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The application of formal perception of gestalt in architectural education

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Abstract

It's well known that, architectural design is a problem solving process which has the purpose of reaching a synthesis through analytic approaches, involving activities which try to find out appropriate combinations of physical (location, topography, pattern, climate, etc.), cultural (social, economical, political, historical, aesthetics, etc.) and technological (science, technology, etc.) components, for creating functional – sustainable built – environment .All these features make definition of target design solution harder and reveals the complexity of reality as a process that requires creativity. In Gestalt school of thought, students are not limited with simple logic approaches or simple reasoning strategies. They are encouraged to effective, productive and functional way of thinking by learning creative thinking. Gestalt school aims to teach students a way of discovering the principles in solving problems and adopting this experience throughout their life. In this paper, Gestalt perception of the formal approach into architectural design education and its contribution to problem solving will be discussed during the planning process.

Keywords: Architectural education; architectural design; perception; Gestalt theory

1. Introduction

Designing in architecture is a process of problem solving. Architectural design, based on "form", "function", and "construction" is a process of finding and regulating the functional components for creating a built environment. In this process, generally, a careful analysis, synthesis and an evaluation based on the present information are made consecutively. The problem is studied completely and common solutions are found. The process is repeated until there's coherence between the observed and predicted outcomes (See figure 1).

2. Architectural Design

The phenomenon of architectural design is made of not-exactly-defined problems with multiple variables and non-specific criteria. Also the solution of the problem can change in time too. These properties make the definition of the solution more difficult but meanwhile, proves that designing is a complicated process which requires creativity.

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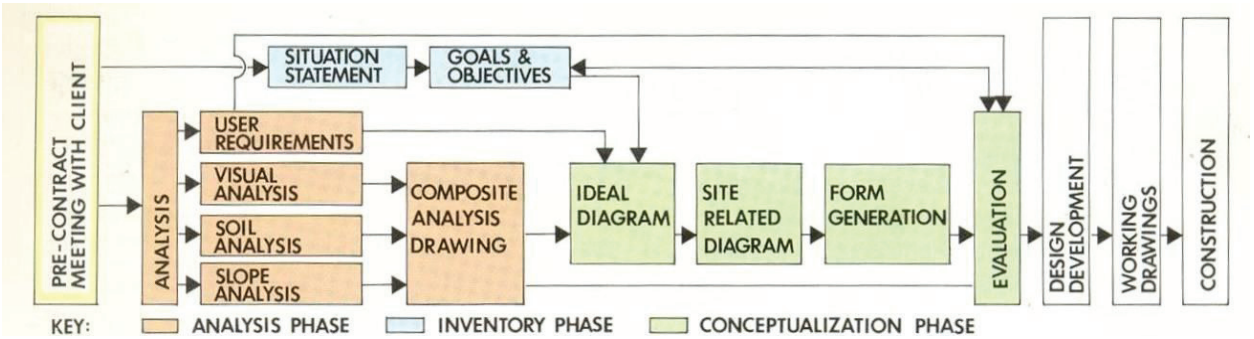

Figure 1. The architectural design process (Hepler,Wallach, 1987)

The mission of the designer is to use the available resources to create a built environment that meets the needs as much as possible. The designer at the same time is in the position of a decision- maker about the future of that environment (Arcan 1997, Uraz 1993).

The concepts used in architectural designing can be seen in the table below, under the headings "function", "technology", "environment" and "economy". The lectures in the architectural curriculum which can provide support to the students about these subjects can also be found in table 1.

Table 1. The inputs used in architectural design process with supporting courses, (Ertürk,1987)

THE INPUTS USED IN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PROCESS			
ECONOMIC INFORMATION	**ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION**	**TECHNOLOGIC INFORMATION (LEVELOF TECHNOLOGY)**	**USER-ORIENTED INFORMATION (UTILITY/FUNCTION)**
THE COURSES SUPPORTING THE PROJECT LECTURES IN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN EDUCATION			
Construction Management courses Courses related to the legal aspects of building construction Professional Practice courses	Lectures intended for environmental control Environmental Physics Lectures Urban Design Courses Restoration Courses History Courses	Construction Courses Materials Courses Statics, Mechanics and Behaviors Courses	Building Science Courses Introduction to Architecture Courses related to ergonomics Methods of design Basic Design
Economic possibilities and limits Feasibility and relevant knowledge	Social characteristics Cultural characteristics Geographic, climatic, topographic structure, soil properties	The opportunities and problems of building constructional systems Available constructional materials and their properties	The physiological and anthropometric characteristics of the user. Static and dynamic measures of anthropometry Perception and comfort limits Health conditions Needs The psychological characteristics of the user Attitudes and behaviour Likes, reactions, desires The social characteristics of the user Life style, habits Relations with the environment Information about user actions Actions Accessories and how they are used Action times