

Enabling Professional-Self Design: Educating for Praxis/Ethos/Poiesis

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Introduction

Architectural education generally implies a form of professional education, with a focus on design as the underlying process and outcome. Professional education is fundamentally about the education of professionals i.e. live, living people, rather than inanimate objects. A direct focus on the education of professionals in design contexts naturally leads to curiosity around the design of the designers-in-the-making, drawing out the constitutive elements of the personal/professional interface.

We are thus in the realms of *professional-self design*, where the subject and object of the designing is the prospective designer themselves – in terms of what they intend to profess, and how, and why. This is subtly, but significantly, different from a focus on the essentially impersonal subject matter – in this case, architecture. The intent here is to privilege *architect education* (rather than architectural education) i.e. the making of architects, rather than the making of architecture.

The associated professional education needs to be more consciously designed to support this distinction, which may be accomplished through an extraordinary regard for extraordinary integrations. This presentation reports on some learning from an ongoing experiment in enabling such professional-self design (Friesen and Wight, 2009), by approaching the education challenge as an effort to realize certain integrations. These key 'makings' of professionals (involving much *inner work*), are named here as *praxis* (personal), *ethos* (inter-personal) and *poiesis* (trans-personal) (Wight 2012b). This triad represents the form-response to the questions: What makes a professional? What does a professional make?

The forum for pursuing this triad of integrations - of students' perceptions and intentions – has been a capstone professional practice course, in a graduate professional planning program, within an architectural design school¹. Over two decades of ongoing experimentation the course was progressively evolved from a conventional (professional practice) seminar course to more of a post-conventional *professional-self design studio*, featuring *praxis-making* and *ethos-making* (Wight 2011b, 2011c and 2013). These in turn were envisaged as laying the ground for an anticipated over-arching *poiesis* (a form of collective poetry-in-action on

a grand scale) – still very much 'under development' or 'being evolved'.

The whole course came to be positioned within the context of 'place-making, as well-being by design' (as the hypothesized *poiesis*) (Wight 2011a, 2013). The main concern became the associated professional preparation requirements. An underlying interest was – effectively - to enable students to bring their 'professing' alive; they – the students – were being positioned, aspiringly, as 'the agents of the next enlightenment'. How might they be best helped to be effective in such a role?

With regard to the AAE 2014 conference theme, liveness can be considered to have been invoked in the context of wholeness – supporting students in bringing their whole selves to their professional life: body, mind and spirit. It is all about whole-making – the common denominator in place-making and well-being. Liveness was also evoked in terms of in-the-moment presencing, within a wider field, of collective intention (Senge et al 2004); Scharmer 2007). This is about noticing what is being noticed, about what is intended, and what garners attention - manifestations of sense-making and meaning-making.

'Practice' is thus translated into 'making' – the mobilization of knowledge as action, of intervention with intention - with 'professional practice' being conceived in terms of three particular 'makings', together encompassing one's professional-self design (Wight 2012b).

Praxis, *ethos* and *poiesis* represent professional development places with professional wellbeing in mind; they are enduring places for life-long learning, for having a well-developed learning life. They harness and foster triple-loop learning (Torbert et al 2004), transcending the small self, and are evolutionary in orientation. They are fecund environments for growth and development – in the realm of consciousness.

This is the three-cylinder container for the living and learning – a unique design challenge, where the subject and object of the design is one's professional self, individually and collectively. And where the design intent concerns one's integrated-ness, on the inside, and one's integration-ability, on the outside - both on one's own, and with others.

This happens to be the manifestation of an 'integral life' perspective (Wilber et al 2008), of integral education theory in practice (Murray 2009; Dea 2010; Esbjorn-Hargens et al 2010) (see Fig. 1).

