STUDIO LEARNING METHOD IN SCHOOL OF DESIGN IN INDONESIA[1]

A CASE STUDY ON THE APPLICATION OF STUDIO LEARNING METHOD FOR THE VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN DEPARTMENT OF PETRA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Freddy H. Istanto
Visual Communication Design Department
School of Art and Design Petra Christian University
Indonesia

ABSTRACT

In the early time of its appearance, the design education in Indonesia had a very technical sense. Then, it began to adopt the artistic sense after about 20 years later. The method of studio learning in Indonesia is adopted from the development of the Bauhaus and Beaux-arts' apprentice system. This apprentice system was once influenced by the design in the technical/engineering context.

In Petra Christian University's Visual Communication Design Department, this studio learning method is not only applied to its core subject but also to its skill subject. Physically, the connotation of studio is a room for drawing. But in term of designing, actually studio is more than just a room for it. Studio is a place for learning, enriching the idea by chatting, feeling, touching, and doing. It's also a potential place for integrating skills, values and design literacy.

Studio can be an ideal place to make the traditional become more global. Right from this place, the strength of the local culture will spark its bright sunshine to the whole world.

Keywords: School of Design In Indonesia, Studio Learning method.

ABSTRAK

Awalnya Pendidikan Desain di Indonesia lebih ditekankan pada pendekatan keteknikan. Barulah 20 tahun terakhir inilah pendidikan desain yang bernafaskan kesenirupaan dimulai. Salah satu metode pengajaran di Pendidikan Desain ini adalah model pengajaran studio yang diadopsi dari sistim permagangan Bauhaus di Jerman dan Beaux-arts dari Perancis.

Jurusan Desain Komunikasi Visual Universitas Kristen Petra menerapkan proses belajar-mengajar sistim studio ini tidak saja pada inti atau matakuliah utama saja, tetapi juga pada matakuliah-matakuliah yang membutuhkan pendekatan ketrampilan. Secara fisik konotasi studio adalah ruang atau tempat untuk menggambar. Tetapi dalam konteks perancangan (desain) studio tidak sekedar ruang gambar, tetapi juga sebagai proses belajar, pengkayaan dan penggalian ide melalui diskusi, mendengar, melihat, merasakan, menyentuh dan mempraktekan. Studio merupakan tempat yang potensial untuk mengintegrasikan ketrampilan, nilai-nilai desain dan wacana desain.

---

[1] Kertas kerja ini telah dipresentasikan pada 2002 *International Design Conference* di Dongseo University Korea Selatan pada tanggal 18 Mei 2002.

Dalam perkembangan dunia informasi, pemanfaatan teknologi komunikasi dan kemajuan moda informasi (internet) tidak hanya memudahkan mengakses informasi saja, tetapi yang lebih penting dari hal itu adalah studio menjadi tempat yang ideal untuk memancarkan kekuatan, kearifan dan kebesaran aspek tradisional ke seluruh dunia

Kata kunci: *Sekolah desain di Indonesia, proses pembelajaran studio.*

DESIGN EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

In Indonesia, Design Education has been going on about more than half century. It was the Dutch government that introduced this kind of education through technical engineering school in Bandung. Historically, the design education in Indonesia has been developed into two different paradigms. Up to now, the design education in Indonesia is still considered in these paradigms, they are (1) as a part of technical engineering and (2) as an extension of arts (Sachari,2001). In relation to the technical engineering, usually this discipline gains its place under the umbrella of civil and architecture engineering. Meanwhile, as an extension of arts, which finally has been legalized by the government, this discipline is placed under the umbrella of Arts and Design.[2]

The first school of design in Indonesia was the *Technische Hogeschool* Bandung, it was established by the Dutch. At that time, there was no specific division between civil and architecture engineering. The academic subjects that are considered as the pioneer of design education in Indonesia are drawing and designing lessons. It is important to know that the Japanese military government also gave some contributions to the design education in Indonesia. In 1944, they reopened the *Technische Hogeschool*, which had been closed down for some years, with a new name that was *Kogyo Daigaku*. It consisted of two groups of education level, they were *Daigakubu* (the high school for technique) and *Senmonbu* (the junior high school for technique). In 1945, pioneered by some of Indonesian figure, the *Kogyo Daigaku* was renamed to High School for Technique (STT).

