**Integrating Theoretical and Practical Components of the Architecture Education Curriculum**

Mahmoud Reza Saghafia\* and Paul Sandersb

*aDepartment of Architecture, Art University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran Email:* [*mrsaghafi@qut.edu.au*](mailto:mrsaghafi@qut.edu.au)

*bDepartment of Architecture, Deakin University, Geelong, Australia, Email:* [*paul.sanders@deakin.edu.au*](mailto:paul.sanders@deakin.edu.au)

\*Corresponding author: Saghafi, Mahmoud Reza, Associate professor at Art University of Isfahan, Mobile: +989134026097

**Integrating Theoretical and Practical Components of the Architecture Education Curriculum**

**Abstract**

Integrating different parts of the curriculum is one of the important challenges in architecture education. Curriculum development has an important role in linking theoretical subjects into practical design studios. This study focuses on an analytical comparison of two architecture curricula in different contexts of Australia and Iran. The purpose is to find the limitations and benefits of each curriculum through educational systems, teaching time for theoretical and practical subjects, and the map of courses and subjects. This paper contributes to the literature of architecture education through analysis of integrating different subjects. This study implements a comparative case study method. The comparison indicates that although the architecture curriculum in Iran benefits from an extensive education with more subjects, wider content, and triple teaching time, it provides less opportunity for integrating theoretical and practical subjects. Furthermore, course structures at Australian universities benefit from greater flexibility and choice for students to individualise their course through elective subjects. Architecture education is a problem-based and project-based learning, so the results of this research have a wide application in research on higher education. Also, the findings of this study can assist design schools to improve their curricula through linking theory to practice.

**Keywords:** curriculum, architecture education, theoretical subjects, practical teaching, design studio

1. **Introduction**

Integrating theory and practice is a contemporary challenge for curriculum development in higher education generally and in design education specifically, whereby the Curriculum is the platform for linking theoretical knowledge into practical projects. Design pedagogy is supported by educational curriculum to reach this aim. There are different design pedagogies which universities follow based on their context and goals.

Curriculum design is an essential part of education delivery and reform. Curricula usually involves the whole experience provided to students in a school [1]. They form part of activities, recommendations and actions with the purpose of improving formal education [2]. Curricula development may have different purposes including responsive curricula to ‘unpredictable local, national and global challenges and opportunities’ (Moore, 2012). Integrating different parts of the curriculum is one of the important challenges in architecture education around the world [3, 4]. Therefore, regular research on curriculum including architecture education is needed to respond to contemporary changes and challenges.

Architecture education has a number of divergent demands that include the need for more flexible and integrated curriculum to meet real world problems [5]. Architectural curricula needs to modify according to current professional interest and accreditation board validation [6], and it is also required to find a balance between individual and collaborative learning, future and history, and creativity and sustainability [7]. Furthermore, architecture curricula are goal directed means for social equality and saving environment [8]. Architecture curriculum and course content needs to reform for balancing and harmonizing subjects as well as integrating these knowledge to design studio projects [6].

Traditional approaches to content analysis help to identify the content components to be learned and classified in the curricula. Following the mechanistic paradigm, the educational process of architecture is reduced to a large number of disconnected components [9]. However, through a constructivist view, knowledge components are not separated in the real world [10].

Traditional forms of architecture education engage and involve many aspects of experiential learning and integrated curriculum based on creative activities of problem solving. How much the content across the course is relevant, and how much there is opportunity to apply skills and knowledge to new situations, supports the development of new ways of understanding [11].

Architecture students were not able to provide practical and meaningful links between ancillary subjects and design projects. Therefore, it seems that each subject is independent and unlinked to others [12]. While the studio is not the only setting for architecture teaching and learning activities, the traditional pedagogy tries to centralize it and integrate it with other subjects. In modern architecture pedagogy the subjects which support the design studio are taught where content is usually delivered in lectures, and tutorials sessions are offered to support development and critical thinking, and is where the students are expected to explore and discuss issues related to lectures [11].

1. **Materials and Methods**

The research has utilized an illustrative form of case study to expose alternative approaches to curriculum structuring. Two cases have been analyzed to show the existing situations in two different contexts. This study implements a document analysis method in which documents are interpreted by the researchers to provide meaning around an assessment topic [13]. Document analysis has been used to compare and contrast the two cases; commonalities and differences are uncovered and discussed. It has also used a comparative case study method [14]. While the two cases set the limitations of the study, they also present possibilities for curriculum development that may be applicable outside of these cases, in similar contexts.

