VERSATILE BOOKLET, POSTER, PRESENTATION— AS A PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION TOOL. URBORELO.

Kolařík Radek

ABSTRACT: The paper presents the tools for processing and communicating a (studio) project, its possibilities and a case study with commentary, on a project for the field of urbanism. It reflects the author's experience of using it in teaching at three schools of architecture (ARCHIP, FA CTU, FUA TUL) in the last ten years.

The case study uses the Urborelo format, which I created for the needs of introductory projects in the field of urbanism at all three schools. Urborelo is a folio for the city and the landscape, or in general for any environment. It is a compound of the words urbanism and folio (children's picture folding book). Its form resulted from an effort to structure the procedure for managing a studio project at schools of architecture, and an even longer-lasting effort to find a contemporary, adaptable form of project communication in its conceptual phase. I evaluated the experience of using the tool so far. The evaluation criterion was the effectiveness of using the tool.

KEYWORDS: Urborelo; versatile booklet; effectiveness in education; project communication tool; conceptual phase; (typographic) grid; outline; narrative structure; graphic language

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INTRODUCTION

Student projects need to be communicated, i.e. presented in an appropriate manner and in accessible forms.[1] To do this, students and future architects[2] are provided with the following basic tools:

• model (analogue, digital I include in 2D illustrations or animations, i.e. in printed form or digital projection),

• illustration (any 2D representation, but usually always basic parts of project documentation, but also photographs of models, collages, etc.)

• written word (various literary genres and styles)

• spoken word

• other (only for the needs of this essay): videos, animations, performances, etc.

The basic question is therefore: What tool should be recommended/prepared for students so that it does not reduce the authenticity of their individual outputs and helps their development and presentation?[3]

The following discussion presents the method of creating one such tool, a summary of the experience from its development and a decade of use. The text is a concentrate of topics that all have a relevant role in illuminating the creation and experience from its use.

Creating the tool reasons
A lot of energy, and usually not very effective, spent by most students[4] (and subsequently their teachers) on preparing materials for consultations, checking the progress of individual phases of the project; or the same energy lost during consultations by explaining what it would be like if it were as the author believes and tries to say, even if he cannot currently prove it in any way, only abstractly verbally (usually lengthy and chaotically) describe it. The proverbial tripping over one's own feet, which complicates moving forward. From the beginning of the semester to its end.[5] That is why I decided to create the tool on my own impulse and at the expense of my own office, so that this energy could be spent on feedback and discussion, open to all who can benefit from it (usually students and their classmates). The tool has, in simplified terms, the form of a brochure, poster, presentation template.

TOOL BASIC OBJECTIVES (ITS BASIC FORMS: BROCHURE, POSTER)

These are the maximum feasible simplification of communication between students[4] with the thesis supervisor, consultants, classmates, during consultations during the development of the concept; with opponents or members of the commission, or (and this was one of the main impulses) to communicate the basic ideas of the concept to representatives of the city's political representation, the public in the broadest sense of the word. For this reason, I primarily present the tool for urban or landscape projects in the design phase of the building, study (i.e. presentation of concepts and their justification). The use is then adapted analogously for building design projects and their sets.

METHOD (CHARACTERIZED BY RELEVANT ELEMENTS, STEPS AND THEIR CONNECTIONS AND ROLES WITHIN THE WHOLE)

Basic technology of the tool
In order to make working with the tool — more precisely, with the templates created for it — accessible to the widest (and above all necessary) number of students[1], it is necessary that its use be accessible to them quickly, within the framework of a short training, usually additionally held within the framework of studio teaching. Undemanding to previous experience with (pre-press) software. From this point of view, Adobe Indesign[6] is primarily used.

Tool basic structure
In order to make working with the tool accessible to the widest (and above all necessary) number of students[4] and especially effective for students and teachers, it is necessary that the basic forms of the tool are adaptable and versatile, or that these forms have a uniform basis, easily usable in all its applications. This is ideally served by a tool designed for this purpose and used by those for whom this activity is the main professional activity: a type grid8 used by graphic designers.[9, 10]

Tool basic format
This is the usual one, also used in printing (books).[11] It is the A series format according to ISO 216, DIN 476[12], traditionally used for adjusting and shipping basic project documentation. This already shows its specific adaptation. And the complete basic unit is one A4 format in portrait (portrait). Two (double page) make up A3, most often used for project portfolios. The templates assume A4 binding, with the printing being double-sided, the double-page representing an A3 page, and in addition, the A3 proportion is suitable for digital projection.

