

Abstract

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Creativity-Function Nexus Creativity and functional attentiveness in design-studio teaching

The question of creative form versus function is one that is very debatable, and has been in question for a long time in both architectural education and practice. Milestone figures of architecture all have their different views on what comes first, form functional spaces. They also vary in their definitions of creativity. Apparently, creativity is very strongly related to ideas and how they can be generated. It is also correlated with the process of thinking and developing. Creative products, whether architectural otherwise, and whether tangible intangible, are originated from 'good ideas.' On one hand, not any idea, any good idea, can be considered creative but, on the other hand, any creative result can be traced back to a good idea that initiated it in the beginning (Goldschmit and Tansa, 2005). However, how can a good idea be classified, which ideas are useful and helpful, and how can they be characterized, are main questions that this research work aims to answer. This paper attempts to discuss and compare various, and often opposing, viewpoints of both students and teaching staff, at the possibility of striking a balance between exciting forms and functional precision in the design studio. The research examines the conflict that students often face when assigned with a design project, and the difficulties they experience in translating theoretical and fundamentally-important data into a novel architectural interpretation. Furthermore, the investigation aims at relating the continuous, nonlinear process of review and modification, customary to traditional design-studio approaches, to the final products students submit as part of their design-studio applications. The final issue in question is the role of criticism and assessment in the forms of juries crits, assessment criteria, and whether this traditional aspect of design-studio education truly provides architectural students with the constructive criticism they need amid feelings of tension and limited time constraints. The Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design department at the Arab Academy for Science and Technology (AAST) is exploited as a case study for the research work presented in this paper.