The study focuses on an analytical comparison between two different curricula, being at the School of Architecture at the Faculty of Fine Arts at University of Tehran (UT) which represent a conventional public university in a developing country, and at the School of Design in the Creative Industries Faculty at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) which represent a conventional state university in a developed country.

The scope of this study is primarily focused on introducing and analyzing the curriculum of architecture education at two selected universities through different factors such as teaching time for theoretical and practical subjects, the distribution of the subjects, and the map of courses and subjects. But there is also a comparison of the two educational systems in terms of mode of teaching delivery, size of students’ groups, and various types of learning environments.

In this paper, theory refers to the knowledge, while practice refers to the application. In addition, theoretical subjects refer to the subjects rather than Design category, while practical subjects refer to the subjects which are taught in Design Studios. Moreover, theoretical teaching time refers to the teaching time which are delivered as lecture, while practical teaching time refer to the teaching time which deliver as tutorial sessions; no matter if they are related to Design studio subjects or other categories.

* 1. ***Case 1: Iran***

University of Tehran (UT) is the largest and first modern university of Iran and was established in 1934 [15]. UT is ranked as 601-800th in World University Ranking by the Times Higher Education [16]. The first department of architecture in Iran was established in 1940 as part of the Fine Arts Faculty. The architecture education was closely modelled on the French École des Beaux-Arts based on the traditional atelier system which was a design studio led by a master and his colleagues. Each atelier had been combined of students from different entries. So, students in this learning environment had opportunity to benefit from peer-learning [17].

The architecture curriculum in Iran has periodically changed in 1959, 1968, 1982, 1998, and 2014. The latest version was directly designed by UT in 2014 and approved by ‘Council of Educational Planning’ at ‘Ministry of Science, Technology, and research’ in 2017. Since then, individual universities which have their own ‘Board of Trustees’ were authorized to devise their own curriculum for approval by the ‘Council of educational Planning’, can be used by other universities. Before that, the ‘Council of Art’, which was formed by selective professors from different universities, were responsible for designing and reviewing architecture curriculum under the supervision of the ‘Council of educational Planning’ at the ‘Ministry of Higher Education’.

The course redefine partially occurred in 1968 and then overall in 1982 (after the Cultural Revolution in Iran) [17]. As the first major change, the course redefined to re-orient toward Iranian Architecture and cover more technical subjects forming an architecture engineering degree. The next major shift in course design occurred nationally when a Continuous Master Degree of Architecture changed to Bachelor and discontinuous Master Degree in Architecture in 1998 [18]. Until 1998, students who were selected in the national university entrance exam as well as especial exam for choosing architecture course, entre to Master of Architecture which long 6-7 years. The university entrance exam is held in national level for 5 decades and architecture was the only course which was offered as Master in Mathematic category. So, this course was very attractive and high ranked. Although this change occurred 20 years ago, some academics still believe that the previous curriculum was better for training architects [18]. It seems that most of these opinions did not consider parallel changes in the culture of universities, the economy of the country, and other contextual confounding variables.

The continuous 6-7 years Master program was divided into a 4-4.5 years Bachelor and a 2-2.5-year master’s degree to provide more flexibility, offering various fields for Masters. But the Bachelor Degree of Architecture remained with no other alternatives [19]. From 2002, the School of Architecture at UT offers one undergraduate program and eight postgraduate programs which incorporates a PhD program and seven Master degree courses including Architecture, Landscape, Interior Design, Architecture Energy, and Architecture Technology [15]. The revised curriculum [12] in Iran has defined a bachelor’s degree for four years which is between the comparative duration for a Bachelor of architecture in the US (5 years) and Europe (3 years).

* 1. ***Case 2: Australia***

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is a large size university ranked as 201-250th in World University Ranking by Times Higher Education [16]. Architecture is one of seven design courses at the School of Design, which moved from the Faculty of Built Environment and Engineering to the Creative industries Faculty in 2012. QUT and its predecessor institutions have offered continuous professional education in architecture since 1919. The latest version of the architecture Course received professional accreditation in 2016, in which a five year program of architectural education is structured as a four year undergraduate Bachelors (Honors) degree and a one year postgraduate Masters [20]. The course at QUT represents the conventional architecture curriculum within Australian universities regarding the category of subjects and their outlines. However, the structure is unique within Australia (where all other architecture programs are structured as three years plus two years for Bachelor and master’s degrees respectively) and it has facilitated several possibilities that enhance the student learning experience.