[3] KOLAŘÍK 2023
[2] PATT 2012
[3] MAU—LEONARD 2024
[4] The unit of measurement for this balance is the standard student. This does not consider the approximately 20% of students who are familiar with any acceptably conceived model of the study structure, are prepared in basic skills or are prepared to operationally supplement deficiencies in the basics independently, i.e. as it should be standard at a university-type school. KOLAŘÍK 2107.
[5] MAU—WARD 2020
[6] Adobe InDesign is a professional software from Adobe for typesetting and page layout design, which is used to create print and digital publications, such as books, magazines, posters, e-books and interactive PDF documents. It provides a wide range of tools for working with text, graphics and layout, which allows you to create high-quality and visually impressive content for various print and digital platforms. It provides options for creating content for both traditional print and digital distribution, including modern elements for interactive digital projects.[7]
[7] OPENAI, 2025. Google. AI program: https://www.google.com/search?q=adobe+indesign. [Quoted 2025-08-18]
[8] BLAŽEK 2024
[9] BLAŽEK 2020
[10] PECINA 2017
[11] AMBROSE—HARRIS 2009

[12] Paper size: https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Formát_papíru)
[13] VIGNELLI 2010
[14] VIGNELLI 2013
[15] SHAW 2009
[16] SIDUN 2021
[17] MAU—KOOLHAAS—SIGLER 1997
[18] VOSSOUGHIAN 2011

Basic typographic grid
There are several ways to work with a typographic grid.[13] The aim of this tool is not to demonstrate mastery of its use.[13, 14] I adapted its use for the needs of teaching students at architecture schools. It must be user-friendly, especially from the students' perspective: its basic principles must be easy to explain and applicable, the adaptation of the template for each field (i.e. urban planning, which is illustrated in this article, and architecture) must be almost intuitive. The grid is therefore lapidary from a practical point of view, and the consequence of the lapidary achieved in this way is then, alongside the font, a fundamental part of the visual style of the tool.

Font
In addition to the application of the typographic grid (neutral, not strictly typographic), the font and its styles are what have a fundamental influence on the overall impression — and this, as follows from the logic of the matter — should be as neutral as possible. Which is objectively a condition that cannot be fulfilled from everyone's perspective. The conditions of neutrality, generality, with the fact that we are moving in a more technical field (than artistic, but here I mean rather than literary or advertising), are best met by the Helvetica font, which was created for this purpose. Due to its unavailability to everyone, a pragmatic decision was made to use Arial, available to all students with some exceptions. Its application as part of the visual style of the tool is essential.[15, 16]

Visual style, characteristics
It must suit everyone and everything (students and their work), but also potential addressees (users, committee members, opponents, etc.). This is a feature that is completely unrealistic in reality; certainly not in a way that it is acceptable, accepted and embraced by everyone without reservations. The visual style is therefore neutral in its form, rather technical. Lapidary to banality supports neutrality and the necessary detachment in relation to the primary content of the pages.

Working with type is analogously mechanical, with these rules: the selected font in one cut is used in four basic and one accompanying size (for sources and footnotes); the font size automatically associates the meaning of the message (and the larger it is, the more concise the message must be, i.e. it is more easily accessible and its urgency is intuitively given). The text therefore flows from the upper left corner, without any further (usually unrealistic) ambition to organize the surface.[17]

Visual style, structure
The cover is designed to create tension, to initiate curiosity. On the front is the name of the project, it is essentially without illustrations, it offers nothing more than an abstract word, it entices. On the back is the abstract — because we read from front to back, but we pick up the book and after a brief look at the title page we first look at the back, I can read the short text (approx. 200 characters including spaces) in a few seconds and, in combination with the name of the project, be tempted to leaf through the content. (See Fig. 1.)

The structure of the brochure and poster template (analogously also the presentation) is based on the division of the project processing into individual phases: analytical, conceptual, design; sometimes it is introduced by chapter zero, containing illustrations of the area being addressed and selected materials, if it fits into the story of the project, or some other. Each chapter is usually introduced by a pictogram, slogan, gloss, essay; some or all; they always introduce what is to come; logically, they are therefore processed after the content is ready; the content of the phase follows. This principle gives the brochure and presentation the necessary rhythm and flow, supports the impact of the story, and makes it easier for the addressee to navigate.