In the scope of elementary school, this design education can be seen through the handicraft and drawing skill lessons. Meanwhile, in the higher education, the design education is offered through the craft skill lessons. At that time, these two kinds of lessons (drawing and handicraft) were considered important for the elementary school

---

[2] Some of them, arts and design education is placed under the umbrella of literature and linguistic disciplines. It is also common to some university for example IKIP *(Institut Pendidikan Ilmu Keguruan)*, which is now *Universitas Negeri Umum* and does not emphasize itself only on the education pertaining to teachers (education faculty)

students. In this period, the school or education with the orientation to create numbers of drawing teachers indeed gained special attention. In 1947, a school for the drawing teachers has been legalized by the government under the name of *Universitaire Leergang Voor de Opleiding van Tekenleraren*. Later, in 1956, this school was merged into a part of Architecture and Arts. This action was followed by the official appointment of Arts and Design Faculty in Bandung in 1984. Furthermore, during these 10 years period, the growth of the design education in Indonesia has increasingly developed.[3]

THE DESIGN EDUCATION AT PETRA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (PCU)

The first time it was established in 1961, PCU has only had English Department. This department was followed by the other two engineering departments, they were Civil and Architecture Departments. And up to this moment, these two engineering departments are considered as ones of the best department in Indonesia. The explanation on this consideration is not only coming from how well PCU can handle its management, but also from how popular its development is, especially for its physical development in the era of 80's to 90's.

Just like the common design education in Indonesia in its early years of development, PCU's Architecture Department tended to emphasize itself on the aspect of technological. It could be seen through its strong emphasize on the aspect of Building Science and Structure Science. In addition to that, there was also a design tendency expressed by its students' works that showed their stress on the design with a functional-rational style. Another supporting reason for the tendency to have technological changes was the global situation at that time in which was highly influenced by the modernism. Architecture as one of cultural aspects could not be set aside from the cultural spirit of a certain era. Furthermore, the lecturers of the department, who most of them were graduated in that era, have made this tendency strongly shape the design application of the students.

The design education that puts its emphasize on the aspect of arts appeared in Petra Christian University when a graphic design program, a program that is equal to a three-

---

[3] Nowadays, more than 15 state and private universities have set up their own Design Department. All of those universities can only be found in Java or Bali. Yet, we can still find a more informal and non-degree education for design course in most of the big city in Indonesia.

year diploma program (D-3), was set up in 1992 namely PPKAI (Interior and Architectural Communication Program). The good management progress and the society's great interest in this program encouraged the university officials to set up an undergraduate program (S1) for the design education in 1998. This undergraduate design program is named Faculty of Arts and Design that consists of two departments; they are Interior Design Department and Visual Communication Design Department (VCD).

In every educational field, there are two main aspects that hold the important role to make the education program become successful. The first one deals with the thing that is going to be taught to the students, while the second one covers the way to convey the message of the education to the students so that it can be accepted and understood. The former aspect is closely related to the curriculum and syllabus of the educational program itself, meanwhile the later aspect is associated with the way to share the knowledge to the students. The Architecture Department has been the pioneer in applying this studio learning method in its design education program. In fact in its era, this design studio of Petra's Architecture Department has become a reference to several universities in Indonesia.

THE DESIGN EDUCATION BY STUDIO LEARNING METHOD

The design education process through the studio learning method is not a new thing anymore because this kind of method is adopted from the design education system of the France's *Beaux-Arts* as well as the Germany's *Bauhaus*. In PCU's Architecture and Interior Design Departments, the education system through the studio learning method has been applied to the students since they are still in the first semester. In fact, this method will still be needed by the students to do their final project. Meanwhile, for the Visual Communication Design Department, it not a must for its last year's students to do their final projects using this studio method. To these last year's students, the studio learning method is optional to them since they are allowed to do their final projects with or without this studio method. In accordance with its character, the design education by studio learning method is not only focusing on the psychomotor training but also on the skill to think as a graphic designer and the ability to apply the concept of design.

