

Kongres Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran UKM, 2010

An Effective Teaching and Learning Approach for the Architectural Program with Reference to the Framework of Educational Psychology

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Abstract

The development of architecture in Malaysia is facing a crisis due to various problems perpetuated by individuals or groups related to the field. The individuals and groups mentioned are also categorized as human capital which not only consist of the technocratic group but also of various background disciplines such as contractors, suppliers, developers, patrons, entrepreneurs, lawyers and others. The problem is caused by the weakness of the human capital which is produced by the educational institution. Since there are opinions about a crisis which the education institution is facing in its teaching programme, it seems unsuccessful in its role in producing quality human capital. The approaches and ways of teaching and learning should be changed. It should be referred to the opinion of educational psychologists and professional academicians to upgrade the quality of teaching and learning explicitly on the architectural program.

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Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Kongres Pengajaran & Pembelajaran UKM, 2010

Keywords: architectural programme; teaching and learning; psychology aspects;

1. Introduction

The main intention of this paper is to describe the problems of providing teaching instructions for the design studio subject phrased within a critical analysis of the education psychology. This paper extends the questions and issues raised by the eminent scholar, Professor Dr. Mohamad Tajuddin from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and relies much on the framework of education of Zahari Ishak. Education is more than just passing on a set of skills or imparting experiences but more towards nurturing a more humanistic and holistic attitude and inspiring minds. This paper is important since most academics in architecture are either from the practice side of the field or simply architectural graduates with no formal training as teachers. Teaching is a profession by itself and requires a certain mind set, attitude as well as skills about the ability of imparting knowledge as well as motivating students to aspire

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beyond a specific task or function. All schools of architecture in Malaysia has evolved without any critical analysis done on the pedagogy of teaching. One of its most important subject particularly the Design Studio. It is hoped that this paper shall open a wider discourse of teaching that would place it beyond the simple act of providing robot-like workers to the building industry. Architecture is both a science and an art form phrased within the context of human rituals, beliefs and values.

The problems in architecture are caused by the weakness of individuals. The problem is assumed to be due to the education system received while in the educational institution. Because of this, the problem should be solved by correcting the foundation of the problem in order to get long term benefits. The foundation of learning is the education program given during the learning level which should be directed to the development of quality 'humans' who can think and not only skilled in doing their job but creative and honest. However, awareness program, courses to increase quality and productivity and efforts on monitoring are seen as inefficient short term efforts to address this issue. They only solve the external individual problem while the internal problem or the intra-personal ones should be solved during their education level.

This writing is prepared for the benefit of academicians and students who take architecture as their main career. It is prepared based on observation from various perspectives and roles which are the practicing architects, academicians and as a Muslim. As a practicing architect, the writer faces various crises in his career including the issue in designing buildings, architectural products, contract administration matters, city planning and others. The lists for the 'crisis' mentioned can be found in the writing of Mastor (2007). The writer felt that the city that we live in and most of the modern cities have 'failed'. The failure is not due to their poor physical planning but due to the design of cities not for people but for machines or vehicles. Man has become a 'slave' to machines and is forced to face various challenges, disasters and difficulties in the city. The city is not built to give harmony and tranquillity to people but instead it has been built due to economic factors and as gestures to glory. Traffic congestions, flash floods, road accidents, water shortages, interrupted electrical supplies, children falling from buildings, garbage disposal concerns and others are common phenomenon in the city. The result is that people themselves are being burdened with various financial issues and social problems which are difficult to bear. The problems happened due to lack of knowledge among the community on the thoughts on city planning and architecture which are supposed to solve the problem of human life. Towns and city planning have been taken over by people for profit and for the expression of glory. Knowledge on city planning and architecture has not been given to the public even though it is the third essential need for humans after food and clothing. Because of that, every academician should be perceptive to various knowledge about city planning and architecture so that it could be applied into the curriculum or co-curriculum. This is to ensure that the majority of the community know their rights as the inhabitants of the city and building.

Zahari Ishak (2006) has spoken about the need for teachers to become experts and have professional educational knowledge in order to provide an effective education. Zahari suggested that even though the experiences of teachers are important in the learning process, yet, based on the experiences this can only lead to repetition on the character and action during teaching because this action will not give a good result to the method of learning development.

The paradigm shift which leads to the cognitive revolution is considered as a huge change in education psychology during the middle of the 20th century. The change demands the increase in the knowledge and thoughts of teachers in the process of teaching and learning during teaching. However, there are several questions in education psychology which has become the main discussion agenda. These questions are related to the ability of a person to study, the development of intellectuals, the emotional and the social arrangement that happened. Furthermore, the question is what is the cause of the uniqueness in a person? Why is an individual or a group of individuals gets motivated resulting from their experiences? Why isn't there any stimulus to change? The paradigm shift will not happen if the teachers are still doing the old teaching style inherited from past practices which needs to see the changes in the student's behaviour clearly. This action will only produce a generation who is intellectual on paper but not humane enough to be the person as stipulated in the National Education Philosophy.

Zahari (2006) has also discussed on the approaches which should be taken by teachers to increase the quality of education which will bring an increase in the quality of the teaching career. Among the matters discussed are the knowledge and learning on how to teach, class control, teaching strategies, students learning knowledge and towards the need of the professional knowledge. Because of that, every academician should always study and work hard to

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