The poster in its basic form has the form of a strip consisting of four A1 formats laid out. Complemented by a strip of four A4 formats, basically the book cover and free interpretation of the content and imprint. At eye level, two formats are (usually) intended for the design phase, the lower format for the concept development phase and the upper format for the initial analytical phase. In accordance with the role of the poster, we very often intentionally disregard this arrangement and subordinate it to the nature of the work. (See Fig. 2., 3.)

The goal of this visual style, which is very economical in its possibilities, is the intuitive perception of the message (conveying the content to the addressee). Therefore, the labels do not dominate, but the content (in order of importance of the illustration, text). The labels are placed in the upper left corner, made in the smallest (additional) size, distinguished by underlining, or supplemented with a subtitle. They only serve to ensure that the addressee can occasionally confirm that he is perceiving the content correctly.

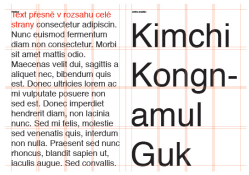
The name visual style is perhaps ambitious, considering the final form of the materials (templates) and the principles on which they are based; it is simply the appearance of the result. But I stick to the term (visual style) that is common today, if we are talking about the appearance of something that is part of the communication tools, or rather the visual identity (this is not the case here).

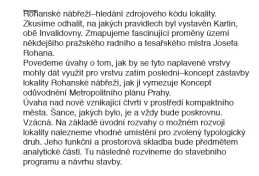
Visual style, pros and cons
From the above, it follows that the visual style is built on a certain deficiency, the consequence of which is a certain degree of uncertainty — imbalance: but there is usually no time for this during the processing of semester papers, and moreover, for a large part of students it is something that they have difficulty dealing with. Thus, a clear rule that is obvious is preferred, the usual imbalance remains, but a readable structure and rational order are present.[18]

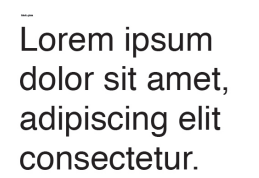
Tool basic versatility
The basic—most commonly used—sub format of the A series (A3), i.e. one double-page spread of a brochure, one image, can simply be arranged in rows and columns for poster application. And in addition, it can be enlarged or reduced diagonally within the same typographic grid. The application possibilities are unlimited (reasonably, naturally). In cases where this form is used to its full extent, the form is often chosen very individually.

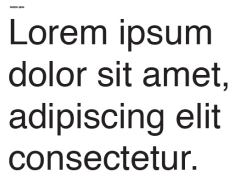
Tool basic forms
The communication of a student project is essentially no different from the communication of a project in life after graduation, i.e. professional life. In principle, it is no different from the presentations of "projects" in other fields. It has two basic forms: printed and presentational. The printed form usually takes the form of a brochure and poster for school projects. Presentational forms are usually (annotated) digital presentations on a projector or screen, i.e. a series of images. Students receive templates for these three as part of their semester assignment.

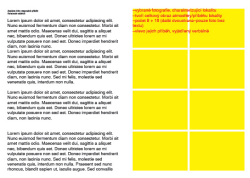
Roles of individual forms
For the final, targeted application of individual forms of the tool, I always try to clarify their primary role. This means that the explanation can, of course, be any other conceivable one in justified cases. However, in the end, it must always be clear what the form is supposed to be, and it should be fulfilled as successfully

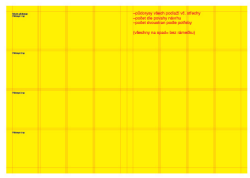


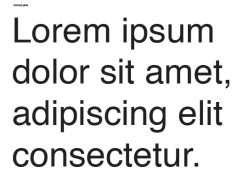












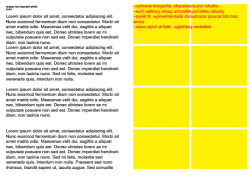


Fig. 1.: Brochure template, as part of the binding assignment document. Yellow parts indicate graphics, red texts are instructions to follow. The first slide with a grid, the following without it. Basic idea of what is described in the individual chapters (Source: author Radek Kolařík, RKAW)

as possible, i.e. it should use the potential of its role within the overall communication of the project to the maximum. The initial characteristics, which I present to students as part of the initial assignment of semester assignments, are as follows:

