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Studio design critique: student and faculty expectations and reality

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STUDIO DESIGN CRITIQUE:
STUDENT AND FACULTY EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
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requirements for the degree of
Master of Landscape Architecture

in

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by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the use of criticism in the landscape architectural design studio. Criticism is a very useful tool in the communication of ideas and the evaluation of designs, yet its application in design studios has not reached its full potential in the discipline of landscape architecture.

To develop an understanding of criticism as a pedagogical tool in the design studio, along with faculty and students expectations of criticism, this thesis uses a two-step approach. The first step explores the intentions of critique used by design instructors during desk crits and juries. The second step explores the students' perceptions of the criticism they receive during desk crits and juries. The findings from both the faculty and students will be compared to discover both the faculty and students' expectations and the reality of the design studio critique.

Although very little literature exists on the theories of landscape architecture criticism and its use in the design studio, the first portion of this thesis will explore theories of criticism borrowed from art, literature, and architecture; landscape architectural criticism; history of the design studio; and the use of criticism during desk crits and juries in the design studio. This thesis will then combine this research with the qualitative and quantitative data collected from design instructors and students, in order to gain an understanding of their expectations of criticism as a pedagogical tool, and the reality of its use in the design studio.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Criticism as applied to landscape architecture was chosen for the topic of this thesis based upon an opportunity I had to study written design critique. Inspired by a class taught at Lincoln University in New Zealand by professor Jacky Bowring, I decided to apply what I learned about written critique to critiques given in the design studio. A potential exists to apply the theories of art, architectural, and literary criticism to criticism given to students during landscape architecture studios. A more thorough investigation of the available information on landscape architectural criticism was needed to determine if these theories would be useful in the learning situations that are found in studios. By asking teachers and students their thoughts on the subject, I hoped to learn how, through this research, I could provide information that would complement or improve the learning experience occurring in design studios for both teachers and students.

The students of landscape architecture acquire their education in a studio setting at a university. In a landscape architecture studio each student has his/her own area in the studio that consists of a drafting table instead of a desk. The design studio is a different learning environment than a typical lecture classroom. During a lecture, students listen to the professor talk about information that is relevant to the subject matter. In a design studio, students work on design projects at their drafting tables, where problem-solving skills are required to deal with situation where there may be no precedents to follow. The relationship between the students and the teacher is similar to a master-apprentice relationship. The design instructor gives private tutorials and constructive criticism to each student dependent upon each situation that confronts the student. Criticism given at the student's desk while working on a project is referred to as a desk crit. Criticism given

to a student at the completion of a project is given during a design jury. During a jury the student presents his/her project in front of the instructor and other students in the studio and then receives feedback.

I remember my first desk crit as a landscape architecture student. I was so proud of the work I had produced. 'This was good', I was thinking to myself. My professor didn't exactly agree. My intentions were questioned. Feedback was given to me on how I could change my work in order to take my ideas to the next level. It took a few minutes to get over my bruised ego and absorb the criticism that I was given before I could continue working on my project. Now that I think about it, I was looking for approval. Instead, I received my first spoonful of criticism.

I remember how intimidated I was during my first design jury. I remember a classroom full of eyes on my project and myself. I was unprepared and I didn't know how to prepare because I didn't know what to expect. I hadn't slept the night before because I was up all night working frantically on my project. Honestly, I don't remember the grade I received on that project, or the feedback that was given to me during my jury. I do remember being relieved it was over, because I could go home and sleep and forget about the whole experience.

My undergraduate degree was in biology. I memorized facts and recited them for tests. Right and wrong answers existed. Biology labs consisted of experiments that had been conducted many times before, and the expected outcome was known. The professors had taught the labs long enough to know what the students did wrong if the outcome of the experiment produced unexpected results.

I admit I have biases about how criticism is utilized in landscape architecture studios. I don't think students entering into landscape architecture are given an adequate orientation into the studio culture, which is very different from many learning situations most students have been in. I think juries can be intimidating and confusing for students. It took me a full semester as a landscape architecture student before I learned how to accept and respond to criticism. Now that I have been a teaching assistant for two years, I have been on both the receiving and giving end of criticism. This has made me question how I myself can give effective criticism. It has also made me question why students sometimes react the way they do to criticism. After studying theories of criticism, I believe criticism can be utilized in a very positive way as a teaching method in studios.

I am still a student of landscape architecture, although it has been a few years since my first jury and desk crit. One of the most valuable lessons I have learned as a student I learned while writing this thesis. The chairman of my thesis committee had returned a rough draft to me with scribbles up and down the margins. "No," one of the notes shouted to me, "this suggests a bias on your part and is unnecessary!" I sat and thought about the written comments: why could I not separate my own biases from this paper? And then it struck me. I am writing a critique. This thesis is a critique of how criticism is used in a design studio. As I have discovered from the research that follows this introduction, criticism is more about the critic than the object being criticized (Attoe, 8). One cannot separate your own biases from a critique because criticism is a behavior in which individuals express their own perceptions of an object or an idea, in the "interest of a more adequate perception" (Dewey, 299). In this thesis I am describing, interpreting, and evaluating critiques in design studios according to my own perceptions.

What I believed at first to be a misunderstanding between myself and my professor on the topic of voicing my biases in my thesis, was in reality both of us exercising the subject matter of this thesis, criticism. I finally realized that both of us had our own ideas and perceptions of criticism as it is used in the design studio. This thesis is a written critique of criticism in the studio. The scribbles in the margin of my rough draft were a critique of my critique. We were both trying to put into written and verbal forms our perceptions of our ideas of this subject in order to inform each other. Criticism should inform and enhance other's perception and appreciation of the object being criticized. In this interchange of ideas between my professor and myself I understood his perceptions, and in doing so I better perceived my own.

Criticism has the potential to be a powerful pedagogical tool in landscape architecture education. Criticism is a behavior in which individuals express their own perceptions of a physical place, an object, or ideas in the hope of communicating their ideas to others. However, criticism is sometimes perceived to have a negative connotation because of its sense of passing a judgment upon a physical place or object.

The aim of this thesis is to create a greater awareness of the possibilities of how criticism can be integrated into a design studio setting. Much of what is presented here is based upon written theories of criticism. Another goal of this thesis is to foster a clearer understanding between students and instructors as to the purpose of criticism as employed during desk crits and juries. Informed use of criticism as a teaching method has the potential to foster a culture in the design studio that is open to discussion of ideas and to teach students the critical thinking skills necessary to reflect upon their own design decisions and their consequences.

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

The prevalence of criticism being viewed as a negative judgment, instead of an integral behavior used during the design process, is problematic because critique is the core educational tool used in the design studio. Design instructors are often not trained as educators, but as practioners, and have "difficulty dealing with education in any other terms that those they have experienced" (Malecha, 74). It is important for landscape architecture educators to reevaluate and better understand criticism in the classroom toward creating a critical culture in the studio that is open to dialogue and a communication of ideas.

The purpose of this thesis is two-fold: to explore if theories of criticism are employed by in the landscape architectural design studio; and discover both the instructors' and students' perceptions of criticism in the design studio. Both would require an understanding of the existing theories of criticism, design instructors' purpose and goals while utilizing criticism in desk crits and juries, and students' perceptions of the criticism they are recipients of during studio crits and juries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Criticism in the fields of art and literature is well established and respected. Landscape architecture criticism, however, both in the written and verbal forms has not received its due amount of attention as an important part of our discipline. There exists a plethora of literature on theories of criticism that can be adapted for use in the field of landscape architecture. Where art and literary criticism is used to inform and advance these fields, criticism as currently applied in a landscape architectural design studio is less understood. There exists a need to further develop the understanding of criticism,

particularly as a main feature of the studio setting, to attempt to contribute to student's

understanding of the physical environment and their responses to it. Following is a

literature review covering several topics relating to criticism. This review provides an

overview of criticism as effectively practiced in other arts that could apply to landscape

architecture education. This literature review topic has been divided into four categories:

theories of criticism; landscape architectural criticism; the history of the design studio;

and methods that utilize criticism in a design studio, desk crits and the jury.

Theories of Criticism

According to John Dewey, a 20th century American philosopher, criticism is

judgment. He defines judgment as an "act of intelligence performed upon the matter of

direct perception in the interest of a more adequate perception" (Dewey, 299); in other

words, judgment is an inquiry into an aesthetic experience, which is an experience of a

physical object or place, which leads to the enhancement of perception and appreciation.

Acknowledging that our "perceptions supply judgment with its material" (Dewey, 298), it

is, therefore, essential to understanding criticism. The fact that people have different

experiences with the physical environment, which leads to unique perceptions, is the

basis for a variety of judgments that defy imitation. Understanding this leads one to

reason that criticism is not only about the object but the critic as well.

The word judgment lends itself towards many connotations, which leads to

different theories of criticism. In *Art as Experience,* Dewey describes two types of

commonly used criticism: judicial and impressionistic. He describes these theories to

exemplify the misconceptions people have about the function of criticism. In the

following paragraphs, both judicial and impressionistic criticism will be discussed, concluding with Dewey's theory regarding the functions that criticism should perform.

Dewey makes it clear that the word 'judgment' can have an authoritative connotation as if a critic passes a verdict upon an object. Criticism in this sense, "is thought of as if its business were not explication of the content of an object as to substance and form, but a process of acquittal or condemnation on the basis of merits and demerits…keyed to the note of praise and blame, exculpation and disapproval" (Dewey, 299). This type of criticism, termed judicial criticism, uses precedents and personal authoritative status of the critic in place of an acute perception of an aesthetic experience.   In a physical and spiritual environment that constantly changes, people continue to have new interactions with their surroundings, which require "new forms of expression" and a type of criticism that is open to new ideas.

Unlike judicial criticism, which is based upon the use of precedents for judgment, Dewey also discusses impressionistic criticism, in which judgment is replaced by a description of imagery and the impressions an aesthetic object evokes. This theory proposes that criticism does not go beyond defining an impression that is made on us by a work of art. Dewey disagrees with impressionistic criticism because criticism extends beyond our first recorded impressions, as he states:

> Impressions, total qualitative unanalyzed effects that things and events
> make upon us, are the antecedents and beginnings of all judgments. The
> beginning of a new idea, terminating perhaps in an elaborate judgment
> following upon extensive inquiry, is an impression, even in the case of a
> scientific man or philosopher. But to define an impression is to analyze it,
> and analysis can proceed only by going beyond the impression, by
> referring it to the grounds on which it rests and the consequences which it
> entails. And this procedure is judgment" (305).

Judicial and impressionistic criticism do not satisfy Dewey's definition of criticism as an inquiry into an aesthetic experience in order to gain perceptions to inform judgment. According to Dewey, all criticism has a specific function to perform. These functions are discrimination and unification, which should ultimately lead to an awareness of perception—"a difficult process, of learning to see and hear" (Dewey, 324). Judgment should elicit a lucid awareness of all of the parts (discrimination) and discover how the parts are "related to form a whole" (unification) (Dewey, 310). Discrimination, also called analysis, is to determine what is important and each part's respective contribution. Unification, also called synthesis, is the unifying of parts into an integral experience for others, "The critic shall seize upon some strain or strand that is actually there, and bring it forth with such clearness that the reader has a new clue and guide in his own experience" (Dewey, 314). In closing, Dewey states that the critic's experience of an object has the ability of deepening other's experience as well, "The material out of which judgment grows is the work, the object, but it is this object as it enters into the experience of the critic by interaction with his own sensitivity and his knowledge and funded store from past experiences" (310).

Dewey emphasizes criticism being an inquiry into an aesthetic experience in order to gain perceptions to inform judgment. In agreement with Dewey's theory of criticism are views in Joseph Daracott's book, *Art Criticism: A User's Guide.* Daracott's book on criticism bridges the gap of Dewey's theory and how to formulate one's perceptions into criticism. According to Daracott, criticism is our perception of our physical environment and our attempt to transfer what we see into a written or spoken dialogue to explain how we see things. He borrows from James Ackerman, an architectural scholar, to reiterate his

views on criticism as a dialogue, "What a work of art communicates can be described only in terms of an interaction between an object and a subject; it communicates nothing at all unless someone is there to look at it. In other words, there are no aesthetic objects, only physical objects, which, when observed, are capable of stimulating an aesthetic event" (Daracott, 10).

In his explanation of criticism, Daracott then describes how to go beyond the theoretical basis of Dewey into actually formulating one's perceptions into criticism. Criticism is formed in three general stages: description, interpretation, and evaluation. Description is defined as a verbal account of a work and the critic's response to the work. Three things affect how a critic describes an object: the critic's own perception, different ways of describing, and the sharing of different aesthetic experiences. Interpretation helps to explain the meaning of the work, which may be simple or complex, and have varying interpretations from different cultures based upon a cultures myths, history, and recognizable symbols. Evaluation is "a summing up which places the work in the experience of the critic" in order to ascertain a value or worth to a work of art, and help others to form an opinion. (Daracott, 11).

In *Architecture and Critical Imagination*, Wayne Attoe stresses the importance and prevalence of criticism in the field of architecture, ranging from: critics columns in newspapers, journals, and magazines; teacher remarks in the design studio setting; between architect and client; architect and contractor; architects and policy makers, and between architects. His opinions of criticism come from his experiences as both a student and a teacher and he observes that, "Too often when criticism starts, excuses begin, and so defensiveness gets in the way of good, responsive work" (Attoe, 2). Since

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criticism is prevalent in design fields, Attoe strives to bring a better understanding of the methods of criticism, "so that instead of threatening and intimidating, criticism can be used as a tool for generating better work" (2).

Attoe also reiterates the behavior of criticism includes the three categories of description, interpretation, and evaluation. He also identifies that criticism falls under three basic groups: normative criticism, interpretative criticism, and descriptive criticism. Below is a summary of Attoe's categorization of criticism, which will be followed by an explanation of the different types of criticism.

1. Normative criticism-
   - Doctrinal criticism
   - Systematic criticism
   - Typal criticism
   - Measured criticism

2. Interpretative criticism
   - Advocatory criticism
   - Evocative criticism
   - Impressionistic criticism

3. Descriptive criticism
   - Depictive criticism
   - Biological criticism
   - Contextual criticism

The first category of criticism is normative criticism, which is grounded in the belief that there is "a model, pattern, standard, or principle against which its quality or success may be assessed" (Attoe, 11). In the category of normative criticism falls doctrinal, systematic, typal, and measured criticism. Doctrinal criticism has as its basis a doctrine, such as; form follows function, and tends towards "the belief that there is a single approach for accomplishing our purposes and a single standard for measuring our achievements" (Attoe, 13). Systematic criticism is an "alternative to the single

doctrine…[it] is an interwoven assemblage of principles or factors, a system for judging"

(Attoe, 21). Typal criticism is based upon structural, functional, and form types. Finally,

measured criticism assigns numerical standards to provide the norms against which

something is judged. For example, criticism of a public square may take into

consideration the proportion of the size of the square in comparison to the height of the

buildings surrounding it.

The second category of criticism, interpretative criticism, is highly personal. As

Attoe explains, "the interpretative critic seeks to mould others' vision to make them see

as he does" (49). The three techniques of interpretative criticism include: advocatory,

evocative, and impressionistic criticism. Advocatory criticism is employed by a critic

who is an advocate of a building or place and is, "concerned primarily with engendering

appreciation, not with passing judgment" (Attoe, 49). Evocative criticism "uses whatever

means are needed to arouse similar feelings in the reader/viewer. The evocative critique

is not right or wrong, but a surrogate experience" (Attoe, 61).   Finally, impressionistic

criticism "uses the work of art or building as a foundation on which the critic then

constructs his own work of art" (Attoe, 74).

The third category of criticism is descriptive criticism, "more than the other forms

of criticism, descriptive criticism seeks to be factual…it does not seek to judge nor even

to interpret, but to help us *see* what is actually there" (Attoe, 85). Descriptive criticism

includes depictive, biographical, and contextual criticism. Depictive criticism does not

judge, but merely depicts what exists; such as, how people move through a space.

Biographical criticism provides others with and understanding of the artist in order to

allow a better understanding of their intentions. Finally, contextual criticism provides

information about the social, political, and economic context in which something was designed.

The ideas of criticism and critical theory of John Dewey, Joseph Daracott, and Wayne Attoe suggest a rich understanding of a theoretical basis of criticism and the many forms it may take. All of these theories have one thing in common; criticism is not only about the object being criticized but more importantly the critic. Our individual perceptions of the world around us inevitably cause us to have inherent biases. It is recognizing that each critic does not produce a final judgment about an aesthetic experience but rather, "once the bias in a critic's assessment or position is recognized, those who are the objects of criticism are freed of the burden of final judgment and can drop defenses and learn from the frank encounter with the other whose life has been touched" (Attoe, 8).

Landscape Architectural Criticism

The preceding theories of criticism have been directed specifically towards art or architecture. The basic components of description, interpretation, and evaluation can be applied to criticism as a pedagogical method in landscape architecture education. Landscape architectural criticism, however, does vary considerably from art criticism because of two factors that are present in a landscape, time and place. The following is a summary of notable landscape architects and their views on the state of criticism in the discipline of landscape architecture.

Elizabeth Meyer views criticism of landscape architecture as expanding "the world of the designed landscape object through interpretation, through the explication of content and context of the work. She finds meaning not only in the complete forms and

spaces of the designer's marking on the paper and the land, but in the relationship between those marks and the context…through this contextualization, the landscape is transformed from an autonomous designed object into textural work that is interwoven and intermingled with the world" (Meyer, Reflections, 18). Since landscape has a relationship to its time and place, it is inseparable from debates about the place of man in nature. However, Meyer argues that landscape architecture criticism lacks communication about pressing issues concerned with our environment and instead, "we are constrained by conceiving of our work through hackneyed phrases (formal and informal, hardscape and softscape, man-made and natural) instead of through engagement with the tensions of our time" (Meyer, 21).

Landscape architect John Hopkins believes that the primary aim of criticism is "to enlighten and to inform…it should also lead to judgment" (Hopkins, 25). He goes on to discuss a framework for criticism that would move criticism beyond personal preference and the "I like this/I don't like this" subjective statements. His framework begins with an appraisal of the designer's intentions and then analyzes: "cultural, historical and physical context; ecology; macro- and micro- economics; legal and planning issues; functional aspects; structure and technology; philosophical grounding; and artistic and aesthetic considerations" (Hopkins, 25). He then examines the genius loci of the site, which he terms the intuitive and emotional response a person might have being in a site. The last component of his framework borrows heavily from ideas of Dewey which he calls the intellectual response. The critic analyzes the form of the design in terms of separate elements and "a means of understanding how those disparate elements have become a

cohesive whole where each reinforces the other in support of an over-arching concept" (Hopkins, 25).

Hopkins suggests that once a critic considers the content and context, the intuitive and emotional response, and the intellectual response- all aspects should be "synthesized into a holistic response…when this unification provides profound insight, criticism itself becomes an art" (25) This insight then not only helps to guide others through the experience, "but to the designer as well- and artist is never fully aware of what she/he is doing" (Hopkins, 25).

At the 1990 Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA) conference, educators discussed what is the role a critical inquiry in the education and practice of landscape architecture. Those who participated include Margaret McAvin, Elizabeth Meyer, James Corner, Hamid Shirvani, Kenneth Helphand, Robert Riley, and Robert Scarfo. This conference set the tone for the current views of the role of criticism in landscape architecture, the following is a summary of the proceedings of the conference.

