



THE LEARNING CURVE

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FOR A VERY LONG TIME NOW, EDUCATION IN GENERAL, QUALITY EDUCATION, IN PARTICULAR, HAS BEEN A LOW PRIORITY ITEM IN OUR NATION. THE STRUCTURE IN WHICH OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMES ARE RIGIDLY ORGANIZED LEAVES VERY LITTLE SCOPE FOR ANY INNOVATION.

The typical architecture curriculum was framed in 1950's and is little affected by the changes of the latter half of 20th century. The Most curriculum of architecture schools in India is striking in their careful attention to the issues of the 1950's only. An architecture degree requires study of design, construction, drafting, environmental control systems, structures, architecture history and a few electives.

Fundamental design courses often retain an emphasis on abstraction, proportion, principles of architecture and color theory. The history teaches students to aspire to the greatness of Mies, Le Corbusier, and Wright while being reminded that they can never reach such level of prominence.

While construction and detailing is often taught strictly according to conventional methods. Even now the students are expected to know the fundamentals of masonry construction, steel frames and timber construction which have reached a plateau in the 1980's. This holds right for the conventional structural engineering and Services courses too.

In a nutshell, a simple description of the present curriculum might be the "age-old" desire to make architecture education operational, meaningful, and relative to the architectural design process.

It is very much evident that the world has changed and we are overdue to rethink what we teach. This recognition invites a proposal to change it.

The challenge lies in framing a transformed curriculum that addresses contemporary issues, challenges, and crises. The issues of the 21st century like timeless principles of drawing, climate change, end of petroleum era, bio-engineering advances, project management, career development skills and design in architecture has to be focused more.

The focus has to include computer-generated design, creativity, collaboration, evidence-based decision making, form making and problem-solving skills which are not only for architects but for any practitioner of any profession.

Instead of focusing on age-old construction systems, the more appropriate curriculum could include carbon fiber composites, Nano-tube materials, and photovoltaic systems. Since construction nowadays goes beyond material science to include smart products is necessary for the hour.

The pedagogy of teaching and learning process has to be framed for each studio by each teacher in such a way that the studio has to encourage the creativity of the student. The mechanism of solving this pedagogy has to be found together by the teacher in consideration the student's caliber. It is important to make the students understand the willful control of the direction of thoughts rather allow it to wander aimlessly.

The design brief is the central idea of the studio. No two studio can have the same design brief. The brief has to be framed in such a way that it helps the students to learn to structure the form in the context of objectives framed. Care has to be given in such a way that brief is prepared to keep in mind the caliber and thought the process of the students present in the studio.

Even when a group of people gathers to undertake an innovative experiment, the experiment flourishes for a while and then quickly disappears. The system does not generally allow any space for such innovative experiments. The learning and experiences of those innovative experiments whenever tried are rarely documented and made available to subsequent groups involved in new methods of teaching.

Fortunately, the conventional course of teaching design studio has to be abandoned and replaced by innovative methodologies. An innovative means of studio material in a short time frame of four or five week periods are possible and are more viable.

Perhaps we have an extended role play as an academician. As architectural educators, we have to produce a curriculum for the 21st century, by which we can rise to the level of courage shown by other countries.