• **brochure (ad Fig. 7):** it provides detailed information about the project, chronologically arranged; it has a rhythm, it is structured according to the phases of the work; it can be flipped through unevenly, slowly or quickly, depending on the interest of the addressee, returned, stopped, several brochures can be flipped through at once for comparison and accelerated insight into the works;

• **poster (ad Fig. 8):** its role is to attract attention during the initial seconds, at a great distance, within the overall — without disturbing it; to attract attention, arouse curiosity to take a further interest in the project: it can also contain information that can only be read up close; however, it primarily leads the addressee to the brochure, to leaf through it; or it motivates them to spend even more time watching the presentation on the screen;

• **presentation** (digital projection on the screen) can be an attractive, because dynamic, way of presenting, complementing static ones (including analogue models, which can be animated here); to a certain extent

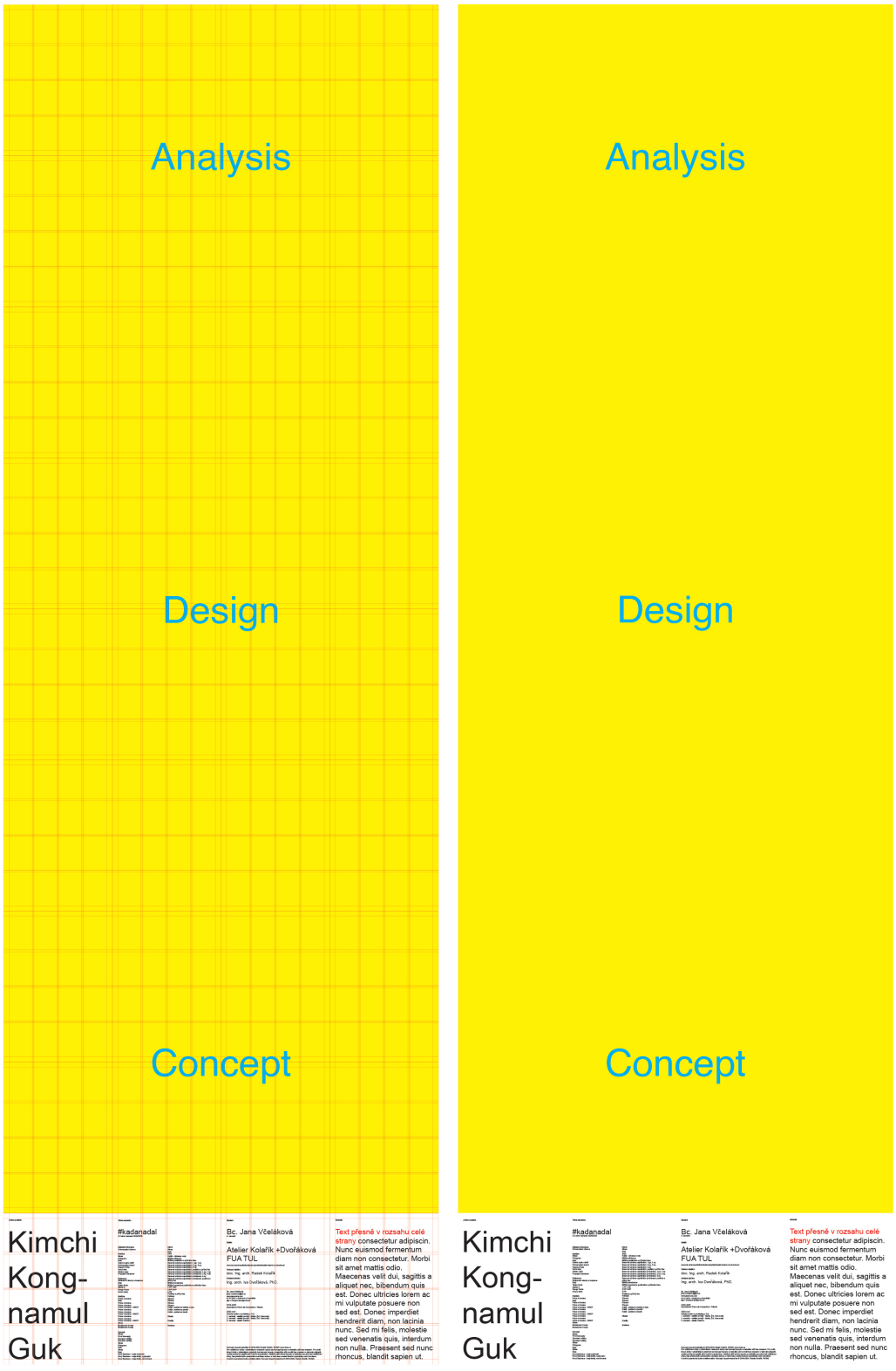


Fig. 2.: Poster template, as part of the binding assignment document. Yellow parts indicate graphics, red texts are instructions to follow, blue indicates the recommended location of phase documentation. Left with a grid, right without it. Basic idea of what is described in the individual chapters (Source: author Radek Kolařík, RKAW)

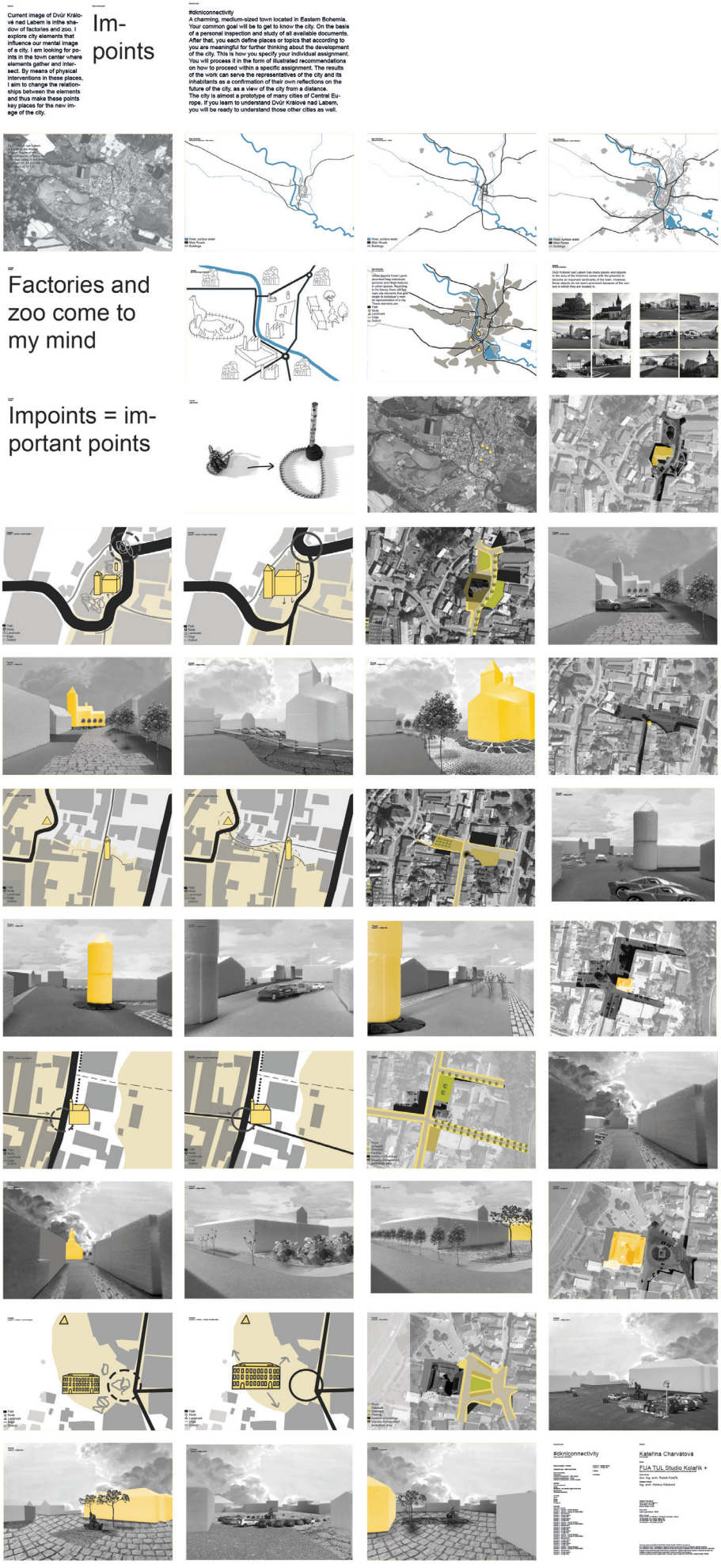


Fig. 3.: Example of student work that uses Urborelo as a form of expression. Impoints. Illustrated notes on the vision of the city of Dvůr Králové nad Labem (Source: author Kateřina Charvátová - Ateliér Kolařík +, 22/23/ZS, FUA TUL in Liberec)