In particular the longer undergraduate course allows greater flexibility and choice for students to individualize their course by enrolling in ‘second majors’ that extend and specialize their skill set; the integration of the undergraduate degree with study options in five other design disciplines (Landscape Architecture, Interior Design, Graphic Design, Industrial Design, and Fashion ) as well as broader built environment related study areas, such as; Urban and Regional Planning, Construction Management, and Property Economics. These diverse learning opportunities provide a rich and diverse environment appropriate for 21st Century graduates. The one year Masters allows the creation of a more unique experience with a focus on transition to practice [20]. The combination of six design disciplines has also provided opportunities for collaboration and transdisciplinary activity [20].

The course structure benefits from opportunities for integrated transdisciplinary study(within course subjects, through minor/major programs, through addable degrees). According to Crowther and Savage [21], ‘The value of such student choice in not limited to transformative learning and professional alignment. Students who make their own choices are also more likely to use a ‘deep approach’ to learning due to higher levels of motivation and feelings of ownership’. Electives are normally structured as Minors (4 subjects) and Second Majors (8 subjects) to ensure that students engage with a structured amount of relevant knowledge, rather than too many random single electives [20]. Students may choose to do a Minor in Work Integrated Learning (workplace learning) in which they analyze and report on their professional practice experience. This would normally be completed in years 2 to 4 [20].

Various knowledge domains contribute to the ability of practitioners to implement this curriculum. These knowledge domains exist at the intersection of understandings of society, technology, art, culture, history, professionalism, law and business. They are also appropriated and synthesized in architectural practice and, through this process, distinctive architectural knowledge emerges. Developing this ability to integrate divergent fields of knowledge is a significant aim of the courses [20]. The School of Design at QUT seeks to embed design activities into all of their subjects, allowing students to practice and implement their developing design skills across a range of architectural content areas [20].

1. **Results**

There is a close relationship between educational curriculum and educational systems. In traditional systems of design studio teaching (UT as other Iranian universities), each academic member (lecturer) is responsible for a group of students and there is not a structured relationship between different groups of each entry (year) for architecture studios. But in modern systems of architecture studio teaching (QUT as other Australian Universities), each lecturer is coordinator of an architecture studio (or other subjects) that consists of multiple groups of up to 20 students. In this system each coordinator plans the outline and provides theoretical materials which is delivered in an hour lecture per week to all the students, this follow by tutorial sessions for studio teaching in different groups for three hours.

In Master Studios, the coordinators’ duties are limited to administration works and the tutor of each group who is usually a permanent academic staff, design and define the project outline and so on. Also, there is no lecture for Master studio and tutorial sessions run 7 hours per week. Moreover, in ‘Architecture design 8’ of bachelor’s degree there is 1-hour lecture, but 6 hours tutorial p/w. Tutors generally will be selected from practitioners or PhD students. Tutorial sessions of design studio follow a ‘Problem Based Learning’ approach for application of knowledge through different learning activities.

The number of students at lectures usually range between 60-80 at UT and 100-200 at QUT, the proportion for practical subjects (average size of tutorial groups) are similar in both universities (around 18 students for bachelor design studio tutorial). Moreover, at UT each lecturer is responsible for teaching 4-6 subjects per year, while at QUT the number is 2-3.

Furthermore, there are different types of learning environments in architecture education including lecture room, studio space, tutorial room, computer lab, fabrication lab, and online learning environment. The different types of learning environments support different pedagogies which leads to deeper engagement of students with problem-based learning. QUT benefits from the aforementioned six types including tutorial room, simulated practice office, and online learning environments, but UT does not have the three latest.

* 1. ***UT and QUT curriculum comparison***

Educational curricula can be compared through different aspects. This section focuses on the aspects that are related to integrating theoretical and practical parts of the curriculum. In the document of Architectural Engineering curriculum for the Bachelor degree at UT [12], the subjects of non-design studios have been introduced to serve for design, criticism, and research of architecture works. The curriculum states that the graduate of the bachelor’s degree should be able to apply the necessary knowledge for a contextual design. However, this aim is not supported by an effective pedagogy, as the curriculum/unit outline does not include any section such as learning approaches/teaching methods.