<p>I – Why I do</p> <p>How I experience, feel, think, believe, value, grow.</p>	<p>IT – What I do</p> <p>Behaviours, products, measurables</p>
<p>WE – Why we do</p> <p>Relationships, shared values, cultures, norms</p>	<p>ITS – How we do</p> <p>System dynamics, social systems, policy</p>

Figure 1: The Four Integral Quadrants (Wilber, 2000)

The Professional-Self Design Inquiry

The pedagogy is highly student-centered, with a strong focus on self-inquiry – 'knowing thy self and being thy self'. As a professional-self design studio, the guiding questions emerged as:

What is calling me? What is my calling? What am I being called to profess?

What do I want to make of myself, personally and professionally? What does the world want of me... to use me for?

What is my unique gift or gifts - that I cannot not give? How do I plan to be of service in the world, to the world?

The context is very much experiential learning, but with an interest in integrating the 'experiencing' within a wider, implicitly integral, framework where individual (inner) experiences (I) are meshed with collective (inner) inter-relationships (We), individual (outer/exterior) behavior (It), and collective social or institutional (exterior) systems (Its) (See Fig. 1 for further integral 'quadrant' elaboration)

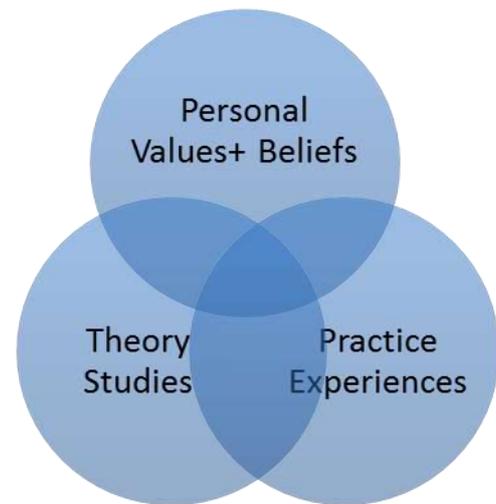


Fig. 2 Professional Development Places of Intersection, Integration and Making

In broad terms the professional-self design concepts are structured as an integration of theory, practice and (personal) essence, i.e. the students' theory studies, practice experiences, and personal values and beliefs – in effect, their emerging sense of professional 'essence' (their 'prof-ess-ence') (Fig. 2). The latter critical component (often downplayed in 'modern' professional education) could be conceived as their *élan vital*, or *anima* – their life spirit, thus engaging the core of their aliveness. The design challenge is for them not only to bring life to their designing, but to bring their life – and themselves as a whole – self-consciously into their professional self-design, and thus into their 'professing'.

The triad being advanced here defines a critical and complex professional development place, for the making, and makings, of professionals. Praxis (and ethos, and poiesis) may be envisaged right at the intersection of - and as an integration of - all 'theory studies', 'practice experiences' and 'personal values + beliefs'. This intersection, which is in the form of an integration – and in practice a 'making' - is like a sweet spot, right in the middle, reflecting one's (individual or collective) core - where thinking, doing and believing meet, which feed off one another, which are always evolving, and which are inherently full of life.

Theory Studies: This is where the head rules, the work of the mind - at work. A place of perceptions and interpretations, of patterns that matter.... thinking, reasoning; mental, perceptual.

Practice Experiences: The body at work; hands-on. A place of behaviours, of doings, of realizations... acting, enacting; practical, radical.

Personal Values and Beliefs: The work of the heart, and soul, en route to the whole; the place of the personal touch – the place of feeling, sensing, and intuiting; the realm of essence.

The latter territory (essence) represents an inner place with outer manifestations - the main conduit to praxis (and ethos and poiesis). It informs the 'I' (rather than the 'me') of professionals; it goes to what a professional 'stands for', what a professional ultimately 'professes' – from, or out of. Ideally, this 'I' is expressed as the 'undivided self' (Palmer 2007), as a whole being at work in the world; as such it is much more than a combining of theory and practice – there is also a spirit of sorts at work - interpreting, discerning; fundamental, transformational.

Meshing the Personal and the Professional

To begin to personally relate to this triadic scheme it is necessary to first appreciate a distinction between one's 'practice' and one's 'praxis' (Praxis is featured here, for illustrative purposes, but a similar patterning may be inferred with regard to ethos and poiesis). Praxis embraces practice (it transcends and includes it) but practice is more habit and routine – going through prescribed motions. Praxis, by contrast, is transformative – an ongoing evolution, on a trajectory to the ever-more-whole.