[19] Josef Škvorecký: https://citaty.net/citaty/13406-baruch-spinoza-svoboda-je-poznana-nutnost/

[20] Efficiency is a physical quantity describing how input energy is converted into required energy. Efficiency is determined by the ratio of output to input power. I use the term efficiency in a figurative sense.

[21] A metric is a quantitative measurement or indicator used to evaluate performance, efficiency, and progress in various areas: https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metrika

22 An Internet conversion refers to a situation where a website visitor performs an action requested by the operator, which is of particular commercial benefit to him: https://cs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Konverze_(marketing)

[23] In my case, these were illustrated notes on a city selected by a student, prepared based on a brochure template, in the form of Urborelo. All first-year students, i.e. from the fields of art, architecture, and urbanism, participate in the workshop. Each week of the semester, they receive a task assignment that they will process during that week. Assignments and consultations are prepared for each week by a different teacher, usually the head of the studio or one of the main accompanying disciplines. This method of managing the semester is now in its third year and is under development. Last year (which I present as a case study), students were asked, due to capacity reasons, to choose for the final presentation the one of fourteen assignments that they considered to be the best prepared in their opinion and that they wanted to be evaluated. Out of a total of 54 completed assignments presented (out of a total of 64 first-year students of all disciplines), 10 chose the Urborelo project. And most of them were also highly rated by the committee. I do not consider the evaluation to be decisive in this case, nor the subjectively influenced fact that 18.5% of students of all disciplines (including art) chose the preparation of an urban planning assignment as the calling card of their semester work. The assignment was therefore the second best rated in the selection of the students themselves. I consider this to be a sign of the usefulness of the tool, measured by its popularity. Given that the vast majority of students go to the Faculty of Arts and Architecture with the idea that they will design works of art and houses, not cities. In my experience, there are less than 1% of them. The highest-rated assignment was chosen by 12 students (22.2%).

it can be personified by a medallion — a personal introduction, introduction, conclusion of the topic (in the case of an installation within an exhibition, when the author is not personally present); a presentation intended for personal interpretation tends to be more economical in the number of images (especially comment sections) and usually does not contain animations or videos.

CONCLUSION

Freedom of use (and the freedom that comes from using the tool) are for me the basic criteria of its usefulness. Understandably, the tool is not always received with enthusiasm (by students). However, it is a mandatory part of the assignment with the following justification: it allows us to fully concentrate on the content of your message during consultations and presentations, we are not distracted by the external form of the graphic design; the impact of your design is up to you. In the practice of an architect, this condition is not exceptional, practicing architects know this and graduates often subsequently appreciate it.

The uniformity of the presentation (supported by the basic structure of the arrangement of characteristic pages (ad template structure) helps communicate the concept towards the public or the commission. This is repeatedly confirmed with frequent praise. So, I apply this idea appropriately: "Freedom is the understanding of necessity."[19]

Templates are mandatory for standard semester theses. For master theses (bachelor's and diplomas), they can be used by students, but on the contrary, I expect their specific interpretation, which will help support the tone of the concept. Or they may not be used.

Tool use justification

The experience gained by applying the tool (brochure, poster, or presentation templates) is, although it is experience gained in a related field, it is applicable to a (not) surprisingly large extent in the teaching of architecture, urban planning, landscape architecture — that is, everything that is somehow related to the built or, more generally, urbanized environment. Again, simplified for illustration: how does working on the initial phase of a project of anything, which partly takes place in a 2D display, differ from working with the surface of a page or poster? In both cases, it is about finding a specific form of harmonization of the arrangement of elements, in some order, based on some outline.

