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The role of autonomy in creativity development in fundamental courses in architecture education process

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Abstract

In architecture education, it is important to guide the learner's thought, but not induce or dictate a particular line. In this regard, learners should be helped to be able to fly their mind in order to foster their creativity. Fundamental courses in architecture are for improving creative thinking skills of students in terms of context and practice. Student's participating actively to these courses, would end to a motivation which could be an introduction to creativity. The literature review of the research shows that different approaches in architectural education and learning can be articulated which emphasize on autonomy as pivot point of creativity in education. Research questions are: 1-What is the relationship between creativity and autonomy in architectural education and learning? And 2-How the interaction between creativity and autonomy emerges in fundamental courses in architecture education? Research method of the paper is participant observation research method has been adopted for the research. Descriptive analytical techniques adopted to enhance the efficiency of models.

Keywords: autonomy, creativity, fundamental courses, architecture education

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1. Introduction

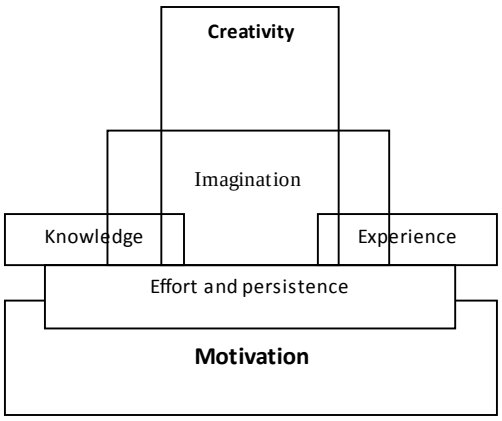
Architectural design is a process based on creativity and individuality criteria. With the design education, it is aimed to create new product in intellectual fields by revealing the creative ability existing in individuals. The concept of creativity has been understood in different and often conflicting ways, and across the design disciplines there is no shared understanding about creative processes and, in particular, how they apply to learning and teaching experiences. In order to improve creativity in design education process, learning and training circles should involve activities that will improve the creative behaviours of students. Act of designing is based on the skills of perception, conception, interpretation and expression. It can be said that design is a creative act since it aims at producing something that is non-existing before (Kılıçaslan, 2010).

2. Creativity

Scientists have expressed creativity in different interpretations. For example, Guilford believes that creativity is a set of capabilities and features that will lead to creative thinking (Guilford, 1967). Torrance has defined creativity as a process of Sensing difficulties, problems, gaps in information, missing elements, guessing and Formulating hypotheses about these deficiencies and testing these conjectures and possibly revising them and then transferring the results (Torrance, 1988).

2.1. Effective components of creativity

What is meant by "components of creativity" is the elements which make up creativity. In a comprehensive and comparative approach, the essential elements of creativity can be seen as follows:



As it is shown in figure 1, human's creativity is rooted in his experience and knowledge, and is activated upon the imagination. Human creativity basis on his efforts and persistence to achieve new and innovative solutions and results. Level of effort and perseverance, in turn, is influenced by human motives. Motivation can be defined as the driving force of human activity and the power of his creative process. One of the factors in making motivation is responding to the needs. According to the existing texts about motivation psychology, "Needs" and "Goals" have been mentioned as two major structures, which interpret "personal motivation", more than others.

Need is required as every condition which is necessary for human's life and his growth, so that its training can cause physical and mental health. Motivational states create a driving force for action (Reeve, 2005).

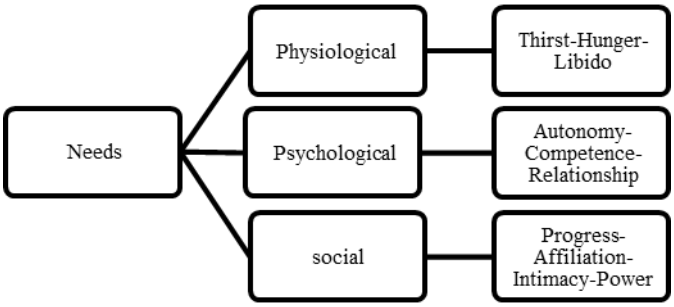


Figure 1: Division of Needs, Ref: the authors

1.1. Psychological needs

When an activity satisfies our psychological needs we're gratified by that. Overall, psychological needs including "Autonomy", "Competence" and "Relationship", provide a natural motivation for learning and development. People's experience of learning and healthy development, depends on the environment replies to the psychological needs (Reeve, 2005).

1.2. Autonomy

Autonomy can be defined as "need to experience choice in starting and adjusting behavior. (Hasanzadeh, 2008) If "Will" is defined as the "Human capacity to choose how to satisfy its needs", then "Autonomy" is required as the process of utilizing will (Deci, 1980).

Autonomy supportive environments encourage people to set their own goals, guide their own behavior, choose their own method for solving problems and basically, pursue their own interests and values. These environments increase people's intrinsic motivation, curiosity and desire to challenge. Of course autonomy supportive environments are not easygoing, unresponsive and negligent (Reeve, 2005).

2. Conclusion

In conclusion the following can be noted:

- One feature of architecture is the special role of creativity in architectural works.
- One component of creativity is motivation in individuals.
- One of the motivating factors in education is the need for autonomy in learners.

Hence, paying attention to the needs of autonomy can motivate learners, so that fields of creativity could be provided.

According to the presentation and the experience of authors in educating fundamental courses in architecture during 27 semesters in Shiraz University, two methods for using autonomy in architecture education can be defined:

1. Providing different options for architecture students in exercise subject, for example offering several architectural design subjects and allow students to choose among them, or selecting suitable samples from case studies by students.
2. In individual and collective architectural corrections, learner's thought must be guided rather dictated.

In architecture education (and even education in general), offering some of contents or skills (especially in skills training) is the introduction of next steps in education, however some of the topics are not attractive to the learners. In these cases the trainer can motivate the learners through the contents, by mentioning its value and importance.

Supporting autonomy, will amplify the intrinsic source of motivation: It can be done by identifying trends, preferences, and competences of individuals. For example the trainer who supports autonomy, coordinate his curriculum with learners leaning. Autonomy support also, is depended on information: Informing helps others to recognize the reason of their apathy, poor performance or misbehaviors, and gives feedback about recovery and development, and yet prevents critical, judgmental and negative feedback. Supporting autonomy reinforces valorizing: people who are autonomy supportive manner, explains the meaning, value or the importance of these behaviors, in order to motivate others to do boring tasks. In this case, they can voluntarily accept. Autonomy support also, accepts negative affect: People have a way of autonomy, admits such behaviors (negative affect emergence) as justified reactions to performance of what seem to be boring and worthless (Reeve, 2005).

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