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Sindhu Jagannath is an Independent Architectural Consultant, Academician, Conservation Enthusiast, & an Entrepreneur. Currently working as Associate professor in DSCA apart from running her start-up company and architecture studio “Design Palette” she has experience over a decade and has authored, co-authored, presented & published several research papers in refereed Journals, conferences both National and International. Her unwavering belief in eco-friendly design constructions and sustainable lifestyle practices sculpted her niche architectural practice which echo reduce, reuse, and recycle mantras. Her passion for entrepreneurship geared her debut into the entrepreneurial world with her start-up company, a social enterprise called “Prathama Srsti” in the year 2017.

## DELIBERATING IN THE RETROSPECT ON DICHOTOMIES IN TEACHING HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE

History of Architecture in Architecture course is introduced from the very first semester which is typically presented as a facet of cultural history tracing the advent of man’s achievements as development over time and across world. The syllabus thus attempts to cover world perspectives in Art and Architecture tracing from prehistoric to contemporary times. Early years of teaching started and ended in classroom with a quest to make subject more interesting to students. However this quest not only led teaching and learning out of classroom but also to a series of experiments to explore challenges of pedagogy which always seemed to manifest in a dual and conflicting situations. This paper does not take a polemical approach to decide one method over the other but rather tries to investigate in retrospect approaches taken over 13 years to address various challenges presented by institutional changes (one system to another) students and teaching experience, capsuling this journey by identifying dualities implored by various situations as a pedagogical approach that is evolutionary and subjective.

**key words :** Pedagogy; History of Architecture ; dichotomy, teaching plan; expository & explorative

### 1. Introduction

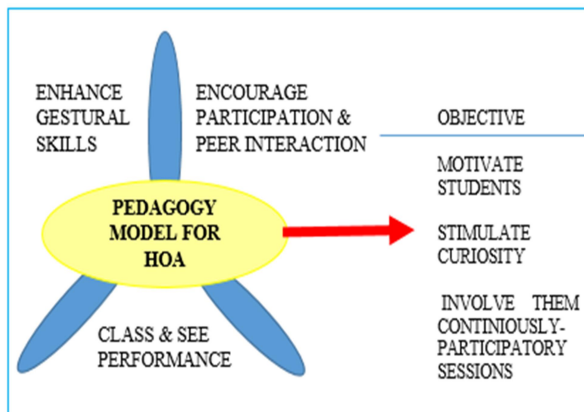
The objective of History of architecture (HOA) course is introductory and broadly varies from providing an understanding to evolution of architecture both in India and western world with stylistic modes, characterized by technology, aesthetics, planning practices, to identifying socio- cultural changes aptly reflected in the typologies and building theory of that period.



The most illustrious historical works from each period which exemplifies the characteristic features of that time are identified to be discussed. However the course objective fails to mention any conscious induction of skills in pedagogy. This brings to the very first dichotomy presented by course objective itself.

### 1.1. Dichotomy- teaching either knowledge or skills?

Basic Gestural skills in teaching-learning are key factors. They become all the more important for a teacher when the learning requires to be evaluated for “understanding” the content taught to a student and to “express” the understanding to be evaluated for a student. The approach in the first semester was clearly Expository.



**Figure 1 :Pedagogy model for teacher centric approach, Source: Author**

### 1.2 Teaching plan- Teaching approach was direct with Conventional teaching framework and deductive reasoning

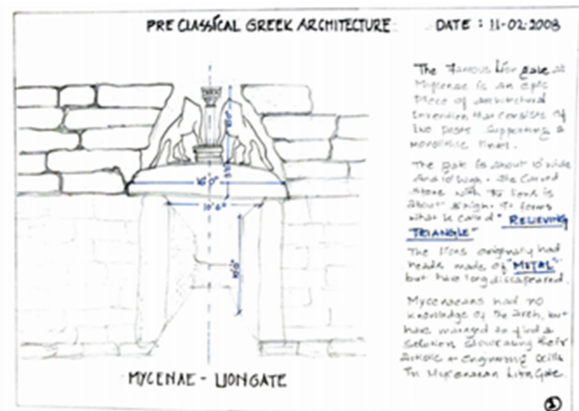
## First semester - Lecture structure -

Introduction covering geographical and historical contexts.

