A proposal

RESEARCH STATION AS DISTRIBUTOR OF EDUCATION IN RESEARCH AND THEORY

April, 2020
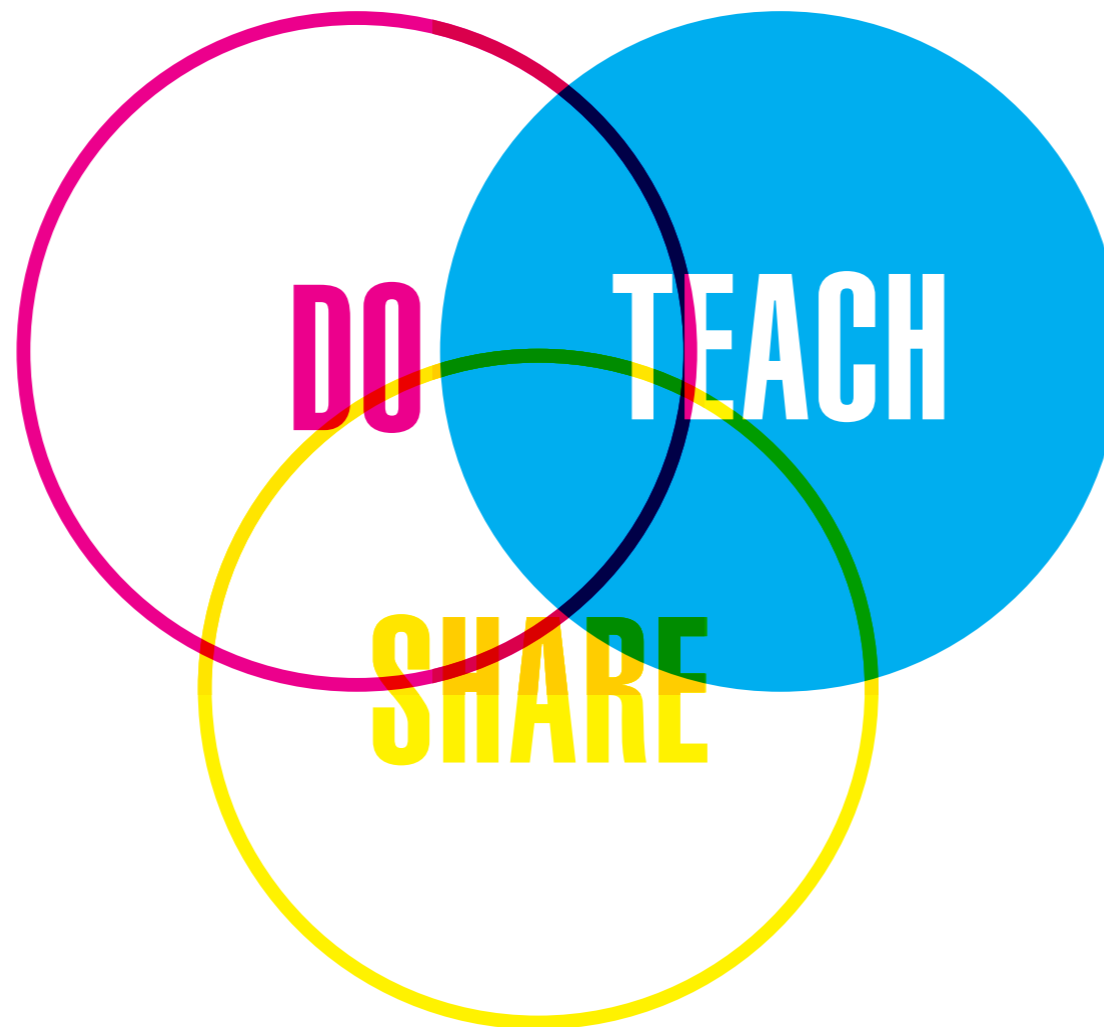**Mark Mulder, coordinator Research Station**
Suzanne Rademaker, coordinator Theory

FIRST: 3 FUNCTIONS OF THE RESEARCH STATION

Research Station.

