



CRITICISM IN DESIGN STUDIOS

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Criticism

Second Semester

Week number 8

May 2025

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What is Criticism in Design Studios?

Criticism in Design Studios

Since architecture and interior design are now mostly taught in studio settings, the way students learn design can be very different. Still, **critique sessions are a key part of how student work is judged**, even though this method hasn't been studied deeply.

- A good assessment helps students know what is expected, gives them chances to check their own progress, practice, and get useful feedback.
- If students understand how critique works, they can take an active role, asking questions and learning more, instead of just listening to what the teacher says.

Assessment in Design Studios

- One of the most important parts of assessing architectural projects is deciding **when to include critique in the design process** and **what type of critique fits best at each stage**. This helps provide better control and guidance throughout the design.
- If critique is only given **after the design is finished**, students or architects often become **defensive** because they feel like their work is being judged too late. This makes the feedback less helpful. That's why it's important to **study different critique methods** and understand how they affect the design process.

Architectural schools lead to the classification of the critique tools in architectural design studios in nine categories.

1 Individual critique

Individual critique is a discussion between the tutor and students.

- This is a **one-on-one conversation** between the teacher (tutor) and the student. The teacher gives **personal feedback** directly to the student about their design work.

It's a private and focused discussion where the student can ask questions and the teacher can give specific advice to help improve the project.

This type of critique helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses better because the feedback is customized just for them.

2 Formative critique (interim crit)

- A **formative critique** happens during the **middle of a project**, *before the final work* is submitted for grading.

The main goal is to give students helpful feedback on their work-in-progress.

This way, students can spot problems, improve their ideas, and make better design decisions before the final deadline.

It helps students focus on learning and developing their skills, instead of just worrying about getting a good grade.

3 Summative Critique (Final Crit)

- **Summative Critique (Final Critique)** happens at the *end* of a project when students present their final work and receive a **grade**.
- At this stage, students can **no longer improve** the project based on the feedback they get — it's already finished.
- That's why many students feel **frustrated**: they hear advice and corrections, but it's **too late** to make changes to improve their grades.

However, the **real goal** of a final critique is **not** just about pointing out mistakes. Tutors want students to **practice evaluating their own work**:

- Thinking critically
- Learning how to judge what works well and what could be better
- Preparing to become independent designers/artists

4 Peer Critique

- Peer Critiques are crits run by the student group with the tutor acting as a facilitator.
- Usually, the student group is divided into smaller groups, and the group critiques the work of those in their own group or those in another group.
- Students need to be given agreed-upon criteria to critique against.
- The tutor as facilitator feeds into the discussion where there may be questions.

Peers then may give feedback to the group verbally or often through written comments given to the individual student through nameless sheets.

5 Group Critique (Expert Crits)

- It is the most common form of the crit sessions.
- A group of students takes part in a critique by one or more tutors.
- These can range in time from a series of short half-hour sessions with a small group of students and a tutor to all-day sessions for a large group of students and tutors.
- Usually, students will present their work in front of their tutors and peers and receive feedback, which can be from tutors only.

6 Public Critique

- Where an invited professional from industry or another department is part of the critique panel.
- Students can give external experience from an external perspective and provide feedback.

7 Written Critique (May be Online Form)

- The criteria for comments have to be discussed before criticizing.
- This type makes chance to gives more explanation on each comment and also makes it easier to think about feedback.
- This can be used in peer's critiques, and they will give their idea more honestly when they are not in a face-to-face situation.
- All comments can only be accessed by the individual student and tutor.

8 Seminars

These types of crit sessions usually take place around a table in a non-hierarchical situation, and this will lead to more participation from shy students and quieter members.

9 Panel Discussion

In a panel review, projects are discussed without revealing which student created them. The projects can be chosen either randomly or on purpose by the instructors. These discussions happen in an open and shared environment, where everyone can take part. This makes them a very effective way for students to learn.

This kind of review is especially useful at the **beginning of design education**, because beginner students don't just need to practice designing—they also need to **learn the basic terms and ideas** of design.

Analyzing the different written ideas of criticism from philosophers, architects and design professors has lead to a hierarchy process for criticism that has the potential to be used in design juries. This process consists of the following steps:

1. Listening and seeing
2. Description
3. Analysis
4. Interpretation
5. Guidance
6. Evaluation

Do you have any questions?

Assignment

Types of Criticism in the Design Studio

Instructions: Fill in the table below by describing each type of criticism session used in design studios. Use complete but concise sentences.

Type of Criticism	Definition	Purpose	Two Advantages	One Disadvantage
Desk Criticism				
Group Criticism				
Jury Criticism				
Peer Criticism				