

**Memo**

25. juni 2019

**Titel:** External Expert Panel ITPDroemer@sdu.dk  
T +4565501423**Reference:** 18/934**Date:** April 26th 2019**Participants:** Professor Stephan Wensveen, Eindhoven University of Technology (SW)  
Frank Jacob, Ejer HID Human Interface Design GmbH, Hamburg (FJ)  
Associate Professor Laurens Boer, IT University of Copenhagen, (LB)  
Vice Dean for Education, Lars Grassmé Binderup, Faculty of Humanities (LGB)  
Associate Professor Robb Mitchell, Head of Studies ITPD (RM)  
Professor Jacob Buur, ITPD (JB)  
Nicklas Egebæk Hansen, Student ITPD (NEH)  
Christina Fyhn Nielsen, Research Assistant  
Carina Rømer, taking minutes (CR)

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**Introduction**

The experts met at 9:00 and spent an hour of “panel time” after a briefing by JB as to the aim of the day.

At 10:00 LGB welcomed everyone and asked for a brief presentation. LGB then informed about the background for and the purpose of the meeting. This meeting had a different set-up than previously held meetings, but the idea of having “panel time” is an idea the Faculty will use in the future.

**Presentation of Action Points**

RM presented the action plan for improvements to the ITPD program based on “Uddannelsesberetningen 2018”. The discussion that followed has been inserted into a SWOT-analysis below.

**Conclusions from the panel discussion on SWOT****Strengths**

- The panel mentioned it was clear from the material, that the students love being here.
- There are several courses where the students have the opportunity to contact companies/organizations on their own, i.e.. trying out what it is like to make the initial contact. That provides the students with an opportunity to work on their story and make it straight and strong - “How can I help you?”.
- ITPD is a great program for strong students with a strong core identity.
- Students with many different BA backgrounds.
- The competence description is a great tool for students when it comes to self-promotion.

**Weaknesses**

- The panel noted that there is a gap between being here as a student and being in the real world, where you need to sell yourself and your skills to get a job.

- The student rep. informed the panel, that students are unsure about their future career and what to do to find the right path. After about a year, students ask “What can we actually do”, they know they can do a lot, but it is difficult to articulate.
- For weaker students with no core identity, it is much harder to find their place in the program.
- Students with many different BA backgrounds.
- RM asked the panel for advice as to how students can get better at promoting themselves. The panel suggested:
  - More freedom within the program to learn self-articulation and identity finding
  - More info on the two Studios; what is the difference between the two and what do they deliver as far as identity.
- It was noted by the panel, that there is too much cross-disciplinary focus, not enough specialization options.
- Not enough differentiation between the two studios, instead use them as identity builders.

### **Opportunities**

Regarding opportunities, the conversation focused a lot on “How do we support students in making their own way?”

- When enrolled in a master program, it is not the first time that a student is introduced to a given topic. Where is the place to fail epically and to take responsibility for that failure?
- LBG explained the Career Management Skills (CMS) set-up.
- The panel pointed out; that when you must take responsibility for yourself and others during your studies, you will be better prepared at an earlier stage for your later meeting with the job market.
- Recommendation: Strengthen areas where students find own route – including perhaps CMS training
- The panel talked about what would be a good selling point to a potential employer. Grades are not interesting, employers do not read scientific papers. Employers relate to project portfolios, to changes you can make.
- The panel noted that there is not much room for individuality, you have to be a team player. Therefore, it is important to give students an idea of “How can a team benefit from me, what will I be a part of in other surroundings”. Facilitating is not enough. You have to contribute. Students should be prepared to name the two tools in their toolbox that sets them apart.
- Recommendation: Start portfolio from beginning of program
- The panel suggested it would be a good idea to have students who completed In-company Project report back to the next generation, both to encourage more students to go for an In-company Project, but also to practice telling others what they have done.
- Companies are looking for people with ITPD skills. Know about life and know how to support change.
- Students are asking for more connection to Design School, connection to Eco-system. Students: “Think what we could do together”
- The panel suggested students try to use business analysis on themselves – “what are my resources, who is my network?”
- It would be a benefit to the Faculty to use the Design programs as an innovator of education and professional skills.
- When discussing recruitment, it was suggested to let alumni or students take over an ITPD Instagram account and have them comment on activities or reply to questions like: Why is it cool to study here?

- Also, be relevant; the program is truly collaborative and know how to engage with everyone, not many schools can claim this.
- The panel discussed a suggestion from students to re-name the program. To what?
- The panel found the ITPD to be a strong name, but it might need a stronger subtitle or story behind.
- It might be a good idea to define the “product” in Product Design.