"Het Research Station speelt een cruciale rol in het verzamelen, bekendmaken en initiëren van onderzoek in Leisure en kunsten. Het is de standplaats van de lectoren en de hoofddocenten. Hoofd-docenten vormen de linking pins met de opleidingen. Daarnaast wordt gewerkt aan een eenduidig vocabulaire en een gedeeld repertoire aan onderzoeks-inzichten en onderzoeksvaardigheden. Het station werkt niet alleen als werkplek voor onderzoekers maar vooral ook als podium voor presentaties, platform voor discussie en centrum voor bezinning."

Source: Accenten Verschuiven, Strategisch Plan Willem de Kooning Academie 2020-2024

DO — TEACH — SHARE

"If the Research Station is the interface of educating research in art and design and functions as a repository, a database, an index and a way finder for how we teach, then we need to coordinate these teachers. A managerial position in the role of how we teach research. Our proposal: Research Station becomes the repository of all research and theory teachers, the station distributes (based on requests by majors, practices) the expertise over the projects and years."

Source: Position Paper Research Station.

Teach

"The Research Station wants to be the interface of educating research in art and design. We want to answer the question "How do we teach research @ WDKA"? The RS wants to be the interface between questions of users and the system of knowledge. The users of this interface are 'those who want to know and want to learn', which starts with students but includes the whole 'learning community'.

When we start from the premise that "research is not exclusively practiced at the Research Station" but "sits in every part of our education at Willem de Kooning Academy" (mywdka/researchstation) the Research Station should function as a repository, a database, an index and a way finder to the other 'parts' (stations, majors, masters, practices and partners).

The Research Station supports (via 'use of sources' and/ 'use of writing') research given in stations, majors, masters, practices and partners. The Research Station also aspires to give direction to research at the WdKA. We want to achieve this by creating a research community that is not only aligned with the research agenda, but also feeds this agenda. This means coordinating people who teach research, connecting the supply of expertise to the demand from the curricula, and developing new expertise that fits future needs.
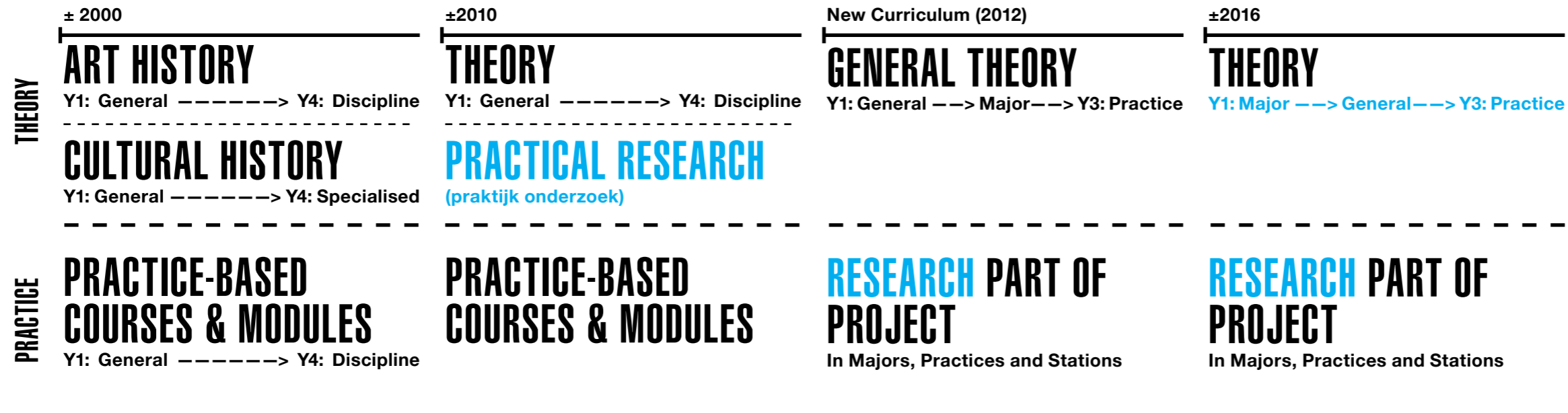
The Research Station furthermore wants to break down the artificial barrier between practice-based research and theory by merging with the theory department."

Source: Position Paper Research Station.

Do

"While the Lectoraat is focussed on conducting/organising research trajectories (starting from "What kind of research does the WdKA do"), the Research Station is applying this to education (starting from "What kind of research does the WdKA teach")."

Source: Position Paper Research Station.

