Knowledge creation and exchange within research: the exegesis approach

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This paper discusses the exegesis approach as a means of applying research methods and gaining insight into the processes of knowledge creation and exchange. The conceptual framework of exegesis based research will provide insights into the knowledge creation processes within practice based education which on it turn will feed the insights necessary for further development of the Methods of Research curriculum taught at Utrecht School of the Arts. The curriculum will engender new approaches and methods within design research and therefore help students and educational facilitators to create and articulate their retrieved knowledge.

Institutions in higher art & design education are by nature organizations which value learning and creativity. Education and knowledge creation is the core business of these organizations. As such, it is quite remarkable how poorly developed the notion of knowledge creation through research is at an institutional level. Although educational facilitators put lots of energy at enabling knowledge creation and facilitating learning at a student level; few organizations have developed a knowledge vision on how they can enable knowledge creation within research processes at an institutional level. The new approach; the exegesis approach, gave the institution the wanted insights of research which addresses this stated issue on both a theoretical and practical level within the EMMA [European Media of Arts] and the PhD in Design program.

The exegesis approach enables the students to meet the challenges of research within this particular field. In the exegesis the student will conduct self-directed research on an individually assigned project of their choice. This will result in a creative artefact. In support of this process of research and creation, the student will write a supportive thesis to provide a substantial piece of work in which both critical theory and practice can be demonstrated and which will function as a critical underpinning of the project development. The role of the artefact in this research process will be supportive and complementary. Both project and thesis provide evidence for the culmination of Masters level achievement on the program.

The relation between the thesis and the individual project is a relationship with mutual influence. The thesis provides a research based theoretical and contextual framework for the practical work performed in the individual project. The individual project should bear evidence of theories, propositions and assumptions. The individual project should be embedded in the thesis part as a case study. Relevance of theory and design should be shown at an early stage. At completion of this module the student is expected to present a practical as well as a theoretical body of work that is not only of a high quality, but also a result of rigorous and reflective research. Both practical theoretical.

The knowledge created and retrieved within this process is supported by an online learning environment LEDA [Learning Environments of the Digital Academy]. The paper will conclude its empirical founding's on this type of education with a validation of used methods and tools and opens up some new issues on the agenda within our field of expertise and education; Art, Media and Technology.