Elizabeth Meyer, a professor at University of Virginia, views landscape architectural design itself as a critical inquiry that "can be an investigation through the formal language of design into the meaning of work relative to its situation or context" (Meyer, 157). She believes that employing criticism in practice has three important contributions to the discipline of landscape architecture. First of all, it helps to foster a precision of design language. Through describing, comparing, and use of terminology, criticism narrows the possibility for ambiguous interpretations. Second, criticism creates new ways to think and evaluate. By employing existing theories, which reflect past values, new values and ideas are likely to emerge. Thus, practice as criticism can lead to

new directions for approaching design. According to Meyer, the third contribution

criticism can have for the discipline is to agitate for change. Criticism has the ability to

"exasperate, to increase the unease of a discipline. This unease is frequently a function of

not commenting on what was done, but on what was not done or said, on the silences

within a project that bespeak much about situational or worldly meaning" (Tafuri qtd. in

Meyer, 157)

At the same conference, James Corner, a professor of landscape architecture at

University of Pennsylvania, began by stating that our culture has been dominated by

technocratic thinking for the past two hundred years. This scientific way of thinking is

concerned with means and ends, and is not concerned with spiritual questions of our

existence. Corner claims that critical thinking is an alternative to the technocratic way of

thinking, "as it strives to unite art with life and that, as far as this pertains to the design

and habitation of lived environments, this is of utmost significance to landscape

architecture" (159). Modern criticism started in 17th century Europe. Modern criticism

was born in coffeehouses attended by an educated bourgeoisie who was seeking

individual freedom from the rule of an authoritarian state. In this case, criticism had a

very social function of exchanging ideas and opinions.

Corner then discusses what he believes to be four foundations for a form of

critical thinking, which is influenced by bourgeoisie criticism. The first foundation is

that "critical thinking begins with *skepticism*, particularly with regard to authority, rules,

and conventions that have long gone unquestioned. Although much skepticism may

often be subversive, it is neither cynical nor destructive, but rather emerges from a

discontentment, an unfulfillment. Wonder and amazement are expressed through a

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healthy and inquisitive questioning" (Corner, 160). The second foundation is *reflection*, an analysis of the values and issues involved. The third foundation is *speculative contemplation*, in which possible ways for future change or alternatives are considered. And the fourth foundation culminates criticism into an *action*, in which a critical position is acted upon.

Throughout the literature on landscape architectural criticism some common ideas emerge. One is the potential for written and verbal criticism to enlighten and inform people in the field of landscape architecture of new ideas. Also, the most important theme relating to landscape architecture education is that the discipline lacks an analytical framework for criticism and a common theoretical basis, which would allow for evaluative standards. The lack of agreed upon design theory and little written criticism is a problem that is "perhaps most pressing in design education itself, where criticism is the dominant pedagogical mode and capacity for criticism not only through but of one's own work is what is ultimately taught. Many educators pay little explicit attention to articulation of any theoretical basis for design criticism" (McAvin, 155).

The History of the Design Studio

The critique as an educational tool in landscape architecture studios is borrowed from the methods of teaching utilized in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts). Before the establishment of landscape architecture curriculum in universities, the earliest recognized American landscape designers were educated in various fields, including agriculture and horticulture. Thomas Jefferson, an American landscape designer of the eighteenth century, was trained in the liberal arts and studied landscapes through travel in

Europe. Frederick Law Olmsted, who is considered the Father of Landscape

Architecture, was a trained sailor, farmer, and journalist.

The first course in landscape architecture was offered in 1868 at the

Massachusetts Agricultural College, just after the Civil War. Then in 1871, P.H. Elwood

at Iowa State College taught a course in landscape architecture. The first full curriculum

offered in landscape architecture was inaugurated by Harvard University in 1899

(Morrow, 100). The philosophy adapted by Harvard University was based upon the

traditional Beaux-Arts approach utilized in the education of architects.

The Beaux-Arts system began in 1671 when Louis XIV founded the Academie

Royale d'Architecture in France. This establishment disassociated architects from the

construction site, and instead educated the architect at a school. Then with the Ecole des

Beaux-Arts flourishing in the 1800s, architects were taught to design "compositions

where the logic of two-dimensional paper aesthetics governs architecture" (Tschumi, 24).

The educational system of the Beaux-Arts emphasized drawing and classic precedents.

Although other methods of teaching, such as the craft and production-oriented German

Bauhaus surfaced in the 1920s, have influenced the way design is taught, the traditions of

the Ecole des Beaux-Arts still structure and heavily influence the landscape architecture

studios of today.

The design studio is the central learning place for students of landscape

architecture. The educational concepts used in the studio are borrowed from the methods

fashioned at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris. The basis of the Beaux-Arts theory of

teaching is a private tutorial between a student and one who has mastered the art of

design. The system consists of five main educational practices: the division of students

into 'ateliers' or studios, the tradition of older students assisting the younger pupils, the teaching of design by practitioners and the judgment of designs by a trained jury of practitioners, the start of design education upon entering the studio, and finally the system of 'esquisse' or the sketching of design solutions (Malecha, 1).

Criticism is the main pedagogical method used in the design studio. The studio revolves around teacher demonstrations, desk crits given to individual students by the teacher, and juries of final design solutions. The definition in *The American Heritage Dictionary* of criticism is: "1. The act of making judgments and evaluations. 2. Censure; disapproval. 3. A review or article expressing the judgments of a critic" (165). Upon close investigation of the etymology of the word 'criticism', the meaning implies discernment and sifting through a matter, and not that which would lead to a negative or unfavorable judgment. The word criticism derives from the Greek verb, *krinein,* meaning to make distinctions, or to separate (Attoe, 4). The underlying sense of judgment attached to criticism evolved from the Greek noun, *kritos*, or a judge (Williams, 75). The negative undertone of criticism is often seen in academic studios, "too often when criticism starts, excuses begin, and so defensiveness gets in the way of good, responsive work…instead of threatening and intimidating, criticism can be used as a tool for generating better work" (Attoe, 2).

In order for criticism to be used in a design studio as a valuable tool, the methods of critique must be employed in a way to support understanding and should be based upon, "clarity of intent and process…[to] reinforce the private tutorial aspects of the studio" (Malecha, 76). Criticism is a way of communicating design knowledge to the student, and a way to bridge the gap from theory to practice. Critiques in the studio also

help students develop their own critical faculties by instilling the process of reflecting and reacting to design intentions, which lead to their design decisions, and then reacting to the consequences of each action.

Desk Crits

As this literature review has previously discussed, there exists many theories of criticism and its potential for use in landscape architecture. Two potential uses for criticism in the design studio occur during different situations: the individual desk crit and the jury. As the purpose of this research is to define both teacher's and student's understanding of criticism employed in the design studio, it is important to describe both the desk crit and the jury. By describing both we can better understand when and how criticism is used in the design studio. This thesis seeks to answer not only what the purpose of the desk crit and jury are as understood by both faculty and students, but also is effective criticism what is occurring currently in these processes.

During studio time, students work on an assigned project at their individual drafting tables. The studio professor visits each student at his/her desk for what is called a "desk crit". The process of the desk crit is quite simple. It usually begins with the professor listening to the student's verbal description of ideas assisted by sketches and models. Then the studio professor and the student embark upon a dialogue in which the professor guides the student through the design process. The conversation is unique with each student depending upon the student's ideas and progress. Desk crits are a time during which the Beaux-Arts heritage of our education is evident. Desk crits exemplify the master-apprentice relationship; the learn-by-doing style of teaching that landscape architecture education is based upon. One potential problem of this heritage of landscape

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architecture education is that, "The greatest obstacle to the development of design studio

instructional methods is the design instructor who often has difficulty dealing with

education in any other terms than those they have experienced" (Malecha, 74).

The Jury

The name jury is quite intimidating. If one looks up the word 'jury' in a

dictionary, the definition states, "A body of persons summoned by law and sworn to hear

and hand down a verdict upon a case presented in court" (American Heritage, 378). One

may wonder if this is the purpose of a design jury.

A design jury is a spontaneous conversation about a project in which the student

is allowed a short time to present his/her work in front of his/her classmates, instructors,

and sometimes outside interested parties, after which a panel of 'jurors' discusses the

project. The jurors are usually composed of faculty of landscape architecture or

architecture, teaching assistants, practitioners, and sometimes, public users, clients, or

government officials. Figure 1.1 is a drawing of a typical design jury displaying where

the persons involved in a design jury are situated.
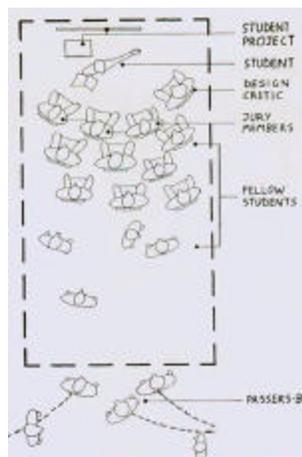
Figure 1.1. Typical Layout of a Design Jury (Doidge, 6).

The jury system as used in landscape architecture education is borrowed from nineteenth centuries ideas used in the Ecole des Beaux Arts. The purpose of juries was exclusively to evaluate, "the students' fate ultimately rested 'in the hands of the gods'— that is, jury members—who decided whether they passed or failed" (Anthony, *Design Juries* 9). At the Ecole des Beaux Arts the jury system was a closed system where the jury alone, behind closed doors, evaluated the work of the students. Not until the jury concluded were students able to receive feedback on their project, which took the form a few written comments and a marked grade on their project.

The closed method of the jury was brought to the United States from France through the American students who trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. About 500 students from America trained there between "1850 and 1968, when it closed" (Anthony, *Design Juries* 10). By the early 1900s, the closed jury system was in place in America:

> Many of today's older designer, trained in the 1930s and 1940s, recall their student days when they simply submitted their completed projects for review and their professors disappeared behind closed doors. Hours or sometimes days later, their projects were returned with a simple letter grade and, if they were lucky, a few stray marks or comments on their drawings. The reasoning behind the grade was rarely discussed. (Anthony, *Design Juries* 11).

The evolution from closed to open juries is not clear. The change occurred gradually between 1940 and 1960. The new open jury format allowed students to verbally present their work to faculty who discussed issues and evaluated the work publicly in front of both students and colleagues. The shift from closed to open juries possibly "reflected general, widespread trends in education and grading in other fields, moving from an emphasis on responsiveness to authority (a mere letter grade) to a greater

emphasis on individuality (a grade with comments and discussion and increased interaction between instructors and students)" (Anthony, *Design Juries* 11). Although juries may have partly evolved because of education trends, juries seem to work against the educational theory that encourages positive aspects of students' work rather than punishing students and focusing on failure and negativity:

> The dominant viewpoint in education today stresses the pedagogical advantages of success and the disadvantages of failure. In short, our schools are reward-oriented. Thus teachers are instructed to focus on the good aspects of a student's behavior and to overlook the poor. In design schools, just the opposite usually occurs. The research for this book bears this out; students overwhelmingly report that criticism at juries, and to a lesser extent at desk crits, is weighted heavily toward the negative (Anthony, *Design Juries* 13).

In a roundtable discussion in 1993 at Harvard University published in *GSD News,* faculty of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban planning discussed the design jury system. The faculty discussion debated the purpose of the jury, and whom the jury should be directed towards. The following is a summary of the discussion.

The main topic the discussion focused upon was the purpose of the jury. The faculty at Harvard agreed that the purpose is not to pass judgment on the students or to evaluate their work. The educators viewed juries as an opportunity for discussions of theory and ideas to flourish, using the student's work as a vehicle for the discussion. One participant in the discussion, Alex Krieger a professor of urban planning stated, "The differences of opinion between faculty and students seems to be about whether the juries are primarily a means of evaluating student work or a means of fostering discussions among jurors, students, and the class as a whole…Maybe you don't agree, but it hardly ever seems to be the key evaluative moment" (3). Another professor who agreed the

purpose of the jury is discussion was Mark Scoggin, the Chairman of the Department of

Architecture:

> Actually, I think the students like the juries to evaluate their work. That's really what they want to have happen. They want the people to focus on their project, on the issues that they are concerned with, and they want to hear the reaction. And that's all about evaluation…and quite frankly I think that's the weakest part of the jury system. For me, the jury is a fantastic time to establish a discourse or a debate within the school…and the student's work is the medium which that discourse and debate can center around…" (5).

From excerpts of the discussion in *GSD News* it becomes evident that the instructors at Harvard perceive the purpose of the jury differently from the students. One of the panelists tries to accommodate for both of the perceived needs, "What we seem to be getting to is that the jury…has to be at least two things. One is evaluative…the students want that. But also it has a teaching role…[Juries] define for the student what it is that they've done…[That] seems to be key" (Dilnot, 7).

Martha Schwartz, a landscape architect and professor at Harvard states:

> The final jury is almost always going to be anti-climatic. You've already done 90% of the learning during the design process. You've already been through your struggle, and it's over by the time you present. The real learning process has already happened. Students often think that they're going to get this big kick at the end of all this, but I think they're looking at juries in the wrong way…The jury's job is not to tell students whether or not their work is good or bad. Instead, their job is to raise issues and make the student think (Schwartz qtd. in Anthony, *Design Juries,* 17).

Rather than evaluation, Schwartz's ideas of a jury include the purpose of discussion and teaching students to be critical and constantly question existing conventions, experiment, and explore their design ideas.

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The roundtable discussion also focused on whom the review is directed towards. In their discussion of the purpose of the jury, it was evident that the jurors discussed issues among themselves, using the students' work as a vehicle for discussion.

One panelist addressed the issue by stating:

> What kind of learning experience are the students owed in a jury situation? Seemingly, the juncture of real attention to their work with the important larger implications of that work. And so if you have a focus just on the work, the students are disappointed because the discussion doesn't seem to have much meat, and if you have a discussion just about the general societal issues or design theory, they feel their efforts have been neglected (Saunders, 8).

Yet the faculty participating in the roundtable discussion also realized that when the jurors find the discourse fascinating the discussion is only between the jurors and "the students…didn't know what the hell was going on. It was entirely uninteresting to them" (Robbins, 7). On the other hand, juries that appear interesting to the students, seem boring to jurors, "because it was going over things that may have been old hat to the people on the review, but were new to the students. Remember, each year we have new students. [It's] very hard to repeat things year after year, but some things may need repeating" (Robbins, 7).

As one can infer from the varying ideas of the purpose and structure of criticism in the design studio, there exists a misunderstanding between students and teachers intentions during a jury. The faculty roundtable discussed that teachers wanted the function to be a discourse of ideas, whereas the teachers perceived the students as wanting the purpose to be an evaluation of the individual projects being discussed during juries.

Research Conducted on Design Juries

The leading researcher on the topic of design juries is Kathryn H. Anthony, an associate professor in the School of Architecture as well as an associated faculty with the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her book *Design Juries on Trial,* as well as her article, "Private Reactions to Public Criticism; Students, Faculty, and Practicing Architects State Their Views on Design Juries in Architecture" provide the most relevant information to the research compiled this thesis. A summary of her research follows below.

Kathryn Anthony researched the effectiveness of design juries in architectural education and how design students respond to the public criticism they receive during juries. Her research combined data collected from behavioral observations of design studios, interviews, questionnaires, and diaries. Her participants included students, faculty, and alumni in many design-based fields, including landscape architecture.

The results of her research suggest that overall, all participants in her research believe that juries need improvement, "the vast majority of those questioned believe that today's architectural jury system is inadequate and needs improvement" (Anthony, *Private Reactions* 5). The results also disprove her hypothesis that the students would be most critical of the jury system since they are the receivers of the public criticism given during juries, "instead, it appears that…architecture faculty, students, and alumni are about equally critical of the system" (5). For those in the study who believed the jury system needs improvement, suggestions for change were given directed towards both the faculty and students. Suggestions for improving juries that were directed towards students included, "participate more actively, to be better prepared, more confident, to

have a positive attitude, and to perceive the jury as a learning experience" (5).

Suggestions for improving juries that were directed towards the faculty included, "to set clearly the format and procedures, address issues specifically and focus on problem objective, and to schedule the jury after the project is due" (5).

Another major finding from Anthony's research is centered around how much students learn from final and interim juries. The results differed substantially between faculty and students on how much seemed to be learned from each format, "generally speaking, students think they learn less than faculty think they do" (Anthony, *Private Reactions* 6). In her research, 63% of the faculty in the study believed students learned a lot from interim juries, whereas only 29% of landscape architecture students agreed. On the other hand, 19% of the faculty believed students learned 'a lot' from final juries and 69% believed students only learned 'some' from final juries. Students agreed and 16% of the landscape architecture students believed they learned 'a lot' from final juries and 59% believed they learned 'some' from final juries. (7). The difference between the views of interim and final juries occurs because some students believe it isn't until the final jury that their project is complete enough to merit comments, whereas some view final juries as offering criticism that comes too late because they cannot act upon the advice given and alter their project.

Another theme Anthony's research focused upon was how students responded to the oral, spontaneous public criticism they receive during juries. Through her observations of juries and student diaries, Anthony concluded "design students are under a great deal of stress during the jury. Unfortunately, this tension interferes with their ability to recall correctly the criticism they are given about their own work"

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(Anthony, *Private Reactions* 7). By observing body language during design juries, Anthony concluded that most students "display defensive and nervous behavior" (7). Through the student diaries collected in her study, Anthony's research shows that the range of emotions students have during juries were mostly negative, "the most commonly felt emotions are anxiety, fear, frustration, anger, embarrassment, disappointment, guilt, and disgust" (7). Some students that did feel they had a positive jury experience felt charged with motivation for working on latter projects, whereas students who receive a negative jury felt depressed and crucified with little motivation to pursue their work.

Kathryn Anthony's research challenges some of the assumptions that are made about the educational value of design juries. The assumptions include: the jury is a learning experience for students, the jury improves design skills, and the jury teaches students to critically evaluate their own work. Another major assumption about design education is that all of the information students supposedly learn in juries, "ideally, has a cumulative effect so that the design of subsequent work is at least partly influenced and improved as a result of the criticism they received on previous design projects" (Anthony, *Private Reactions* 8). The cumulative learning effect is called "double-loop" learning, in which "a deep level of understanding which allows one to reexamine values and assumptions" occurs (8). Anthony's research challenges these assumptions and proves that the stress inflicted upon students in the design jury interferes with its effectiveness as a learning tool. The stress level during the jury is so high that it interferes with the "students' ability to function normally. It appears from all sources of information that the 'ideal' feedback cycle discussed earlier, is not working properly, largely because stress

gets in the way. Similarly, 'double-loop' learning is not achieved, and what learning

does take place remains at a relatively low level" (10).

The preceding literature review discussed theories of criticism, landscape

architectural criticism, the history of the design studio, and criticism employed in the

design studio as desk crits and juries. All of the collected information will be utilized to

explore if theories of criticism are employed during desk crits and juries, as well as, to

compare both the teachers' and students' goals and expectations during both desk crits

and juries.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY METHOD

This thesis intends to explore if desk crits and juries employ theories of criticism, as well as, teachers' and students' perceptions of the goals, purpose, and effectiveness of both desk crits and juries. This chapter outlines the method for a study to measure teacher and student perceptions of criticism in the design studio.

METHODOLOGY

The measurement strategy employed to collect data in this research was survey questionnaire. In addition, personal interviews of design studio instructors were conducted. First, a qualitative study of professor intentions during critiques given in the studio was conducted using interviews. Second, feedback received from the teacher interviews was used to create a questionnaire to be distributed to landscape architecture students. The questionnaire was used to determine student perspectives on criticism in the design studio.

SCOPE

This research of student perception of studio critiques is merely a starting point in exploring and understanding criticism as the main pedagogical tool utilized in the design studio. This thesis is limited to the perceptions of landscape architecture students and faculty at Louisiana State University. The majority of the students in the program are U.S. citizens with a small percentage of international students. The study will include both male and female students in both the undergraduate and graduate programs.