Share

"The Research Station aspires to be an experimental space that is open to all possible activities of doing, showing and disseminating research. From texts, to publications, to collections, to exhibitions, to meetings to performances and demonstrations (see more at mywdka/researchstation). By doing so it wants to be an inspiring space that debunks the myth of research."
[...]
"The Research Station aspires to be a public space that presents and positions research at WdKA to the outside world. This means that we want to create an open and inviting space for the 'WdKA research community' to share, show and disseminate. Next to that we want to be a partner in communication-strategies that position research."

Source: Position Paper Research Station.

SITUATION OF THEORY: A HISTORY

Theory

THEORY

± 2000

ART HISTORY
Y1: General ——————> Y4: Discipline

CULTURAL HISTORY
Y1: General ——————> Y4: Specialised

±2010

THEORY
Y1: General ——————> Y4: Discipline

PRACTICAL RESEARCH
(praktijk onderzoek)

New Curriculum (2012)

GENERAL THEORY
Y1: General ——> Major——> Y3: Practice

±2016

THEORY
Y1: Major ——> General——> Y3: Practice

PRACTICE

PRACTICE-BASED COURSES & MODULES
Y1: General ————> Y4: Discipline

PRACTICE-BASED COURSES & MODULES

RESEARCH PART OF PROJECT
In Majors, Practices and Stations

RESEARCH PART OF PROJECT
In Majors, Practices and Stations

Now

THEORY VS. RESEARCH

Our observations:
- Theory tries to do too much within one subject taught by one teacher;
- Theory and practice are still separated from each other: separate subject codes, separate assessments, separate deliverables, separate knowledges;
- While theory often is also about (desk)research, theoretical and practical research (research by making, visual research) are offered as separate parts. This leads to arbitrary discussions about what should be considered research and what should be considered theory.

The way the curriculum is currently structured means a lot is required from the theory courses: stay close to the discipline, but also offer more overarching theoretical perspectives, provide a good (=broad) knowledgebase, but also look for more specific connections with the projects and what the research teachers are doing. And it still partly depends on the teacher where the biggest focus will be.

