

Self-review of DeTao's teaching activities using the CIQG Quality Platform Standards

Training workshop

(Songjiang, Shanghai, June 2 & 3, 2015)

Setting the Workshop in Context:

Where has DeTao come from and where might it go?

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Education Masters

Stamenka Uvalić-Trumbić

Dear Fellow Masters and DeTao Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for us to welcome you to this workshop, which is one of a series organised by our KMI studio.

While our previous workshops were targeted towards a wider audience of academics and professionals, this one is an internal training workshop aimed at strengthening the quality and impact of DeTao's education model.

Let us set the context for this workshop. We shall review the evolution of DeTao's Masters' Academy since we began our journey with you in 2010 and look at how this workshop may facilitate future developments.

Background: The Quality Platform

I start with the background.

A DeTao team participated in the Conference of CHEA, the US Council for Higher Education Accreditation, in Washington, DC in January 2013.

DeTao declared that it wished to be accepted as a CHEA Quality Platform Provider under the programme that CHEA was developing.

The CHEA Quality Platform is a mechanism for the external review of the output and performance of innovative education providers that are outside the traditional university framework. We call this 'post-traditional higher education'. DeTao has defined its long-term focus as 'beyond university'.

The purpose of the CHEA Quality Platform is to give students and the public reliable information about the quality of a provider's offerings. Those offerings may be intended to improve of work skills, for general intellectual development, or for the pursuit of further education.

The DeTao KMI Manager's Amy Xu's report for the last six months includes the comment that:

"Many Masters asked if we have any quality assurance system to ensure the quality of teaching. This is a problem to be solved in DeTao".

In response, KMI is organizing this training workshop to help DeTao develop its quality assurance system. We hope that this will lead to DeTao becoming a Quality Platform provider.

Becoming a Quality Platform Provider is not an end in itself, but part of the gradual evolution of DeTao as a recognized and trustworthy provider of innovative teaching and learning.

The DeTao Concept

I start with the basic concept of DeTao, as it was presented when the DeTao Masters Academy was initiated, in order to demonstrate its innovative features. It was conceived as a new model that would blend tradition and innovation to foster cultural and economic progress in China.

Inspired by what he saw at the Shanghai Expo in 2010, Chairman George Lee had the dream of creating a unique pool of global talent, beginning with the Creative Industries. He was keen to see Chinese industry expand its capacity for high-level innovation. His idea was that world-leading authorities, which he called Masters, would pass on their ‘tacit knowledge’ to senior apprentices who would then act as bridges to larger Chinese audiences of executives, professionals and students.

If I understand correctly, the words “DeTao” have several meanings in Chinese, one of which is “planting a seed”.

That seed has grown rapidly in the last five years. At first the project seemed to outsiders like a fairy-tale. Indeed, several Masters told us that when they first received the e-mail invitation from DeTao they thought it was “spam”. But the dream has developed into an exciting adventure with great future potential.

The new building at SIVA for the Creative Industries Cluster was officially opened in 2013. Starting with the original handful of Masters, among which we were proud to be numbered, the DeTao network has now attracted hundreds of exceptional talents from all over the world in a variety of disciplines, all of them enthusiastic about making George Lee’s dream a reality.

Sir John and I were privileged to conduct video interviews with a number of Masters in the Creative Industries in 2012 and 2013. Despite their diverse origins, backgrounds and strong individuality, they share several common features.

One is multi-disciplinarity, which we find in their academic backgrounds, in how they approach their professional work and in the way they intend to pass on their tacit knowledge to their students in China.

A second common characteristic is that many of the Masters use advanced technologies in diverse ways in both their work and their teaching.

Third, all the Masters have a palpable enthusiasm for sharing and “clustering” their expertise and talent. This is happening in the fascinating knowledge creation process that we are now witnessing at CCIC and augurs well for the future.

Let me illustrate this with examples of some of the first Masters to join DeTao.

One is Nathan Wang, Master of Music he is of Chinese origin but lives and works in California and also in studios in Beijing. Nathan has a pluri-disciplinary background as a musician, mathematician and psychologist. However, music has always remained his passion and he now works both in Hollywood and in Chinese cinema. He considers the DeTao opportunity as a “dream come true”.

Another example is Haim Dotan, who works in both the US and Israel. Although primarily an architect, he is also a talented painter and a poet. His books of Poetry and Architecture “After the Rain” and “Echo in the Desert” won the prize for the Most Beautiful Book in China 2011. Haim Dotan is a man with a mission to change the way that people live in urban centres. He wants to use technology to achieve low cost, ecological green cities and more socially focused and culturally authentic communities.

Another architect, Matias del Campo, who designed the Austrian pavilion for the Shanghai Expo, took the unusual decision to build it entirely in China from 3D models rather than importing materials. He is strongly committed to the use of contemporary technology in everything he does. He considers that DeTao is the ‘epicentre of an earthquake’ in architectural training.

