

Design for Classroom Units: A Collaborative Multicultural Studio Development with Chinese Students

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Abstract : In this paper, we present the main results achieved during a five-week international workshop on Interactive Furniture for the Classroom, with 22 Chinese design students, in Jiangmen city (Guangdong province, China), and five teachers from Portugal, France, Iran, Macao SAR, and China. The main goal was to engage design students from China with new skills and practice methodologies towards interactive design research for furniture and product design for the classroom. The final results demonstrate students' concerns on improving Chinese furniture design for the classrooms, including solutions related to collaborative learning and human-interaction design for interactive furniture products. The findings of the research led students to the fabrication of five original prototypes: two for kindergartens ('Candy' and 'Tilt-tilt'), two for primary schools ('Closer' and 'Eks(x)'), and one for art/creative schools ('Wave'). From the findings, it was also clear that collaboration, personalization, and project-based teaching are still neglected when designing furniture products for the classroom in China. Students focused on these issues and came up with creative solutions that could transform this educational field in China.

Keywords : product design, collaborative education, interactive design, design research and prototyping

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