# **The BSP Graphic Skills Portal**

Enhancing Urban Design education through outside-the-classroom learning tools: development, implementation, and professional impact

Valentina Giordano
The Bartlett School of Planning, UCL

AMPS 2024 JUNE 10 – 12 2024, SAN FRANCISCO, USA



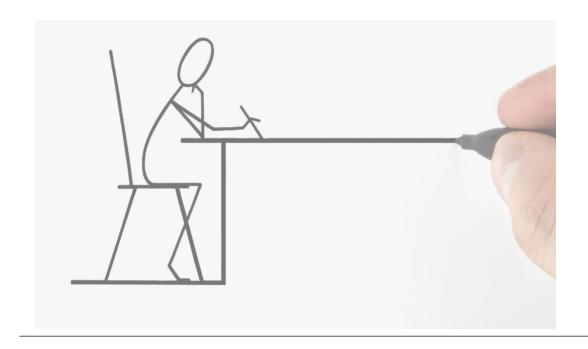






### INTRODUCING MYSELF – PRACTICE AND ACADEMIA

- Over 15 years' experience as an Urban Designer in UK professional consultancy, specialising in urban design and streetscape intervention
- Lecturer in Urban Design since 2020, with teaching experience in Urban Design modules at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels since 2014
- Research work focused on UK design governance and place quality: www.placealliance.org.uk



v.giordano@ucl.ac.uk



## GRAPHIC SKILLS TEACHING – AS IT WAS

• From a wide range of highquality but individually developed resources, only accessible to specific Modules and student cohorts...



## - GRAPHIC SKILLS TEACHING - DIFFERENT PROGRAMMES, SHARED CHALLENGES

### **Undergraduates Programmes**

Urban Studies BSc

Urban Planning and Real Estate BSc

Urban Planning, Design and Management BSc



URBAN DESIGN SPECIFIC PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMMES
SHARING UD
CORE +
SPECIALISM
MODULES

URBAN DESIGN CORE MODULES

### **Postgraduates Programmes**

MPlan City Planning

MRes Inter-disciplinary Urban Design

MSc Housing and City Planning

MSc Infrastructure Planning, Appraisal and Development

MSc International City Planning

MSc International Real Estate and Planning

MSc Spatial Planning

MSc Spatial Planning Degree Apprenticeship

MSc Sustainable Urbanism

MSc Transport and City Planning

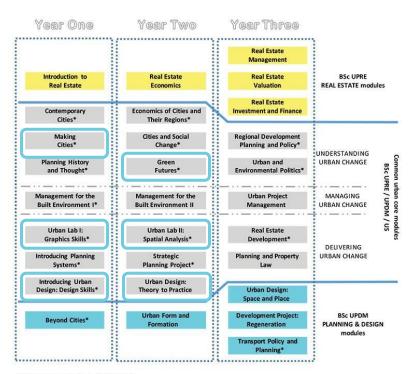
MSc Urban Design and City Planning

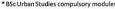
MSc Urban Regeneration

BSc Urban Planning and Real Estate

BSc Urban Planning, Design and Management

BSc Urban Studies





### STUDENT & STAFF SURVEY - OVERVIEW

#### SUMMARY

Design skills

'It was also helpful to have the Urban Graphic Skills workshops to turn to if we needed any help to achieve given idea."

'Some modules in Term I are challenging for students without graphic background, but indedd a good opportunity to practice design skills'

'During the first few weeks of Term I, students without graphics experience can help/learn from one another. However, this can be overwhelming for students who have graphic skills."

#### PRE-COVID ←

'Basic video editing skills needed!'

'There should be the option of a fully taught skills class on graphics.

'It is not realistic to learn the design skills and learn the process of developing a design at the same time on this time scale.'

'There is not enough time for those without design skills to learn and properly perform."

'There was a reminder to resources available to help i.e. Graphics Skills time to develop a great or workshops, but I think more support within the module is needed to help students with no graphics experience.

'Graphic skills courses in a room that isnt fit for purpose, very steep learning curve for someone with no skills.

'There simply was not enough inspiring idea, especially if you're new to this field."

'Increase teaching time for the photoshop task, and provide adequate teaching for photoshop to help those who need it but challenge those who already have a good understanding of the software.'

### 'Need for more technical tutorials on

#### **NEGATIVE**

'I found myself quite disadvantaged compared to those with backgrounds in software.'

#### POSITIVE

'Photoshop and InDesign skill trainings offered by the Urban Graphic Skills are very very helpful.'

'The key strength of the module is that it is being able to train us to do a poster on our own.

'It has allowed me to develop my computer graphic skills at

> 'Some introductory sessions helped students understand what level of graphic skills is expected and gives guidence to students as well."

#### → POST-COVID

'Learning how to use software 'Lacked help with online amongst many other the graphic skills' people was extremely hard."

insufficient (i.e. does not tell you how to actually create a section, only how to edit it) and not cover everything we are 'Many people could not join 'While skills in the graphic software can

'More graphic assistance in terms of 3D work is needed."

'It would be good learning some more actual techniques for sustainable design."