Timothy Jacob Jensen is the Chief Designer and CEO of Jacob Jensen Design, which is famous for streamlining form language playing between light and darkness. Timothy places Scandinavian values – Honest, Caring, and Peaceful - at the heart of his design forms that include a large variety of products from watches to coffins! He is an artist and a businessman who now has several studios in China with young designers based here. Timothy sees China as a huge market for good design and the DeTao Masters Academy as an irreversible trend.

I could go in this vein, because all of DeTao’s Masters are highly distinguished people with fascinating stories to tell about their lives and achievements, but let me pass you to Sir John to reflect on the future.

Sir John Daniel

How can the DeTao Masters reach a wider audience?

Stamenka has cited just a handful of hundreds of DeTao Masters to illustrate the breadth and richness of global talent that the DeTao Masters Academy has assembled. Their studios at CCIC are becoming tremendous intellectual and artistic powerhouses as they influence their Chinese colleagues and students. But China is a big country and many of its people could also benefit from contact with these Masters. Who knows what sparks of creativity might be generated if people across China could build on the Masters’ ideas?

How can we extend the Masters’ tacit knowledge beyond the privileged few who learn from them at SIVA and CCIC and reach much wider Chinese and international audiences? We suggest three avenues.

The first step is to strengthen DeTao's education model and give it wider recognition. This is the purpose of this workshop, which we hope will lead later to DeTao's acceptance as a Quality Platform Provider after a formal external review.

The advantage of taking this route is that the CHEA Quality Platform looks at the learning outcomes that DeTao's teaching achieves and does not try to force it into the traditional framework of quality assurance in higher education. The Quality Platform is intended for innovative and alternative providers around the world, like DeTao here in China.

The second step is to innovate in methods of certification. This could be achieved by issuing DeTao Digital Badges to students. DeTao has already invested significant effort in developing a system of Badges, which is a great start.

We observe that after a slow start badges are now becoming an important thrust of certification in North America and Europe, whereas DeTao is already a pioneer of badges in China. They are well suited to DeTao's philosophy of focussing teaching on learning outcomes, competencies and achievements. The status of Quality Platform Provider would strengthen the credibility of these badges and provide a model for other post-traditional providers around the world.

The third avenue is to extend the reach of DeTao's teaching by operating online. DeTao has already taken three steps in this direction.

First, Stamenka and I have worked on the issue of quality in online teaching. DeTao and the CCRTVU Press published our first guide *A Guide to Quality in Online Learning*, in Chinese by in 2013. The second, *A Guide to Quality in Post-Traditional Online Higher Education*, was published last year. It, too, was published simultaneously in English and Chinese. These guides have been widely cited and downloaded here in China and around the world, demonstrating DeTao's wish to show leadership in achieving quality in online teaching.

Second, Professor Yan Jin has initiated the O+O, or Online plus Onsite programme whereby DeTao creates online courses that will be used to enrich the teaching of that subject onsite in a number of conventional universities. Other Masters will follow his example and create O+O courses.

Third, two years ago DeTao donated funds to help Peking University to offer some MOOCs, Massive Open Online Courses but the development of these courses did not involve DeTao Masters

Now, however, following a visit to DeTao from the CEO of the FutureLearn MOOC consortium, Simon Nelson, three months ago, DeTao has the opportunities to become a direct partner in FutureLearn as one of its Specialist Institutes and to produce its own MOOCs. This would enable DeTao Masters to reach a worldwide audience.

FutureLearn has just launched the world's largest MOOC, enrolling nearly 400,000 learners in 150 countries on its course on English-Language Teaching. I am not suggesting DeTao should aim for numbers like these, but I am sure that thousands

would register for DeTao FutureLearn MOOCs on topics such as Animation, Design, and Ecological Architecture.

We shall leave it there. Stamenka has recalled some of the excitement that attracted world-renowned experts to become DeTao Masters in the early days. The organisation that DeTao has built has tremendous potential and I have suggested three ways in which that potential could be exploited. This workshop is a first step.

We are very honoured that Dr. Judith Eaton, the President of CHEA has come to speak at this workshop. As President of CHEA she cannot take part directly in the later external assessment process, but her presence here is a sign of her commitment to innovation in methods of quality assurance.

As higher education diversifies she is determined to ensure that approaches to quality assurance evolve to meet changing needs. The Quality Platform is an expression of that determination. The Quality Platform aims to meet organisations like DeTao on their own ground and to review the quality of their outcomes and performance against the background of their own unique missions.

We are also pleased to welcome the expert team that will conduct this training workshop and will likely be involved in the later external review. Dorte Kristoffersen is Deputy Executive Director of the Hong Kong Council of Accreditation for Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). Professor Jianxin Zhang runs a research centre at Yunnan University. Some of you will know her from our previous workshop.

These two distinguished international experts will focus on the Quality Platform Standards both from an international perspective and within the Chinese context.

After these plenary presentations, the participants will split into two working groups this afternoon in order to prepare the self-study.

We will reconvene tomorrow in plenary to look at the results of the workshops and have an open discussion through a Masters' roundtable.

We very much look forward to the outcomes and hope you will enjoy the process.

Thank you