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First design studio experience in education of interior architecture: an example of Akdeniz University

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Abstract

Under Bologna studies, the department reformulated its studio system together with its curriculum, and the new system put into practice by the fall'11 semester. The new system not only unified the second year's studios with the following and converted the old studio system which was formerly based on deductive reasoning and converted to inductive reasoning method, but also synchronized the curriculum with new studio system. The aim of this paper is to share the experience of the newly practiced studio system and compare it with the old one which was formerly based on deductive reasoning and converted to inductive reasoning method.

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1. Introduction

In 2010, Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design in Akdeniz University reformulated its studio system during the curriculum studies within Bologna Process, and the new system is put into practice by the fall'11 semester. The aim of this paper is to share the experience of the newly practiced studio system and compare it with the old one which was formerly based on deductive reasoning and converted to inductive reasoning method. In former studio system; throughout the first two semesters students were studying the notion of architecture (form, function façade, mass etc.) while in the following two semesters they were introduced to interior space without intervening building envelope and structure; and then they were asked to focus on detailing and theoretical discussions in the last two semesters. By doing so it was aimed that the students would experience space respectively from larger to smaller scales. In the current system, the process was reversed. It is aimed to make students firstly to deal with the notion of space and then to conceive the notion of architecture by induction method. The first semester students had worked on three small-scale projects called "space experiments". In this paper these projects and the method used in the studio would be explained in detail.

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2. The Bologna Process

Turkey has been a part of Bologna Process which aims to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange since 2001. Thereafter, Turkish Universities conducted several studies on their curriculums to be a part of the EHEA. Under this aim, the work plan within the framework of Bologna process, have been studied in Akdeniz University Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design in 2010. During the process, the curriculums and the ECTS of the similar schools, which connected in the scope of Erasmus program, were examined. Additionally, the opinions of internal and external shareholders were surveyed through written and oral survey methods. Within this context, a large number of related persons, including representatives of the Chamber of Interior Architects-Antalya Branch, professionals such as interior designers, manufacturers, craftsmen and the graduated and current students were consulted. As summarized in the Table-1, when the participants were asked to rate the qualities of the graduates from 5 to 1 (very good-5 and very bad-1), they mainly criticized the lack of creativity in both concept and detailing phases of design, technical knowledge and participation in teamwork; while %50 to %75 percent of them rated the abilities in functional design, CAD using and harmony within the work group as intermediate. In the same report, deficiency in number of academicians in the department and problems in physical conditions such as lack studio spaces, workshop spaces, computer labs etc. were highlighted as other problems of the department (Örmecioglu et al., 2010).

Table 1. Table showing some of the results obtained from surveys with internal and external shareholders. Source: Örmecioglu et al (2010) *Design the Bologna Process Survey Report*. Unpublished report prepared by Bologna Commission of the AKU Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design. December 2010.

Rate the following abilities of our graduates from 5(very good) to 1(very bad)	5	4	3	2	1
Creativity (in concept phase) in design	%12,5		%37,5	%50	
Creativity (in detailing phase) in design	%12,5		%50	%37,5	
Functionality in design		%50	%50		
Technical knowledge/constructive (detailing) abilities		%12,5	%12,5	%50	%25
Cad using abilities	%12,5	%12,5	%75		
Harmony within the work group	%12,5	%12,5	%75		
Participation in team work	%12,5	%12,5	%62,5		%12,5

The results display an apparent need for restructuring in aims and methods of the educational system in the department. Moreover, there was also an urge of Bologna Process on “develop[ing] a unified system that facilitates mobility, transparency and recognition of qualification from one educational setting to another” (Karseth, 2006:255). Consequently, the curriculum of the department that had been employed in the last decade was revised on the basis of the data gained through these surveys; and the new curriculum was put into practice along with the fall’11 semester.

3. The old and new studio systems

3.1. The old curriculum and the former studio

Although the underlying idea of the former system was transferring spatial design knowledge to the student in deductive method, from larger scale to detailing, it had many disadvantages. First of all, in former studio structure, the design education started with basic design courses but no studios in the first year. It is supported by obligatory courses such as introduction to art, technical drawing, and ergonomics. Nevertheless, the absence of design studio in the first year’s curriculum dawdled two semesters of time away. Hence, when the students started to third semester they were still novice. First year was followed by two semesters of TMTstudios (TemelMimariTasarım/TMT-Basic Architectural Design) in which students were asked to design small and/or medium-scale projects together with landscape design in natural topography and/or in urban area. Main aim was to make students get understand the architectural unity of a building with function, structure, inside, outside, mass, façade and environmental design. The TMT studios were supported with obligatory courses such as presentation techniques, building systems,

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