

Chapter 1

Distance Learning in Architecture/ Planning Education: A Case Study in the Faculty of Architecture at Selcuk University

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ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces asynchronous learning, which is rapidly becoming a key element of institutional teaching and learning strategies with many academic departments seizing the opportunity to use new technologies to enhance their educational provision. It argues that design education has not been well served by asynchronous learning tools despite their many advantages. Educators are reluctant to use these tools due to the preconception of the unique nature of the studio-based learning of design. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an alternative media supporting the traditional studio for architectural/planning education that comprises digital pedagogy. Furthermore, the authors hope to bring about a better understanding of the reasons why asynchronous learning has been implemented by schools of architecture, how educators incorporated asynchronous learning into their curriculum, what advantages might be achieved, what kind of difficulties schools might encounter, and how they could be overcome in the case studies in architectural schools in Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

Today, technology is perceived as an effective and indispensable element of life and has become the

most distinctive characteristics of modern culture. The improvements in information and communication technologies (ICTs) offer new opportunities in business world, in education and in every field of

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-7316-8.ch001

life. Using ICTs in architecture/planning education are very important. Because, architecture/planning has been evolved into a multidisciplinary and international business by means of the development of the internet. Participants in architecture/planning profession are from all parts of the world and come together to complete designs, either in person to person contact or via the internet (Bala & Arat, 2013). The purpose of this chapter is to provide an alternative media supporting the traditional studio for architectural/planning education that comprises digital pedagogy issue.

In scientific literature, different terminology is used as distance learning, distance education, dlearning or D-Learning. In general, distance learning provides delivering education and teacher to students who are not physically present in traditional setting such as a classroom, atelier, studio, meeting hall or conference hall. Distant learning is performed in two ways as synchronous and asynchronous learning according to the application method.

This chapter is about a specific teaching/learning methodology which includes synchronous, asynchronous and traditional approaches supporting each other in design studio. SAIT Polytechnic Architectural Technologies and Selcuk University carried out a project using the potential of information technologies. Students from Canada and Turkey cooperated to solve the design problem of sustainable housing in Canadian's East Village. The project has involved both planning and architectural scale. The outputs of this study are:

- A better understanding of the reasons of distance education,
- Why synchronous/ asynchronous learning has been implemented by faculty of architecture,
- How educators incorporated asynchronous learning into their curriculum,
- What advantages might be achieved,
- What kind of difficulties schools might encounter and

- How they could be overcome in the case studies in architectural/planning education.

THE CONCEPT AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Man's desire to communicate with somebody far away is older than desire to educate somebody who is far away. Human beings can neither put on wings and fly nor can move too far distances like smoke. However, they build gigantic vehicles that go faster and reach farther than cranes and smoke, together with sending his/her voice to other end of the world in a matter of seconds. Second step of human being which fulfilled this, is educating of the human beings; knowledge reaches human being, no matter where he/she is. Information and communication technologies submit for human use, those which were merely dream of yesterday. Acquaint us with new teaching and learning procedures which have more functions and with more content compared to those procedures which already known (Alkan & Bala, 1998).

The literatures and studies related to distance learning expanded considerably in the last years. Studies researched different aspects of distance learning from its technologies, methods, and pedagogy to perceptions, opinions and attitudes of students and academicians toward distance learning (Buselic, 2012). Some authors defined distance education according to both communication and technology.

"Distance education implies that the majority of educational communication between (among) teacher and student(s) occurs non-contiguously (at different times and at separate places-separating the instructor-tutor from the learner). It must involve two-way communication between (among) teacher and student(s) for the purpose of facilitating and supporting the educational process. It uses technology to mediate the necessary two-way communication" (Garrison & Shale, 1987).

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