected for the work with the gestaltning decreased to two. Clearer goals embraced by all teachers in the program would probably have resulted in full participation of visualizing their learning experience.

7 Final Discussion
The background to the idea of a gestaltning in the form of a memorial comes from several themes used to explore the relationship between the global city and its cultural meaning; fear, memory and spectacle. The negotiation of cultural responses lies in fear that focuses on paranoia, memory in monuments and urban violence as a source of spectacle in visual representations. The cultural memory of the city is where space is recycled, recreated and renewed.
Mike and Robin coped well with the chaos and diversity of the exchange and in their own words express that it had been an opportunity to increase knowledge and learn more about their profession for the future. They affirm:

R: Yes...
M: Yes, I will definitely... find it useful ... and then that they use so much solar energy than we do.
R: Yes....
M: ...and that is quite understandable.
R: Yes, it is.

Moreover, they document their ability to manage chaos and develop intercultural competence:
R: Here ehh.
M: We had the opportunity to experience all the events ourselves.
R: Yes...
M: ...and learn about their culture, that is to be there ... take part in...
R: ...and kind of get to know them personally ... how they live ...
M: ...cause, you don’t get that as well if you are there just on a holiday.
R: No, you don’t.
M: ...so...trips like these are...
R: I mean, this wasn’t kind of a touristic town. There were generally only those who lived there who were there, in a way.

Robin and Mike used the professional eye for creating order out of chaos expressed in the gestaltning. From the narrative, it is clear they increased knowledge, which they felt contributed to developing the professional eye. The narrative of the motifs leans towards the third eye are at times humorous, poking fun at the environment, critical of shoddy work, but also appreciative of their experience with diversity – the rationale of international exchange. Mike concludes: This was completely different. This is a completely new culture, a completely new language and you learn to get on with those you don’t understand or who do things differently.

Bibliography

Litterature


Articles


Academic Papers


Josefsson, Elaina (2009). Illustration and Masking the Text in Charles Dickens’s


Websites