This thesis will employ a qualitative approach to explore design studio instructors' perceptions of criticism employed in the studio. The results of the instructor perceptions was used to inform and guide the student questionnaire which was developed

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after faculty interviews. The student questionnaire will employed a quantitative approach with the results used to provide an indication of the effectiveness of the design instructors' intentions during desk crits and juries. For this reason, the research will be presented in a summary format and is based primarily on a content analysis of the questionnaire results and the interpretations of these results by the author.

INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEWS

Personal interviews were conducted with five design studio instructors. Four out of the five instructors who were interviewed were male. The scope of instructors interviewed was limited to instructors teaching studio classes for the spring 2003 semester. The studios were limited to second, third, and fourth year undergraduate studios; as well as, first and second year graduate studios. These studios were selected because of the comparative skill levels between the graduate and undergraduate studios.

The interviews focused on both ways criticism is employed in a design studio, the desk crit and jury (See Appendix A for complete interview questions). Design instructors were asked the following questions about both desk crits and juries: goals, purpose, effectiveness, and student reactions. More specific questions were asked about juries, such as, student participation, a framework for criticism, and changes for improvement. In the creation of the interview questions as a survey research instrument, a concerted effort was made to ask questions which were not biased. This was achieved by asking questions that did not lead or encourage the response given by instructors. The interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed by the author. The findings from the interviews were used in order to develop a questionnaire to gauge the effectiveness of criticism in the design studio and to validate instructors' intentions.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

Student questionnaires were distributed to five landscape architecture studios. The studios included second, third, and fourth year undergraduates and first and second year graduate students. In total, one hundred and two questionnaires were distributed to students, seventy-seventy to undergraduates, and twenty-six to graduate students. The participants who filled out and returned the questionnaire to the author included forty-four total students from Louisiana State University, giving a forty-three percent return rate. Of the participants, twenty-nine were undergraduates and fifteen were graduate students. Of the undergraduate students, nineteen were male, and ten were female. Of the graduate students, seven were male and eight were female. Participation in the student questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous, aside from asking the gender of the participants.

The items used to collect data in the student questionnaires were based on the answers received during the earlier phase of research, which utilized teacher interviews. The questions in the questionnaire were adopted and followed the example of Kathyrn Anthony's student questionnaire in her published research in her article, "Private Reactions to Public Criticism; Students, Faculty, and Practicing Architects State Their Views on Design Juries in Architectural Education".

The questionnaire used for this research covered topics including; the purpose, educational goals, effectiveness, and students' reactions to both desk crits and juries. Also asked were questions relating directly towards the design jury including: a framework for criticism, past successful and unsuccessful experiences, explanation of the purpose of a jury to the class, whom the jury is directed towards, student participation in

a jury, and changes for improvement (See Appendix B for complete student questionnaire).

In the chosen survey research instrument of a questionnaire, an arduous effort was made to ask questions which were not biased. This was achieved in the student questionnaire by asking questions posed a scale of point between the end points of a positive/negative continuum and by asking open-ended questions, which allowed the students the respond in their own words.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data collected from the teacher interviews was coded into common response categories by the author. The results were analyzed in a qualitative manner, and implications of this analysis are discussed in Chapter Four.

The data collected from the student questionnaires was analyzed in both a qualitative and quantitative manner. The data collected from the student questionnaires was calculated to find percentages of students who chose each of the given answers for the close-ended questions. The data was first calculated using all forty-four student responses. The data was then recalculated separating the undergraduate and graduate responses, and further separated into male and female responses for both the undergraduate and graduate students. The data collected from open-ended questions on the student questionnaire was also coded into common response categories. The results and implication of this analysis from the student questionnaire are discussed in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS FROM INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEWS

The first portion of this research specifically addressed the perceptions design studio instructors' had of desk crits and design juries. The following data was collected from interviews with the instructors. Altogether, a total of five design instructors participated in the study during the week of March 23, 2003. All responses to questions were tape recorded and transcribed at a later date. The results were then analyzed to find common categories of answers, and a brief summation of the range of answers to each individual question was created. All results are discussed in a summary format because of the quantitative method used to collect the data, and is based primarily on content analysis and the interpretations these results by the author. The following results are organized into sections, which correlate to the questions asked during each interview (See Appendix A for complete interview questions).

- **Instructors' Views on the Purpose of a Desk Crit**

All five of the instructors interviewed discussed that one of the most important aspects of a desk crit is to listen to the student's design ideas in a one on one, personal environment. This close physical distance allows the instructors to establish trust with the student. This safe, nurturing environment is established in order make the student feel comfortable to ask questions and express their individual design ideas. It is during a desk crit that the instructor can interact with the student to give, "Immediate feedback on the personal level, the instructor immediately has the sense that the student is engaged and is where they need to be as far as grasping the concept and principles that are being applied in the project" (personal interview).

Along with listening to the student's ideas, three out of the five instructors interviewed discussed that an important aspect of a desk crit is also to ask the student questions to get the students to think critically about design options. Frequently, the student asks the instructor a question during a desk crit in search of the correct answer. The instructors respond to the student, not with the right answer, but rather with a question, as one instructor stated:

You try to get them [the student] to get in touch with themselves and their own design sense and to bring that out and be able to use that in a powerful way in a design. It takes a long time and a lot of trust and nurturing to help them along, so I mostly ask questions. They ask me a question, I ask them a question back most of the time (interview).

The importance of asking questions during a desk crit is to make the student think for himself, "Theoretically, if you can ask the right questions at that time a light bulb goes on and they will start thinking" (interview).

During a desk crit, the importance of asking questions is also a way instructors teach the students to become their own critic. One instructor stated:

> At 3am in the morning when you've got to make a decision to draw a line this way or that way, the student needs to have internalized the teacher as a critic. The purpose of the desk crit is for it to be unnecessary, for the student, not in a negative way, to have an internal positive critic…so he or she can move on through the design process alone and independently. That's really the key, that's why it's so important that you can't be negative, because that feeds into internal self-criticism…(interview).

Overall, the instructors perceived the purpose of desk crits to be: a personal, one on one environment in which the teacher listens to the student's ideas; a time to encourage ideas; a time to give advice, guidance, and encouragement; and a time for the

instructor to ask the student questions, which allows the student to learn critical thinking skills and problem solving skills.

- **Instructors' Objectives During a Desk Crit**

Five of the five instructors interviewed discussed that one of their objectives during a desk crit focused on getting to know each student individually on a personal level. This was an important objective because it teaches the instructors how to approach each student in a desk crit in the best way to encourage further development of their design ideas and their design process.

Another objective discussed during the interviews by two instructors was the development of the student, not only as a logical problem solver, but to encourage the development of creativity, as one instructor stated:

> Learn how to deal with the right and left side of the brain, try to put aside the logical side a lot and trust the creative side, trust the instincts, and be inspired by things…to explore because it's [the design process] not linear, it's not vertical, your mind is much more powerful than that. So I try to get them to get it touch with that and be comfortable doing that. (interview).

Another design instructor agreed with this view by stating, "the desk crit is bringing the student along in his/her own creative journey in response to whatever it is the project offers…some issue that is being explored, and see how students respond to that" (interview). In summation, educational objectives to achieve during desk crits according to instructors include getting to know the students individually on a personal level, and encouraging each student's own design process and creativity.

- **Instructors' Views on How Students React to Desk Crits**

Design instructors overall feel there is a wide range of reactions students have to desk crits. Some of the instructors commented that reactions could sometimes be

attributed to the compatibility between the personalities of the instructor and student. The results to this question ranged from very positive to negative.

If a student learns from the desk crit and he or she's ideas are expounded upon, a very positive and excited reaction occurs from students. In the middle of the range are student who react indifferently to advice given and seem reluctant to even think about the guidance they received in a desk crit. Although, the design instructors pointed out that they don't always intend the student to take the advice given, but the student should think about what is said during a desk crit and develop their own ideas further. Design instructors also noted negative reactions by students to desk crits. Some of the negative reactions the instructors discussed included the students being discouraged, disappointed, confused, or defensive. These negative reactions usually stem from a student wanting to be told how to solve a design problem, or to be given the 'right answer'. As one instructor stated:

> Initially they [the students] get frustrated because they want me to give them the answers. It's disconcerting for them to learn that there aren't any. They have to come up with the answer, they have to find it in themselves, it is a process. It's difficult because everywhere in school prior to this you can find the answer in a book (interview).

Two of the five instructors interviewed also discussed the most undesirable reaction to desk crits from students is when the student is trying to please the instructor. As one instructor stated, "The worst student is one who tries to please you, when you are trying to reflect back to the student what you see in the student and the student has nothing or is hiding what they think and instead trying to please you" (interview).

- **Instructors' Views on the Effectiveness of Desk Crits as a Learning Tool**

Results to this question revealed that five out of five instructors interviewed agreed that desk crits are an effective learning tool. The reasons they believe desk crits are effective vary. One instructor offered that desk crits allow the instructor to gauge any common problems the class is encountering that may need to be addressed. Another instructor has had many good experiences with the outcomes of desk crits, stating, "I've seen too many students do something wonderful with a crit not to believe that it could work" (interview). If the outcomes of a desk crit are positive, it may be an indicator that students are critically thinking about the design problem they are addressing, are listening to advice given, and considering possible design solutions.

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, developing a studio culture that fosters the language of criticism as a pedagogical tool may be challenging because design instructors are not trained specifically as educators. Rather, like a master-apprentice relationship, knowledge is passed on to the design student by someone who has mastered the trade in a hands-on environment (design studio). One design instructor when asked how effective desk crits are as a learning tool replied, "I don't know how else to do it [teach design]. That doesn't mean there isn't another way. It's the way I was taught, and it is the way I've done it" (interview). Marvin Malecha in his book, *The Design Studio,* discusses that developing tools for teaching in the studio setting may be problematic because, "the greatest obstacle to the development of design studio instructional methods is the design instructor who often has difficulty dealing with education in any other terms than those they have experienced" (Malecha, 74).

Another design instructor offered the opinion that desk crits are effective as a learning tool in the context of passing on design knowledge and teaching the student how to be his/her own teacher, "I don't think you can teach design. But you can set up situations where a student teaches himself, such as projects. Critiques nudge the student along" (interview).

The only problems discussed about factors that directly relate to the effectiveness of desk crits are class size and the number of instructors that teach the studio. The size of the studio and the amount of attention each student receives directly relates to the effectiveness of being able to administer desk crits to each student.

- **Instructors' Views on the Purpose of a Design Jury**

Five out of the five instructors interviewed agreed that one of the purposes of a design jury is to allow the student the chance to present his or her work in order to receive feedback by a variety of people. The idea is widely held that a jury should be a time when a student can present his intentions and design process and validate his design solution by receiving feedback from others. As stated by an LSU instructor:

> [A jury is] a springboard of discussions, relating a project to larger ideas, and also a review of the process that the student went through. If a student presents his intentions, 'this is what I was trying to do', then you can give a critique and judge how well that was done. I think that comes from the student- it has to. Challenge the student to own what they did and why they did it. That is the true purpose of a jury (interview).

Instructors also responded that one of the purposes of a design jury should be for the students to have an opportunity to build their presentation skills, including their verbal and graphic communication skills. The purpose of a jury should be to, "build presentation skills, to allow them to gain confidence and competence in explaining their work, in describing the process they went through to be where they are" (interview).

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The data collected from landscape architecture design studio instructors at Louisiana State University agree with research collected by Kathryn Anthony, a leading researcher of the topic. From her research, design instructors believed the purpose of a jury to, "provide an opportunity for the student to present (communicate) the process and solution to a design problem…the criticism should be considered informative and both positive and negative- providing the student with encouragement as well as stimulus to continue exploration" (*Design Juries*, 29).

- **Instructors' Views of Juries Evaluating Students' Work**

Two of the five instructors interviewed discussed that students want a jury to specifically evaluate their work, and discuss what they did well or didn't do well. The instructors view was based upon their observations that students view the jury as an evaluation of their project, and the outcome of the jury determines the letter grade they receive on a project, "juries have to be a part of the evaluation process. Students want juries to directly relate to their grade" (interview). However, these instructors did not view juries as the definitive evaluation for a project because juries are fast-paced and spontaneous. A proper evaluation of a project requires more time to review the specifics of each project in relation to the criteria stated in a project statement, as well as the execution of each student's design intentions.

A different view on the purpose of a design jury also surfaced in the interviews with instructors. Three of the five instructors stated that juries are more effective when they not only partially evaluate individual student work, but when the jury also becomes a discourse of ideas on broader issues that a project may present. This discussion seems

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to benefit the entire class, rather than only the student presenting a project. One

instructor responded by stating:

> I see benefits in the type [of jury] that evaluates student's individual work and gives feedback on what works and what doesn't work. But I also see more benefit as a jury as dialogue or discussion. And I think the best juries, the one where the most number of students have light bulbs go off on their heads, are the ones where they get engaged in the discussion (interview).

Another instructor stated that too much emphasis is placed upon evaluation during design

juries. Rather than stressing evaluation during a jury, "the final evaluation is done by the

student after they leave the class. They either retain and use what they learned or they

don't, that's the definitive evaluation. The grade is just another step and it is

overemphasized, less emphasis is placed on what happens inside your head" (interview).

Unique to the jury system at LSU is the importance placed upon the student's

individual intention, as one LSU instructor stated:

> Juries can both evaluate and be a discussion which arises from the student's work. But it still has to be from the perspective from what their concept was and what they were trying to do…you did this well b/c this is what you said you were trying to do and I see it carried out, not 'I don't like that concept' (interview).

Marvin Malecha in his book, *The Design Studio,* wrote "methods of instruction besides

the jury can be used. Rather, methods developed upon clarity of intent and process may

reinforce the private tutorial aspects of the studio" (76). This type of jury discussion is

evident in the studio culture at Louisiana State University and has the potential to be

developed further.

Two of the instructors interviewed at LSU viewed evaluation an important part of

the jury because the students demand it. The other instructors interviewed discussed how

evaluation was the least important part of a jury, and that discussion of ideas and the

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designer's intent should take precedence. These results both agree and disagree with previous research, as will be discussed below.

According to Kathryn Anthony's research findings, "design faculty believe that juries should provide an opportunity to evaluate students' design work with the assistance of some outside opinions from their colleagues." (*Design Juries,* 30). Although, she goes on to state that, "it is indeed ironic that while faculty rountinely advise students to identify goals for their design projects, they themselves have rarely identified clear, obtainable goals for the jury process" (*Design Juries*, 30). Contrary to Anthony's research, are the beliefs held by some of the educators at Harvard University. Discussed earlier in the literature review, during a roundtable discussion about juries at Harvard University's design school, a point was made among the faculty that although students want juries to evaluate their work, the educators should view juries as an opportunity for discussions of theory and ideas to flourish, using the student's work as a vehicle for the discussion. Mark Scoggin, the Chairman of the Department of Architecture stated:

> Actually, I think the students like the juries to evaluate their work. That's really what they want to have happen. They want the people to focus on their project, on the issues that they are concerned with, and they want to hear the reaction. And that's all about evaluation…and quite frankly I think that's the weakest part of the jury system. For me, the jury is a fantastic time to establish a discourse or a debate within the school…and the student's work is the medium which that debate can center around…" (GSD, 5).

Since there exists no agreement between the instructors interviewed on the subject of juries as evaluation, landscape architecture students at LSU are exposed to differing expectations during design juries.

- **Instructors' Objectives During a Jury**

The instructors' objectives during a jury include listening to the student present a design solution to his/her peers, which should lead to an understanding of the student's concept and ideas. After the presentation, instructors' objectives changed to discussing with the student positive and negative aspects of the project, and any changes for improvement that may affect future design decisions. Some instructors focused the discussion on individual student projects, and others focused the discussion on comments that would benefit the entire class.

- **Instructor's Use of a Framework for Criticism During a Jury**

None of the five instructors interviewed utilized a framework for criticism while discussing students' projects in a jury situation. Instructors relied on spontaneous comments instigated by each individual project. This finding in the research is in concurrence with research by Kathryn Anthony who noted in her research that, "Methods of delivering criticism at….universities questioned appear to be similar. Most criticism is oral and delivered in public, on-the-spot" (*Private Reactions*, 7).

As discussed in the literature review, criticism can be constructed in different ways, but the behaviors of description, interpretation, and evaluation are the basic components of criticism. One component alone, such as evaluation, is not sufficient to be criticism. According to Andy Grundberg, a critic for the *New York Times:*

> 'connoisseurs', be it of wine, photography, or design, make proclamations of 'good' or 'bad' based on their own particular tastes. The supporting reasons for these proclamations are rarely given, and without the benefit of explicit criteria, they are merely idiosyncratic, don't lend themselves readily to discussion, and are not informative. Unfortunately, designers often play the role of connoisseur while serving on juries. Relying primarily on criticism based strictly on their own personal taste can create chaos and confusion for students (qtd. In Anthony, *Design Juries*, 105).

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One instructor admitted to discussing 'glaring mistakes' that may be noticeable in a presentation of a project. Instructors overall aimed at giving students more positive than negative criticism. As well, one instructor offered that a framework for criticism during a jury might be useful to allow all students to receive specific comments on their projects. This sentiment is echoed in Wayne Attoe's writing:

> If critical processes are found frequently (studio, self-criticism,…), then we should be aware of the methods of criticism employed and their uses and abuses so that critical activities can truly support our understanding of the physical environment and efforts to improve its usefulness and quality (Attoe, 2).

Based upon observations of the author as both a receiver and giver of feedback in the design studio, although design instructors do not follow a structure by which to give criticism during a jury, studio criticism tends to be given to students by several means, including, citations of design theory, facts, references to well-known built works, and rules-of thumb.

- **Instructors' Views on How Students React to Juries**

A wide range of student reactions to juries was discussed in the interviews. It was discussed that students who actively engage in desk crits and attend class regularly seemed to appreciate feedback given in juries. On the other hand, students with poor attendance or those who did not seek out feedback in the studio reacted indifferently to juries and did not engage in discussion. In this same category would be students who do not engage in discussion because they are sleep deprived from staying up the night before a jury to work on their project. It was noted by design instructors that the level of engagement by students during design juries is very low if the jury is given on the same day the project is due because the students haven't slept.

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Two of the five design instructors discussed that some students tend to react defensively to the criticism they receive. As one instructor stated:

> Some students want to argue, they are very defensive and sometimes I'll be thinking it [their project] is really good, but I may mention 'if you would've pushed it in this direction', making a suggestion, thinking the student would agree or disagree…but instead they get very defensive as if I am attacking them. Some students can't separate their egos- who they are from what they do, that's the biggest draw back in the whole jury process (interview).

Another instructor described how it can be frustrating for the teacher if the student acts defensively during a jury:

> Defending what you have done is good up to a point, but then you have to accept the criticism… 'okay, I understand what you're saying and I'll consider it next time'. Something that drops the point and shows the student is willing to listen and take some constructive criticism or advice. (interview).

Other reactions students have to juries that were noticed by instructors include nervousness by the student presenting a project. Two of the five instructors interviewed discussed that students being nervous about presenting their project interferes with them learning from other students' presentation because instead of listening and engaging in the conversation they are worrying about their presentation. Just the opposite, one instructor noted that if students feel they received approval during their jury, they react boastfully throughout the rest of the jury, thereby not feeling the need to listen to other students' presentations. In Kathryn Anthony's research, her observations revealed that:

> While receiving the jury's comments, most architecture students display defensive and nervous behavior. Most of this behavior was non-verbal. Most common student behavior patterns observed were crossing arms and legs, avoiding eye contact, and covering up the mouth and chin…Most faculty behaved nervously too, as did some onlookers from the rest of the class (*Private Reactions*, 7).

