



Résumé of Section II

The investigation of individual influences on individual design processes can be ascribed to many different personality traits or individual characteristics such as intelligence, social competence, action strategies, experience, etc.

One important aspect concerning investigation research relates to the question of whether extreme cases are useful for design research. For example, it seems very difficult to compile the strategies of outstanding experts in a systematic manner. In general, the design process could be recorded only *post hoc*. In consequence, the data are necessarily self-reports (e.g. sometimes of work done years before), which are difficult to verify.

However, what is the origin of the remarkable success of designers like Gordon Murray? One may argue that this designer has a great deal of experience, but we must not forget that there are many designers with years of experience who are less successful. Therefore it seems necessary to analyse these outstanding designers and their design processes in great detail. By doing so we may perhaps learn unusual but significant aspects that might be important for success, such as obsessive motivation or neglecting rules and traditions. In any case, it is not enough to reduce success only to the experience of outstanding designers.

Günther & Ehrlenspiel illustrate another way of examining individual differences by comparing designers who have received education in systematic design with designers who are in practice without this education. Although the authors consider there are several differences with regard to the steps of procedure' between these groups, it is necessary to emphasise the fact that there is no such person as 'the experienced designer from practice', just as there is no such person as 'the designer with education in design methodology'.

In general, it seems to be have been established that methodological education is useful – even for experienced designers – especially in situations in which the designer is faced with a new and complex problem, and what serve as his usual strategies will not deliver a successful result. It would seem easy to distinguish designers using the criterion 'methodical education' vs. 'no methodical education', or 'experience' vs. 'no experience'. However, some designers without a methodical education may use a combination of different strategies according to fixed rules as their routine behaviour.

The same problem occurs with the 'experience' criterion: evidently, experience is only a verbal declaration that contains a complex pattern of several aspects determining the design process and thus the result. Furthermore, experience is a continuum, not a two-dimensional category, and differentiation between experienced and non-experienced designers has to be complemented by a detailed observation and analysis of the procedure of the designer. It would be interesting to know the detailed methods applied by the designers in practical situations, and how they gain advantage by using such methods.