> '.……*Let him be educated, skillful with the pencil, instructed in geometry, know much history, have followed the philosophers with attention, understand music,*

have some knowledge of medicine, know the opinion of the jurists, and be acquainted astronomy and (with) the theory of the heavens'.

It is very clear to see that to be a designer, one has to master certain knowledge and skills. A designer needs certain competencies that are to mention (1) personality (attitude) competency, (2) technical competency (skill and knowledge), (3) communication competency, (4) methodological competency and (5) social competency (Aditjipto 2002). Inside the studio, the students' the knowledge and their developmental design aspects are being developed by doing some training or students/tutors/lecturers' interaction. This studio's training and discussion will gradually develop and form a kind of design concept inside the student's mind. In the studio, the students will also be able to do some practice to balance their hand and way of thinking, develop their sense of shape and form, enhance their design skill, elaborate their understanding toward design and improve their skill and design quality.

As a place to do many kind of activities, studio will become a place for the students to learn and practice the visualization and representation as well as to learn the new material and the way to think of a designer. This process will involve the intensive relationship among the lecturer of the subject (the advisor), tutor and the student himself. Yet, the most important relationship is the togetherness between the tutor and the student who is under his guidance. This relationship shows us that besides the studio complete facility, the studio teaching management is also an important quality to develop the students.

DESIGN EDUCATION BY STUDIO LEARNING METHOD IN PCU'S VCD

The need of this studio learning method in Petra's Visual Communication Design Department is not only aimed for answering the need of creating its scholars, but also for filling out what is lacking in the teaching system of the lower education level. The design education in Indonesia encounters a big obstacle when its freshman does not have enough knowledge and skill portion especially in relation with the skill subjects.[4] The idea of

---

[4] As an illustration, high school students only get a one semester (6 months) chance to learn drawing skill subject. Meanwhile, during this six months, the students are not simply learning about pure drawing arts but also studying about some other arts; music, drama and even dancing. Thus, their arts and designs' knowledge and skills become limited.
Other obstacle for the Indonesia design education is the society's passive enthusiasm towards the field of arts and design for the future job of their children. Most of the parents see doctor, engineer and economist as the most promising job for their children.

cutting down on the basic skill design subject for example drawing subject cannot be carried out in Petra's Visual Communication Design Department. Moreover, this basic skill design subject can be used as a media to introduce the freshman to the new knowledge full with the most-up-to-date technology.

The great amount of the VCD's students has made the studio learning method in this department need a special management treatment. The studio teaching management in this department needs to be taken care with a very hard working effort, thus, VCD is always trying to evaluate itself by reviewing this studio learning method every new academic year.[5] The model of studio's teaching and learning plan will need an integrated and solid curriculum that covers the planning for the first up to the last semester program. The core subjects (the Visual Communication Design subject I to V) are the unity of the curriculum although every semester has its own objective and goal. Another management that need to be taken care besides the model of the studio's teaching and learning plan is the organization of the students in groups that will be trained and instructed by a tutor with the ratio of 1:15 or 1:20. The coordination of the students' group leaders, advisors, guest lecturers either administratively or academically will be handled by each head of the studio. To be more detailed, the administrative work will be carried out by the administrator, while the studio coordination will be arranged by the Head of the Laboratory. For that reason, the tight coordination and scheduling for example in setting up group discussion, inviting guest lecturers (professional) or visiting the area for research. The rules and regulations that can support the application of the studio teaching method and the operation of the laboratory organization's structure can be used as a control toward the application studio learning method (figure 1)

In short, studio is a media for stimulating students' ability to design and developing their competency in the aspects of visual communication design planning that will encourage them to be professionally competent. Physically, the connotation of studio is a room for drawing. But in term of designing, actually studio is more than just a room for it. Studio is a place for learning, enriching the idea by chatting, feeling, touching, and doing. It's also a place for integrating skills, values and design literacy.