Two of the five instructors also discussed that students' reactions to juries revolve around the notion of the jury as an evaluation of their project. One instructor stated, "They want to know: did they like it/did they not like it…did I do okay/did I not do okay?" (interview). In summation, the instructors viewed the students as having a wide range of reactions to juries, from positive receptive learning experiences, to reactions of nervous, defensive behavior.

- **Instructors' Views on the Effectiveness of Juries as a Learning Tool**

Although all of the instructors interviewed agreed that desk crits are an effective learning tool, when asked if juries are an effective learning tool, four of the five instructors interviewed discussed that the effectiveness of juries as a learning tool is conditional upon many factors. One instructor discussed that juries are effective, "if students are offered good feedback…meaningful, informative, not subjective 'I like it/I don't like it'…that is the subjectivity, that's fine you like it but why?" (interview). Another instructor offered:

> Whether they [students] learn that much…well, when I look around and see people sleeping in the jury after the first few presentations…basically, I find that most students want to hear about their own project and they are not interested in the others…they would leave after their turn if they could, they just want to know if they did okay and if they got and A or a B (interview).

One of the five instructors discussed that juries are not as an effective learning tool as desk crits because desk crits focus on the students design process, "the student is focused on the end result, and the teacher should be focused on how the student gets there and what they learned along the way" (interview).

Research from Kathryn Anthony from interviews, questionnaires, observations, and diaries of students, instructors, and practioners, indicates overwhelmingly that, "the

vast majority of those questioned believe that today's architectural jury system is

inadequate and needs improvement" (*Private Reactions*, 5).

- **Instructors' Views of Successful Design Juries**

Successful design juries as viewed by instructors are those that engage the

students in a discussion of ideas, allowing both the student presenting and the entire class

useful information that can be applied to future design decisions. One instructor

discussed he is satisfied with juries when:

> Students have been able to receive what I've had to say. The ideal jury is
> one in which a student owns his own work, explains it well, and listens to
> different points of view. The best jury would spark a discussion on larger
> issues, but it rarely happens because our education system is focused on
> the end result rather than the process by which we arrive there. The
> landscape is not an end result and something that is definitive, which is of
> course what the students are looking for, is doing a disservice to the
> students and the landscape (interview).

The idea of criticism having the ability to instigate a discussion of differing ideas

during juries, instead of being an evaluation of a finished product, would continue to

breathe life into the student's design even after completion by sharing with others one's

perceptions and reactions to the work. As Arthur Danto states on his idea of criticism:

> A work of art is composed of a material object given life by a structure of
> thought, much as a human person may be regarded as a body animated by
> a soul. Criticism, in its highest vocation, identifies the thoughts that give
> life to a work or set of works (Danto qtd. in Meyer, *Reflections*, 18).

 Other specific jury situations that were considered successful by three instructors

were juries that include outside jurors that are involved in a real site who can offer

students realistic advice on the feasibility of their ideas.

- **Frequency of Instructor Explanation to Students About the Purpose of a Jury**

Three out of the five instructors interviewed stated that they do not discuss the purpose of a jury with students while teaching a design studio. The other two instructors who did discuss juries with their students revolved the discussion around reassurance that juries aren't intended to be destructive, as well as explaining how to give an effective presentation. The results to this topic are in concurrence with research done by Kathryn Anthony, who has found that, "…rarely are the goals of juries brought out into the open and discussed. One reason for this is that even design instructors are unclear as to what the goals of juries should be, and they have a plurality of viewpoints on the subject" (*Design Juries*, 29).

- **Instructors' Views on Whom the Jury Should be Directed Towards**

Five out of the five design instructors interviewed believe the jury should be directed towards the entire class. Although a few mentioned at first the class as a whole should give their attention to the student presenting, then the discussion should include everyone present, as one instructor stated:

> It [jury] should be focused on larger issues and include the rest of the students…or else what's the point of having the rest of the students hanging around falling asleep in the back of the class, wondering when they can present their idea and then they want to leave (interview).

- **Instructors' Views on Their Encouragement of Students to Participate in Jury Discussion**

Four of the five instructors interviewed encourage their students to participate during jury discussions. The instructors feel it is important for the students to feel their ideas are important, and as one instructor stated, "Some students want to interact and discuss. It works well when the students care about each other and are concerned with

what one another did" (interview). Although, of the four instructors who encourage their

students to participate during jury discussions, one admitted to not encouraging student

participation enough, "I am becoming more aware of giving the students a chance to

speak, although their comments may not be well directed or sophisticated, they have

observations we may not have. And it makes them feel empowered" (interview). From

these results it appears that students and instructors are willing to participate in a

discussion, although the culture and language of how to deliver criticism in a studio

setting may need to be taught to students to learn how to give for effective criticism

themselves.

- **Instructors' Views on Changes for Improvement in the Way Juries are Conducted**

Four out of five instructors' concern for improvement in the way juries are

conducted was the chance for outside jurors to participate on the jury panel. There were

several reasons given for why outside jurors would improve juries. The first reason was

to make students more accountable for their work by forcing to students to have strong

graphic and verbal skills in order to explain their idea to someone who hasn't seen the

idea evolve into a final project. The second reason was to give the students real world

feedback, rather than just feedback about theories and concepts. The third reason was to

give the instructor feedback about their teaching skills, because if outside jurors gave

feedback to the students it would allow the instructor the chance to step back and listen to

different perspectives. Emphasized by instructors was the suggestion that outside jurors

should have a clear idea of the purpose of the jury, and be given specific areas to

comment on by the studio instructor.

Another change for improvement given by one instructor was to try alternative ways to conduct juries, such as, allowing students to role play. During a jury in which students role play, students would assume the roles of citizens concerned with the project, such as, a maintenance crew, the mayor, neighbors of the site, etc. This role playing jury would force students to think about all people who would be affected by their design. Two of the five instructors mentioned they would like to see a reduction in the size of juries, in order to give each student adequate feedback on their work. Two of the instructors also believe it is important to have the students submit their project before the day of the jury, in order for the students to be alert and willing to participate in the discussion by ensuring the students have slept the night before the jury. One of the instructors' recommendations for change included a 'summing up' of what was discussed during a jury to reinforce the ideas through repetition and to allow the students to discuss issues that they feel are important.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS FROM STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

The results from the student questionnaires will be discussed in this chapter. The organization of information is based upon each of the topics asked in the questionnaire. The results of each question will be displayed in charts. On each chart the undergraduate and graduate students responses will both be displayed individually, and then shown together as the result of all the students surveyed. All data collected from the student questionnaires is displayed in tables in Appendix C.

CLASS DISCUSSION OF THE PURPOSE OF JURIES

Students were asked how frequently the purpose of a design jury is discussed in landscape architecture studios, and the results are illustrated in Figure 4.1. Over half of all students (fifty-five percent) responded by stating that only sometimes in design studios the instructors discusses with the class the purpose of a design jury. Thirty-four percent of all students responded that in every landscape architecture studio they have taken at LSU, the instructor has discussed the purpose of a design jury. Overall, only eleven percent of all students felt that none of their design instructors have discussed the purpose of a design jury in any of the studios that have taken at LSU.

As discussed in Chapter 3, three out of the five instructors interviewed stated that they do not discuss the purpose of a jury with students while teaching a design studio. The other two instructors revolved their discussions of juries around how to give an effective presentation, or reassuring students that juries are intended to be constructive. Comparing the responses given by students to those given by instructors may imply that not enough communication between instructors and students is occurring in studios about the purpose of design juries. This may affect what type of learning experience both the
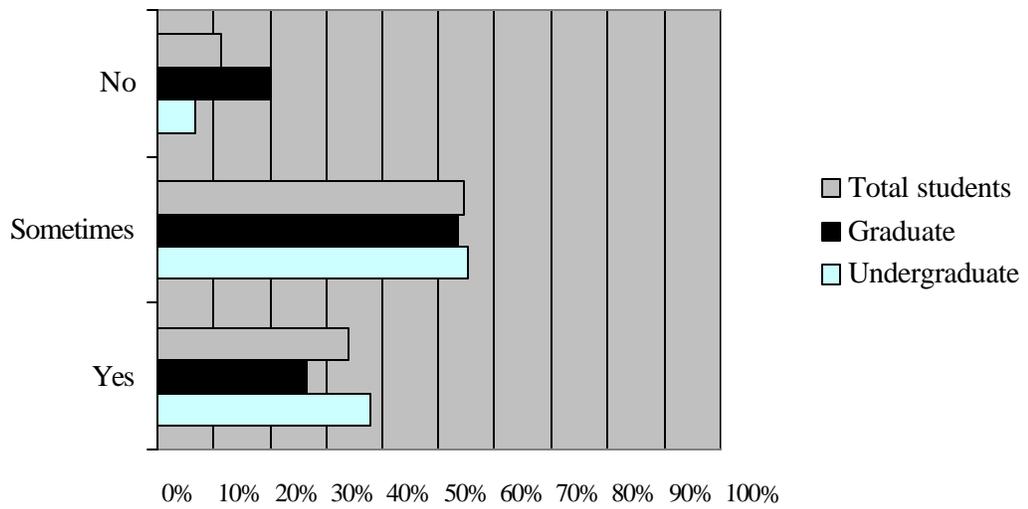
Figure 4.1. Students' Responses to the Question:
During Your Past and Current Design Studios at LSU, Did Your Instructor
Explain the Purpose of a Design Jury to the Entire Class?

teachers and students think they are owed in a jury situation. This lack of communication

may result in juries that are not effective as they could be, if a misunderstanding is

occurring between what students and instructors would like to gain from the experience.

ENCOURAGEMENT OF STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN JURY DISCUSSIONS

When students were asked if they are encouraged to participate in jury discussions

of other students' projects, fifty-eight percent of all students responded they are

encouraged to participate in discussions, as shown in Figure 4.2. Forty-two percent of all

students responded that only in some juries have they been encouraged to participate in

jury discussions. An overwhelming response from students shows that zero percent feel

they have never been included in jury discussions of other students' projects. As

discussed in Chapter 3, four of the five instructors interviewed encourage their students to

participate in jury discussions.

It should be noted at this point that the student questionnaire allowed for students

to write any additional comments they had about juries. One of the written responses

given by a student directly related to students participating in jury discussions. The

response stated, "our class has an unspoken golden rule. You don't point out a negative

during final presentations. We do that in the studio. We have done this for a year, and

our class dynamic is very strong." How students perceive the purpose of a jury affects

the type of discussions that are occurring during juries. Even if instructors are

encouraging students to engage in a discourse, the exchange of ideas may be limited by

the students' perceptions of the purpose of the discussion. If students feel the jury

discussion influences the evaluation of their project, the discourse may be limited rather
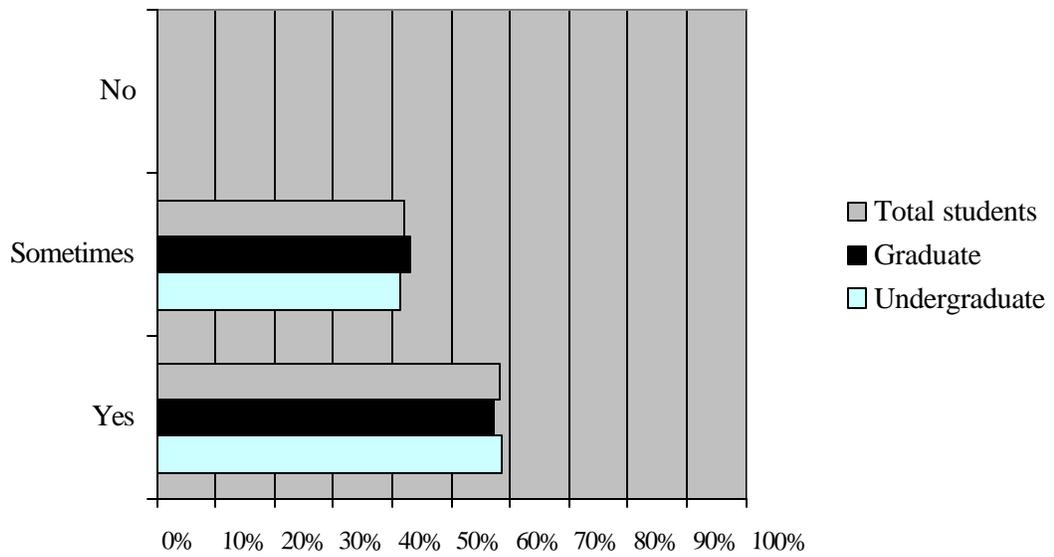
Figure 4.2. Students' Responses to the Question:
During Past and Current Design Studios at LSU, Have You Been Encouraged to
Participate in the Jury Discussion When Another Student is Presenting his/her
Project?

than the discussion flourishing about issues, ideas, or concerns any of the students may have.

PERCEIVED STRUCTURE OF CRITICISM GIVEN DURING A JURY

The view of students surveyed as to whether their design instructors use a structure for giving criticism during design juries is illustrated in Figure 4.3. Thirty percent of the students feel that jurors do use a structure for giving criticism to students. Forty-four percent of students responded that jurors only sometimes do they feel jurors utilize a structure for the criticism they receive during juries. While twenty-six percent of all students responded that they did not think jurors follow a certain structure for giving criticism.

As discussed in Chapter 3, none of the five instructors interviewed utilized a structure for criticism while discussing students' projects during a jury. Yet, thirty percent of students feel that jurors use a structure for giving criticism, while forty-four percent of students feel that a structure for criticism is utilized sometimes during a jury. A shortcoming of this thesis research due to time constraints was exploring what type of structure students perceived their instructors to be utilizing during juries. Some instructors in landscape architecture design studios use an evaluation sheet to grade a project after a jury. These evaluation sheets often include a list of objectives the student should have completed while working on a project. The use of an evaluation sheet to grade a project against a list of criteria may be what students perceive to be a structure instructors use during criticism. However, instructors who were interviewed give spontaneous verbal criticism during a jury situation that differs for each project, based upon what issues each project may present to be discussed.
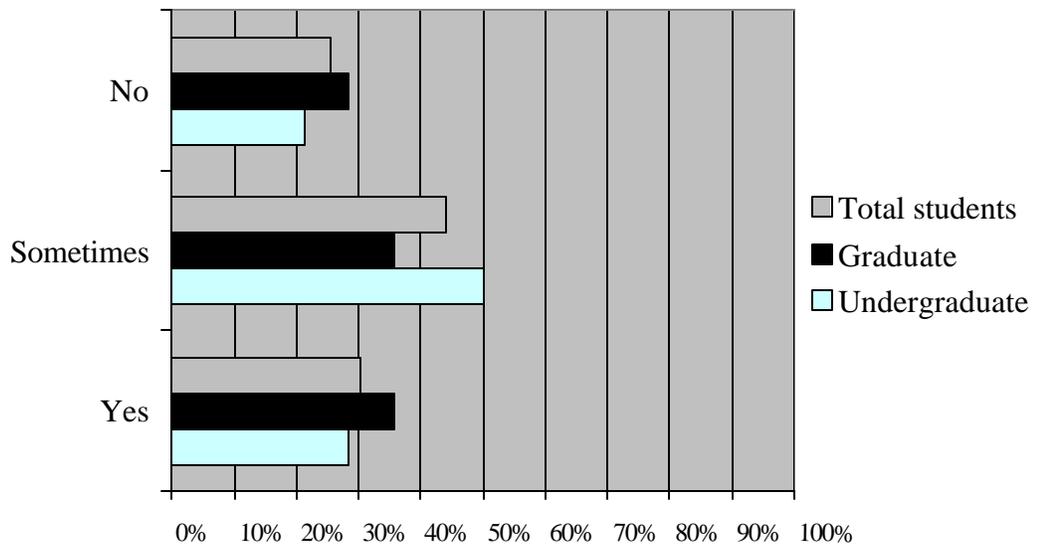
Figure 4.3. Students' Responses to the Question:
Overall, Do You Feel Jurors Follow a Certain Structure For Giving Students
Criticism During a Jury?

WHO SHOULD BENEFIT FROM A JURY

The students' responses to whom they think should benefit from a jury are illustrated in Figure 4.4. Over half of the students (fifty-two percent) responded that both the student presenting a project and the students in the class observing the jury should benefit from the jury process. Whereas, thirty-six percent of all students thought everyone observing the jury should benefit, including the jurors. Only eleven percent of students thought only the student presenting a project should benefit from a design jury. As discussed in Chapter 3, five of the five instructors interviewed believe the jury should be directed towards the entire class.
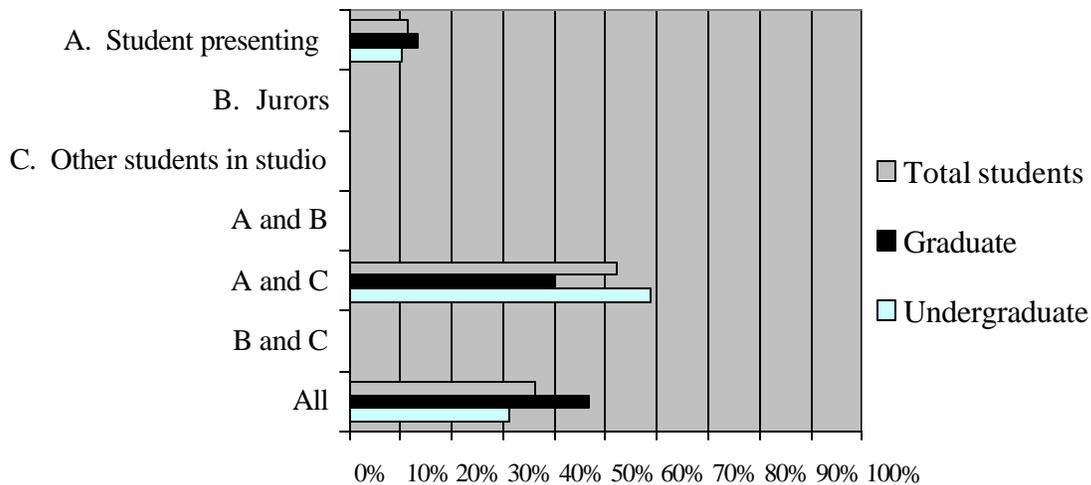
Figure 4.4. Students' Responses' to the Question:
Who Do You Think Should Benefit From a Jury?

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE WAY JURIES ARE CURRENTLY CONDUCTED

The students' responses to whom they think benefits from the way juries are currently conducted are illustrated in Figure 4.5. The most common response from students at thirty-two percent was that students believe only the student presenting a project benefits from jury discussions. The next common response, at twenty-three percent, was that students thought everyone present at a jury benefits from the discussion.

