

Impact of Blended Learning in Interior Architecture Programs in Academia: A Case Study of Arcora Garage Academy from Turkey

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Abstract : There is currently a growing trend among universities towards blended learning. Blended learning is becoming increasingly important in higher education, with the aims of better accomplishing course learning objectives, meeting students' changing needs and promoting effective learning both in a theoretical and practical dimension like interior architecture discipline. However, the practical dimension of the discipline cannot be supported in the university environment. During the undergraduate program, the practical training which is tried to be supported by two different internship programs cannot fully meet the requirements of the blended learning. The lack of education program frequently expressed by our graduates and employers is revealed in the practical knowledge and skills dimension of the profession. After a series of meetings for curriculum studies, interviews with the chambers of profession, meetings with interior architects, a gap between the theoretical and practical training modules is seen as a problem in all interior architecture departments. It is thought that this gap can be solved by a new education model which is formed by the cooperation of University-Industry in the concept of blended learning. In this context, it is considered that theoretical and applied knowledge accumulation can be provided by the creation of industry-supported educational environments at the university. In the application process of the Interior Architecture discipline, the use of materials and technical competence will only be possible with the cooperation of industry and participation of students in the production/manufacture processes as observers and practitioners. Wood manufacturing is an important part of interior architecture applications. Wood productions is a sustainable structural process where production details, material knowledge, and process details can be observed in the most effective way. From this point of view, after theoretical training about wooden materials, wood applications and production processes are given to the students, practical training for production/manufacture planning is supported by active participation and observation in the processes. With this blended model, we aimed to develop a training model in which theoretical and practical knowledge related to the production of wood works will be conveyed in a meaningful, lasting way by means of university-industry cooperation. The project is carried out in Ankara with Arcora Architecture and Furniture Company and Başkent University Department of Interior Design where university-industry cooperation is realized. Within the scope of the project, every week the video of that week's lecture is recorded and prepared to be disseminated by digital medias such as Udemy. In this sense, the program is not only developed by the project participants, but also other institutions and people who are trained and practiced in the field of design. Both academicians from University and at least 15-year experienced craftsmen in the wood metal and dye sectors are preparing new training reference documents for interior architecture undergraduate programs. These reference documents will be a model for other Interior Architecture departments of the universities and will be used for creating an online education module.

Keywords : blended learning, interior design, sustainable training, effective learning.

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