ABSTRACT

RECONSIDERING THE TEACHING OF ARCHITECTURE AS A REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Derya Yorgancıoğlu, Istanbul Kemerburgaz University
Dept. of Architecture, Asst. Prof. Dr., Istanbul, Turkey
Email: derya.yorgancioglu@kemerburgaz.edu.tr

Today, a learner-centered educational approach is at the center of the ongoing paradigm shift in higher education, and particularly in architectural education. Recent debates address the profiles of graduates of bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degree programmes in architecture in relation to the knowledge, skills and competences that graduates as ‘learners’ should cultivate throughout their learning processes. However, the profile of the ‘teacher’ who is also actively involved in students’ learning processes is rarely discussed. According to the ‘learner-centred’ educational approach, the student is the subject of an active and engaged learning process; nevertheless, it is the teacher who coordinates this process by familiarizing the student with the tools and methodologies of approaching knowledge, learning how to learn and thus producing new knowledge. The ‘teacher’ is also a ‘learner’ for whom the act of teaching is a process of continuous learning. However, academicians enter teaching processes as an instructor with little pedagogical background on how to teach architecture. What is more, professional competence in the practice of teaching of architecture is not well defined.

In this paper it is argued that the debates on learner-centred educational approach in architectural education should be revisited as a ground for defining the profile of ‘teacher’ of architecture as a ‘learner.’ This paper examines the nature, scope and principles of the teaching process of architecture by taking ‘reflective practice’ as a conceptual basis. It inquires the role of reflection in improving learning and professional practice. It is discussed that the act of teaching, when re-considered as a reflective practice, can become a learning process. Reflective practice is addressed as a form of knowledge production and a tool for architectural pedagogy. The paper maintains that teachers of architecture can learn from reflection on their practices, and a systematic reflection on teachers’ experiences of their own practices can enhance their professional development in architectural education.