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Eighteen percent of students think both the student presenting and the students observing benefit from the jury discussion. Eleven percent of all students think only the students observing a jury benefit from the discussion. Nine percent of all students believe only the jurors benefit from jury discussions. Two percent of students believe that no one benefits from the way juries are currently conducted at LSU.
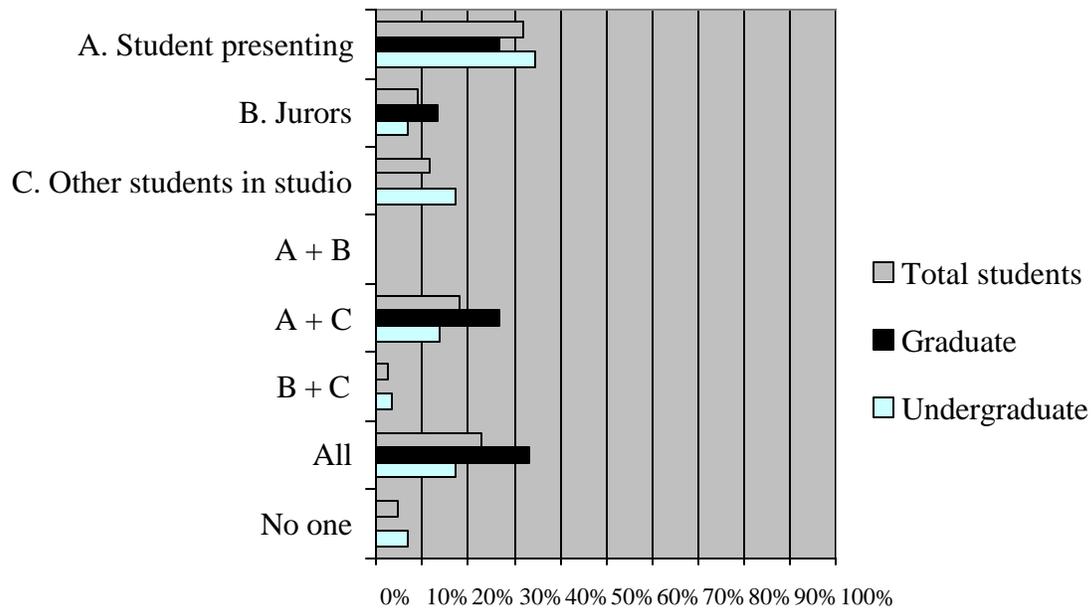
Figure 4.5 Students' Responses to the Question:
Who Do You Think Benefits From the Way Juries Are Currently Conducted?

COMPARISON BETWEEN WHO STUDENTS THINK SHOULD BENEFIT FROM JURIES AND WHO THEY THINK CURRENTLY DOES BENEFIT

There exists an inconsistency when comparing the students' responses to which they think *should* benefit from juries and whom they think actually *does* benefit from juries. This inconsistency may imply that students think juries, as a learning experience may not be as effective as they have the potential to be.

Students responses indicated both the student presenting a project and the others students in the studio observing the jury should benefit from the experience (52%), in

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comparison, only eighteen (18%) percent of students think the above mentioned students are benefiting from the experience. The responses for who should benefit from a jury are concentrated to the students (52%); everyone present, including students and jurors (37%); and a small percentage think only the student presenting the project should benefit from a jury (11%). In comparison, the responses to whom students think benefits from the way juries are currently conducted were widely distributed among all of the choices. Again, this inconsistency may imply that juries, as a learning experience, may not be as effective as they have the potential to be. The inconsistency of who think should and does benefit from the way juries are currently conducted may occur because there is a lack of consistency in the way juries are conducted in different studios.
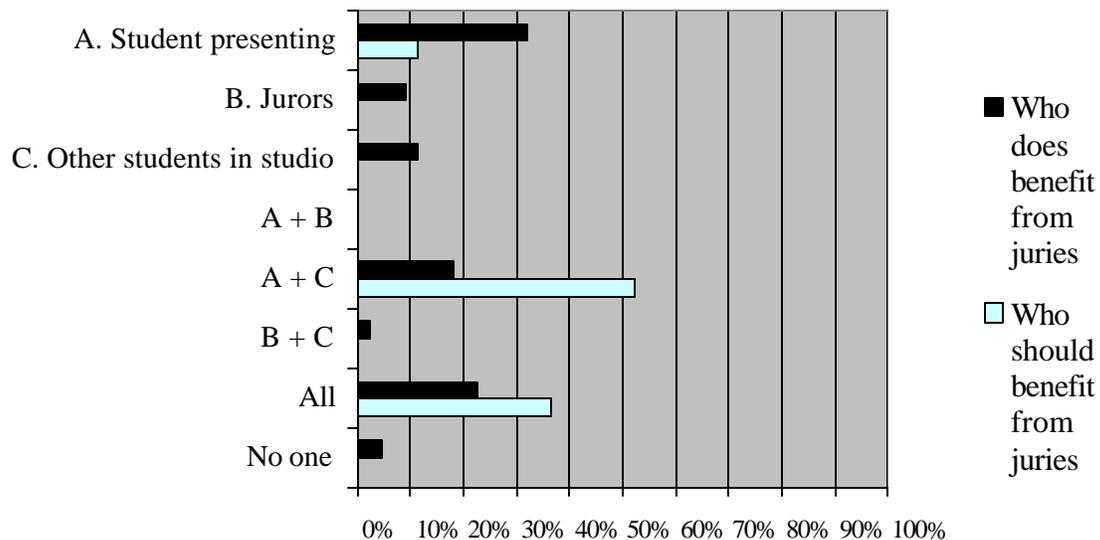
Figure 4.6. Comparison Between Whom Students Think Should Benefit From Juries and Who Benefits From the Way Juries are Currently Conducted.

STUDENT SATISFACTION OF DESK CRITS AND JURIES

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with desk crits, informal class pin ups, and juries. The students were given a scale of one to five by which to respond to the

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questions. One on the scale represented the student was very dissatisfied, and five on the scale represented very satisfied. The responses of four and five, interpreted as the student was satisfied, were calculated for each category. The following results shown in Figure 4.7 are a percentage of students who responded to each category who were satisfied.

Of all three learning situations employed in a design studio, students were most satisfied with juries. Sixty-three percent of all students who were surveyed are satisfied with design juries. Fifty-three percent of all students surveyed are satisfied with desk crits. Whereas, only thirty percent of all students surveyed are satisfied with informal class pin ups.
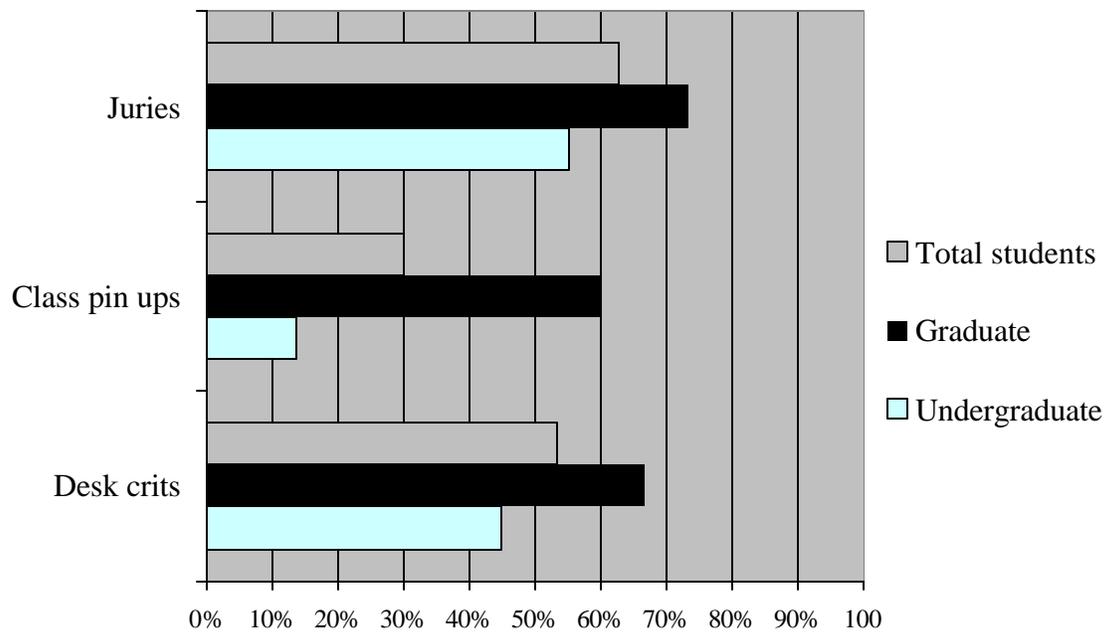
Figure 4.7. Percentage of Student Satisfaction of Desk Crits, Pin Ups, and Juries

It should be noted that the results between graduate and undergraduate students differed dramatically in these results. While sixty-seven percent of graduate students surveyed are satisfied with desk crits, forty-five percent of undergraduates were satisfied with desk crits. Seventy-three percent of graduate students were satisfied with juries, and

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a much smaller number of undergraduates were satisfied with juries at fifty-five percent. The most dramatic difference is in students satisfaction of class pin ups. Sixty percent of graduate students were satisfied with pin ups, while only fourteen percent of undergraduates were satisfied with pin ups. This may be due to the smaller class size of graduate studios, which may allow for more effective communication during pin ups.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING TOOLS IN A STUDIO

Students were asked to rate how much they learn from several different situations in a studio. The different learning situations included desk crits, positive criticism, class pin ups, negative criticism, and final juries. The students were given a scale of one to five by which to respond to the questions. One on the scale represented the students learned very little, and five on the scale represented the students learned very much. The responses were analyzed to find the mean or average of responses. The following results shown in Figure 4.8 are shown an average or mean of students' responses for each category to indicate how much students think they learned from each situation.

On a scale of one to five, students' average response to how much they learned from desk crits was 3.89. The next highest learning experience students rated was negative criticism at 3.7. To positive criticism, students rated their learning experience as 3.61. This was equal to the response students gave to their learning experience while presenting their own project during a final jury, also at 3.61. Students rated their learning experience while other students present their projects slightly lower at 3.4 on the scale. The lowest rating for a learning experience was at 3.14 for informal class pin ups.

Comparing the student results to the responses given by teachers indicates that both faculty and students view desk crits as a more effective learning tool than juries.

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Although this research did not quantify the results of instructor interviews, when they were asked if desk crits were effective teaching methods, all answered yes without hesitation. The results indicate that students feel on a scale of one to five, the amount learned from desk crits averages at 3.89. This indicates that the faculty perceives the students to be learning more than the students think they do.
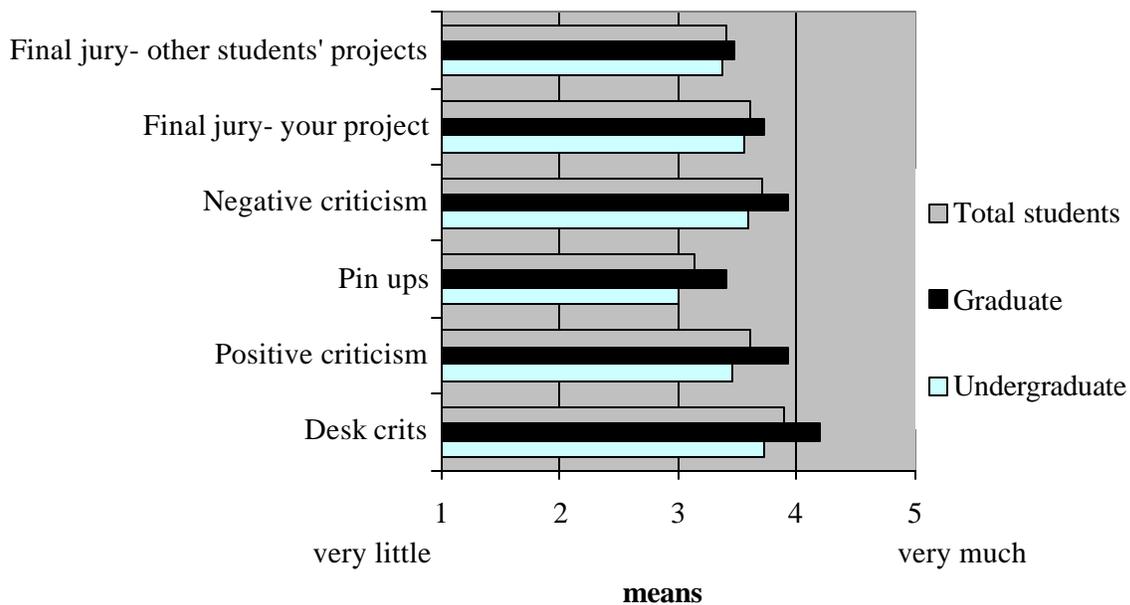
Figure 4.8. Students' Response to the Question:
In General, How Much Do You Usually Learn From Each of the Following Situations?

STUDENT VIEWS ON THE GOALS OF DESK CRITS

Students surveyed were given thirteen choices listed as goals of desk crits. The given choices were acquired from responses given during instructor interviews. Students were asked to agree or disagree if they thought the given choices are goals of desk crits. The students responded on a scale of one to five. One on the scale represented the student strongly disagreed with the option as a goal of a desk crit. Five on the scale represented the students strongly agreed that the option was a goal of a desk crit. For each option, the responses of four and five were calculated because they were interpreted

as the student agreed that the given option was a goal of desk crits. The information is shown in Figure 4.9 as the percentage of students who agree that the given topic is a goal of a desk crit.

Students responses of what they agree are goals of desk crits are as follows in descending order: advice from the studio instructor (87%); suggestions for further research (84%); understanding their own personal design process (82%); gain confidence in talking about ideas with others (80%); allow a chance for the teacher to listen to their ideas (78%); an opportunity for students to explore several different design options (78%); find faults in their design (75%); an opportunity for instructors to encourage each student to explore their own ideas (75%); improve critical thinking skills (73%); teach students how to respond to criticism (69%); teach students how to critique their ideas on their own (66%); gain confidence in their own design ability (64%); be given a design solution by their instructor (36%).

STUDENT VIEWS ON THE GOALS OF JURIES

Students surveyed were given a choice of eighteen possible goals of juries and were asked to agree or disagree if they thought they were goals of juries. The given choices were acquired from instructors' views on the goals of juries. Students were asked to agree or disagree if they thought the given choices are goals of juries. The students responded on a scale of one to five. One on the scale represented the student strongly disagree with the option as a goal of a jury. Five on the scale represented the students strongly agreed that the option was a goal of a jury. For each option, the responses of four and five were calculated because they were interpreted as the student

Figure 4.9. Percentages of Students Who Agree the Following Items are Goals of Desk Crits

agreed the given option was a goal of a jury. The information is shown in Figure 4.10 as the percentage of students who agree that the given item is a goal of a jury.

Students responses of what they think are goals of juries are as follows in descending order: learn how to respond to criticism (90%); improve presentation skills (87%); listen to jurors' feedback (82%); see other students' projects (82%); find out what you did and didn't do well (80%); chance for teachers to listen to your ideas (77%); improve design knowledge (73%); inform future design decisions (71%); improve graphic skills (68%); listen to feedback given to other students (66%); review the process that lead to your design (64%); discuss ideas and issues with others (64%); improve critical thinking skills (59%); allows the chance for others to find faults in your design (52%); chance for jurors to convey their knowledge (48%); improve design vocabulary (43%); establish a letter grade for your project (34%); chance to please instructors (27%).

The most important goals of juries according to students directly relates to what they believe they can learn from the project they are presenting. They think juries should teach them to defend their design ideas by responding to the given criticism, improve presentation skills, learning about specific parts of their project that worked and parts that didn't, learning from other students' projects, and learning more design knowledge and how they can apply it to future designs. These results are similar to Kathryn Anthony's findings that imply, "Students stress that juries should provide an opportunity to learn how well they solved a design problem and how they can improve their design work in the future. Learning from the jury is a key goal" (Anthony, *Design Juries*, 31).

However, rating lower as goals for design juries according to students are improving critical thinking skills, discussing ideas and issues with others, reviewing their

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design process, and improving design vocabulary. These results may imply that the communication in juries as they are currently conducted revolve around evaluating how well a student solved the problem by producing a finished product. The results are in concurrence with the roundtable discussion of Harvard professors published in *GSD News*, in which professors recognized that students want the jury to evaluate their project, while professors want to focus on a discussion of ideas that relate to larger issues in the field of landscape architecture, placing the student's project into a larger context.

STUDENT REACTIONS TO DESK CRITS

Students surveyed were given a choice of fourteen possible reactions students have to desk crits. They were asked to rate how frequently they responded in the given ways. The given choices were acquired from instructor interviews. The students responded on a scale of one to five. One on the scale represented the student rarely reacted in that way to desk crits. Five on the scale represented the student very frequently responded in that way to desk crits. For each given reaction, the responses of four and five were calculated because they were interpreted as the student frequently responded in the given way to desk crits.   The information is shown in Figure 4.11 as the percentage of students who frequently responded in the following ways to desk crits.

Students' responses of how they frequently react to desk crits follows in descending order: appreciative of feedback given (84%); receptive to feedback given (79%); encouraged (61%); ready to try new things (61%); excited about ideas (58%); confused (54%); inspired (49%); confident in personal design process (47%); frustrated because they didn't get answers (35%); disappointed (33%); nervous (26%); defensive of ideas (23%); resistant to take advice (14%); indifferent (5%). A few responses were
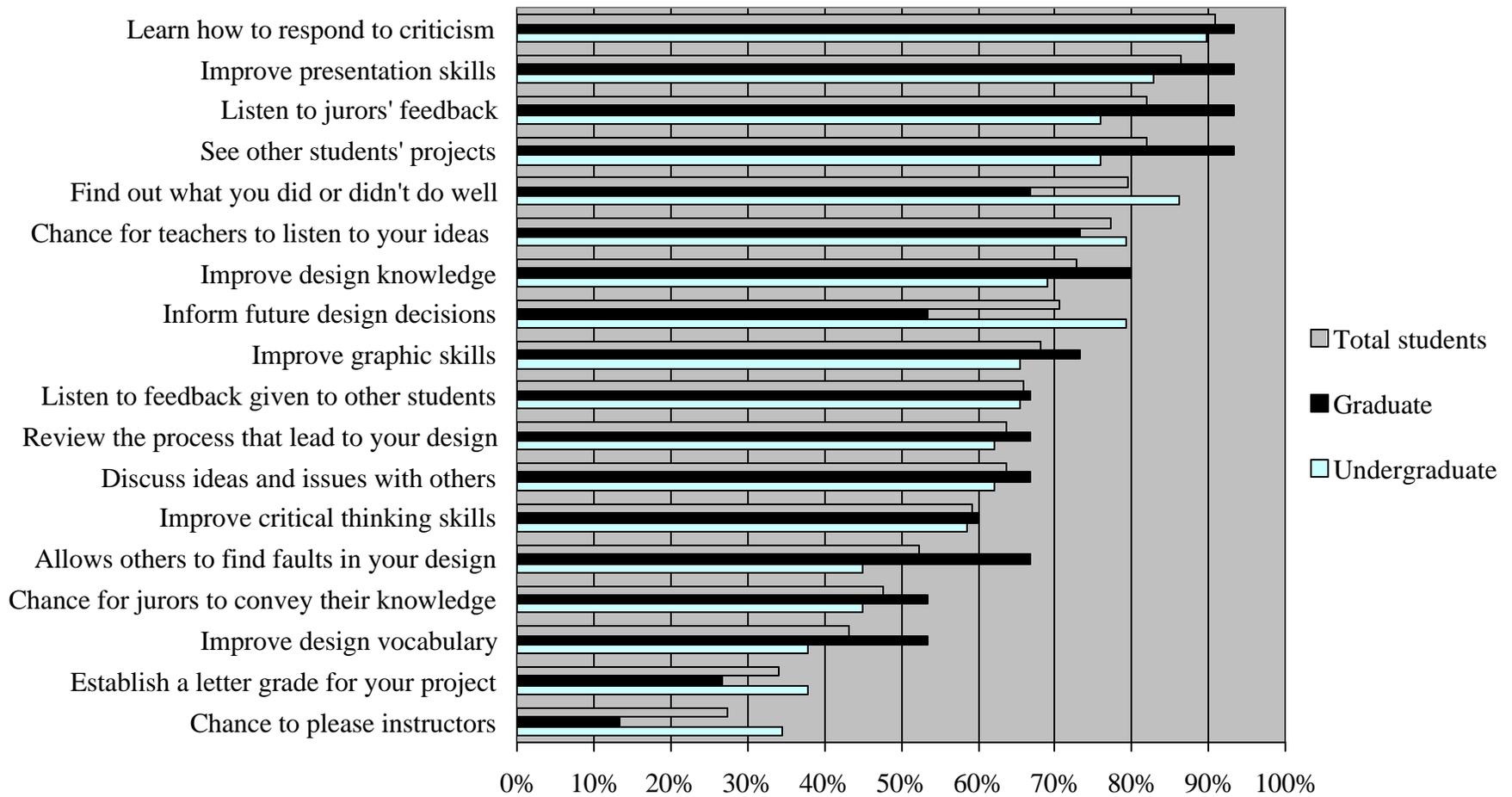
Figure 4.10. Percentage of Students Who Agree the Following Items are Goals of Juries

written under the optional 'other' category by students. These include the following reactions: aggravated (2%) and smothered (2%). The students' responses imply they frequently response in positive ways to desk crits. This indicates students are learning from the feedback given during desk crits. Overall, graduate students responded more positively to desk crits than undergraduate students.

