

Collaborative teaching network for the incorporation of good methodological practices with a gender perspective in university instruction on heritage work.

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Abstract

This article details a collaborative project between the University of Seville and the University of Málaga designed to incorporate a gender perspective into architecture and heritage education. The initiative aims to address the lack of inclusion in current curricula by proposing a methodological review that values real diversity and corrects biases in design and regulations.

The project connects five subjects from Seville and two from Málaga using a methodology that features a virtual space for debate and repositories, introductory seminars, and specific evaluation systems. The ultimate objective is to transform teaching dynamics to train professionals capable of creating safer, more equitable environments, establishing that the gender perspective must be a structural element of the educational framework rather than a mere addition to the program.

Keywords: collaborative teaching network; gender perspective; heritage work instruction; safe environments; real diversity; transversality; University of Seville and University of Málaga.

1. Introduction

The incorporation of gender perspective into architecture and cultural heritage remains a pending issue. It frequently seems to have been left to the voluntarism of teachers in the discipline (Gutiérrez Mozo, 2014) in an unfit inherited system of production and design. In the case of architecture, a new perspective is needed to help us define safer, more inclusive, friendlier environments, which correspond to the realities of society.

Disciplines as lively and flexible as heritage, allow an enormously productive multi-scalar and multidisciplinary dialogue, especially with regard to the issue of the inclusion of the gender perspective (Casado-Mejía et al., 2025). All this, within the framework of the 'Tourism and Territorial Development' pole of excellence established in the Andalusia Tech Campus of International Excellence. Within this sector of specialization, one of the lines of work aims to promote the development of more sustainable and inclusive tourism, within a teaching context in which the approach is applied.

The gender perspective in architecture education, understood as the critical integration of gender inequalities and diversities into the analysis, design, and teaching of architecture, with the aim of producing more inclusive environments and bodies of knowledge, aims to highlight and value real diversity 'based on the work done by women and men of different genders, identities, generations, abilities, and resources' (Gutiérrez Mozo et al., 2021, p. 9). It is essential to contextualise and make these aspects legible in university teaching so that those who must apply them do not reject them and instead accept them as a useful tool that improves their work and is not understood as an imposition that hinders it (Bermejo-Lorenzo et al., 2022).

Applying the gender perspective is a more than necessary integration, which makes visible and emphasizes the real diversity of work in cultural heritage. It helps educators to manifest the multiplicity of positions and attitudes that architectural activity blends, from the project, design, use and appropriation of urban spaces, to the very definition of the landscape, the territory and our heritage (Ramos-Torres, 2021). It also acknowledges how different groups experience and interact with the built environment differently.

Our project is based on the exchange of teaching experiences on heritage conservation between the Degrees in Architecture of the University of Seville and the University of Málaga. This exchange builds a framework for joint action that reinforces the knowledge of teaching and methodological experiences of the discipline with a gender perspective.

The starting point is the linking of five subjects taught at the School of Architecture of Seville (Architectural History, Theory and Composition 1, 2 and 3, Urban Planning 1 and Architecture and Heritage), whose teaching contents deal with heritage aspects at different scales, with two subjects taught at the University of Málaga (Heritage, Tourism and Territory and Architecture and Heritage) focused on strategic intervention in urban spaces.

The inclusion of the gender perspective in education aims to further acknowledge changes in Spanish society, including a broader spectrum of gender identities and social dynamics. It constitutes, therefore, a fundamental task to promote the critical spirit of students. This approach stimulates discernment and self-criticism, allowing to deepen the topics discussed, make inequalities visible, empower students and promote a transformative attitude towards society. Gender awareness in education not only promotes equity, but can also enrich the architectural design process, making the built environment more inclusive and accessible to all.

The common objectives pursued by the authors of this paper are related to built heritage, cultural landscapes, public space, tourism, as well as gender studies in its heritage dimension. The research and work are carried out from the disciplines of Architecture, Urban Planning, Gender, Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage and Heritage Didactics. Inclusive education in cultural heritage and architecture requires the active participation of various working groups and constant dialogue with teaching staff:

- The research group HUM-1050 ‘Heritage Action Group’ of the University of Seville, which gathers most of the University of Seville lecturers participating in the project,
- The Institute for Research on Habitat, Tourism and Territory (iHTT) of the University of Málaga, which is a joint inter-university centre with the Polytechnic University of Catalonia for research on the new challenges posed by the contemporary city in relation to habitat, territory and tourism.