Around 2000 our education consisted of a general propaedeutic year, after which a discipline was chosen. The curriculum was divided into more or less clearly divided subjects.
In addition to the practical subjects, there were theory courses: art history and cultural history in year 1, then for example film history and media theory for AV students. The theory courses differed for each department (Major).
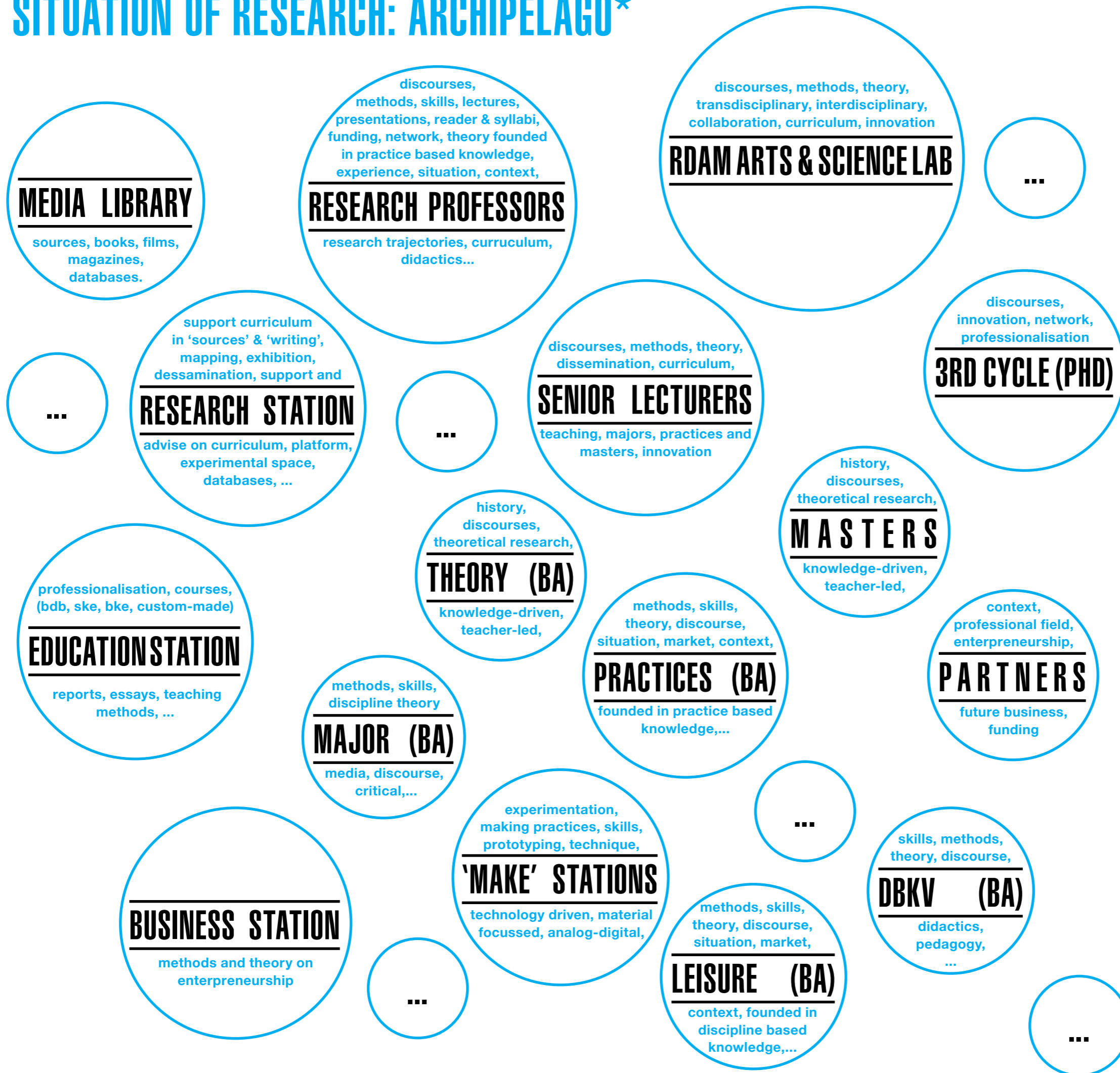
Around 2010 Practical Research was introduced. It was usually given by a teacher with a lot of theoretical background and therefore was still closely related to theory. Around this time we started to make a distinction between General Theory and Disciplinary Theory (vaktheorie).

With the arrival of the **new curriculum** in 2012, we made a shift to only teaching General Theory and Practical Research in the majors. For the practices theory consisted of a **Studium Generale**. General Theory - as the name implies - was general, one size fits all. Soon complaints were raised that the perspective on / from the specific disciplines was missing, so Disciplinary Theory was reintroduced.

Around 2016 we switched to a model in which Disciplinary Theory and General Theory were combined into one course for the majors, to better align with the scope and focus of the projects and to eliminate the one size fits all model that led to a lot of student dissatisfaction and resits. We now start from a more disciplinary perspective and slowly zoom out to broader perspectives and theoretical frameworks. The practices run their own theory program based on their scope and needs.

SITUATION OF RESEARCH: ARCHIPELAGO*

An archipelago, sometimes called an island group or island chain, is a chain, cluster or collection of islands, or sometimes a sea containing a small number of scattered islands.

MEDIA LIBRARY

sources, books, films, magazines, databases.

discourses, methods, skills, lectures, presentations, reader & syllabi, funding, network, theory founded in practice based knowledge, experience, situation, context,

RESEARCH PROFESSORS

research trajectories, curruculum, didactics...

discourses, methods, theory, transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary, collaboration, curriculum, innovation

RDAM ARTS & SCIENCE LAB

...

support curriculum in 'sources' & 'writing', mapping, exhibition, dessamination, support and

RESEARCH STATION

advise on curriculum, platform, experimental space, databases, ...

...

discourses, methods, theory, dissemination, curriculum,

SENIOR LECTURERS

teaching, majors, practices and masters, innovation

discourses, innovation, network, professionalisation

3RD CYCLE (PHD)

history, discourses, theoretical research,

MASTERS

knowledge-driven, teacher-led,

professionalisation, courses, (bdb, ske, bke, custom-made)

EDUCATION STATION

reports, essays, teaching methods, ...

history, discourses, theoretical research,

THEORY (BA)

knowledge-driven, teacher-led,

methods, skills, theory, discourse, situation, market, context,

PRACTICES (BA)

founded in practice based knowledge,...

context, professional field, enterpreneurship,

PARTNERS

future business, funding

methods, skills, discipline theory

MAJOR (BA)

media, discourse, critical,...

experimentation, making practices, skills, prototyping, technique,

'MAKE' STATIONS

technology driven, material focussed, analog-digital,

...

skills, methods, theory, discourse,

DBKV (BA)

didactics, pedagogy, ...

