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## OPEN BUILDING IN EDUCATION

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Hong Kong.

Architectural Education  
Contemporary Movements  
Every Day Environment  
Design Responsibility  
Teaching Formats  
Transformation  
Open Building  
Teaching Supports

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Kelbaugh, Kendall, Martin-Chavez, Saglamer,  
Shadar*

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# DOWNTOWN MEXICO CITY: An Experience Teaching Open Building

Andrea Martin-Chavez

## Abstract

*After more than five years of teaching Open Building to students in the last year of their architectural training we have learned one thing: it is easier to master the Open Building methodologies if we first apply some of its main ideas to extract the urban and architectural rules from the reality and only afterwards, students have an easier time learning and applying the methodology to make new OB design proposals. To achieve this we work either in downtown Mexico City or in other Mexican colonial cities where the historical urban fabric provides an easier reading of the urban and architectural typologies.*

*In this article I am going to talk about our last year's teaching experience and the results we achieved. There are three main objectives to be met in this last year of architectural training. The main one is to deal with socially relevant problems that involve real communities. The second one is that the teaching resembles the practice of architecture as much as possible. And one that we have added to the curricula is to train students to understand, learn and apply OB ideas in their urban and architectural work.*

*Architectural competitions have turned into important part of the practice. For that reason we encourage students to enter at least one of the multiple options that occur during the year. This time there was the opportunity to enter a competition aimed for students organized by ARQUINE (a well known international trimester architectural publication). The competition objective was to design studios and housing for art students in an empty lot in historical downtown Mexico City.*

*To achieve the objectives of the course, as well as to participate in the competition, we divided the course in three parts. In the first part students made an urban diagnosis of the area, a site analysis and a design proposal for the competition. In the second part they studied traditional housing vecindades as well as the families living in that particular area. They applied the support idea to these typologies to get acquainted with the generals of the method. In the third part they studied the methodology thoroughly to be able to design a support building to relocate the studied families. In the end, each student designed a different support building in an empty lot nearby to the studied area.*

*In our experience, students are very enthusiastic and responsible when working with users and applying OB ideas. Most students from this last generation are now working in housing related agencies. Two of these students work for the Mexican Architectural Association and recently promoted a new competition jointly with the local government Program of Housing Improvement. The competition goal is to design incremental housing in the periphery or in downtown areas, avoiding prototypes. They are strongly supporting the use of OB ideas for the competition and this year's students will participate in it.*

**Keywords:** *Teaching Supports, Tissue Model And Supports Methodologies.*

## INTRODUCTION

In this paper I want to share some teaching methods we have used in support of Open Building. Together with Professor Jorge Andrade, I have been teaching OB to students in their last year of architectural training for more than five years in the Metropolitan National University of Xochimilco (UAM-X) in Mexico City. With this accumulated experience we have understood the student's diffi-

culty to learn and apply Tissue and Support methods without any previous exposure to it. There are very few examples of Supports in Mexico City but many traditional housing typologies where zones and margins can be learned. In these traditional typologies, usually very flexible in their layout conception, students apply the ideas behind supports to find the logic in it. The "modular system", a particular pedagogic system used to teach in our university relates academic, research and community





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