---

[5] VCD was established in 1998. Every year, VCD accepts more or less 200 new students and up until the year of 2002, it has already had 800 students in total. This studio learning method has been applied to these students and it is always being reviewed and evaluated in every new academic year.

In accordance with that, the instrument and infrastructure in Petra's studio classroom are designed to support this studio teaching method. To make the studio learning method goes on smoothly, these following things have already been provided by Petra (1) the lecturer's room that is in the position of face to face with the studio classroom. In the lecturer's room, there are some books that can be used by the students for their literature study, (2) tutor's room, which serves as the working and consultation room, (3) the studio classroom. Besides as the working place, the studio serves as the place for displaying the students' work, keeping their work and things (inside the studio, the students have their own locker that are used to store their things and works), (4) in addition to those three places, Petra has a hall that is used for the students' leisure activities (figure 2)

THE VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN DEPARTMENT IN THE FUTURE

As a young department, the Visual Communication Design Department still has some weaknesses. The teaching and learning process by studio learning method is just one aspect of education, besides the other important aspect that is the content of the education itself. The studio learning method that has been considered as the perfect system for the design education still needs to be straightening up. One of the most urgent needs is the need of having the complete facility especially for the technological facility. Studio is a place for learning, enriching idea by chatting, feeling, touching, and doing. Thus, for design education, it is must be treated as studio without wall. Studio without wall may projection to the globalization of information, where students and tutors can access easily getting more information about design around the world (Arifin 2002). Moreover also means an ideal place to make the Indonesian Archipelago become more global. Right from this place, the strength of the local culture will spark its bright sunshine to the whole world. [6]

---

[6] With this studio learning system, students can learn the wisdom, strength and the richness of their local culture. The students are not only shown the example of how great "Jurassic Park" is, but also how beautiful the Toraja traditional puppet is. Music does not always mean how energetic and lively Britney Spears is, but also how attractive and beautiful the traditional dance is. Why should the design of a great France designer that is being presented to the audience while the traditional garment also has its own attractive side? Through the studio learning process, students can also combine and unite Charles Jenck's literature with the traditional architect's masterpiece. Besides David Karsen's graphic design style, the local design and ornament are also interesting to be explored and applied to the students' work. In addition to the magnificence of foreign animation film, the wisdom and attractiveness of folktale can also be applied to the concept of the students' work.

The other dominant factor that also needs to be fixed up is the curriculum review, whether the present curriculum can fulfill the need of the era. The higher education in Indonesia is handled by Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Tinggi (DIKTI) Department of National Education Affairs. The design education is designed with 144 credits, into which the government decides 100 credits for the curriculum based on the National Curriculum (KURNAS) and the rest 44 credits for the curriculum with the local content. Yet, it is frequently heard that the national curriculum and the government are often late in answering the need of the era. As the private university, Petra's Visual Communication Design Department is more flexible in reviewing and applying the new curriculum. The local content that offered by Petra's Visual Communication Design Department can be used to fill out what is lacking in the national curriculum. In this year, Petra's VCD will make some curriculum review with the reference to the present curriculum, do some comparative study to more advance and famous university in Indonesia and make some benchmarking with the same kind university in abroad. [7] (figure 3)

Observing the condition of Indonesia especially Surabaya, the technological development is the perfect answer for the need of developing society at the time being. On the other hand, the progress of this discipline will make development seems to be very technical. Because of the global demand, the country need, the regional potential as well as the students, the acquisition of the technology for information and communication related to VCD's discipline becomes the most important priority. [8]

For the longer perspective term, by reviewing the wide expansion of VCD, the academic development is seriously needed by this department. Petra Christian University has three departments that can bring support to one another; they are VCD (design), Informatics Engineering Department and Electrical Engineering Department (engineering), and Communication Department (Communication). With the support from the intellectuals of these departments, Petra can set up a new department that is

---

[7] The demand for benchmarking with some outstanding universities in abroad has become one of the department as well as university's targets and strategies for the period of 1999/2000 to 2004/2005. The cooperation with Dongseo University (DSU) is an appropriate step to support this target. With the appointment of DSU's Design Department as the First Level University in Design Field by Department of Education of Korean Government, VCD has found the right institution for achieving its target of benchmarking.