Each classical example mentioned was discussed in terms of style, architecture and materials. Session was concluded summarizing with pointers for the next class.

**Student Activities-** Sketchbook – list of sketches facilitated to be sketched and submit after every module.

*Assignment book-* Important questions from each chapter were asked to answer and submit after each module for Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA). Mandatory three tests were conducted .Mock test (3hr) was given at the end of semester to prepare them for Semester End Exam (SEE). The performance of students both in CIA and SEE were not satisfactory. Both assignments came in largely incomplete, clearly indicating inadequate basic skills required for both. SEE results also showed an average performance. The dichotomy whether to teach knowledge or skill resurfaced. Thus in the second semester focus of teaching though still teacher centric, attempted to enhance their gestural skills. Lesson plan, student activates and assessment mechanism remained same. Teaching mode became demonstrative and group activities were included which seem to have triggered the interest.



**Figure 2 :Sketch demonstrated in the class**

**Source:** Author

	Semester	Syllabus	Issue focused	Assessment Mechanism
1	First	Early civilizations -world perspective	Lack of interest and motivation in the subject	Test performance –Average from three tests=70% Sketchbook and Assignment book submissions 30%
2	Second	Hindu architecture -India	Lack of basic Gestural skills and non-participatory attitude	Test performance –Average from three tests=70%, Sketchbook and Assignment book submissions 30%

**Table 1 :** Issue focused and Assessment Mechanisms used in the first two semesters.  
Batch -2007- Class of 58, **Source:** Author

Second year threw me into a whole new perspective of pedagogy when both system and students changed. Students of this batch were quite smart and demanding. They seemed more enthusiastic, eager to learn, willing to work both individually and as a group, were also open for experiments. They asked several questions demanding an exposure to many examples which the syllabus did not mention. Perhaps this was the reason that second year despite being short semesters and a roller coaster ride was still the best and productive year of pedagogy. This also led to pedagogical leap from teacher centric to student entric.

## 2. Dichotomy

**Institutional context-** System change-VTU (state university led) to Autonomy – 16 weeks vs 13 weeks – Introduction of quiz along with tests. **Dichotomy in pedagogy - Direct instruction vs indirect instructions** (Autonomy gave some flexibility with respect to desired outcomes) **Conventional teaching framework vs Explorative Teaching framework** (Time frame vs Autonomy). **Aptitude of students-** Smart, enthusiastic, willing to work and experimental approach, were good at gestural skills. **Monuments/classical examples vs local and humble examples** (students demanded examples other than mentioned in the syllabus) **Examples as products** (Style,

architectural features and spatial organization) **vs process** (world context, Sociopolitical, economic, cultural and climatic contexts. Construction process, material significance etc.)

### 2.1 Teaching plan- Explorative (student centric) with innovative teaching techniques

Teaching plan was discussed in the introduction class to accommodate their interest both in terms of extra examples and type of activities. This was a mutual agreement and commitment session.

**Lecture structure** – lectures were planned with exclusive titles for each time period based on the factors which dictated their architectural manifestation. Introduction covered not only geographical and historical layers but also political, socio-religious, philosophical and economic layers. Slides briefly discussing lesser known but otherwise important examples apart from syllabus were included. Small session end tasks were given as extended learning which was not compulsory, hence giving a choice for both not keen and very keen students.



**Figure 3:** Models done by this batch (I&II semesters), **Source:** Author

**Student Activities-** Sketchbook – list of sketches facilitated were asked to sketch during class and post class in the sketchbook. Debates were conducted to discuss important topics. Important questions from each chapter were asked to answer based on the demonstrated structure, with an exclusive opinion based conclusion. Mandatory three tests were conducted. Mock test (3hr) was given in the end of the semester to prepare them for Semester End Exam (SEE).

**Group activities-** Students were divided into groups to make model of classical examples, wall mount model/chart to discuss lesser known examples of the period. Assessment was now divided as 50% for tests and 50% for Assignments. Equal weightage gave them motivation.