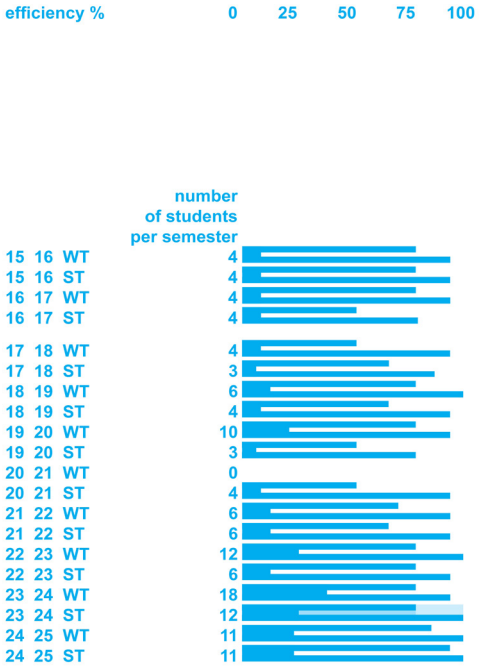


Fig. 4., 5.: Tool efficiency; the upper line indicates factor 1, the lower factor 2; the number shows the number of students in a parti semester, also expressed by a block of the height of both lines; students only of the Mg. degree ARCHIP (Source: author. Evaluation of seminar papers, relevant part. ARCHIP 2015-2025. Architecture and City. Radek Kolařík Archive.)

Use of the tool effectiveness[20] evaluation.

The effectiveness was evaluated in terms of two factors:

- development of the project/concept (factor 1) and
- communication of outputs/results of the work (factor 2).

This is for seminar papers at the ARCHIP school and semester projects at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University and the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University. (See Fig. 4., 5., 6., 7., 8.)

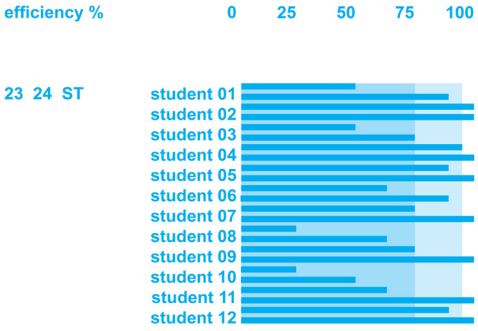


Fig. 6 Tool efficiency; the upper line indicates factor 1, the lower factor 2; individual students, how they stand with each other and within the aggregate value of the results of all in the semester; sample of the semester 23-24-ST; t students only of the Mg. degree ARCHIP (Source: author. Evaluation of seminar papers, relevant part. ARCHIP 2015-2025. Architecture and City. Radek Kolařík Archive.)

Fig. 7.: Tool efficiency; the upper line indicates factor 1, the lower factor 2; The number shows the number of students in a particular semester, also expressed by a block of the height of both lines; Bc. and Mg. students of the Faculty of Arts of CTU. (Source: author. Evaluation of semester projects, relevant part. Faculty of Arts of CTU 2015-2022. Archive Ateliér Kolařík +.)

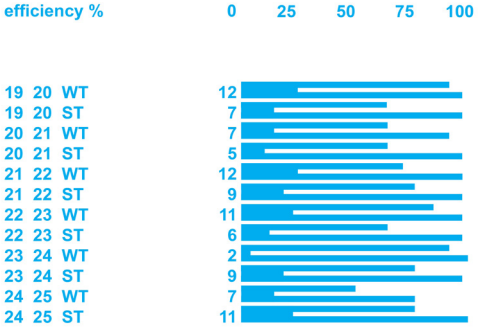


Fig. 8.: Tool efficiency; the upper line indicates factor 1, the lower factor 2; the number shows the number of students in a given semester, also expressed by a block of the height of both lines; students of Bc. and Mg. degrees FUA TUL (Source: author. Evaluation of semester projects, relevant part. FUA TUL 2019-2025. Archive Ateliér Kolařík +.)

To show a possible/additional perspective, I present below an evaluation of short-term tasks assigned to students of the 1st semester of the Bachelor's degree at FUA as part of the Freshmen Workshop. The effectiveness is evaluated in terms of the popularity of the tool and Urborelo (factor 3, see Fig. 9.)