BUSINESS STATION

methods and theory on enterpreneurship

...

methods, skills, theory, discourse, situation, market,

LEISURE (BA)

context, founded in discipline based knowledge,...

...

ANALYSIS

1. The current Bachelor curriculum with separate theory and research courses creates an arbitrary divide between theory and research that does not facilitate an easy synergy between the two. This divide does not contribute to a better understanding about the role of theory and research for a students' practice.

2. Spreading research across all educational spaces is seen as an advantage, but it also prevents us from getting a clear overview of what our students are learning. Because everyone is (partly) responsible, there is ultimately no coordination on methods, levels, skills and learning trajectories. In addition, not only does the supply remain (partly) hidden in the curricula of majors, stations and practices, but the demands and needs from the various educational partners and students is also not made explicit.

1. Education separation leads to

THEORY VS. RESEARCH

2. Being embedded means that

RESEARCH= EVERYWHERE BUT HAS NO CENTER

WE PROPOSE...

...that all research and theory tutors become part of the Research Station. The Research Station thus becomes the central database of —and distribution center for— knowledge, methods, skills and people who embody this expertise. The Research Station will be responsible for the design and coordination of robust learning trajectories for research and theory.

THEORY= KNOWLEDGE BASED.

1. 'KNOWLEDGE BASICS'

The theory teachers define their expertise (subject, discourse, didactics) and connect this to a educational situation: discipline (major), transdiscipline (practice) or making (stations). This is then translated this into electives / modules of 8 weeks.

2. 'PROJECT KNOWLEDGE'

Need for specific knowledge / theory for doing a project (need is defined by major/ practice/master curriculum), see how this works on the next slide ▶

EXAMPLES OF 'KNOWLEDGE BASICS'

DISCIPLINE

- **HISTORY OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION** (L. Schijvens)
- **WAT IS CONCEPTUELE KUNST?** (J. Gijsen)
- **ART IN MOTION** (S. Rademaker)
- **SEMIOTICS** (C. Somze)
- ...

TRANSDISCIPLINE

- **WHAT IS AUTONOMY?** (F. Cramer)
- **INTRODUCTION IN SOCIOLOGY** (Erasmus)
- **NEW ECONOMIC MODELS** (C. van Middelkoop)
- **COPYRIGHT & APPROPRIATION** (M. Schotman)
- ...

STATION

- **KNOWLEDGE OF FABRICS** (E. de Baan)
- **THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK-PRESS** (K. Hospers)
- **BIOBASED ART AND DESIGN** (E. van Leest)
- **ART IN THE AGE OF MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION** (B. Lichtenegger)
- ...

How does it work?

According to our analysis of the current situation, we can distinguish between roughly two kinds of 'theory' being taught right now; a more overarching theory that deals with a (broad) knowledge base and a more project-oriented theory with a clear link to current projects that students can apply in their work.

We propose to make a clear distinction between these two forms of theory and to offer them in different ways. Project theory can engage in a clearer relationship with research and it can also have a different scope depending on the projects. The theory that deals with knowledge bases can be disconnected and take place in the form of elective modules. We speak of elective modules because we think that it does not make sense anymore that we exclusively choose which knowledge is relevant for students. We think that in the current landscape many theories, histories and knowledges are relevant and every time we choose something, we choose not to do something else. So we propose a system where we offer 6 or 8 modules, for example art histories, media histories and / or theories, philosophy, sociology etc. Students choose what they find interesting and/or relevant. If students in the course of their study find that they have missed something, they can always follow other modules. We can also choose modules that are more in line with the majors in the first two years and modules that are more in line with the practices in years 3 and 4.

RESEARCH STATION AS DISTRIBUTOR OF RESEARCH & THEORY

① TEACHERS

The research & theory teachers define their expertise (subject/methods/skills) in research and/or theory.