Negative reactions to desk crits were implied by students but at a lower percentage of frequency than positive reactions. The student questionnaire indicated that over half of all students (54%) are left feeling confused after a desk crit quite frequently; about one-third (35%) of all students are left feeling frustrated because they didn't get answers, and one-third (33%) are left feeling disappointed after a desk crit. Design instructors indicated that students may react confused, disappointed, or frustrated after receiving a desk crit. These reactions may occur because the student is struggling to solve a design problem. During a desk crit, the student may turn to the instructor for a design solution, only to be discouraged by the fact that they have to discover a solution by using their own design process.

STUDENT REACTIONS TO JURIES

Students surveyed were given a choice of fifteen possible reactions students have to juries and were asked to response how frequently they responded in these ways. The given choices were acquired from instructor interviews. The students responded on a scale of one to five. One on the scale represented the student rarely reacted in the given way to juries. Five on the scale represented the student very frequently responded in the given way to juries. For each option, the responses of four and five were calculated because they were interpreted as the student frequently responded in the given way to
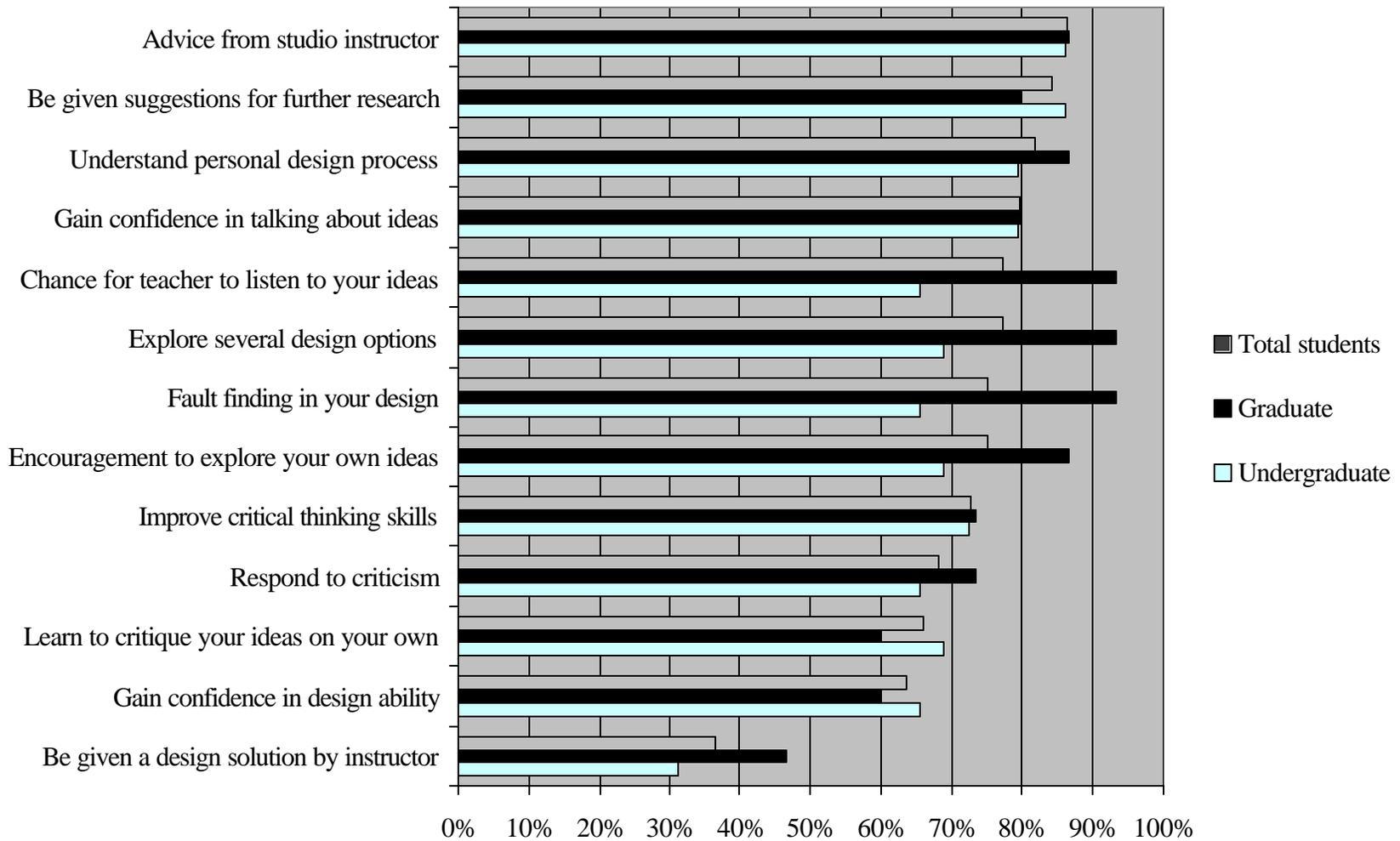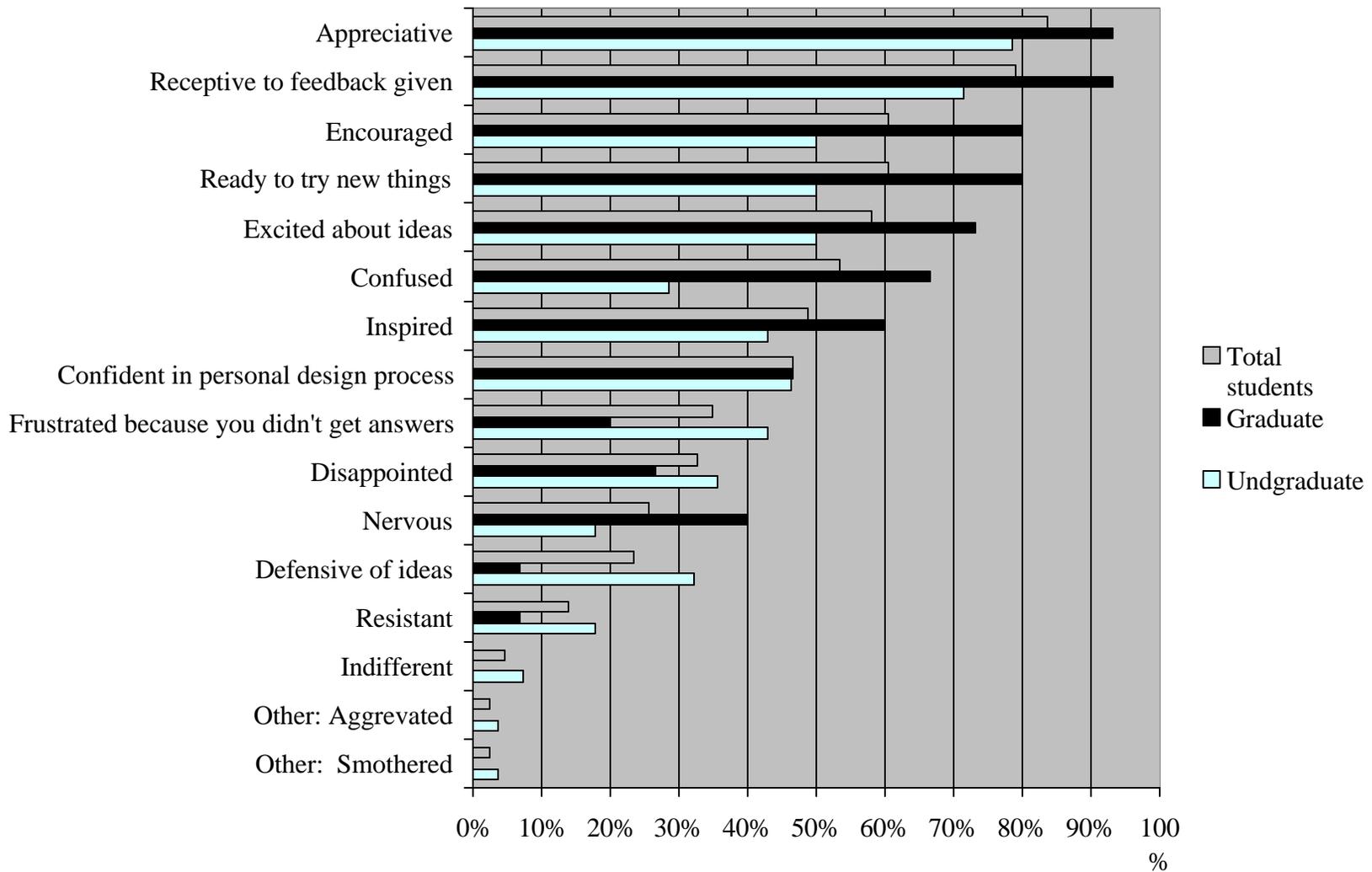
Figure 4.11. Percentage of Students Who Frequently React in the Following Ways to Desk Crits

juries.   The information is shown in Figure 4.12 as the percentage of students who

frequently responded in the following ways to juries.

Students' responses of how they feel they react to desk crits is as follows in

descending order: appreciative (64%); receptive to feedback given (56%); ready to try

new things (47%); confident in personal design process (47%); encouraged (44%);

nervous (42%); excited about ideas (42%); inspired (40%); bored (38%); defensive of

ideas (33%); argumentative (26%); disappointed (23%); confused (23%); resistant to take

advice (9%); indifferent (5%). A few responses were written under the optional 'other'

category by students. These include the following reactions: aggravated (2%) and

exhausted (2%).

The results to the frequency of student reactions to juries were lower than

expected. Neither the positive nor negative reactions were given exceptionally high

responses. Although responses given by LSU instructors were not quantified, it was

discussed that students who regularly attended classes and engaged in desk crits were

often appreciative of feedback given during juries. Whereas, students who had poor

attendance and did not engage the instructor frequently responded indifferently to juries.

The student results show sixty-four (64%) of students frequently react appreciative to

juries, whereas only five (5%) of students surveyed responded they react indifferently to

juries. A limitation of this research probably occurred in the sample of students who

returned the questionnaires. Although, questionnaires were distributed to all of the

students in the selected studios, forty-three (43%) were returned. It is possible that

students who have poor attendance in design studios and who do not actively engage

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professors in discussion of ideas comprised a low number of students who responded to the questionnaire.

Overall, graduate students responded more positively to juries than undergraduate students. Graduate student responded more positively to both desk crits and juries. These reactions may be because of the level of maturity that is required to give and receive criticism. A well-developed knowledge of design theory is necessary for discussions to broaden past 'I like it/I don't like it' discourse into a critique based in theory:

> Critique needs a solid grounding in theory to be meaningful, and this takes some time to develop. There is an idea structure behind criticism. This is the link between criticism and theory. Criticism is a crucial link between theory and practice. It takes time for this structure to develop, and for the student to reach the level of sophistication needed to use it meaningfully (Bowring, 44).

COMPARISON OF STUDENT REACTIONS TO DESK CRITS AND JURIES

A comparison of student reactions to desk crits and juries is shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 4.13. Overall, students react more positively to desk crits than juries. In a desk crit, students more frequently react in the following ways: appreciate, receptive to feedback given, ready to try new things, encouraged, excited about ideas, and inspired.

It is possible students react in these ways more frequently to desk crits than juries because the feedback given during a desk crit can be acted upon because the student is in the process of design when he/she receives a desk crit. Desk crits also allow for a closer physical distance between the teacher and student where they physically are on the same eye level, which probably allows the student to feel more comfortable talking about ideas.
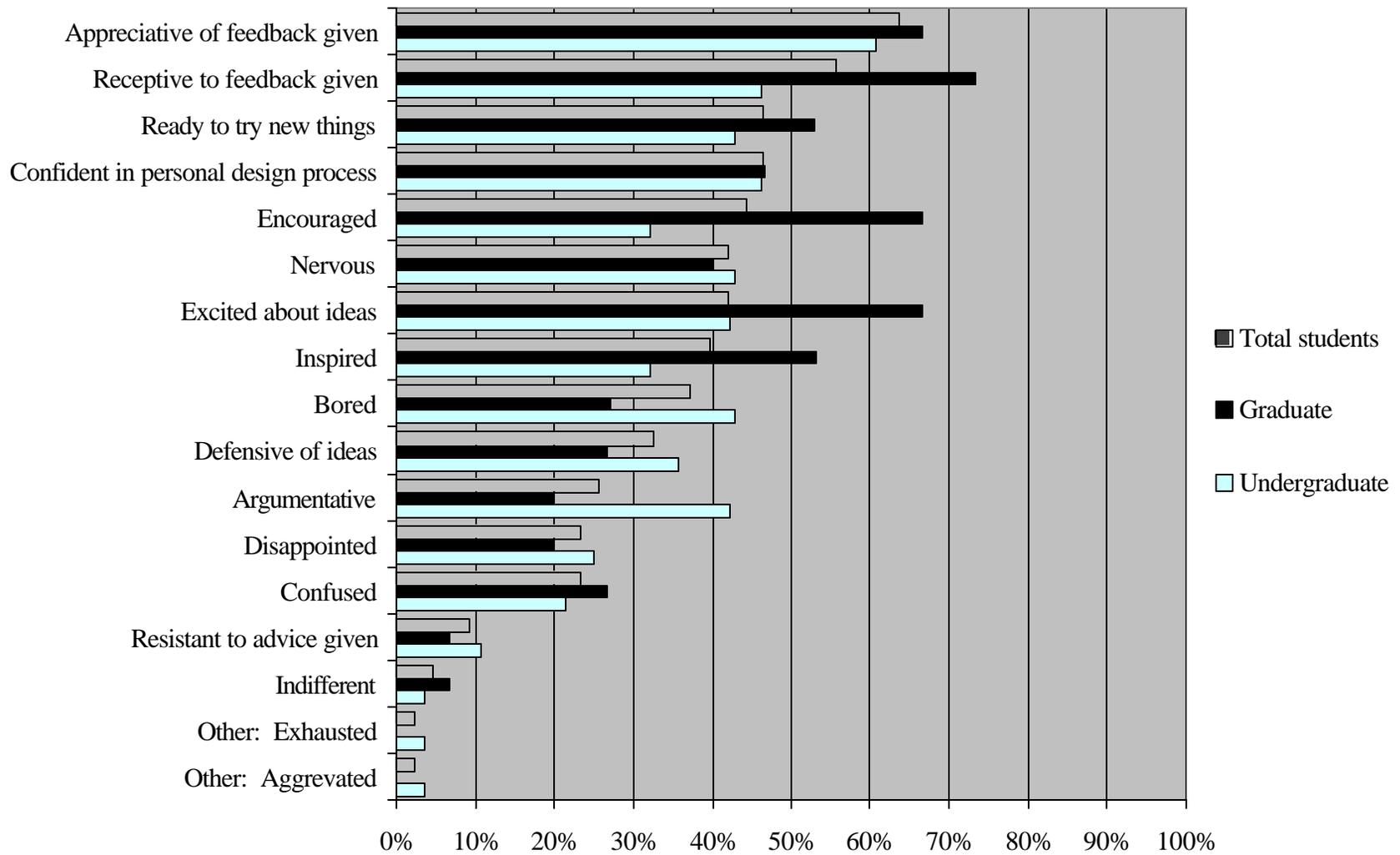
Figure 4.12. Percentage of Students Who Frequently React in the Following Ways to Juries

Students also responded more frequently to desk crits in the following ways: disappointed, confused, and resistant to take advice. This may indicate the personal struggle students may experience in a design process that has no guaranteed outcome.

Table 4.1. Comparison of the Frequency of Student Reactions to Desk Crits and Juries.

Reactions	Desk crits	Juries
Appreciative	84%	64%
Receptive to feedback given	79%	56%
Ready to try new things	60%	47%
Encouraged	60%	44%
Excited about ideas	58%	42%
Confused	53%	23%
Inspired	49%	40%
Confident in personal design process	47%	47%
Disappointed	33%	23%
Nervous	26%	42%
Defensive of ideas	23%	33%
Resistant to take advice	14%	9%
Indifferent	5%	5%
Other: aggrevated	2%	2%
Other: smothered	2%	0%
Other: exhausted	0%	2%

Juries more frequently than desk crits make students react nervous and defensive of ideas. Students may react in these ways because of the physical separation between the student presenting and the rest of the class. This physical geography of a student and his/her work being on display may cause a student to become nervous and defensive of his/her ideas.

BEST JURY EXPERIENCES

Students were asked to write a response to an open-ended question about the best jury experience they have ever had or seen. The responses usually focused on one
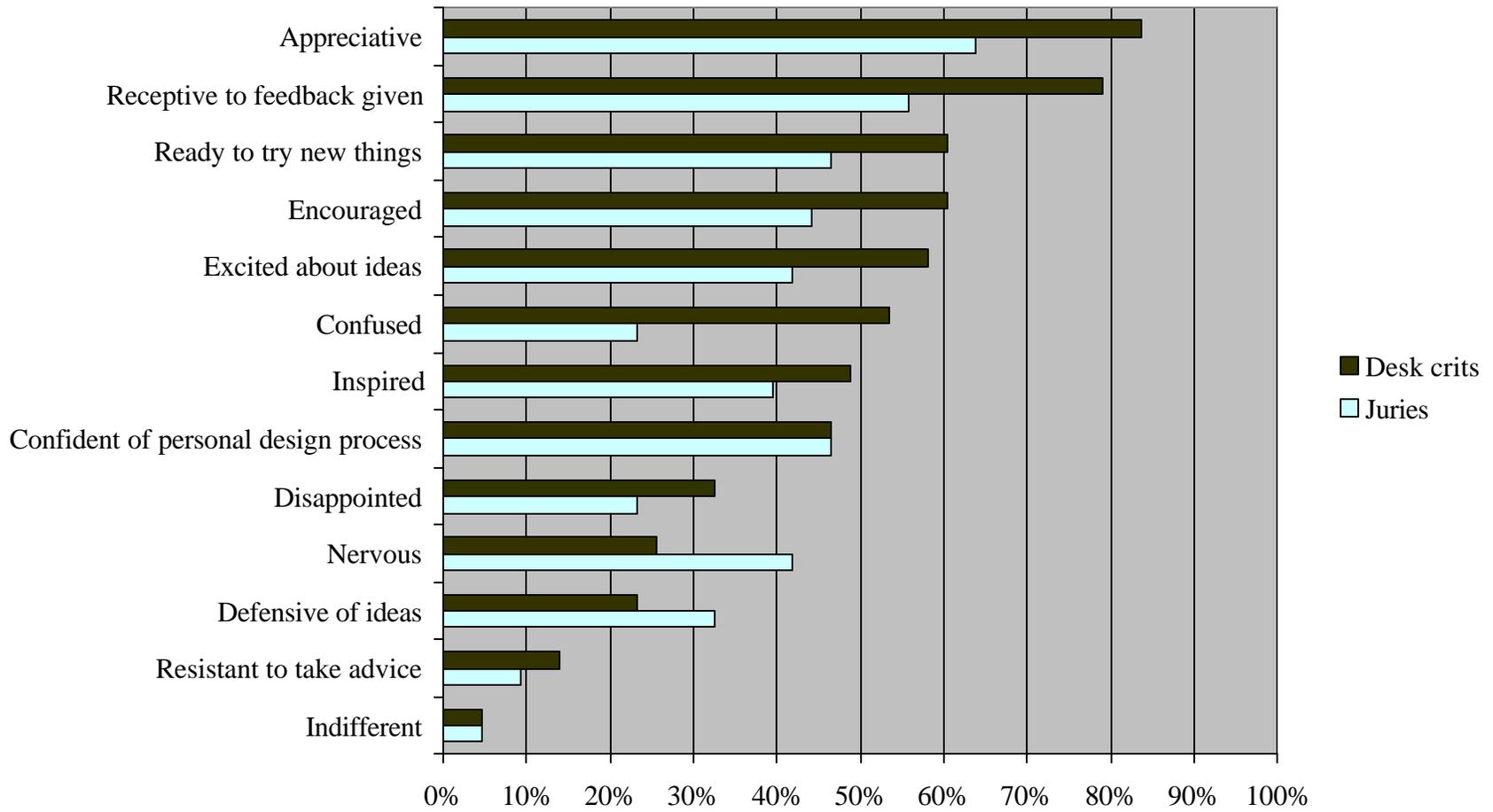
Figure 4.13. A Comparison Between Students' Reactions to Desk Crits and Juries

specific aspect or characteristic that made the jury a good learning experience for the

student. The following are some of the responses that were given by students:

"Juries are good when the critique is both positive and negative and to the point. If it is all negative the student will get discouraged and zone out. It if it all positive, the student will think their work needs no improvement."