'Need for more live lectures and O&A on the software such as SketchUp.

how to use Photoshop. Sketchup, Indesign etc.'

'The group work element was 'It should be mandatory challenging (given the ongoing that the students without Pandemic, having to work from design background must home/remotely, and pairing complete the 'Urban 'The graphic portal tends to be 'Teach students different skill sets especially Graphics skills' Module with graphic software).' before taking this module.

> design graphics course as the registration process did not

how to design'

'InDesign is not an appropriate tool for group work as only one person can work on it at once, which means one person has to dedicate a majority of time to convey the group's ideas onto the panels."

made available to all students with a as so much of it went to the admin of checklist of objectives and functions collecting and presenting everybody's that students should be able to pick up by the end of the module.'

'I feel like we could all have benefited from some more teaching on how to use graphics software (instead of it being an optional module that most people don't have time for).'

asked to do (e.g. axonometric, massing, the pre-course urban be learned, it seems it is much harder to learn how to think in a creative manner to put graphic skills to the best use and enable access to Moodle quickly.' produce a professional and engaging final document."

> 'I was the only person in my team with any sort of graphic capability which put huge time constraints on me when trying to advise them, collate their material (and then have to re-do it anyway), make my own content, and create our document. It meant I had less 'A more structured lesson plan should be time to engage with the actual content

> > 'No clear guidance and advice for what makes up a good design report in terms of structure and types of graphics (though the extra design skills session was a useful start for this)."

### STUDENT & STAFF SURVEY – FINDINGS

### **Student perspective**

#### **Main concerns:**

Limited time available to learn the required skills

Pre-induction course useful – but too dense

to participate in the pre-induction.

Proficiency / skills gap between cohorts

### **Resulting issues:**

Slow vs steep learning curve

Students with no graphic skills struggle and try to learn as fast as possible / students with graphic skills overload themselves with graphic responsibilities, with less time to engage with contents.

### **Staff perspective**

### **Use of Graphic Skills:**

Graphic skills are mainly used for elaborating diagrams and infographics, and spatial analysis.

Mainly, the final graphic output produced by students are **reports**, **ppt** and **posters** including graphics .

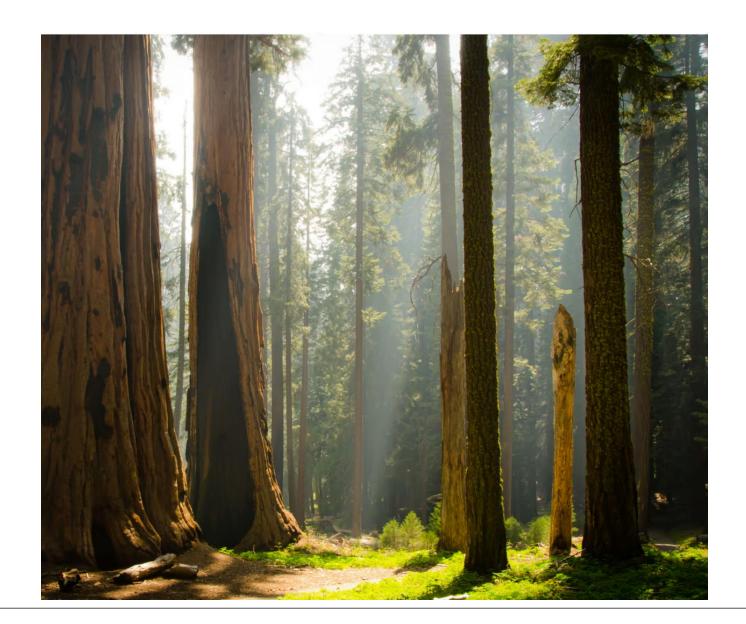
### Students struggle most with:

**Technical drawing using a software** (i.e. creating sections, masterplan, etc.), followed by **hand drawing** (this reflects the fact that they don't have a graphic background).

Mainly, **Adobe Illustrator**, which may be the one where students focus most

## GRAPHIC SKILLS TEACHING – THE PORTAL AS A COMMON SOLUTION

• ...to an interconnected "eco-system" of resources benefitting all students across Programmes and Modules.



### THE BSP GRAPHIC SKILLS PORTAL – WHO AND WHAT IS IT FOR?

### **ACCESS THE SITE:**

https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/planning/programmes/graphics-skills-portal





**For BSP students**, both in Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes and across all years.

For students who are new to graphic skills help them explore and understand the basics of both software and techniques to be able to advance.

For students already proficient in graphic skills but given the breadth of topics might find interest in the aspect that they have not considered before.



For anyone interested in discovering and developing graphic skills concepts and techniques



Our portal provides detailed guidance for the following software:



















### THE PORTAL – CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Provides the basics of urban analysis, design and presentation through the creation of graphics

- **1.** Three separate sections including:
  - a. Overview, description, and PDF handouts relating to four key design processes:

#### **ANALYSIS**



#### **VISUALISATION**



### DETAILED DESIGN PRESENTATION



- **b.** A software library with dedicated guidance
- c. A graphic resources library
- **2.** A one-week Graphic Skills Foundation Module available to current offer holding students accessible before enrolment

#### THE BARTLETT SCHOOL OF PLANNING

**UCI** 



Home Study Research People Resources for Current Students News Events Publications About us

UCL Home » The Bartlett School of Planning » Resources for Current Students » Graphics Skills Po

#### **Graphics Skills Portal**

The BSP Graphic Skills Portal is a set of step-by-step guides and tutorials aimed at supporting students' development and learning of graphic skills at the Bartlett School of Planning.