SUPPORT BY RESEARCH STATION IN 2020

Research Station helps teachers in identifying knowledge bases, methods and skills via an unambiguous vocabulary and shared repertoire.

See: "How We Teach Research"

SUPPORT BY RESEARCH STATION IN 2020

Research Station helps majors, practices and masters in identifying fields of knowledge, methodology and skills via an unambiguous vocabulary and shared repertoire.
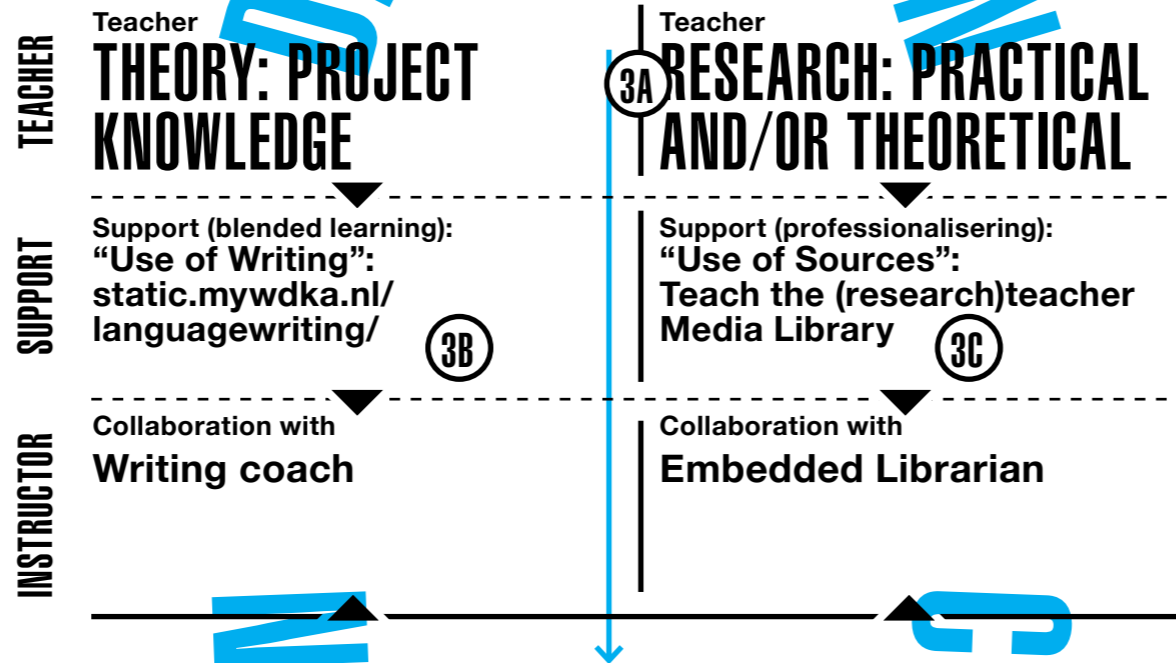
See the pilot: "Research-LearningTrajectories@LTD january 2020"

② COURSE LEADERS

The course leaders define in the curriculum the specific need for expertise in research and theory in the project.

SUPPLY

DEMAND

DISTRIBUTION

③ RESEARCH STATION

the research station becomes a database of teachers with their specific expertise in research & theory. This database, made in an uniform vocabulary, catalogues our shared repertoire as an art institute

TEACHER

Teacher
THEORY: PROJECT KNOWLEDGE

Teacher
③A RESEARCH: PRACTICAL AND/OR THEORETICAL

SUPPORT

Support (blended learning):
**"Use of Writing":
static.mywdka.nl/
languagewriting/** ③B

Support (professionalisering):
**"Use of Sources":
Teach the (research)teacher
Media Library** ③C

INSTRUCTOR

Collaboration with
Writing coach

Collaboration with
Embedded Librarian

COLLABORATION

④ PROJECTTEAM

During preparation practicalities and specifics for research (methods, skills, expertise) and theory that are beneficial for the project.

How does it work?

Simular to how other stations are employed in the projects, Research & Theory become an expertise that education needs to collect at the Research Station.

0   First, research and theory teachers (i.e. teaching hours) are moved from the project team to the Research Station. They have then become part of the Research Station Team.

1   The research & theory teachers of the Majors, Practices and Masters identify and profile themselves as part of a research community.