This batch did well in terms of activities and submissions producing excellent models (Fig 3) which were used in the later years for teaching. This approach was continued for the

same batch in their 4th covering Renaissance to Modern period and 5th semester covering contemporary architecture. Both the semesters went well and were successful. Haptic tools and group activities worked very well with this batch. However the result was quite shocking when the same approach was followed for the next batch. The impact, response and performance varied greatly. Students were reluctant to make models and work in group activities leading to the next dichotomy.

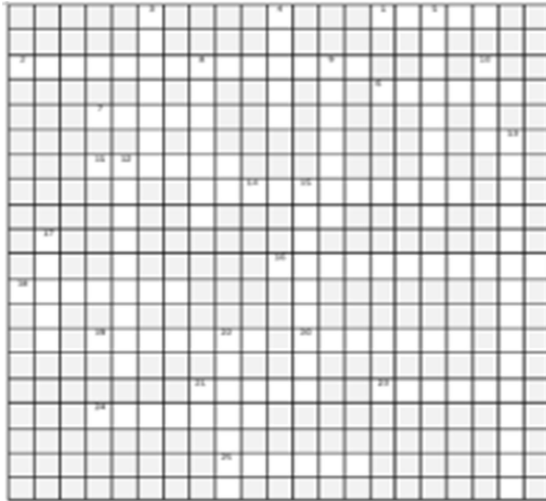
### 3. Dichotomy- Students activities – Group Vs Individual

#### 3.1 Teaching Plan- Explorative & reflective teaching

Group activities not only encourage peer interaction but also help each to identify their own strength and weakness while contributing constructively to the team. Obvious lack of interaction among themselves in this batch led to formulate group assignments. However, submissions which came in were either incomplete or of unacceptable quality. The group activities suffered, productive time was wasted in blame game. They expected me to discuss and furnish tailored reference material for every topic which meant no time for any extra activities at all. Despite what appeared as not so successful semester their performance in semester end exam was astonishing. With 100% result there were more number of students scoring A grade and majority scoring B grade. This prompted me to change my tools and techniques for teaching and crafting various assignments specifically individual activities in the following semester. In a jiffy students were more open, active and surprisingly each student connected with me when individual assignments were set and discussed.





**ACROSS:**

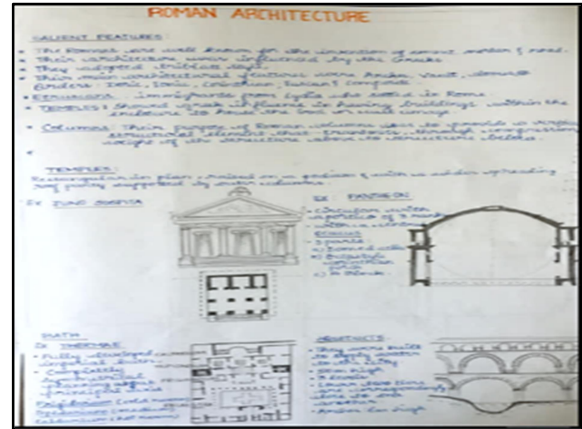
- 1 Minoan City-(5)
- 2 Slenderness of a Maiden -(10,5)
- 6 A circular colonnaded building- (6)
- 7 Temple of Nike - (5)
- 11 Prevalent as a prominent feature in Greek Houses.-(6)
- 14 Surrounded by a single row of columns-(9)
- 16 Across Athens-(11)
- 18 Archives in Agora-(7)
- 19 Walkway- (7)
- 20) A Sanctuary surrounded by a wall- (7)
- 21 Civic & Religious buildings erected progressively around i
- 23 Carved detail in wood adapted to Greek temples - (6)
- 24 Person responsible for visual drama of Parthenon on acrop
- 25 Hall for cultural needs in Agora.-(6)

**DOWN:**

- 3 Ovolo molding between the shaft and the Abacus- (7)
- 4 Triglyph & Metope -(5)
- 5 Parthenon-(9)
- 8 Formative age of the Greek City states.-(7)
- 9 Proportions greatly exaggerated in columns - (7)
- 10 Principal part of the Greek temple- (4)
- 12 Dedicated to city's Patron - (9)
- 13 Golden age of Greek-(9, 6)
- 15 Public office buildings - (5, 4)
- 17 A stage building - (5)
- 22 Principal Hall of Preclassical palaces. (7)