Praxis may be variously represented as: foundational, formative, performative and generative. It is more than (just) theory; more than (just) practice; and, self-reverentially, it is more than (just) 'me' in action. It represents a significant integration of important differentiations - an embryonic form of (and format for) professional-self design. Praxis is clearly underpinning – a form of elemental professional DNA (Figure 3).

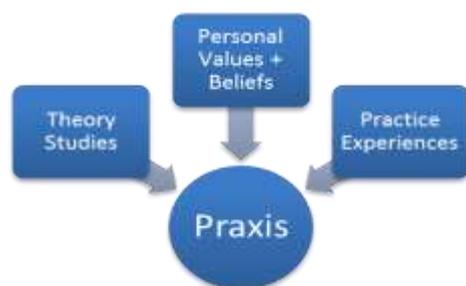


Fig. 3: Praxis – Underpinning.

Praxis is being represented here as the prime - and primal - 'making' of an aspiring professional... a truly transforming place. This is a place where it should be safe, educationally, for the personal to encounter the professional, and for some necessary meshing of the personal and the professional. The associated

professional-self design should also encompass other dimensions of 'the personal', namely, the inter-personal dimension in *ethos*, and the trans-personal dimension in *poiesis*. These traverse highly transformational terrain (See Figure 4, over page).

The three elements of the triad should be viewed in terms of their nested inter-relatedness (praxis as foundational; but being transcended by - while being included within – ethos; with poiesis similarly transcending, while including, praxis and ethos).

Personal	Interpersonal	Transpersonal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •me •Trans-form: From me to I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •We •Trans-form: From I to We 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All of (pl)us •Trans-form: From We to All of Us
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Praxis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ethos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Poiesis

Fig. 4. The personal/inter-personal/trans-personal - and the professional

Praxis is personal professing territory; ethos is essentially inter-personal; and poiesis is potentially trans-personal, trans-disciplinary, trans-professional. In developmental terms, the integration within praxis is mostly an expression of personal transformation – from 'me' and one's defining grasping ego, as a human 'doing', to 'I' as an in-relation self-construct, as a contribution, as a human 'being' (and – prospectively - as a human 'becoming'). The integration within ethos is a development beyond discrete codified ethics (Wight 2011c; 2013). The integration within poiesis is a development beyond networking and partnering into the realms of meshworking and collaboration – a form of collaborative developmental action inquiry (Nicolaidis and McCallum 2013).

Pairings and Presencings – To Be Integrated

Each of these integrations – prototypical makings of professionals-in-the-making – may be articulated in part in terms of particular pairings that engage, and animate, the 'whole' of a person, their whole self – body, mind, soul and spirit. These 'pairings' – of inner dimensions and outer manifestations – may be referenced to help students focus on what matters, and what merits an alignment effort, with respect to their professional-self design (see Figure 5)

Such 'pairings that matter' – that engage mind, soul and spirit more directly, and intentionally – may aid in the articulation of one's praxis, as well as a shared ethos, en route to an enhanced propensity for poiesis (Wight 2011c). In total, these pairings and their alignment

amount to a considerable 'presence' – of one's professional self, both on one's own and with others.



Fig. 5. Pairings that Matter, to be Aligned, via Professional-Self Design

This presencing (Senge et al 2004) can be viewed as a series of larger inter-related 'makings' – sense-making, meaning-making and place-making (see Figure 6).



Fig. 6. Presencings: To be Integrated

Sense-making involves making sense of one's world, through the senses that we are all equipped with. Meaning-making is, ultimately, something we do with others – establishing what is meaningful, meaning-filled, in common. Place-making builds on both – it is a fundamental human act, which may be regarded here as a form of poetry on a grand scale, rippling with truth, goodness and beauty.

