DESIGNING DESIGN EDUCATION

EDITED BY iF DESIGN FOUNDATION

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On the future of design education

250 experts from four continents conducted five years of research together with the iF Design Foundation and published the results in the *Whitebook on the Future of Design Education*. Read this excerpt to find out what is lacking and what skills and techniques are required to equip junior designers with what they need for the future.

The iF Design Foundation conducted a multi-level study to examine how the international community construes the future of design education and design degree course. The study involved 250 persons and those who participated were very diverse. Different methods were applied: research of existing literature, interviews and on-site observation, workshops and group discussions.

The results show that the experts worldwide discern an urgent need for action:

• The unanimous assessment was that the status quo in design education does not suffice to overcome the challenges that result from the dynamic changes in technology, business and society.

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• At the same time, the unequivocal verdict was that at present there is no organisation in sight that is taking up this compellingly necessary, fundamental updating of design education. No initiative has stepped up and dared a radical new beginning.

• Concluding a degree course does not enable a smooth transition into the world of work. Study is usually a sequence of isolated subjects while practice consists of projects in which all elements are equally relevant. Learning to store-house knowledge in case it is required should be replaced by project-based learning.

• Practices in design are so varied that the overall picture is defined by specialisation. This contradicts the claim to be holistic. For this reason, education must focus on the integration of all the key aspects.

• Design is defined as a value-based practice that is bound up with great social responsibility. In order to do justice to it, degree courses must be structured more strongly as protected zones for independent research and scholarly discourse.

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• Digitisation and the emergence of AI are changing design's practices of implementation so rapidly that the related skills cannot be part of education. Training in them must therefore be separated from graduate study. The latter requires greater free scope for analogue activities and critical reflection, which as a rule does not culminate in simple or binary statements.

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• The combination of imagination (visioning) and the ability to present things (visualisation) is con-sidered the core of all practices in design. For this reason, graduate design education must offer a balanced mix of intellectual thinking and manual making, of going into details in depth while also looking at the overarching picture.

• While 20th century design was primarily understood as a result, design in the 21st century is first and foremost a process. To achieve this successfully in changing teams on an intercultural and interdisciplinary basis, techniques of interpersonal communication must become a central component of design education.

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• Lifelong learning must be supported by a stronger interlocking of practice and education. At the same time, education will benefit from direct inputs from the world of practice.

There is also agreement that there will be regional and culturally-specific differences in what consequences these insights have. In the 21st century, design should not lead to uniform results but to answers that are appropriate to specific contexts.

Executive Summary by
iF Design Foundation
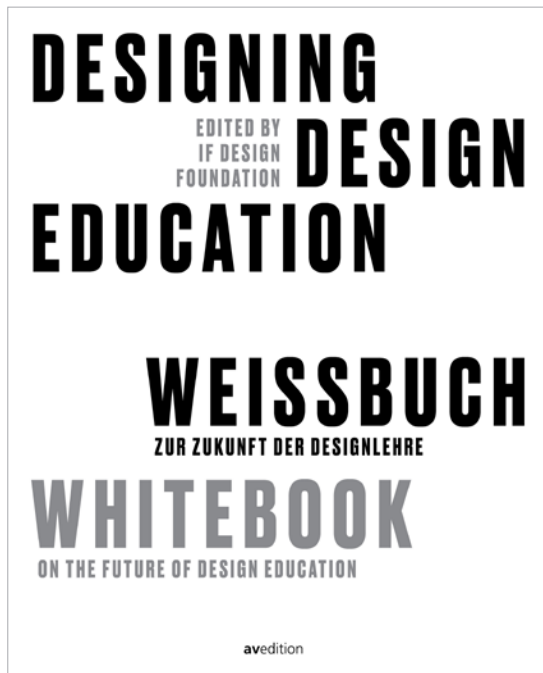
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**Designing Design Education –
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How must design studies be structured in order to not only keep pace with the changes in the economy and society but also to shape them? How much artificial intelligence and coding must be conveyed during studies? This book documents five years of international research on these questions, which 250 designers participated in worldwide.

The iF Design Foundation is dedicated as a non-profit organisation to design as a phenomenon and practice in the context of education and culture, science and the economy, politics and society. It promotes the development of design-specific discourses and supports the sharing of design-relevant knowledge and findings.

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