**Figure 3:** Crossword designed for Classical Greek chapter

**Source:** Author



**Figure 4 :**Characteristic features of Roman architecture, **Source:** Author

Cross Words, Buzz word, Name it & sketch, many more such fun assignments were framed. The class did no model. But best from previous batch were used for learning. These techniques had an excellent impact on their cognitive skills. I too enjoyed the semester eventually designing interesting tasks for every new topic. Following year I encountered yet another challenging batch of students who successfully nudged me back into questioning the objective of teaching HOA once again. Students were inquisitive. They argued that it is totally waste of time learning HOA without any practical application of content studied. They wanted to learn with real examples. I guess it was Massive open online course (MOOC) on sustainability which I had taken helped me this time with pedagogy.

#### 4. Dichotomy- Theory (classroom teaching) Vs Practical Application (Field study) - Deductive Vs Inductive reasoning

##### 4.1 Teaching Plan - Explorative & Experimental

The objective of course was to understand topics with a perspective of sustainability. Every topic culminated with a broad question that required students to represent examples discussed based on its

sustainable attributes. As group work they were asked to bring open models and explain. As individual exercise each student was given a specific example to write an essay on the same but with sustainability (design, Construction & Material) as their focus. Took students to historical buildings in the city which exhibited certain style that we were studying in that semester. Temples in the city were documented & Inductive reasoning was used to learn salient features of the style.



**Figure 5 :**Shows Open model to explain sustainable layer, **Source:** Author

## 5. Dichotomy- Passive teaching- learning vs Active teaching learning- Less collaborative vs more collaborative teaching-learning.

### 5.1 Teaching Plan – Collaborative and peer teaching

Visual tools such as videos, movie clippings, documentaries and techniques such as photo quiz, Sketch from the model etc were used along with haptic tools like making models for next 3 years. They have been fairly successful semesters. However in recent years there has been a paradigm shift in my pedagogy from passive teaching to Active teaching essentially to create an active learning environment for the students. Apart from usual lectures, several brainstorming sessions were designed. Small topics were

handpicked and guided where team of students would present and answer the queries of the class. Some portions were identified to be covered in these sessions. These sessions were helpful in peer teaching and learning among students. Workshops were conducted roping in experts from other disciplines like historians and Artists. This aided in collaborative learning and multidisciplinary understanding. Lectures, Assignments and activities are designed on the expected outcome of learning. This method of outcome based learning has proved more effective way of teaching so far.



**Figure 6:** Workshop conducted by Sanjhi artist, **Source:** Author

## 6. Discussion

Every new batch present both invariable limitations and possible opportunity in pedagogy. Every time a new dichotomy ascend, it is difficult to decide on one over the other, when they are diametrically opposite. It is also easy to dismiss dichotomy blaming either time, syllabus or students. However, if one thinks that answers lie somewhere in-between hoping to draw best from both then we are compromising more often than doing justice. Middle ground is a refuge of the unprincipled. We may opt for a bit of both but we will do neither well. Then what? More than a decade I have taken paths less travelled to explore and experiment. It is paramount for a teacher to decide first whether you want students to Mug-up, practice & score vs Learn, understand and perform. Teacher centric



methods discussed in first year will work fine if opted former. Later method requires an immense amount of dedicated time and involvement from teacher. In every class one can find students with different level both skills and aptitude for learning. It is very crucial at this point for a teacher to take position

aptitude that majority of the students in class offer. It is but natural when a teacher grows with deeper knowledge pertaining the subject to elaborate their lecture sessions. However this should not confuse or burden them unnecessarily taking away the quintessential knowledge that students must get at that level.

