

Chapter 5

The Experience of Emergency Remote Teaching in the Interior Design Studio: Crit Environments With Potentials and Limitations

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ABSTRACT

To the changing social structure in parallel with technological developments, it is essential to reveal the principal values of design education. Hence, this questioning has become necessary for the pandemic causing the interruption of face-to-face education worldwide. The approach towards design education develops with the understanding of the structure of design act. Today, this structure contains data on the need to develop critical thinking skills to provide design education with contemporary approaches. Hence, the study examined design education's purpose and the design studio's role in realizing it through the concept of crit. The environments in which crit emerges, one of the central pedagogical tools of design studio education, have been evaluated as crit environments with overlapping or diverging but fundamentally complementary features through literature review. This review has been used to examine the interior design studio course, which has moved to the online environment during the pandemic and had to use emergency remote teaching model through a case study.

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INTRODUCTION

The information and communication technologies offered by the 21st century have extended the point of view of educators and enabled the discovery of the existence of different communication tools and environments in realizing the aims of traditional design studio education and in the transfer of the adopted values. Through these discoveries, experiences for giving design studio education in new ways remote, virtual, online-offline, hybrid etc., have become available. However, while these experiences are singular, individual, and based on preference, the COVID-19 pandemic process experienced on a global scale has caused educators to experience these training methods and each educational institution and the courses given within it to renew their practices and memory.

The design studio, which generally constitutes the center of design education, also constitutes the building block of the education given for Interior Design, which is defined as a “distinct profession with specialized knowledge applied to the planning and design of interior environments that promote health, safety, and welfare while supporting and enhancing the human experience” (CIDQ, 2019, p. 1). The pandemic, which has started to be experienced locally as of March 2020, has made the Interior Design Studio course based on face-to-face interaction and practice move from a traditional to an online environment quickly by using the “Emergency remote teaching model”. This teaching model, which differs from the distance education model (Ferri et al., 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; YÖKAK, 2020) but uses its solutions, provided the temporary transfer of education to the technology environment by using distance education solutions in this crisis, where education could not continue face-to-face. Thus, the curriculum and course materials prepared for the face-to-face education environment have quickly and reliably moved to the online environment. With this model providing online access to education and training tools, the traditional studio environment has been shifted to the online studio environment. This new environment has been designed to reflect the conventional classroom.

In this context, the study aims to reveal the process of change experienced and the results obtained in pandemic by means of “ICT304 Interior Design Project IV”, the Interior Design Studio course. The course in question will be evaluated with its approaches to developing critical thinking, one of the main achievements aimed at design education in general and design studio education in particular. This study, handled with this awareness, aims to review the functions and basic features of the traditional design studio in Interior design education, critical thinking in the design studio, crit in critical thinking, and crit environments in the design studio with the literature. Crit is one of the main pedagogical tools of design studio education. Crits need formal and informal environments to become functional. These environments require evaluation as “crit environments” in design studios, with their overlapping or diverging but fundamentally complementary features.

The study intends to analyze the desk crit (individual crit), group crit, interim reviews, final reviews (jury crits) and informal interaction (peer crits), at the beginning of these environments, through literature review. These reviews on the crit environments form the basis for evaluating the process and outcomes of the Interior Design Studio course, which has been moved from face-to-face to the online environment through the Emergency Distance Learning model during the Covid-19 pandemic process. For the theoretical background that forms the basis of the study, the following questions were sought under the Literature review title:

- What are interior design education aims and fundamental values in parallel with the 21st-century skills to be gained in educational environments today?

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