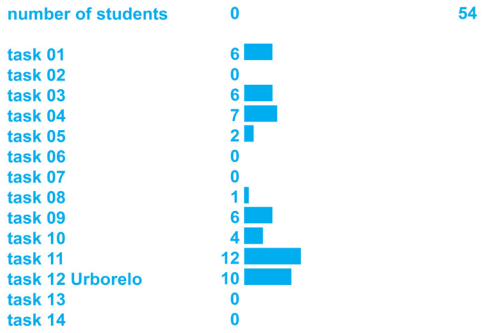


Fig. 9.: Tool efficiency, mandatory form of Urborelo, task processed during the 1st week; the number and block indicate factor 3: i.e. the number of students out of a total of 54 who chose the specified task for the final presentation; students of the 1st semester of Bc. degree FUA TUL (Source: author. Evaluation of one student-chosen task, Workshop freshmen. FUA TUL 2024. Archive Ateliér Kolařík +.)

Factors 1 and 2 are partial evaluations of student works supervised by me, which form the overall grade. They are therefore understandably individual, subjective—however, they are usually an aggregated item of the grade of the supervisor, assistant and 2-3 independent members of the commission. Factor 3 is, from the point of view of measuring effectiveness, the result of collecting feedback (a certain form of a questionnaire method), or data analysis (a summary table of students and the tasks they selected for presentation). It is a metric.[21] It is an analogy of the conversion ratio.[22]

Factor 1 could be characterized as the measure of the benefit of the tool for understanding, using and developing the potential of the assignment and for structured work on the project during its preparation, processing and completion.

Factor 2 could be characterized as the measure of the benefit of the tool in communicating the outputs after the project is completed, as the effectiveness of using the results of the work as a result of its use.

Factor 3 could be characterized as the degree of popularity (success) of the tool and Urborelo among students in the context of the other thirteen tasks assigned by other FUA teachers. To a certain extent, it can be said about the degree of compliance with the set goals.[23]

The evaluation conclusions could be characterized as follows: if factor 1 > 50%, then factor 2 is mostly > 75%. In words: if the student uses the tool meaningfully when working on the project, the effectiveness of its use in presenting the outputs is high. With a positive impact on the quality of the overall result If factor 1 < 50%, then factor 2 is mostly < 75%. In words: if the student uses the tool little when working on the project, the effectiveness of its use in presenting the outputs is low. With a negative impact on the overall result.

The results of the use and the declared properties of the tool must be viewed in the necessary context. By the universality of the tool, I mean more its universality and versatility in direct connection with specific (in this case, my) methods of teaching and managing student work. In this, the resulting tool is, on the contrary, significantly individual. The use of the principle is demanding in its adaptation for a specific teacher. The tool encourages discipline and systematicity, but at the same time requires them from both the student and the teacher. In this especially I see its justification.

URBORELO

Represents the optimal form of use, which exactly corresponds to the presented tool — a brochure.[24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35] In addition to semester designs at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Technical University in Prague, where I worked, and at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Republic in Liberec, where I work now, I use this particular application with a very positive response for seminar papers at the ARCHIP school in Prague, within the course Architecture and City, which I conceived and lead. Here I present as an illustration — a case study — a semester project for the city of Dvůr Králové nad Labem, prepared at the Faculty of Architecture of the Czech Republic in Liberec (see Fig. 3). I present this single case study, among other reasons, for the sake of directness and therefore the clarity of the message: the prescribed output format at the ARCHIP school is a square, the font recommended by Filip Blažek[36] is Flama[37], in two cuts. The application is therefore analogous; its form and appearance are different and for the purposes of this article it would be confusing. The use of the folio form is not particularly exceptional (although it usually does not use the properties of the original format of a children's folding book, but only its external form: a folding book).[39] In the studios I run, we generally use all the properties in principle.

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[36] Filip Blažek (1974) is a graphic designer, typographer, teacher and publicist. He graduated in cultural studies from the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague. Since the mid-1990s, he has been lecturing on typography and leading various workshops in our country and abroad. He currently teaches at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design and at the private university ARCHIP in Prague. In 2022, he founded the graphic studio Designiq, which specializes in the design of periodicals, books and corporate identity. He co-founded the magazine Typo (2002-2012). Together with Pavel Kočička, he wrote the textbook Practical Typography (2000), is the author of the script Font in Computer Graphics (2007), the publication Posters of the Velvet Revolution (2009), wrote essays mapping events in Czech typography for the collection Typo 9010 (2015), and published the textbook Typokniha - a guide to printing (2020, 2022) and Type grids: grid systems in graphic design (2024)38
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