Out of these profiles a database of research/theory teachers is developed

2   Course leaders from Majors, Practices and Masters mark and identify in the curriculum ('onderwijsaanbod') the specific needs in research and theory: required knowledge, methodology and skills related to objectives and learning trajectories.

3   Every year, while making the 'docentenplanning', they share this need to the Research Station, who then acquires one or more experts (teachers) who can meet this need. Research Station find best matches for request and connects the specific teacher to the projectteam.

3a Research and Theory Teacher discuss how they can work together and add to eachothers knowledges.

3b Theory 'Project knowledge' applies 'Use of Writing' tutorial to class (self or w. help of writing coach)

3c Teacher Research (practical/theoretical) applies 'Use of Sources'-module to class (self or w. help of embbed librarian)

4   Teacher(s) are connected to the teacherteam for this specific project. While preparing during the DD-weeks projectteams collaborate and discuss with the research & theory teacher practicalities and specifics for research (methods, skills, expertise) and theory.

STUDENT JOURNEY: ANIMATION+AUTONOMOUS PRACTICE

OP1

YEAR 1

M1: Exploring animation

Theory — Project Knowledge
Overview history and contemporary animation landscape
Research
Exploration artistic research

Elective — Knowledge Basics
Introd. trends & developments in the current cultural field

YEAR 2

M3: Character versus space

Theory — Project Knowledge
Visual analysis character in conflict with space
Research
Visual analytic skills[2] + Spatial Experiments

Elective — Knowledge Basics
What is conceptual art?

YEAR 3

M5: Portfolio animation

Theory — Project Knowledge
Student organised lectures[4]

Research
Students organise own need for research and teachers[5]

Elective — Knowledge Basics
Introduction into sociology

YEAR 4

Minor: Critical studies (AP)

Theory — Project Knowledge
Student organised lectures based on own needs[4]
Research
Desk research: critical theory and related artistic practices

Elective — Knowledge Basics

OP2

M1: Educational animation

Theory — Project Knowledge
Current state of thinking about educational animations
Research
Literature research + visual research + target audience[1]

Elective — Knowledge Basics
Introd. history of visual communication

M3: Character versus space → (OP2) **Overview current discourse immersive installations**

Theory — Project Knowledge
Overview current discourse immersive installations
Research
Field research into immersive installations[2] + Experiments

Elective — Knowledge Basics
Media theory

(OP2, Year 3) Theory — Project Knowledge
Student organised lectures[4]

Research
Students organise own need for research and teachers.

Elective — Knowledge Basics
Relations of power

project on artistic strategy

Theory — Project Knowledge
Student organised lectures based on own needs[4]
Research
Desk research: critical theory and related artistic practices

Elective — Knowledge Basics

OP3

P1: intro into practices

Theory — Project Knowledge
Introduction transdisciplinairy discourses of comm, soc & aut
Research
Practice specific research methods

M4: Proposal animated series

Theory — Project Knowledge
Analysis current media landscape + audience theory
Research
Specified by role of choice[3]: e.g. producer, director,...

Internship

Graduation ANI+AP

Autonomous animation film project form a clearly defined critical position

OP4

M2: Storytelling w. character

Theory — Project Knowledge
Analysis of storytelling through character
Research
Experiments in character animation

Elective — Knowledge Basics
Semiotics

P2: Branding (CP) 'Branded Storytelling'

Theory — Project Knowledge
Theory and strategy of transmedia storytelling
Research
Visual research + deskresearch different forms of transmedia

Elective — Knowledge Basics
Ideological systems

P2: AP: Critical studies – The museum in critical perspective.
Theory — Project Knowledge
Institutional Critique

Research
Semiotic research into a chosen exhibition

Internship

Graduation ANI+AP

Research
Based on the students request for specific research (method, subject, theoretical/practical), a research teacher is assigned to him/her.[6]

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[1] possibly taught by several teachers

[2] icw theory teacher, possibly same teacher

[3] Research could then possibly be taught by different teachers based on specific questions/needs

[4] on request – students try to organize their own lectures through the research station, based on their own questions and needs. Does need to be a group effort, at least 8 students per lecture

[5] students request research teachers based on the specific research they feel would benefit them (research station has maybe about 4 teachers available to choose from?)

