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As an educational tool the importance of informal studies/studios in architectural design education; case of Walking Istanbul 1&2

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Abstract

Design education is the most important part of architectural education. Formal architectural education (training), followed by an architect in the candidate's training period, is a whole consisting of theoretical and practical courses. In spite of this programme package, in design education, student acquires to experience the design by his/her own and this is the only way to learn how to design. In this context, aside from formal architectural education informal studies such as workshops, seminars, conferences, exhibitions, competitions, excavation, etc. have an undeniable importance. In design education, "Informal Studies" have some outstanding results on developing design thinking skills, learning by doing, creating motivation, intuitive knowledge and self-confidence and at the same time these studies are a suitable tool for the LLP- lifelong learning programme. In this paper, as an informal study example two workshops will be discussed to evaluate the contributions of such informal studies on student's individual and collective learning styles, design thinking techniques and practices.

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Keywords: Design education in architecture, informal studios, observation and freehand drawings.

1. Introduction

Yildiz Technical University (YTU), Faculty of Architecture, Department of Architecture with two of European Architecture Schools (Catalunya Polytechnic University, UPC and Zurich University of Applied Sciences, ZWAH) held the international workshops (design studios) of - "Walking Istanbul 1; Rhythm in Fener - Balat" and "Walking Istanbul 2; Texture & Material in Fener - Balat". The results of these studies assure a supportive environment for gaining, transforming and communicating knowledge in architectural design education.

2. The scope and content of architecture

Architects, committed themselves to the principles of profession, honesty and competence, design built environment using their knowledge and skills. Architectural education should contribute to the development of society in social, cultural and economics both in national and international levels.

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The UIA(Union of International Architects),together with UNESCO, created and promotes the UNESCO-UIA Charter on Architectural Education. This fundamental document sets directives on architectural education. Item no.5 describes that architectural education involves the acquisition of the following capabilities(www.uia-architects.org);

ITEM 5.A. DESIGN; •Ability to engage imagination, think creatively, innovate and provide design leadership. • Ability to gather information, define problems, apply analyses and critical judgment and formulate strategies for action. •Ability to think three-dimensionally in the exploration of design. •Ability to reconcile divergent factors, integrate knowledge and apply skills in the creation of a design solution.

ITEM 5.B. KNOWLEDGE; Understanding the role of architect in Cultural and Artistic Studies, Social Studies, Environmental Studies, Technical Studies.

ITEM 5.C. SKILL; •Ability to act and to communicate ideas through collaboration, speaking, numeracy, writing, drawing, modeling and evaluation. •Ability to utilize manual, electronic, graphic and model making capabilities to explore, develop, define and communicate a design proposal. • Understanding of systems of evaluation, that use manual and/or electronic means for performance assessments of built environments.

3. General characteristics of architectural design education

Design education is the most important part of architectural education. Formal architectural education (training), followed by an architect in the candidate's training period, is a whole consisting of theoretical and practical courses. In spite of this programme package, in design education, student acquires to experience the design by his/her own and this is the only way to learn how to design. In this respect, it is possible to talk about three stages in architectural education. First stage is gaining knowledge and skill for establishing fundamental; second stage is using the gained knowledge and skill and the third stage is focused on producing new knowledge from the gained ones. As shown in Table 1, YTU Department of Architecture determined its programme outputs (in the context of set criteria of National Architectural Accreditation Board (MIAK) according to these three stages.

Table 1. 35 Student performance criteria of MIAK derived from NAAB that YTU Architectural Department follows (Ünver, R., Polatoğlu, C., Vural, S.M., 2009).

1st MODULE / 1st and 2nd years	2nd MODULE / 2nd and 3rd years	3rd MODULE / 4th years
Gaining knowledge and skill	Using the gained knowledge and skill	Producing new knowledge and skill from the gained ones
[1] Communication Skills	[6] Design Skills	[29] Comprehensive Design
[2] Critical Thinking Skills	[7] Teamwork Skills	[30] Architectural Practice & Project Management
[3] Graphical Presentation Skills	[8] History Of Western Architecture	[31] Practice Management
[4] Research Skills	[9] History Of Entire World (Excluding Western Architecture)	[32] Professional Development
[5] Formal Composition Systems	[11] Preservation Of Historical Environment And Restoration	[33] Leadership
[6] Design Skills	[14] Cultural Diversities	[34] Legal Responsibilities
[7] Teamwork Skills	[16] Sustainable Design	[35] Ethics And Professional Judgment
[12] Use Of Precedents	[17] Ability To Prepare A Comprehensive Program	
[13] Human Behaviors	[19] Structural Systems	
[14] Cultural Diversities	[20] Environmental Systems	
[15] Accessibility	[21] Safety	
[16] Sustainable Design	[22] Building Envelope Systems	
[17] Ability To Prepare A Comprehensive Program	[23] Building Service Systems	
[18] Site Conditions	[24] Building Systems Integration	
[28] The Role Of Client (User) In Architecture	[26] Control Of Building Costs	
	[27] Technical Documentation	
	[28] The Role Of Client In Architecture	
	[29] Comprehensive Design	
	[30] Architectural Practice & Project Management	
	[31] Practice Management	

These criteria are also determine the knowledge and skills in design; Critical Thinking Skills, Graphical Presentation Skills, Research Skills, Formal Composition Systems, Design Skills, Teamwork Skills, Use of Precedents, Human Behaviors, Cultural Diversities, Accessibility, Sustainable Design, Ability to Prepare a

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