"The best jury would have to be in the situation of a small class. This is for two reasons: people do not get bored and stop paying attention, and you normally feel better about presenting to these people. With these in mind a jury normally works out much better."

"The ones in which questions asked allow me to find errors or shortcomings in my design on my own."

"When the students and professors could exchange their views with each other"

"Any critique that is full of constructive criticism balanced with encouragement. The balance and delivery is what is important."

"Really open, to the point, and focused."

"Both positive and negatives highlighted plus future options for improvement."

These results may be interpreted as individual components that constitute what makes good jury experience. These components include: criticism that is balanced between discussing positive and negative aspects of the student's work; a small class; specific comments on how the student can improve the project; and a variety of jurors to allow for differing viewpoints in the feedback given to a student.

The responses gathered from students at LSU are extremely similar to the results in Kathryn Anthony's research:

> What seems to be key in helping create an exceptionally favorable jury experience is one where the students believe they actually learn something that can help them become better designers. From the students' point of view, the best juries combine a balance between positive and negative criticism…the criticism they receive is specific and constructive. Jurors pinpoint where their designs are strong or weak and what would help improve them (Anthony, *Design Juries*, 32).

Successful design juries as viewed by instructors are those that engage the students in a discussion of ideas, allowing both the student presenting and the entire class useful information that can be applied to future design decisions. One common idea shared by both students and instructors on an element that makes a jury experience successful is that the students learn things from the juror's comments that improve their design knowledge. However, a comparison of student and instructor responses also exemplifies the dichotomy of the desire for juries to evaluate work versus the desire for juries to engage students and jurors in a discussion of ideas.

WORST JURY EXPERIENCES

Students were asked to write a response to an open-ended question about the worst jury experience they have ever had or seen. The following are some of the responses that were given by students:

"When all the time is spent on the beginning projects and there is no time left the end projects."

"Berated, all negative, didn't listen to [the student's] explanation and interrupted during the student's presentation."

"A large class size for juries never works well. Some people just don't care while others tend to simply get bored because it takes too long."

"Seeing someone else torn apart to the point they were almost in tears."

"My worst jury experience was when I received an okay response from jurors and then received a poor grade on the project. I felt as if I had unjustly received a grade, and I did not understand what I did wrong. I did not learn anything."

"I've never had a terrible jury, but I have seen others receive them. Most people deserve bad juries when their work is bad, yet this semester I have seen fairly good projects harshly criticized. Even worse, it seems that some projects were very similar and one person would be praised and the other rejected. This doesn't seem right to me."

"Design juries that are very long and redundant, dealing with issues already discussed, both in crits and class as a whole. Take far too long for their purpose and faculty are never on time."

The students' worst jury experiences were caused by differing reasons. Criticism that was only negative was one cause, poor time management during the juries caused students to lose interest or distribute the attention given to projects unfairly; redundant remarks by jurors also caused students to lose interest; and students also perceived personal issues between jurors and students which caused negative jury experiences to occur.

Research done by Kathryn Anthony on design students' worst jury experiences implies:

> Students' worst jury experiences seem to be typified by strong thread of negativity…But negative criticism is not the issue per se. Students admit that they need some constructive criticism in order to learn how to improve their work. Rather, it is the heavy-handed nature of the criticism that is offered and the fact that it is delivered in overwhelmingly large doses. Negative criticism is often delivered in an undiplomatic, condescending, and insensitive manner, with harsh words (Anthony, *Design Juries*, 33).

CHANGES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Students were asked to write a response to an open-ended question about changes for improvement they would like to see occur in the way juries are currently conducted. The following are some of the responses that were given by students:

"I would like for each project to have an equal amount of time spent on it."

"I would like to see written comments given to each student, and there needs to be a consistent way that juries are held."

"Students held more accountable for the work they hang up. If it looks like no thought or time went into the project, why should we waste our thought and time critiquing the work? No one learns from their design and less time could be spent looking and learning from good design solutions."

"Have a distinct 'jury process', time frame, and prompt start. English should be spoken well by all involved. Lack of communication skills frustrates all parties involved. The above seem like common sense."

"Our class has an unspoken golden rule. You don't point out a negative during final presentations. We do that in the studio. We have done this for a year, and our class dynamic is very strong. We almost take a students versus the teacher role. I don't think this is a good thing because we are not formulating our own opinions, we are only arguing the presenters point."

"In juries I have felt there was either all positive or all negative feedback, not enough mixture of both, I would like to see more of both. I see the students in juries giving both to each other. Also, I do not feel students are given the feeling that they can make comments in juries for each other, and students should be encouraged more to make comments and criticism."

"I would like to have all professors of our building to critique our project for final jury. It is good to get a lot of different views."

"Brevity…get to the point and move on. Trying to protect students' feelings consumes 80% of class time. Limit presentation time. Redundancy- don't restate the same info. Engagement- get class involved."

"Take less time. To the point. Clear explanations for points off. Not too subjective."

"Structure and consistency."

"More open critique, really tell and show how to improve on for the next time."

"I'd like to have more juries where 'outside' instructors come for crits so that the students may receive further and more diverse feedback."

In the students written responses about changes they would like to see occur in the way juries are held, the most common response was having a smaller group size during juries; engaging the entire class in jury discussions; structure and consistency in the way juries are held; give more specific feedback on how students can improve their designs; and inviting outside jurors to participate to encourage a variety of viewpoints.

As discussed in Chapter 3, four out of five instructors interviewed would like to change the way juries are currently conducted by having more outside jurors participate

on the jury panels. None of the students suggested alternative ways to conduct juries, such as, role-playing as suggested by one instructor. Two of the instructors who were interviewed also talked about the importance of having the students submit their projects at least the day before a jury, so they are not up the night before a presentation. Although none of the students wrote this suggestion as a change for improvement, many students did discuss how quickly students lose interest in the jury discussion. Lack of sleep could be one of the causes that students are not interested in engaging in a class discussion and would like juries to move quickly, as one student wrote, "Most of all were the juries that take so long that you don't care what they have to say, you just want to go home."

Overall, the student feedback was more positive than expected. One limitation to the results is that students were confined to respond to the given answers on the questionnaire. The open-ended questions allowed for a free discussion of issues and student concerns that were not covered in the close-ended items on the questionnaire. Another limitation to the results is the sample of students who volunteered to fill out and return the questionnaire. It is unknown if the volunteer sample provides a satisfactory representation of the landscape architecture student body. Implications of the finding in these results and results from instructor interviews will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has explored student and teacher expectations of design studio critiques along with the reality of design studio critiques. This thesis focused on design juries, as a place where learning occurs through the pedagogical tool of criticism. Theories of criticism utilized in art, literature, and architecture have been discussed. Feedback from students and teachers at Louisiana State University has provided a valuable beginning in discovering the expectations students and teachers have of the learning situation owed to both parties during a jury. The feedback has also begun to shed light upon where the expectations are not fully being realized because of various reasons. Student and instructor's expectations can be fully realized with a concerted effort by teaching, learning, and utilizing the art of criticism in a design studio. In this chapter, suggestions will be given as to how to bring to fruition the expectations of criticism given during a jury.

EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, expectations are defined as "prospects; hopes, as of success, profits, etc" (247). Reality is defined as "the condition or quality of being real or true" (572). The reality of jury situations is two-fold. First of all, student and teacher expectations are not implausible or unattainable. Their expectations have come into existence because they have had successful learning experiences during juries. The results of this research imply that students are learning from the tool of criticism in the design studio. The expectations students have of juries are merely components of a design jury, which allow for a jury to be an effective didactic situation. After experiencing an effective jury, students and instructors then continue to

expect a similar situation in juries to follow. They consider it reasonable to demand another experience of the same quality and they feel the situation is due to them. Secondly, the reality of the jury situation is that students' and teachers' expectations are not always being fulfilled. This chapter focuses on suggestions to improve the way juries are currently conducted in landscape architecture studios at Louisiana State University to fulfill both student and teachers' expectations of the jury experience.

Students' expectations of jury situations were interpreted from feedback they provided in the questionnaire. Students expect juries to be focused and allow for all students to have the same amount of time spent on each student's project. The reality of juries is often times with a large groups of students in a studio, an unbalanced amount of time is usually spent on projects for various reasons, including poor time management, some students talk longer than others, or some projects instigate more discussion than others. Students expect criticism to be constructive, delivered tactfully, and include both negative and positive criticism, while offering advice on what improvements could be made. Students expect the jury to benefit most importantly all of the students present at a jury, some feel at least the student presenting should benefit from the learning experience, whereas some students expect all of the students and the jurors to benefit. The reality is some students think the people that should benefit from a jury actually are, whereas others believe only the jurors, only students observing the jury, or no one at all is benefiting. Students expect structure and consistency in the way juries are held and in the feedback they receive.

Design instructors expect a jury situation to be an opportunity for the student to present his intentions, process, and design solution to a variety of people to defend and

discuss his ideas and to receive feedback. Some design instructors felt that juries should evaluate the student's work because they felt students wanted juries to relate directly to their grade. Other instructors felt juries should only partly evaluate the student, and more emphasis should be placed upon how the student's design relates to a larger context and involves the student's in a discussion of ideas. The student questionnaire results show that only one-third of students surveyed feel a goal of a jury is to establish a letter grade for their project. However, when students wrote responses to open-ended questions, the concern was voiced that students don't feel comfortable openly discussing other student's work because it may reflect badly on the other student's grade.

Design instructors feel some of the best juries are those in which students are engaged in the discussion and concerned with learning from their classmates design solutions. The reality is sometimes students haven't slept the night before a jury, which may result in the students not engaging in discussion, or losing interest very quickly. Student and design instructors' expectations of the jury panel is to have a variety of jurors to give the students differing viewpoints, the reality is that all too often, the only jurors that are present are the studio design instructor and his/her teaching assistants. Students expect that the instructors are using a structure for criticism; the instructors discusses they do not use a structure for the criticism they are giving during juries. The reality of the situation is that although instructors do not feel they follow a structure for criticism, from my observations, they do utilize some of the components of criticism, such as description, interpretation, and evaluation in a spontaneous manner during juries.

During the process of designing, a student uses tools of discovery, creativity, and invention. These tools cannot be taught, only mechanical skills can be taught to students.

This is discussed in Belkis Uluoglu's article, "Design Knowledge Communicated in Studio Critiques":

Designing is not simply an act of doing. If it was merely an activity based on skill, then it could be taught by instruction. But we know it takes reasoning, which takes it to another level where it is now considered as praxis [execution or procedure]. Here, activities are not merely impulsive, habitual, or coincidental, but rather conscious, selective, and intelligent (34). Educators of landscape architecture students create situations in which they hope the students, through inventing a design in response to a need, will find creativity, intuition, and invention within themselves. Invention of a design is a creative act and it necessitates the faculty of self-criticism within the designer, "If it is done thoughtfully, criticism can be as much a creative act as design itself" (Hopkins, 24). Self-criticism is a behavior a student enacts while creating a design to explore possibilities, sift through ideas, ascertain a worth to them, extend the thought process to a critical level, and debate ideas inside their own mind. Criticism in a jury situation allows a student to express ideas for discussion with others in a process that may lead to new ideas, "making us aware of what we as contemporary landscape architects are doing and why" (Hopkins, 24).

If we believe criticism to be a creative act in which individuals express their own appreciation and perceptions of a physical place, object, or ideas in the expectation of communicating their ideas to others through "intuitive and intellectual examination and effort" (Hopkins, 25); then criticism in a design jury should also be a creative act. In order to ensure students are learning how to give and receive criticism, to themselves and peers, "to increase our knowledge and understanding of what makes a good landscape

and why" (Hopkins, 25); then a framework for criticism should be taught to students in the design studio, and should guide the criticism students receive in a jury from others.

SUGGESTED FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICISM

Borrowing, analyzing, and assimilating different written ideas of criticism from philosophers, architects, landscape architects, and the surveyed landscape architecture students and their design professors, has lead to a framework for criticism that has the potential to be used in design juries. The suggested framework consists of the following processes:

- Listening and Seeing

- Description

- Analysis

- Interpretation

- Guidance

- Evaluation

Criticism in a design jury should begin with actively *listening* to the student's intentions to understand the process that lead to the invention of the design, and what situation the design being generated for. Recognizing the student made certain decisions and questioning what one sees would then instigate the critical inquiry needed to give criticism in a design jury. The critic's first encounter with a creation should also consists of fine tuning the skill of absorbing an object by seeing what the design is, "The function of criticism is the reeducation of perception of works of art; a difficult process of learning to see and hear" (Dewey, 324). After listening and seeing, the juror or person giving criticism should *describe*, or give a verbal account, of what one sees and one's responses

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to the design. By describing what one sees, the student is given an appraisal if others

realize his/her intentions, as stated by Pablo Picasso, "Intentions are not sufficient, what

one does is what counts and not what one had the intention of doing" (Baxandall, 69).

Three things affect how a critic describes an object: the critic's own perception, different

ways of describing, and the sharing of different aesthetic experiences.

After description, criticism should *analyze* the student's design. This would

require separating the whole design into constituent parts with a view to examine and

interpret (American Heritage, 25). This step in giving criticism refers back to the Greek

root word of criticism, *krinein*, meaning to make distinctions or separate, implying

discernment and sifting through a matter. The stage of analysis is also what John Dewey

refers to as discrimination, or an awareness of all of the parts, and unification, or how the

parts are related to form a whole. As Dewey states:

Analysis and discrimination must result in unity. For to be a manifestation of

judgment it must distinguish particulars and parts with respect to their weight and

function in formation of an integral experience…What is meant is that the critic shall

seize upon some strain that is actually there, and bring it forth with such clearness that the

reader has a new clue and guide in his own experience (314).

 In a landscape architecture jury, analysis may consist of discussing how different

elements reinforce the student's whole unifying concept. Analysis of a work of

landscape architecture would not only consist of analyzing the parts and whole of the

work itself, but also of aspects related to place, time, and potential users. The elements of

place, time, the ability to change and grow, and people affected by the landscape are

distinguishing factors of criticism of landscape architecture versus, for example, a

painting. Analysis should incorporate issues of context, including: cultural, historical, geographical, ecological, social, and political context to better understand the work (Hopkins, 25). The process of analysis would allow the opportunity for discussion of differing viewpoints on the broader issues related to landscape architecture to be exchanged between teachers and students:

   Criticism is a way of revealing our habits of seeing the cultural and logical frames within which we look at things. Criticism is also a way of seeing things in relationship to other things. That is, it is a way of analyzing the connections between a work and its larger cultural, social, and environmental context (Beardsley qtd. in Berrizbeitia, 9).

   After analysis would follow *interpretation*. Interpretation consists of explaining or clarifying the meaning of the design (American Heritage, 364). Interpretation helps to explain the meaning of the work, forms, or style, based upon the critic's own beliefs, culture, and values. Interpretation may also include the critic's emotional or intuitive response to the work (Hopkins, 25).

   This should be followed by guidance. After the critic has described, analyzed, and interpreted a design, the criticism should offer suggestions for future design decision to inform the student. This should be a differentiating aspect between criticism of a work of art in a gallery or a built landscape, and criticism given to a student. As discussed by Marc Treib, "Criticism is essentially an optimistic enterprise. No matter how scathing the comments, there is still the underlying belief in the perfectibility of human activity, with some assumption that if we can just understand the picture more completely, we can design in a better way" (Treib qtd. in Berrizbeitia, 9). Although one purpose of criticism

may be to instill the facility for self-criticism in a student, they are owed in a learning situation such as a jury, guidance from the professor on how to improve the design ability. Wayne Attoe discusses this:

The ends of criticism should be beginnings. If criticism does not have a forward-looking bias it will be of little use and in fact of only passing interest. After-the-fact, harangues, and gushes of approval mean little if they do not relate to future issues, future problems, and aspirations for a future (165).

Guidance should be followed by *evaluation*. Evaluation is a "summing up which places the work in the experience of the critic" in order to ascertain a value or worth total student's design, and help others to form an opinion (Darracott, 11). I believe the stage of evaluation should not occur during a public situation of a jury for a few reasons. First of all, if the purpose of a jury is to be focused upon a discourse between faculty and students, the misconception that a jury evaluates a students project should be eradicated by not allowing a verbal evaluation to be a component of the verbal criticism a student receives during a jury. Second of all, instructors admit that a critique of students' work in a jury happens too quickly and spontaneously to adequately evaluate the students project.

Evaluation can occur in two ways after the design jury is over. A student who is present at the jury can scribe the criticism given to a student presenting a project. The written interpretation of the verbal comments would then be given to the student after the jury. This would allow the student to reflect, to consider and analyze the criticism he/she received. This may help the student form a self-evaluation and learn from someone else's perceptions. Also, a written evaluation of the student's project from the design instructor could be given to the student after the instructor has had adequate time to

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review all of the projects. A written evaluation would satisfy the students desire of having specific comments of how well objective were fulfilled, and what weaknesses could be improved upon.

It is believed that the suggested framework could allow enough flexibility to be applied to a variety of different jury situations; in which case, the student or instructor could adapt the framework to be useful. For example, the recommended process could allow for discussion and debate of jurors comments or questions at any stage without compromising the framework. As well, varying design projects or levels of design knowledge of students may affect the content or issues that are discussed at each jury.

Some landscape architecture studio instructors already utilize many of the steps in the suggested framework, yet without the placement of a label upon the behavior. If a structure and consistency were applied to the criticism they receive, students would be better prepared to give and receive criticism. An understanding of the process of criticism would also allow the student to "make demands of the critic instead of being content as a recipient" (Attoe, 139). These demands may include that:

> Criticisms of his work are lucid analyses of specific virtues or failings, and not simply witty expressions of sentimental enthusiasm or dislikes. If a design, which a student thinks is brilliantly original, should seem in the critic's opinion to be neither, then that opinion must be justified verbally with clarity and erudition. If the student's novelties are manifestly inappropriate or unconstructable, he must be given convincing and experiences arguments for their suppression (Collins qtd. Attoe, 139).

