

4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on New Horizons in Education

## An assessment of critical thinking skills based architectural project course in terms of student's outputs

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### Abstract

There is a judgment and interrogation deed in the origin of the word of criticism. This interrogation is a process that could occur by asking questions, by establishing empathy. Critical thinking requires thinking a lot of things at the same time. Therefore, to see that only the positive or negative aspects of a thing might not be enough. Important point is to see both aspects at the same time, be able to make transition between them and at this time is to find a “new” one.

Being with a critical approach to the design process in architectural education is thought to include a loop that keeps the process alive, to make dynamic training process. Constantly, rapidly opening of different subject to be discussed nowadays, adopt to this speed and nor using the existing data rethinking in multiple environments may be realized with critical thinking skills.

In Karabuk University Safranbolu Fethi Toker Fine Arts and Design Faculty Department of Architecture, 2011-2012 academic term, fall semester, ARCH305 Architectural Project 5's term project includes varies exercises with the aim of to boast the students' this skills. Mentioned with varies exercises emphasized that students could make criticize for familiar situations, could look to them by interrogating. There was a competition whose subject was criticized of housing estate organized by TMMOB Chamber of Architects Ankara Office. The competition subject was decided the main project subject of the semester. At the end of the process a student in this class won a prize.

Target of this study is to discuss the importance of critical thinking skills in architectural education with supporting term project. In this way both architectural educations will be rethinking and to discuss how to approach can be found a “new” one in architectural education nowadays.

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of The Association of Science, Education and Technology-TASET, Sakarya Universitesi, Turkey.

Keywords: critical thinking, architectural education, architectural competitions.

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## 1. Introduction

Architecture is defined by the following statement; “the making of architecture calls for clear thinking, but this is a specific embodied mode of thought that takes place through the senses and the body, and through the specific medium of architecture” in the book, named “The Eyes of the Skin”, which is written by Pallasmaa (2011). He remarks that freethinking is the core of the architecture, and the process of experience and expression of this freethinking can be satisfied via senses. In architecture, the freedom of these senses is important. This freedom provides critical thinking about environment. To look with an investigating and interrogating eye, and to experience the environment with such a point of view have a potential to product “new”s on that environment. Otherwise, all of the products will be same with each other, whereas architecture should be a discipline which can be expressed with individual view. One of the most important aims which are expected to be earned by students during the education process is getting over their frame, and having awareness about requisiteness of multiple points of view. Ponty states that the mission of Cezanne’s paintings is “to make visible how the earth touches us”. Pallasmaa (2011) adopts this view and states that architecture’s mission is also similar.

It is emphasized by Pallasmaa (2011) that the architect is in a contrary perspective continuously. Actually, this contrary perspective is a point of view which people should have at the process of their own investigation. Reaching to a conclusion by considering the statement of Aalto, which indicates that “in every case one must achieve a simultaneous solution of opposites”, by the help of the mutual interrogations forms the basics of the comprehension of the architecture.

Architectural education in Turkey possesses some contradicting points in itself. The links between some related processes are broken, so these processes, which should be handled as a whole, are alienated from each other. In this context, the main aim of these studies is to convey a process about the experience between educational and practical environment, the absence of which is one of the most serious problems of the educational system. The following questions are interrogated by project team; how can the integrity between the theory and the practice be provided and how can the students become aware of the relations with their environments. Sharing the term project process that is supported by Pallasmaa’s ideas is also aimed.

## 2. Architectural Education

The architectural environment of the present time has a set of problems, which are especially related to the education. However; the rapid lifestyle, which has been adopted during the last century, prevents the interrogation of these problems and causes the acceptance of them as they are. When the problems are not seen from a critical point of view, the products that are constructed become identical one with another, whereas it is required that the qualifications of these products should have variances due to the variation of the environmental factors. The students should adopt the awareness of this fact in the first place, so that they can interrogate and think about the variation of necessities for different environments. Increasing this awareness and transforming it to experience and consciousness is a personal gain, the effects of which can be varied from person to person. This gain is notably important for the process of architectural education.

In this context, one of the most important problems is that the fields of architectural education and of the practical area are not supporting each other. However, the architecture is a pattern that should collate these two fields. Summer practices, which are done to provide the integration between the fields of practice and education, are limited only with a little learning of technology related to the work (Yürekli and Yürekli, 2004). Nowadays, the architectural education, which covers the theoretical aspects, ignores the practical aspects. Final products are constructed with the theoretical basis provided by the universities. In fact, not only the final products, but also the process used to achieve these products is important. But each institution has its own approach, and there are some institutions which do not have a process like this. On the other hand, in the field of practice, the mechanism of the capitalist approach is dominant in the applications, and mostly the process is ignored. For this type of a final production, which does not have an apprehension, the identicalness and the qualifications of the products are seen to be insignificant, but quantity is at the foreground.

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