#### The Portal is a starting point for extended learning aimed at

- · helping students to understand and develop core urban design and planning concepts and techniques,
- · improving students' software knowledge and skills, and
- · providing students with an easy-to-navigate out-of-the-classroom educational tool to develop their ideas and proposals

Design comes in a range of forms, from the most abstract/symbolic to the very detailed and together these are used in combination to tell story: the story of how you understand any given urban space and envision its future.

#### DESIGN PROCESSES & TECHNIQUES

#### Design Process & Techniques

This bespoke series of booklets is an easy-to-use free resource to help students familiarise with the 4 phases of design: Analysis, Visualisation, Design and Presentation.

#### SOFTWARE LIBRARY & GUIDES

#### Software Libra

Information about graphic software is available to students on campus, off campus and on personal devices. How download, install and get started on you design increase.

#### GRAPHIC RESOURCES LIBRARY

#### Graphic Resources Libra

is Looking for graphic design resources
fy your next project? We've compiled a
flow to list that include stock images, CAD
blocks, fonts, textures, icons and mo

#### Computers on campus

Find out everything you need to know about using computers on campus

> Computers on campus

#### IT help and support

Information on how to get help and support fro central IT services across UCL

> Information Services Division (ISD) su > Software for students

#### Bartle

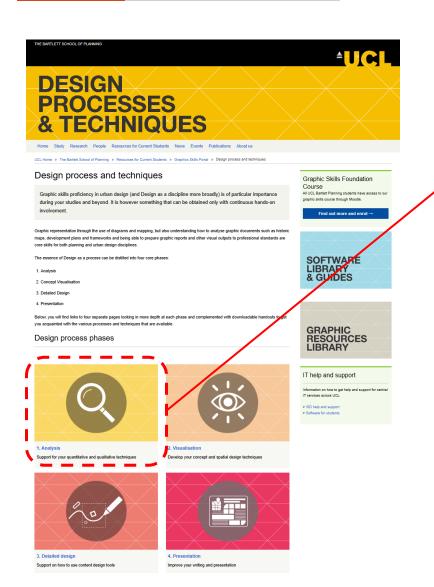
A dedicated large format print service, subsidised by The Bartlett, and run exclusively for Bartlett studen

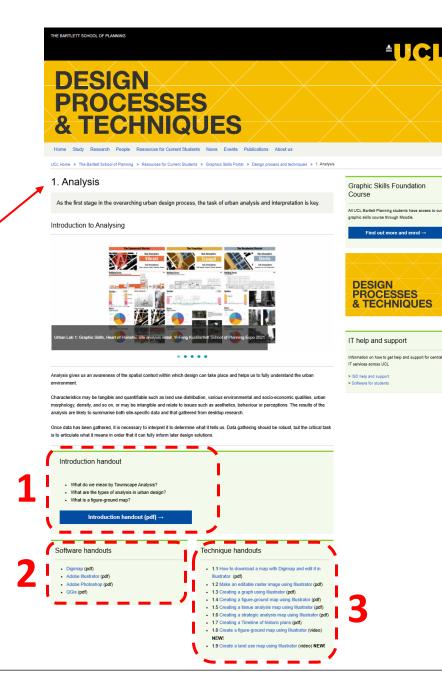


Current ISSP students have the opportunity to enrol in a comprehensive Graphic Stills Fundation Course on Moodle that provides a practical guide to producing agreations for planning and urban design projects. This is an elective non-credit bearing taught models. We strongly recommend this course to students enrolled on MSS programmes particularly if you have no graphics training, or feel the need to brush up or these skills.

View course content and enrol -

### FOCUS ON – URBAN DESIGN





Each phase of the Design Process & Techniques includes three parts which contain documents to be downloaded:

- **1.** Introduction Handout explaining the key features of the phase
- **2.** Relevant Software Handouts
- **3.** Techniques Handout including some exercises and how-to / step-by-step tutorials)



### KEEPING IT RELEVANT - CHALLENGES AND NEXT STEPS



#### **MEASURING IMPACT**

By implementing UCL's Connected Curriculum Framework, to ensure that all UCL students are able to learn through participating in research and enquiry at all levels of their programme of study and connect academic learning with skills for the workplaces.



#### **UPDATES**

Regularly revise and update resources to reflect feedback as well as current practices and technologies.

Include Generative AI design tools support students in using them effectively, ethically and transparently.



### **KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**

Explore options with UCL Life Learning to create a potential CPD output Continued Professional Development (CPD) path available to both the wider UCL student community and built environment professionals without design background.

# **THANK YOU**





**Access the BSP Graphic Skills Portal** 

**Get in touch** Valentina Giordano v.giordano@ucl.ac.uk

Connect