[8] Surabaya is a trading city where the conducive atmosphere of arts is hardly to sense. It is different to most of the big cities in Indonesia for examples Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta and Denpasar (Bali) where the arts atmosphere is so obvious to see. This condition has influenced the education method followed by PCU's VCD. The teaching and learning process does not only give stress on the creation of the scholars with good concepts and management, but they are also prepared with the ability to think and react as the graphic designers always do.

Multimedia Department. The need for this discipline in the future is not only for the Indonesian society in general, but also for the market of Petra Christian University, especially for its expansion to the eastern part of Indonesia.

REFERENCES

Aditjipto, M.I., *Architectural Education: facing the future.* Paper International Seminar The Design Studio: Asian Experience of School of Architecture, 2002.

Arifin, Liliani S., *The Role of Creativity: Method For Studio Management Development.* Paper International Seminar : The Design Studio: Asian Experience of School of Architecture, 2002.

Kiswandono, I., *Manajemen Pengajaran Studio Arsitektur.* Seminar Pendidikan, Studio Arsitektur dan Seputar Badan Akreditasi Nasional. Jurusan Arsitektur UK Petra., 1998.

_____, *Proses Belajar-Mengajar di Studio Arsitektur*. Unpublished, handout. Jurusan Arsitektur UK Petra, 1996.

_____, *Berfikir Kreatif, Suatu Pendekatan Menuju Berfikir Arsitektural unpublished.* Universitas Gajah Mada, 1993.

Sachari, Agus, Perkembangan Pendidikan Desain di Indonesia dan Proyeksinya. *Jurnal Seni Rupa, Desain dan Kriya*, Fakultas Seni Rupa dan Desain ITB, Bandung, 2001.
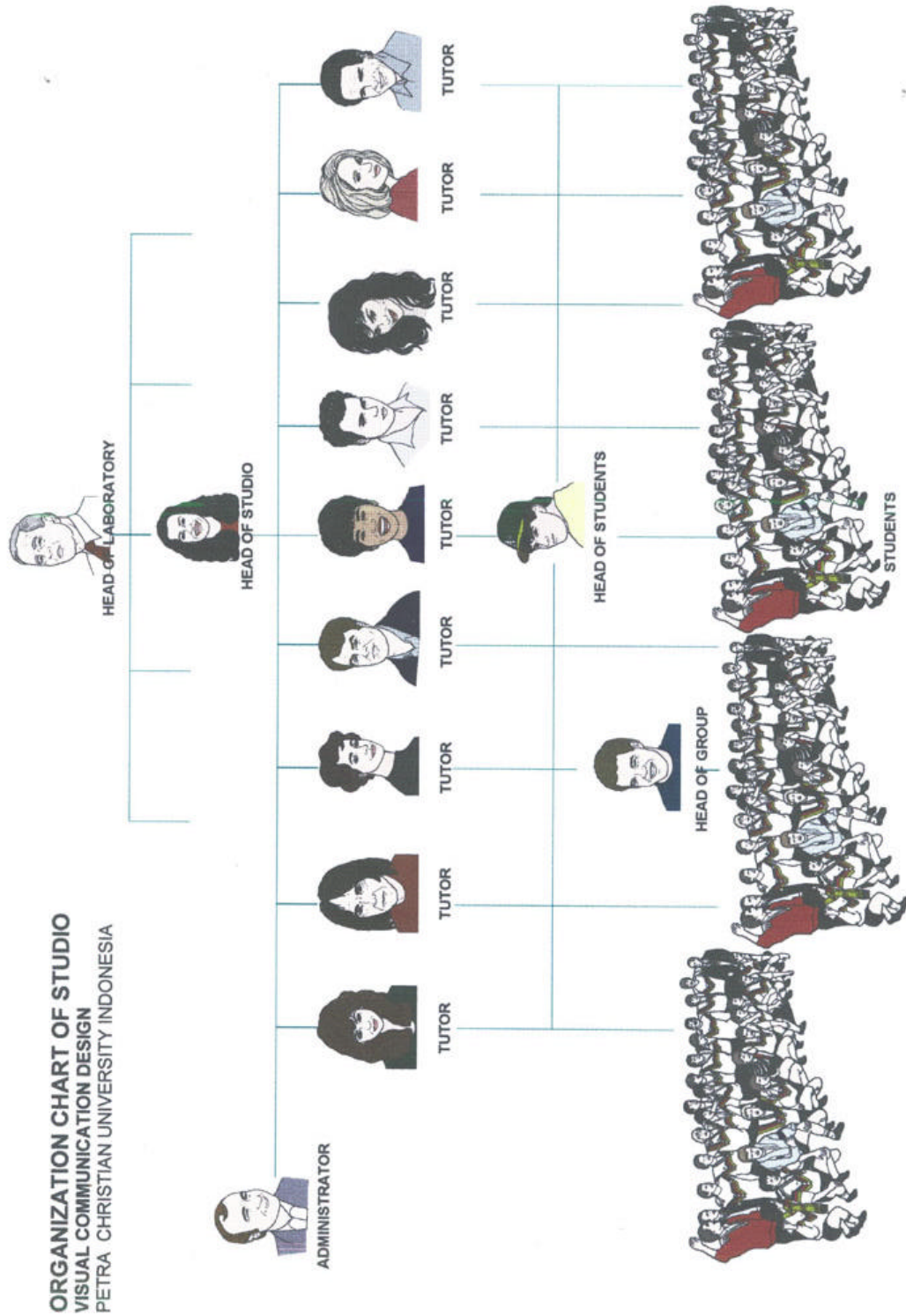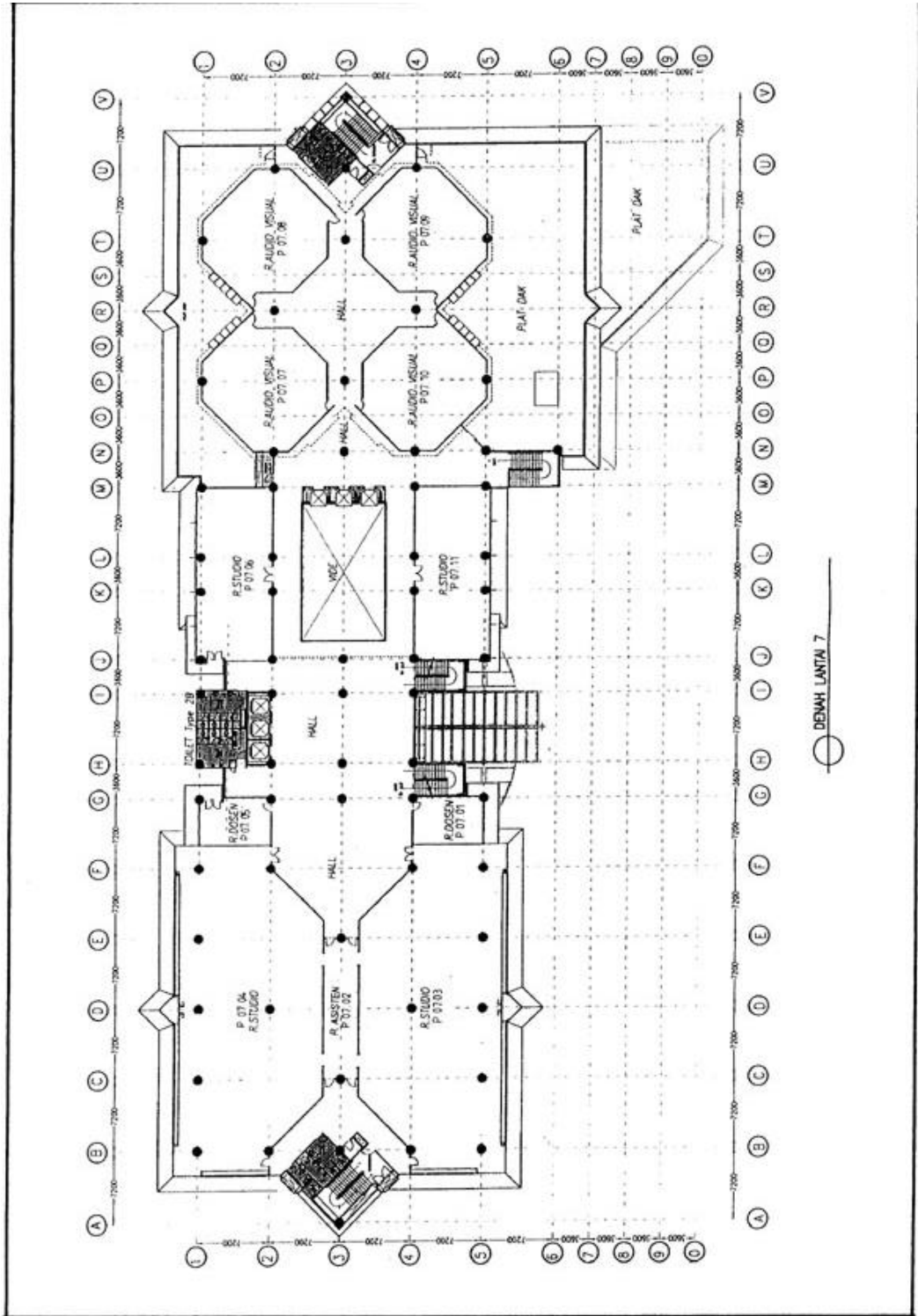
APPENDIX