[6] Students can only choose research teachers tied to the Autonomous Practice.

STUDENT JOURNEY: PRODUCT+AUTONOMOUS PRACTICE

	OP1	OP2	OP3	OP4	
YEAR 1	**M1: Explorative** Theory — Project Knowledge **Overview history & contemporary product design landscape** Research **Prototyping + Material research** Elective — Knowledge Basics	**Design family of objects** Theory — Project Knowledge **Overview history & contemporary product design landscape** Research **Prototyping + Material research** Elective — Knowledge Basics **• What is conceptual art?** **• Art in motion**	**P1: intro into practices** Theory — Project Knowledge **Introduction transdisciplinairy discourses of comm, soc & aut** Research **Practice specific research methods** Elective — Knowledge Basics **Biobased art and design**	**M2: Design for Hema** Theory — Project Knowledge **Market & price awareness in contemporary product design** Research **Fieldresearch into Hema and comparable brands.** Elective — Knowledge Basics	
YEAR 2	**M3: How it's made:** Theory — Project Knowledge **Critical Analysis; role of crafts in the post-industrial world** Research **material research + desk research use of materials** Elective — Knowledge Basics **Knowledge of fabrics**	**New applications for crafts** Theory — Project Knowledge **Critical Analysis; role of crafts in the post-industrial world** Research **desk research into environmental effects of materials** Elective — Knowledge Basics	**M4: Future mass production** Theory — Project Knowledge **Ideological / critical approach to mass production** Research **literature research critical theory research production processes** Elective — Knowledge Basics **Introduction to philosophy**	**P2: Next design lab (CP)** **'New rituals for food'** Theory — Project Knowledge **Discours: relations between (future of) technology & food,** Research **Experiments with automation + literature research [1]** Elective — Knowledge Basics **Semiotics**	**P2: New Earth (SP)** **'Reframing the ecosystem'** Theory — Project Knowledge **Systems thinking** Research **Small tests and experiments + research for a projectplan**
YEAR 3	**M5: Own project** Theory — Project Knowledge **Student organised lectures[2]** Research **Students organise own need for research and teachers[5]** Elective — Knowledge Basics	**P3: Practice: Hacking (AP)** Theory — Project Knowledge **Systems theory/critical theory/theories of intersectionality** Research **Students organise own need for research and teachers.** Elective — Knowledge Basics **Copyright, appropriation and authorship**	**Internship**	**Internship**	
YEAR 4	**Minor: Hacking (AP):** Theory — Project Knowledge **Student organised lectures based on own needs[2]** Research **Students organise own need for research and teachers[3]** Elective — Knowledge Basics **What is autonomy?**	**intervene in a system** Theory — Project Knowledge **Student organised lectures based on own needs[2]** Research **Students organise own need for research and teachers[3]** Elective — Knowledge Basics	**Graduation PD + AP** **A bio-design project with a broad perspective, using many intuitive and associative connections and approaches.**	**Graduation PD + AP** Research **Based on the students request for specific research (method, subject, theoretical/practical), a research teacher is assigned to him/her. [4]**	

[1] icw theory teacher, possibly same teacher

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{3} students request research teachers based on the specific research they feel would benefit them (research station has maybe about 4 teachers available to choose from?)

[4] Students can only choose research teachers tied to the Autonomous Practice.

Planning Implementatie

Mei 2020:
Voorstel 'Research station as distributor of research and theory' uitgewerkt en gepresenteerd

2020-2021: Voorbereidingen:
1. d.m.v. implementeren 'How We Teach Research (=een mapping van onderzoeksdocenten en hun methodes en expertises d.m.v interviews)'. voor eerste groep theorie en onderzoeksdocenten
2. d.m.v. Workshops 'Research-LearningTrajectories (= een onderwijsontwikkel-traject waarbij RS ondersteunt in het definieren van onderzoek in het onderwijsaanbod)' bij majors.
3. Workgroep starten tb.v. coordinatie

2021-2022 — Implementatie 'Research station as distributor of research and theory' in Majors, jaar 1&2

2022-2023 — Implementatie Research station as distributor of research and theory' in Major jr 3, Practices jaar 3 & 4, Masters

2023-2024 — Implementatie 'Research station as distributor of research and theory' in Practices jr 1 & 2, Masters