The suggested framework for criticism is a starting point to realize the potential of criticism as used in the design studio. The usefulness of the suggested framework would needed to be tested by applying it in jury situations and observing student and faculty responses and their views on the effectiveness of the technique. The design studio is full

of potential to be a place where educators could research and explore the possibilities of criticism.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS FOR CHANGE FOR THE JURY PROCESS

Feedback given from students and teachers surveyed on changes for improvement in the way juries are currently conducted will be summarized and expanded upon in this section.

1. Break the studio class into smaller groups for juries.

This would be applicable to some undergraduate studios I the class size approaches thirty and forty students. Having smaller juries would allow for more time and attention to be given to individual projects; allow for easier discussion; and help keep the students attention. One disadvantage for students in dividing a studio into smaller groups for juries would be they would only see and hear the feedback given to a limited amount of projects. Although, the feedback given from students implies the quality feedback over the quantity of critiques is desirable.

2. Better time management of the jury process.

Better time management of juries would include limiting the time in which each student has to present his/her ideas and allowing the same amount of time for feedback to be spent of each individual project. A time schedule for a jury would also help keep the discussion focused, and comments brief and concise to the students focused and interested in the discussion.

3. More encouragement of students in the jury discussion.

Encouraging students to engage in jury discussions would help to keep the students attention, and help them learn how to give criticism to their peers.

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4. Don't have jury on the same day a project is due.

In order for students to be attentive and participate in a jury discussion, the jury for a project should not be held on the same day the project is due to allow for well-rested, focused students.

5. A wider variety of jurors.

Students and teachers would like jury panels to be composed of a variety of people to offer students different viewpoints the feedback they receive. Outside jurors could include people who may be affected by the design if the site is an actual site in Baton Rouge. Outside jurors may also include faculty from other design-based curricula at LSU, such as, architecture, art, sculpture, photography, etc. The jury panel may also be composed of students who are required to do 'jury duty'. A vast resource of knowledgeable students is available in the department of landscape architecture who could give feedback to their peers.

6. Collective reflection.

Offering students a time to sum up and collectively reflect on ideas that were discussed during a jury would reinforce ideas the instructor and students may feel was learned from the jury.

7. Suggest students enroll in a public speaking course.

Students could be encouraged to take a course in public speaking to communicate their ideas more clearly in a public situation, such as, a jury or a meeting with clients.

8. Establish a written statement that describes the purpose of design juries to guide students, faculty, and outside jurors.

The landscape architecture department has the liberty to establish a written statement that describes the unique jury system and process that would be befitting to students and instructors. Creating a common purpose and standards in the department would help guide students, faculty, and outside jurors as to what should be achieved during a jury.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Admittedly, the research conducted in this thesis is merely a starting point in exploring the issues of criticism used in a design studio. The methods used in this research were limited to a small sample of volunteers who participated in this research. More extensive research would be needed to validate or invalidate the results found. As well, the two methods used were limited to interviews and questionnaires. Future research on the subject matter may include careful observations of student and instructor behavior during design juries to better study student reactions in an objective manner. Recording and observing design juries would also allow the researcher to analyze the criticism given to determine any frameworks for criticism that are being utilized to better study the content and communication of ideas in criticism. Another suggestion for future research would be to utilize student journals to record reactions and thoughts students have to criticism they receive in desk crits and design jury.

Future research on the topic of criticism used in the design studio would benefit students of landscape architecture, instructors, and the profession as a whole. A more thorough understanding of landscape architectural criticism would help to build a better understanding of how to teach critical thinking skills that are necessary for the discipline

of landscape architecture to continue to progress with new ideas in an ever-changing built

environment.

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APPENDIX A: INSTRUCTOR INTERVIEW

The purpose of this thesis is to study students' perceptions of criticism in the design studio. Criticism is utilized in two different forms in the studio, a desk crit and the jury. By interviewing design teachers, I intend to establish the faculty's ideas of both desk crits and the jury process. Then, in the second half of my research, I will create a questionnaire using the information I learned from the teachers to distribute to the students. This questionnaire will be used to study students' perceptions of criticism in the design studio.

1. How long have you taught landscape architecture?

First, let's discuss desk crits:

Pretend the music department at LSU has decided to utilize desk crits and juries in their classroom. They have invited you to talk to their faculty to explain how the landscape architecture department uses these teaching methods. The first thing they would like you to explain to them is:

2. What is a **desk crit**?
    Probe question:
    What do you think is the **purpose** of a desk crit?

3. What do you think are the **advantages** of a desk crit over the typical lecture format?

4. More specifically, as a design teacher, what are your **educational goals or objectives** you try to accomplish during a desk crit?

5. What are students' **reactions** to desk crits?

6. Do you think desk crits are **effective** as a learning tool and why?

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Now on to design juries:

7. Again, imagine you are explaining the jury process to faculty in another department. The first thing they would like you to explain to them is: What is a **jury**?

   Probe:
   What do you think is the **purpose** of a jury?

8. Do you think juries should evaluate student's work?

   Probe question: In most academic disciplines, students turn in completed work to a professor. Their work is then evaluated and returned to them, marked with a grade and perhaps a few comments. In comparison to the structure of design studios, what are the **advantages** of a jury over traditional methods of evaluation?

9. More specifically, as a design teacher, what are your **educational goals or objectives** that you try to accomplish during as a juror?

10. Do you have a framework or certain structure you like to follow for each student during a jury?

11. What are students' **reactions** to juries?

12. Do you think juries are **effective** as a learning tool and why?

13. Think back to a jury when you were satisfied with the outcome. Can you explain why the experience was successful?

14. During the course of teaching a design studio, do you explain the **purpose** of a jury to your students?

15. If desk crits are a one on one interaction between an individual student and the teacher, **whom should a jury be directed towards:** the student who is presenting a project, the jurors, or the entire class?

Last question:
15. Are there any changes for **improvement** you would like to see occur in the way juries are conducted?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read carefully before answering the following questions:

Instructions for questions 1-5.

Please circle one answer for each question to best describe your response.

1. Sex:

    Male   Female

2. Are you an international student studying abroad at LSU?

    Yes   No

3. During your past and current design studios at LSU, did your instructor(s) explain the purpose of a design jury to the entire class?

    Yes, in every studio I have taken

    Sometimes

    No, never

4. During your past and current design studios at LSU, have you been encouraged to participate in the jury discussion when another student is presenting his/her project?

    Yes, in every studio I have taken

    Sometimes

    No, never

5. Overall, do you feel jurors follow a certain structure for giving students criticism during a jury?

    Yes

    Sometimes

    No

If you answered no to #5, please answer the following question:

Do you think it would be beneficial to the way juries are conducted if every juror followed a common structure for giving students criticism?

Yes

No

Instructions for questions 6 and 7.

Please circle as many answers as needed for each questions to best describe your response.

6. Who you you think **should** benefit from a jury?

The student presenting a project

The jurors

The other students in the class observing the jury

7. Who do you think benefits from the way juries are **currently conducted**?

The student presenting a project

The jurors

The other students in the class observing the jury

Instructions for questions 8-13.

Please *circle one number* for each category to best describe your response on a scale from 1 to 5.

8. In general, how *dissatisfied or satisfied* are you with each of the following:

	Very dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	*Very satisfied*
Desk crits		1	2	3	4	5	
Informal class pin ups		1	2	3	4	5	
Final juries		1	2	3	4	5	

9. In general, how much do you usually **learn** from each of the following:

	Very little	1	2	3	4	5	Very much
Desk crits		1	2	3	4	5	
Positive criticism		1	2	3	4	5	
Informal class pin ups		1	2	3	4	5	
Negative criticism		1	2	3	4	5	
Final juries- your project		1	2	3	4	5	
Final juries- other's projects		1	2	3	4	5	

10. Do you agree or disagree that each of the following items are **goals of desk crits**:

	Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree
Teacher listens to your ideas		1	2	3	4	5	
Understand your own design process		1	2	3	4	5	
Explore several design options		1	2	3	4	5	
Respond to criticism		1	2	3	4	5	
Advice from studio instructor		1	2	3	4	5	
Be given a design solution from instructor		1	2	3	4	5	
Gain confidence in design ability		1	2	3	4	5	
Gain confidence in talking about ideas		1	2	3	4	5	
Be given suggestions for further research		1	2	3	4	5	
Fault finding in your design		1	2	3	4	5	
Improve critical thinking skills		1	2	3	4	5	
Encouragement to explore your own ideas		1	2	3	4	5	
Learn to critique your ideas on your own		1	2	3	4	5	
Other_____		1	2	3	4	5	

11.   Do you agree or disagree that each of the following items are **goals of juries**:

	Strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	*Strongly agree*

	1	2	3	4	5
Improve presentation skills	1	2	3	4	5
Listen to jurors feedback	1	2	3	4	5
Establish a letter grade for your project	1	2	3	4	5
See other students' projects	1	2	3	4	5
Improve graphic skills	1	2	3	4	5
Chance for teachers to listen to your ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Find out what you did or didn't do well	1	2	3	4	5
Inform future design decisions	1	2	3	4	5
Allows others to find faults in your design	1	2	3	4	5
Improve design knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Learn how to respond to criticism	1	2	3	4	5
Review the process that lead to your design	1	2	3	4	5
Improve critical thinking skills	1	2	3	4	5
Time for jurors to convey their knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Listen to feedback given to other students	1	2	3	4	5
Discuss ideas and issues with others	1	2	3	4	5
Chance to please instructors	1	2	3	4	5
Improve design vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
Other_____	1	2	3	4	5

12.   In general, how often do **desk crits cause you to react** in each of the following ways:

	Rarely	1	2	3	4	5	*Very Frequently*

	1	2	3	4	5
Encouraged	1	2	3	4	5
Confused	1	2	3	4	5
Receptive to feedback given	1	2	3	4	5
Disappointed	1	2	3	4	5
Excited about ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Resistant to take advice	1	2	3	4	5
Inspired	1	2	3	4	5
Frustrated because you didn't get answers	1	2	3	4	5
Confident in personal design process	1	2	3	4	5
Defensive of ideas	1	2	3	4	5
Ready to try new things	1	2	3	4	5
Nervous	1	2	3	4	5
Appreciative of feedback given	1	2	3	4	5
Indifferent	1	2	3	4	5
Other_____	1	2	3	4	5

13. In general, how often do **juries cause you to react** in each of the following ways:

	Rarely	1	2	3	4	5	Very Frequently
Encouraged		1	2	3	4	5	
Confused		1	2	3	4	5	
Receptive to feedback given		1	2	3	4	5	
Disappointed		1	2	3	4	5	
Excited about ideas		1	2	3	4	5	
Resistant to take advice		1	2	3	4	5	
Inspired		1	2	3	4	5	
Confident in personal design process		1	2	3	4	5	
Defensive of ideas		1	2	3	4	5	
Ready to try new things		1	2	3	4	5	
Nervous		1	2	3	4	5	
Bored		1	2	3	4	5	
Appreciative of feedback given		1	2	3	4	5	
Indifferent		1	2	3	4	5	
Argumentative		1	2	3	4	5	
Other_____		1	2	3	4	5	

Instructions for questions 14-17.

The following questions are open-ended questions. Please feel free to write openly to respond to best describe your answer.

14. What's the *BEST* jury experience you have ever had or seen?

15. What's the *WORST* jury experience you have ever had or seen?

16. What *CHANGES FOR IMPROVEMENT* would you like to see occur in the way design juries are held?

17. Please feel free to write any additional comments about desk crits or juries.

Table C.1. Participant information

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male	19	65.5	7	46.7	26	59.1
Female	10	34.5	8	53.3	18	40.9

Table C.2. Student Response to the Question:
During your past and current design studios at LSU, did your instructor(s) explain the
purpose of a design jury to the entire class?

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes, in every studio	11	37.9	4	26.7	15	34.1
Sometimes	16	55.2	8	53.3	24	54.6
No, never	2	6.9	3	20	5	11.4

Table C.3. Student Response to the Question:
During your past and current design studios at LSU, have you been encouraged to
participate in the jury discussion when another student is presenting his/her project?

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes, in every studio	17	58.6	8	57.1	25	58.1
Sometimes	12	41.4	6	42.6	18	41.9
No, never	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table C.4. Student Response to the Question:
Overall, do you feel jurors follow a certain structure for giving students criticism during a
jury?

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	8	28.6	5	35.7	13	30.2
Sometimes	14	50	5	35.7	19	44.2
No	6	21.4	4	28.6	11	25.6

Table C.5. Student Response to the Question:
Who do you think should benefit from a jury?

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
a. The student presenting a project	3	15.8	2	13.3	5	11.3
b. The jurors	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. The other students at the jury	0	0	0	0	0	0
a and b	0	0	0	0	0	0
a and c	10	52.6	6	40	23	52.3
b and c	0	0	0	0	0	0
all	6	31.6	7	47	16	36.4

Table C.6. Student Response to the Question:
Who do you think benefits from the way juries are currently conducted?

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
a. The student presenting a project	10	34.5	4	26.7	14	31.8
b. The jurors	2	6.9	2	13.3	4	9.1
c. The other students at the jury	5	17.2	0	0	5	11.4
a and b	0	0	0	0	0	0
a and c	4	13.8	4	26.7	8	18.2
b and c	1	3.5	0	0	1	2.3
all	5	17.2	5	33.3	10	22.7

Table C.7. Percentage of Students Who are Satisfied With the Following Learning
Situations.

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Desk crits	13	44.8	10	66.7	23	53.5
Pin ups	4	13.8	9	60	13	30
Juries	16	55.2	11	73	27	63

Table C.8. Percentage of Students Who Learn Very Much From the Following Learning Situations.

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Desk crits	21	72.4	12	85.7	33	77
Positive criticism	15	51.7	12	85.7	27	63
Informal class pin ups	7	24.1	8	66.7	15	35
Negative criticism	19	65.5	9	64.3	28	65
Final juries- your project	16	55.2	9	64.3	25	58
Final juries- other students' projects	17	58.6	8	66.7	25	58

Table C.9. Percentage of Students Who Agree that the Following Items are Goals of Desk Crits.

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Chance for teacher to listen to ideas	19	65.5	14	93.3	34	77.3
Understand your own design process	23	79.3	13	86.7	36	81.8
Explore several design options	20	69	14	93.3	34	77.3
Respond to criticism	19	65.5	11	73.3	30	68.2
Advice from studio instructor	25	86.2	13	86.7	38	86.4
Be given a design solution by teacher	9	31	7	46.7	16	36.4
Gain confidence in design ability	19	65.5	9	60	28	63.6
Gain confidence in talking about ideas	23	79.3	12	80	35	79.6
Get suggestions for further research	25	86.2	12	80	37	84.1
Fault finding in you design	19	65.5	14	93.3	33	75
Improve critical thinking skills	21	72.4	11	73.3	32	72.7
Encouragement to explore your ideas	20	69	13	86.7	33	75
Learn to critique your own ideas	20	69	9	60	29	65.9

Table C.10. Percentage of Students Who Agree that the Following Items are
Goals of Juries.

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Improve presentation skills	24	82.8	14	93.3	38	86.6
Listen to jurors' feedback	22	75.9	14	93.3	36	81.8
Establish a grade for your project	11	37.9	4	26.7	15	34.1
See other students' projects	22	75.9	14	93.3	36	81.8
Improve graphic skills	19	65.5	11	73.3	30	68.2
Time for teachers to listen to ideas	23	79.3	11	73.3	34	77.3
Find out what you did or didn't do well	25	86.2	10	66.7	35	79.6
Inform future design decisions	23	79.3	8	53.3	31	70.5
Find faults in your design	13	44.8	10	66.7	23	52.3
Improve design knowledge	20	68.9	12	80	32	72.7
Learn how to respond to criticism	26	89.7	14	93.3	40	90.9
Review your own design process	18	62.1	10	66.7	28	63.6
Improve critical thinking skills	17	58.6	9	60	26	59.1
Let jurors convey their knowledge	13	44.8	8	53.3	21	47.7
Listen to feedback given to others	19	65.5	10	66.7	29	65.9
Discuss ideas and issues with others	18	62.1	10	66.7	28	63.6
Chance to please instructors	10	34.5	2	13.3	12	27.3
Improve design vocabulary	11	37.9	8	53.3	19	43.2

Table C.11. Percentage of Students Who Frequently React in the Following Ways
to Desk Crits.

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Encouraged	14	50	12	80	26	60.5
Confused	8	28.6	10	66.7	23	53.5
Receptive to feedback given	20	71.4	14	93.3	34	79.1
Disappointed	10	35.7	4	26.7	14	32.6
Excited about ideas	14	50	11	73.3	25	58.1
Resistant to take advice	5	17.9	1	6.7	6	14
Inspired	12	42.9	9	60	21	48.8
Frustrated b/c you didn't get answers	12	42.9	3	20	15	34.9
Confident in personal design process	13	46.4	7	47	20	46.5
Defensive of ideas	9	32.1	1	6.7	10	23
Ready to try new things	14	50	12	80	26	60.5
Nervous	5	17.9	6	40	11	26
Appreciative of feedback given	22	78.6	14	93	36	83.7
Indifferent	2	7.1	0	0	2	5
Other: Aggrevated	1	3.6	0	0	1	2.3
Other: Smothered	1	3.6	0	0	1	2.3

Table C.12. Percentage of Students Who Frequently React in the Following Ways
to Juries.

	Undergrad n=29		Graduate n=15		Total students n=44	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Encouraged	9	32.1	10	66.7	19	44.2
Confused	6	21.4	4	26.7	10	23.3
Receptive to feedback given	13	46.4	11	73.3	24	55.8
Disappointed	7	25	3	20	10	23.3
Excited about ideas	8	42.1	10	66.7	18	41.9
Resistant to take advice	3	10.7	1	6.7	4	9.3
Inspired	9	32.1	8	53	17	39.5
Confident in personal design process	13	46.4	7	47	20	46.5
Defensive of ideas	10	35.7	4	27	14	32.6
Ready to try new things	12	42.9	8	53	20	47
Nervous	12	42.9	6	40	18	41.9
Bored	12	42.9	4	27	16	37
Appreciative of feedback given	17	60.7	10	67	27	63.8
Indifferent	1	3.6	1	6.7	2	5
Argumentative	8	42.1	3	20	11	25.6
Other: Aggrevated	1	3.6	0	0	1	2.4
Other: Exhausted	1	3.6	0	0	1	2.4

VITA

Elizabeth Marie Graham was born on October 25, 1977, in Chicago, Illinois. She is the youngest child of Robert and Nina Graham. In 1990, Elizabeth and her family moved from Chicago to Columbia, Tennessee. She graduated from high school in 1995 from Columbia Central High School. From 1995 to 1999 she attended Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee. Elizabeth graduated in 1999 from CBU with a bachelor of science degree in biology with a minor in chemistry.

Synthesizing her interests of drawing, painting, ecology, and plants lead Elizabeth to become interested in landscape architecture. In August of 2000, Elizabeth moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to pursue a master's degree at Louisiana State University. Then in June of 2002, she studied abroad at Lincoln University in Canterbury, New Zealand, for six months. These studies concentrated on sustainable urban design, landscape ecology, and written critiques of built landscapes. Returning to LSU in 2003, Elizabeth completed the requirements for a degree of Master of Landscape Architecture in May 2003.