2. Objectives

This project sets as its priority and most important objective to work on the main challenges that education faces in creating inclusive educational contexts and addresses the definition of measures that promote gender equality (Royo Naranjo, 2022). It highlights the importance of training teachers in the use of digital tools with a gender perspective, but also of reviewing the ways in which architecture is taught and learned from the values of a gender perspective.

Therefore, the primary objectives can be defined as the research and the application of inclusive approaches in urban design, architectural representation and heritage conservation. More specifically, within a broader perspective, the supporting objectives include are to promote reflection on the impact of gender on the configuration of space; to highlight the real role of women in the history of architecture (breaking down the walls that have traditionally diminished their relevance); to identify biases in regulations and develop inclusive urban and architectural design proposals. In this way, teaching becomes a space for transformation that promotes equity and diversity in architectural practice.

We aim to achieve this goal through a conscious selection of materials and resources that may contribute to transforming teaching in architecture, integrating a critical and equitable perspective. Through the incorporation of these resources, teachers can enrich their classes, promoting more active and representative learning as well as building a learning context free of gender bias. This section is designed in such a way that it can serve as an eminently practical guide that can be adapted to different subjects of the degree, promoting a more inclusive teaching committed to equity in the multiple tasks proposed by architecture.

Working on the heritage dimension in different subjects from two different schools - in which the disciplinary approach has meeting points, but also different approaches - is an opportunity

to open up the students' perspective in relation to the different ways of developing a project. In any case, the similarity of the teaching approaches derives from the previous collaboration of all the participants in the field of research, and allows us to start from a common space identifiable by the different groups of students.

In this sense, the aim for the students of the University of Málaga is to acquire the theoretical-practical knowledge needed to successfully address the intervention in heritage spaces from the necessary assessment of the site and its stakeholders, its inhabitants and its relational conditioning factors. For their part, students at the University of Seville will acquire a new dimension of the heritage project, insofar as the comparative analysis between the different exercises will allow all of them to take on board these concepts without limiting them exclusively to their own field of action. Moreover, working on different scales and/or perspectives, depending on the scope of each subject, will enable students to appreciate this scalar interdependence as a working methodology in future professional projects.

3. Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives described above, a five-action-lines methodology is proposed, supported by a virtual space for teaching exchange. This space is provided by the Information and Communications Service to the university community and incorporates virtual teaching, learning object repository and website hosting. This will enable the rapid transfer of different teaching experiences, especially in lines of action 1 and 2. Using Experiential Learning Theory (ELT; Kolb & Kolb, 2017), each action line is mapped onto the stages of experiential learning and to the expected learning outcomes.

Action line 1: Interconnection. A virtual discussion group will incorporate students, professors and researchers involved in the project, with the aim of creating a communication platform between all participants. Weekly, one of the professors will propose a series of current topics of a transversal nature for debate among all. The space will be open to proposals from students, offering reflective activities and knowledge transfer.

Action line 2: Collaboration. Three digital repositories will be established, one for practical work, another for teaching materials and one for research work of various kinds, providing feedback, progress tracking, and dissemination to consolidate outcomes.

- The practical work repository will house the work already done by the students. In this way, students who join these subjects in the second semester will find the work done by their classmates in these subjects as a reference. They will leave a written witness of their reflections and experiences during the development of their work, so that the students who join later can find this entire document at their disposal.

- The teaching material repository will collect the content generated in the virtual space of these subjects so that all students can follow the development of the rest of the subjects by accessing their teaching material. Moreover, the fact of being able to link all this content on an open access platform such as the Repository of Digital Objects of the University of Seville (RODAS) -in which a large part of the teaching material of these subjects is published-, would allow its use in collaboration with public institutions, such as the Malaga City Council or the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage, in order to reach the level of general awareness about the protection of heritage and its relationship with the heritage action applied to other spheres of society. It will also allow collaboration with the rest of the teaching staff of the School of Architecture and, in general, with the rest of the university community, as well as the availability of those interested in the application of the gender perspective to the teaching of architecture, who may request it for informative purposes.
- The research work repository will incorporate the works -research, final degree and master's projects, as well as doctoral theses- tutored by the participating professors who have applied the gender perspective, and authored by the students who address these issues in the subjects involved. In this same space, the experiences of the students can be shared, as well as their own conclusions about the experience carried out. The objective will be the self-evaluation of the skills acquired in terms of collaborative work at the thematic and inter-scalar level, as well as at the comparative level between teaching in the different degrees and Schools of Architecture.

