

Lifelong learning in real estate education: the case of the Master City Developer

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In *30th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference*. ERES: Conference. Gdansk, Poland, 2024.

Key words: lifelong learning, professional education, urban development, curriculum renewal

Real estate practice is subject to constant changes due to related economic, societal and environmental transitions, such as circular economy, sustainable mobility and renewable energy, that need to be taken into account when shaping the built environment. As a result, there is a growing need among public and private real estate professionals to understand the wickedness of the challenges ahead, and to develop leadership skills and appropriate courses of action to realize resilient urban real estate projects. For professional organizations and individual practitioners it increasingly becomes evident that lifelong learning is an much needed investment and effective strategy to obtain state-of-the-art knowledge and to create transdisciplinary learning experiences enabling them to adapt to the changing circumstances and to create positive societal impact. Real estate educators increasingly will face the challenge to accommodate life learning needs and extend the traditional bachelor and master course with a variety of courses aimed at educating professionals.

This paper addresses the substantive and didactic principles applied in the curriculum renewal of a Dutch post-master program Master City Developer (MCD), aimed at educating planning and real estate practitioners for the challenging job ahead. This two-year professional education program is organized by Erasmus University Rotterdam and Delft University of Technology with the aim to educate practitioners to strategically lead urban development projects. The current 20th course has seen a substantial curriculum change as part of an externally financed renewal project. The renewed course structure is based on ten consecutive modules, focusing on economy, transitions, governance, investment and finance, strategy and design, transformation, law, international development, research methods, and thesis. A major content shift involves the introduction of the urban transitions module, focusing on understanding spatial-economic implications of the mobility and energy transition within various scenarios. Moreover two new modules are added. The urban transformation module support students to understand, create and apply integrative strategies to complex inner-city transformation projects. The urban law module deepens the student's knowledge on contemporary spatial legislation and contractual law methods that assist them to effectively collaborate on planning and realizing urban projects.

Besides the substantive change, various didactic principles and learning methods are introduced resonating with the latest academic insights on lifelong professional education: blended-learning, case-based learning, student-centred learning. Blended-learning involves purposely linking the weekly interactive face-to-face meetings with student flexible self-study preparations via diverse online learning materials including theme-based videos, self-assessment, and peer-to-peer assignments. Case-based learning evolves around studying one critical urban development case per module from specific theoretical perspectives, aimed at enhancing the student's ability to critically compare practices in order to construct and apply management concepts and strategies for their own job. Student-centred learning factors in the growing need among professionals for relevant personal leadership skills, which is given shape by a personal development trajectory aimed at individual and collective reflective learning at the intersection of study and practice.