

An evidence-based approach in constructing a sustainable architecture curriculum

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Architecture is regarded essentially as a combination of design and technology that has strong relations with disciplines such as ecology, sociology, psychology, physics, and is widely influenced by political and economical decision-making processes. Due to such a multi-dimensioned nature, the role of the architect becomes prominent in developing designs that are environmentally, socially, and culturally sensitive. Thus, the concept of sustainability rightfully deserves to be addressed as a central component within the interdisciplinary nature of architecture, which is defined as the combination of creativity, scientific knowledge and technological innovation. Hence in the discipline of architecture, sustainability is either underestimated or the concept dominates the design approaches through the superiority of technological innovation, since sustainability itself is a multifaceted and contested concept, intrinsically.

Above-mentioned problem reveals itself in architectural education as well. There is a certain lack of consensus on the influence of sustainability on bachelor curriculum for architectural education. Teaching sustainability in architecture is by agreement defined essential; however, majority of the curriculum is still insufficient in integrating sustainability with its full potential. Nevertheless, in order to envision a sustainable built environment, architecture curriculum needs to cover a basic understanding of the link between sustainability, technology and architectural design. In order to achieve such progress in education, there is evident necessity for a mind shift, both on the part of educators and students.

This paper, therefore, initiates a discussion to disentangle the connections and influences between sustainability considerations and architectural education. On one hand, it is evident that architecture curriculum is required to deliver a holistic way of thinking, on the other hand, decision-making procedures for sustainability measures for architectural design cannot be prescribed with a straightforward manner, since sustainability is a pluralist, contextually-sensitive construct. In order to convey a thorough understanding of the multifaceted nature of sustainability considerations within the discipline of architecture, architectural curriculum should be revised through an evidence-based approach. This paper suggests the means to develop such an approach through surveys and questionnaires, and couples its findings with various approaches within the literature and discusses how to underpin concepts of sustainability that would be introduced to the architecture curriculum. As a result, this evidence based-approach could be useful to integrate sustainability into the architecture curriculum with a responsive method, hence professionals, educators and students might reveal their own approach and perception towards sustainability as a holistic concept and might encourage diversity of approaches to be integrated within architectural curricula.