### Threats

- The panel pointed out that unemployment in the period up until two years after graduation is high.
- Students are trying hard not to oversell themselves – maybe due to “Janteloven” and Danish mentality.
- The Faculty of Humanities is stricter when it comes to student administrative regulations; LBG points out that ITPD does enjoy many exemptions, but that student admission is an area heavily regulated but ministerial order.
- There is no clear idea as to where ITPD is in 5 years.

### Concluding remarks from panel



The panel presented their concluding remarks.

### Recommendations and considerations for vision and profiling

Where is ITPD in five year– what is the vision for the programme five years from now. (Including, how the identity of the programme might develop after the retirement of its founder Jacob Buur?)

- What are the areas expected to offer new challenges and opportunities in the future?
  - New technologies
    - Emergent and relevant technologies from now
    - Role of (big) data and artificial intelligence
    - Biosensing, biocomputing and biological materials
  - Methods and tools
    - Strong within ITPD – we should promote on how we use these to go into the other subjects.
    - If we see our history, what are the M&T in five years?
      - More data driven
      - More use of digital ethnography
      - More use of social media
  - Societal responsibility
    - Responsibility to society

- Cooperation with and integration into the local ecosystem
  - Design Skolen Kolding
  - Local companies
- Societal responsibility
  - What is our responsibility towards society?
- ITPD – what does it stand for?
  - P=participatory, product, prototyping
  - T transformable, tangible
  - Can we change what ITPD stands for? Let the student identify what ITPD is for them.
- Visibility of the programme
  - What is the impact and reputation?
  - How do we communicate that?
  - Empower students (social media) make an Instagram – let students take over
  - Communication to employers (events, brochures etc.)
  - Invite alumni to be more involved. Also, on social media.
  - Student direct – self-directed development
    - Students to take responsibility in making the programme visible
- The individual identity/profile.
  - Selection criteria of student
  - We need to be stronger in our selection
  - Accept that in-take is lower

### **Recommendations and considerations for implementation**

How to work on the programme to realise the vision?

- Role of the two specialisations
  - They should be agile
  - Specialise in two studios. E.g. design anthropology, the other product design. Make it clearer.
  - Embrace the fragility
- Keep the four areas as a vision
  - Sharpen their identity and progression within and let student relate themselves to it (what is the I.T.P.D for you?)
  - It covers the four aspects of the I, the T the P the D
  - "Creating things with tech"
  - It is about analytical thinking
  - Balance between the four areas
    - Distribute faculty so that each area has two faculty members
    - Make it clearer which faculty are in which area
  - Proud of the structure – more clearly defined, so students can more easily form their identity

- Multi-stakeholder Innovation (semester 2) and Social Design (semester 3) overlap in their contents. They should be more clearly differentiated so that the second module builds upon the first.
- Generally be much more explicit about progression of learning i.e. which aspects of different modules feed into which aspects of following modules
- Freedom to choose/form their curriculum, in order to form their individual identity.
  - Professional apprenticeship module students currently choose from offered projects. Instead students should choose a profile or discipline (the original idea of this module).
- Freedom to go out into the surrounding society
  - Close that gap with industry
  - Stimulate student to go out to industry and establish their network. Can we do it within the curriculum?
  - Are there possibilities to invite them (companies) to look at student projects? Opportunities to go beyond in-company projects?
  - Regarding us finding the partners for students: Can they find them for themselves in their own network?

### **Recommendations and considerations regarding employment**

- Students are having difficulty on explaining what they can give to a company.
- Solution: Students should be made responsible for themselves. Understand what they can be afterwards. Ask this in the beginning of the program.
- Have students ask themselves - In the next five years I would like to develop in this way, so how can a company help with that??

### **Final remarks and suggestions**

- Vice dean: "The programme with most exceptions from various faculty rules". Goes to show that ITPD is a programme which is innovative.
- "Give us two-three years with low in-take to make us able to take in more students later, so we can shape this"
- Taking risk – fail and learn from learn from failing. We can also do that as faculty. We offer a lot in the curriculum. Maybe a bit too organized to allow student to take risks. Try not to give the students everything. Though students have to be ready for being self-directed students.
- Ask ourselves: What kind of impact can (should) students take responsibility for?
- Can we somehow show our students 'products', the materials, the tools... in order to inspire.
- What is ITPD and how could it be?
- Suggestion for the overall question of the programme: "We have this great new technology - what impact does it have on society? How can problems in society be attacked with this technology? What are the consequences?"
- How to secure the relevant research competences to support the programme?

**Ending**

The vice dean thanked all participants for a very inspiring and productive discussion. In particular, he thanked the panel, students and the representatives of the programme for thorough preparation and an innovative approach to the day's proceedings.