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Learning in Architecture Design Studio

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Abstract

Design Studio is a core subject in architectural course or education at the higher learning institutes in Malaysia and other countries overseas. All other supporting architectural subjects are normally organized to provide contributions towards Design Studio learning. Therefore, a balance has to be sustained between Design Studio and other subjects throughout an architectural course to ensure effective learning. This paper outlines important aspects in Architecture Design Studio and proposes a Bloom Taxonomy for Design Studio learning to ensure the education objectives are met.

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Keywords: Architectural education; architectural course; design studio; studio learning; Bloom Taxonomy

1. Introduction

Architectural design covers a wide range of factors beyond the physical and structural aspects of buildings. A good architecture should reflect the life of the community in which it is located. Therefore architectural education is a multi-faceted field due to the complexity of the social and cultural aspect normally associated to it. Architectural education is not restricted to physical building design and also incorporates value system, philosophy, sustainability, technologies and other related areas. Diverse subjects other than Design Studio offered in any architecture courses reflect the complexities integral in architecture. Integration of these diverse subjects with the Design Studio is very important as the architecture course offered should be able to produce innovative, creative and holistic architects who are sensitive to the needs of the society, the environment and technology.

2. Design Studio as the Core Subject in Architecture Course

Compared to other subjects in the architecture course, Design Studio is the most dominant subject with the highest credit hours per week. Other subjects such as Construction Technology, Architectural History and Theory, Environmental Physics, Design Communication and others have to serve Design Studio learning in each semester (Figure 1). In general, Design Studio is meant to provide students with expertise and knowledge necessary in order

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to produce innovative, creative and competent design solutions. The main objective of Design Studio is to develop students' imagination in design and allow them to produce architectural designs that have dialogue and balance between poetic and pragmatic thinking. Design Studio provides architectural students with the skill to work under both intuitive and practical contexts. In Design Studio, students express their architectural ideas and creativities through myriad communication techniques and methods such as in the forms of drawings, physical models, computer models, photography, video clips and others.

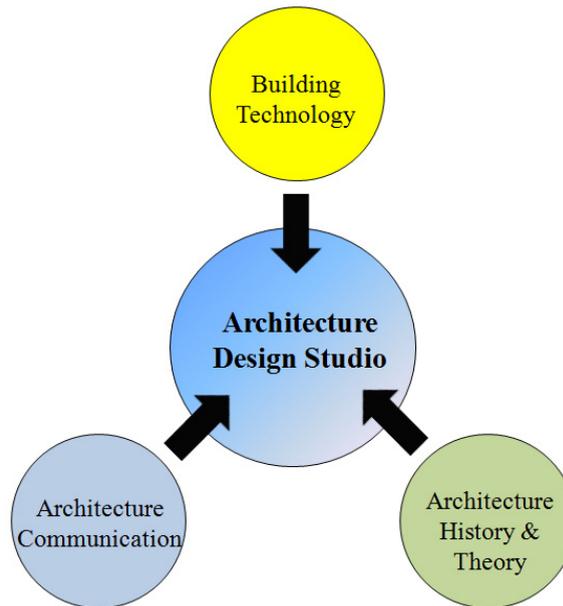


Figure 1. Subjects which supports Architecture Design Studio (the core subject)

3. Learning in Architecture Design studio

The credit hour for Design Studio normally ranges between six to eight hours per week. For an example, at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Sydney and in most other universities in Australia, Design Studio consists of at least 6 credit hours per week; one hour of a lecture session and another five hours dedicated to a studio critic session. The lecture session is normally given by the studio coordinator, assisting lecturer or any invited individual who are related to the design project. The role of the Design Studio critic session is for ensuring that the design processes are well-informed and thus satisfy the project's requirements. Design Studio at the Department of Architecture, UKM also follows this basic architectural education system.

Beginning with a basic and elemental design project in the first year, students will progress and complete their Design Studio in the third or fifth years with a much more complex building projects. Complexity in Design Studio does not necessarily refer to the size of the building project. For an example a medium size theatre design can have a similar complexity with a ten story office building in terms of program requirements (such as acoustics, lighting and others) and its environmental planning.

4. Design Studio Integration with the Support Subjects

In order to ensure architectural students are well equipped to undertake Design Studio each semester, the support subjects in the architecture course need to be well-integrated with this core subject. For an example, the second year architectural students at the University of Tasmania and the University of Sydney, Australia are required to be sensitive to the environmental and social contexts of the design projects given to them. Therefore, the students are exposed to modern and contemporary Australian architecture study in Architecture History and Theory subject.

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