(pedagogy method, tools and technique) based on the maximum scope in terms of interest and

Year	Pedagogy Method and Mode	Pedagogy Objective	Pedagogy Tools	Pedagogy Techniques	Induced skills
I year	Expository Method Teacher centric- Instructive mode & Demonstrative	Stimulate curiosity, Motivate SEE preparation	Visual – PPT, Reading Reference material	Sketching, Architectural Writing	To Enhance Gestural skills and Interactive skills, To develop participatory attitude.
II year & III year	Exploratory method Student centric- Discovery and Constructive mode	To test their creative and artistic aptitude. Learning through multimode of actives  Time management for the extra activities	Visual PPT, Reading and Haptic tools and Assessment Mechanism(tool to motivate)	Sketch& Write Quick and Detailed sketches Structuring & tailoring answers to the questions Writing- opinion based conclusions Group Model making and Presentation	To instigate associative memory To develop observe-understand, comprehend and demonstrate To develop Technical and apt writing skills  To develop creative thinking and writing To develop peer interaction and oratory skills
IV year	Exploratory method Student centric- Reflective, Problem solving and Meta	To instigate team working ability To strengthen their individual	Visual PPT, Reading and Assessment	Games, Cross Words, Buzz word, Name it & sketch, Questioning sessions many	To build and develop their cognitive Skills.



	cognitive mode	skills	Mechanism (tool to motivate)	more such fun assignments	
V Year	Experimental method Student centric- Pragmatic and Inductive mode	To Understand the subject with sustainability layer	Video Lectures, PPT , Research references Case studies	Site visits & documentation Report, essay writing	To develop On site research skills and pragmatic analysis. Logical Application of knowledge by inductive reasoning.
VI, VI I, VIII & IX Year	Explorative, Student centric & Experimental mode	Comprehensive learning	Video Lectures, PPT , Research references Case studies	Site visits, documentation Report, essay writing Oral presentations	Improve gestural skills, Cognitive skills, Demonstrative skills and Narrative skills
X, XI & XII	Explorative, Student centric & Collaborative and active mode	Comprehensive, collaborative & peer teaching learning	Workshops Guest lectures Extended lectures, Panel discussion	Paper writing , Article reading (apart from technical writing for exam & Creative writing	Lateral thinking and Analytical skills
XIII Pandemic semester	Back to teacher centric-expository method Instructive mode	Efficient learning from virtual system	Visual tools	Narrative History Critical and analytical writing	To induce cognitive skills Focused & sustained attention) ( Visual & auditory memory), Visual & Auditory perception)

**Table 2: Comprehensive** table below shows decision on pedagogy based on the student aptitude

**Source:** Author

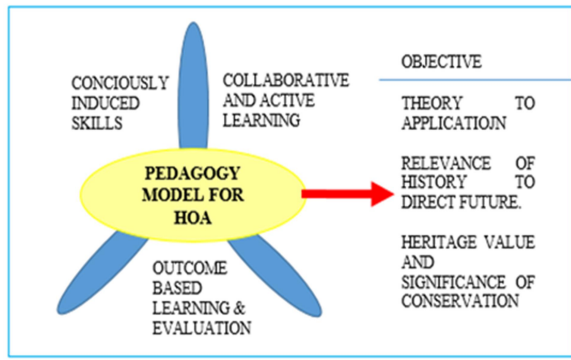
## 7. Conclusion

The success for a teacher per say is largely a relative measure. As a teacher one must elevate from short term objectives such as classroom motivation, participation, SEE results so on to measure success instead help students to grasp bigger takeaway from this

subject that how past could direct future. It is prudent for a teacher to make sure their students go through the six stages of learning sensing, receiving, absorbing, understanding, comprehending and demonstrating. Teachers should aid students in acquiring cognitive



knowledge, enhance their existing skillsets and induce certain new skills, to cultivate right attitude for learning, unlearning, adaptability, responsiveness and gratitude to equip them for competence in the industry through every subject they teach.



**Figure 7 :** Success model for student centric approach, **Source:** Author

Outcome based learning aids in application of the acquired knowledge. Teacher must shift from direct instructive to indirect guided approach. Role change from teacher to mentor offers ample scope to provide values beyond lessons taught in class that one can apply in their field. The journey discussed above tries

to give an insight on two important pedagogical lessons. First effective teaching for any individual is evolutionary that evolves with experience and pedagogical method is subjective for it depends on the objective of a teacher herself varies with the context (student aptitude, time and teaching-learning objective).

However at this point with Covid 19 Pandemic there seems to be yet another set of dichotomy, **Real Vs Virtual Classes**, and **Haptic Vs Digital tools and techniques**. If anything in this world is constant it is the “**change**” itself. Thus pedagogy of HOA continues to evolve with the perpetual changing dichotomy.

## 8. Acknowledgements

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