Figure 1. Organization Chart Studio

Figure 2. Studio Floor Plan

YEAR	SMT	TOTAL CRED	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9
IV	8	10					FINAL PROJECT 10				
IV	7	15				PRACTICAL TRAINING/ INTERNSHIP 5	VISUAL-COMM DESIGN 5 (7)	SEMINAR 3			
III	6	16		PROFESSION ETHICS 2	PACKAGING/ WEB DESIGN/ COMICS/COP/ ANIMATION 2	MANA-GEMENT 2	VISUAL-COMM DESIGN 4 (7)	AUDIO VISUAL 2 (3)			
III	5	20		SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 2	ANIMATION 1 (2)	ADVERTI-SING COMM. 2	VISUAL-COMM DESIGN 3 (6)	AUDIO VISUAL 1 (3)	PHOTO GRAPHY 2 (3)	RESEARCH METHOD 2	
II	4	20	RELIGION 2	DESIGN APPREC 2	COMPUTER GRAPHICS 2	ILLUSTRA-TION 2	VISUAL-COMM DESIGN 2 (5)	PRINTING PROCESS 2	PHOTO GRAPHY 1 (3)	AESTHETICS 2	
II	3	22	CULTURAL HISTORY 2	DESIGN APPREC 1 (2)	COMPUTER GRAPHICS 1 (2)	ILLUSTRA-TION 1 (2)	VISUAL-COMM DESIGN 1 (5)	PRINTING PROCESS 1 (2)	TYPO GRAPHY 2 (3)	AESTHETICS 1 (2)	DESIGN METHO-DOLOG 2
I	2	22	BASIC NATURAL SCIENCE 2	COMM. PROCESS 2	PSYCHOLOGI-CAL PERCEPTION 2	DRAWING 2 (3)	BASIC DESIGN 2 (4)	HISTORY OF ART 2 (2)	TYPO GRAPHY 1 (3)	TECHNICAL DRAWING 2	BASIC SOCIAL SCIENCE 2
I	1	19		ETHICS 2	PANCASILA 2	DRAWING 1 (3)	BASIC DESIGN 1 (4)	HISTORY OF ART 1 (2)	ENGLISH ANVER. COPY WRITING 2	BAHASA INDONESIA 2	KEWARGA-NEGARAAN 2

	NATIONAL CURRICULLUM	PETRA/LOCAL CURRICULLUM	TOTAL CREDITS
BASIC GEN.	8	6*	14
BASIC SKILL	32	5 + 4*	41
SKILL	60	12 + 17*	89
* PURE LOCAL CONTENT	100	17 + 27*	144

Figure 3. Purpose of New Curriculum