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COLLEGE OF VISUAL ARTS, THEATRE AND DANCE

ARCHITECTURE PEDAGOGY: PSYCHOLOGICAL, SOCIAL, AND
OTHER EMERGENT ISSUES IN THE DESIGN STUDIO

By

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at understanding the perceptions of students and faculty at two National Architecture Accreditation Board accredited architecture programs regarding the social and psychological considerations in architectural design. A comprehensive review of literature in the field revealed a strong need for integrating these concerns in the architecture curriculum to enhance students' sensitivity toward human issues thereby resulting in design of environments more conducive to the society and people. In that context I attempted to identify the position of two accredited architecture schools on psychological and social concerns in architecture as well as students' and faculty's interpretations of the schools' foci. The study was qualitative in nature and included techniques of observations, individual interviews and focus group interviews. I observed students' presentations of their design projects, and faculty and visiting architects' critiques of these projects. I also interviewed the professor teaching the fourth year design studio at each school. Students from the fourth year design studio also participated in a focus group interview at each school.

The data from observations and interviews was coded to identify themes related to the concerns expressed by students and faculty. Fourteen themes emerged and some themes were divided into categories during subsequent stages of data coding. An analysis of the responses toward each theme with reference to the emphasis on psychological and social aspects led to inferences for the four supporting questions and the research question for the study.

Both schools selected for the study indicated that their curriculum is structured around creative and technical aspects of architecture while peripheralizing psychological and social concerns. However, faculty and students showed sensitivity toward these issues and various facets associated with them in the discussions of their projects. Additional questions were raised and attempts were made to postulate probable reasons for the attitudes that emerged.