Action line 3: Integration. Introductory seminars will be held prior to the start of the teaching period. To promote the convergence and methodological integration of the project, a theoretical seminar will be held at each university through six master classes - one for each subject involved - which will aim to transmit to students the main objectives sought in each teaching approach. The aim is to increase the scope of these subjects by the attending students, as well as to open the participation of the virtual forum to other students, who, although they do not plan to take the subject, have a special interest in the topics to be discussed. This action line offers dissemination, experiential learning, and pedagogical pragmatism.

Action line 4: Monitoring. Evaluation questionnaires and results reports will be developed. The evaluation questionnaires are aimed at students and will have a double objective. On the one hand, they intend to assess the knowledge acquired in the seminars on the teaching content of the subject in relation to the transversality that is sought. On the other hand, it seeks to evaluate the previous interest aroused by the experience, and the degree of final satisfaction achieved with the teaching process developed. In addition, the virtual space will have a specific section for suggestions and contributions from the educational community at all times, ensuring control, quality, and reliability.

A series of four results reports will be made for continuous control during the process, which will be part of the information that can be accessed through the project's virtual space:

- The first -preliminary- consists of the preparation of a document that will establish in detail the adaptation of the project presented to the teaching program of each of the subjects, establishing the expected results.
- The second -intermediate- will be developed in such a way that it can be verified whether the approaches established in the first report are being adjusted to the teaching development in relation to the objectives set, specifying, if necessary, the modifications to the planned activities.
- The third -final- will describe the process followed, the deviations produced and whether the results obtained with the implementation of the project are in line with those expected.
- The fourth -posterior- will be aimed at teaching improvement, so it will analyse the impact that the experience has had on the teaching results of the subjects involved.

Action line 5: Dissemination. Two initiatives will be carried out for the dissemination of the project, each of which has a target audience and a specific purpose, providing a conceptual framework for knowledge transfer.

- On the one hand, they will be held in a conference to present the project, together with the dissemination of works developed in these subjects in the 2025-2026 academic year, proposing the following structure for their development.
- On the other hand, there will be a publication compiling the generated teaching materials. This publication will contain both the description of the methodology developed in the innovation project and the teaching content of the subjects that are intended to be related, as well as the projects carried out so far by the students. Part of the content of this publication will be written in English in order to familiarize students with the main terms and concepts used, and also to enable the transference of this experience to an international context.

4. Conclusions

We start from the need to include the gender perspective in university teaching in a transversal way in all the knowledge that is taught (Rebollo-Catalán & García-Pérez, 2023). The Agency for the Quality of the University System in Catalonia (AQU, 2020) defines teaching with a gender perspective as one that takes into account both biological (sex) and social and cultural characteristics of people (gender) that produce structural forms of inequality and injustice.

It is not a question of adding new topics to our teaching program or project, but rather the gender perspective involves analysing their impact on people's opportunities, social roles and interactions and also assessing whether the needs of different genders are taken into account and addressed in their development. It even goes further, seeking to transform the dynamics of teaching and learning, promoting an inclusive environment that respects and fosters diversity.

The incorporation of the gender perspective in universities makes it possible to identify, correct and suppress possible gender biases in the Higher Education system. These biases persist in two different ways: On the one hand, explicitly, in the content we select, in the activities we propose to students, in the way we evaluate, but also implicitly, according to the way in which relationships develop inside and outside the classroom. This leads us to the need to review the entire framework on which university education is based.

It is about paying more attention to diversity and enriching the perception and understanding of what surrounds us and we propose to design, create and build. The main objective of our project is, therefore, to provide a general reflection on the introduction of the gender perspective in teaching, thereby responding to the needs of inclusive and gender-sensitive teaching in the field of architecture.

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