Conclusion

These pairings and presencings are the possibilities, the potential, in 'All of Us', and - from an educator's perspective - in our students, if we might better enable their professional-self design: i.e. being professional + comprehending the meaning in being professional + being discerning being professional. Might we aspire, as professional educators, to graduate students not only with an accredited degree credential, but also with a praxis, an ethos and a propensity for poiesis?

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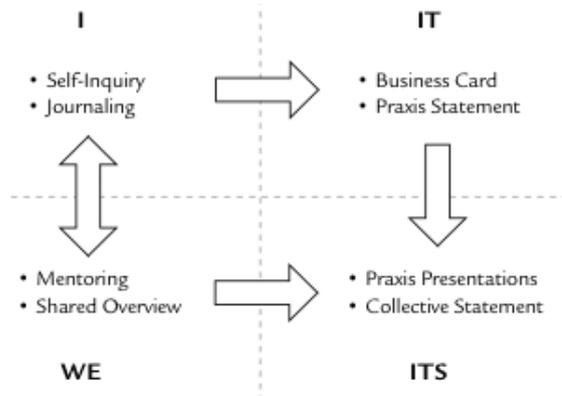
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Notes

ⁱ CITY 7470 Professional Planning Practice is a required second-year (M2) graduate course which aims to serve as a capstone for the University of Manitoba's Masters in City Planning program. It 'book-ends' the 'theory/practice' stream, which includes Planning Theory – at the beginning of the program, and the internship module – in the middle of the program. The MCP program is anchored by three main planning design studios; CITY 7470 has been taught as a 'de facto' fourth studio, with an emphasis on integration, and professional-self design. The course is built around several active learning assignments: maintaining a professional journal (Friesen and Wight 2009); designing a business card; developing an 'elevator pitch'; relationship-building with mentors; interfacing with other professionals in various settings (mainly outside the classroom); collaborating with a practitioner on original planning practice case study research – on some aspect of best-practice/cutting-edge planning of mutual interest; developing/presenting a personal planning praxis statement ('a plan for your own professing of planning – i.e. a professional-self design presentation'); and a collective 'ethos' statement – as a class, as emerging planners, directed to representatives of the professional planning establishment.

The course development and delivery has been informed in recent years by integral education theory, including coverage of the four quadrants featured in integral theory (see below)



For more background on integral framings see Friesen and Wight (2009) – the source for the above diagram, as well as Wight 2012a.

The course draws on several standard texts including: *The CIP Professional Practice Manual* (2002), by D. Witty; *The Profession of City Planning: Changes, Images and Challenges 1950-2000*, (2000), by Lloyd Rodwin and Bish Sanyal (CUPR Rutgers); *Making a Living While Making a Difference: The Expanded Guide to Creating Careers with a Conscience* (1999, 2nd Edition), by Melissa Everett (New Society Publishers); and *Developing sustainability, Developing the Self: An Integral Approach to International and Community Development* (2005), by Gail Hochachka (Polis Project, and Drishti).

More recently, as the professional-self design focus has become more prominent, there has been an emphasis on a range of less conventional sources, that – together – might convey a better sense of how students have been supported, to really stretch themselves. The latest set of such resources are indicated below:

Professional Planning Practice [CITY7470 w2013] Professional-Self Design Support Reading Resource Inputs

*The Art of Possibility:
Transforming Professional and Personal Life*
Ben and Rosamund Zander

*Landscapes of the Interior:
Re-Explorations of Nature and the Human Spirit*
Don Gayton

The Highest Goal
Michael Ray

*Integral Sustainable Design:
Transformative Practices*
Mark DeKay

*Truth Beauty and Goodness Reframed:
Educating for the Virtues in the 21st Century*
Howard Gardner

*Awareness to Action:
The Enneagram, Emotional Intelligence and Change*
Robert Talon and Mario Sikora

*Changing on the Job:
Developing Leaders for a Complex World*
Jennifer Garvey Berger

*The Three Marriages:
Reimagining Work Self and Relationship*
David Whyte

*Crossing the Unknown Sea:
Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity*
David Whyte