Different categories of subjects for UT and QUT curricula have been presented based on the Bachelor and Master of Architecture course structure including: number of subjects in each category, Theoretical (T.) teaching hours and Practical (P.) teaching hours for each category, and the percentage of teaching time in each category to the whole teaching time (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

In the bachelor curriculum of UT [12], the subjects were classified to:

* Basic subjects; at the first three semesters to prepare students for architectural design projects with necessary knowledge, skills and experiences.
* Essential subjects; different architectural subjects including theoretical, practical and combination of two.
* Elective subjects; to select from different fields such as technology, landscape, interior architecture, and internship.
* Public subjects; including 5 public subjects (two for Persian and English languages, two physical practice, and one Society studies) and 6 religious public subjects (students choose 6 from 17 subjects) which are compulsory for all bachelor’s degrees.

And in the Master of architecture curriculum at UT [22], the subjects were classified to:

* Essential subjects; in three groups of design studios, theoretical knowledge, and professional practice.
* Elective subjects; based on the student’s interest or related field of Master thesis.
* Master Thesis; also, is an important part of the curriculum which does not contain any formal classes since it is based on one-to-one interaction between student and his/her supervisor/s. The Master Thesis is an individual project which include confirming a proposal, working with the supervisory team, and submitting a report on theoretical aspects and a design project.
* Prerequisite subjects; for the students who graduate from courses rather than architecture and enter to the Master of architecture, to be familiar with a few essential subjects of the Bachelor curriculum.

[ Figure 1: UT subjects’ categories in Bachelor (B.) and Master of Architecture (M.A.) based on [12, 22]]

[ Figure 2: QUT subjects’ categories, based on [20]]

Although the classification of the subjects in the curricula at UT and QUT are different, the following results can be concluded (Figure 1 and Figure 2):

* Classification of subjects at UT is very basic while at QUT it is more specific and similar to the standard approach in international schools of architecture.
* Number of subjects at UT is more than twice compare to QUT.
* Teaching hours for both Theoretical and Practical subjects at UT is about three times compare to QUT.
* The ratio of teaching time in Design category to the whole in Bachelor and Master at UT are 47% and 69% at UT compare to 37% and 54% at QUT which shows more emphasize on design projects at UT.
* The ratio of Elective subjects to the whole at UT is 4% compare to 24% at QUT. This proportion results in more flexible program for students at QUT for bachelor’s degree.
* The ratio of public subjects at UT is 11% without any link to design studio or practical subjects.

A summary of data presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2 has been provided at Figure 3. This Table compares different aspects including number of subjects/number of Years, lecture and practical teaching hours, time of practical teaching hours relative to the whole, number of weeks per semester, and teaching amount (hour per week).

[ Figure 3 Comparison analysis of architecture curricula at UT and QUT]

According to this comparison, there are 30 subjects for Bachelor and 6 for master’s at QUT compared to 56 for Bachelor and 11 for master’s at UT. It also shows the average of 3.75 subjects per semester in the Bachelor curriculum for QUT, while the relevant number at UT is different (7 subjects per semester). The volume of lecturing hours at UT is about 3-4 times greater than QUT, this proportion is consistence also for the practical teaching hours in the Bachelor course. However, the difference in the Master is slightly less (2-3 times). There are some factors that can explain this difference including the number of years for each level (4 and 1 at QUT compare to 4 and 2 at UT), number of weeks per semester (13 at QUT compare to 16 at UT), and teaching amount per week (13 hours at QUT compare to 14-24 hours at UT). The Total of teaching time at QUT for Bachelor and Master are 1313 and 338 hours which are significantly less than 3392 hours for Bachelor and 832 hours for Master at UT.

Furthermore, ‘Practical teaching time to the whole’ which means percentage of practical teaching hours (the time which students are taught at studio/tutorial room) to all the teaching hours has been compared. This ratio is similar in the bachelor’s degree (67% and 65% at QUT and UT respectively), but difference in the Master (83% and 77% at QUT and UT respectively). The QUT Master’s Degree is 83% practical time for the purpose of preparing graduates for practice, while UT is more concerned about theoretical subjects that enhance the knowledge of graduates.

Finally, the higher number of subjects at UT represents a higher quantity of content compared to QUT. Even if the headlines of the comparable subjects are assumed similar, at QUT the curriculum is very compressed. This means that at QUT, students are required to study and learn independently (for example 3 hours for each subject per week which means 13 hours for teaching and 12 hours for self-directed learning per week) which is achievable in this curriculum. Students at QUT rely more on self-learning which decreases the necessity for teaching contact time at QUT, this approach leads to reduced cost for the educational organization. On the other hand, UT has many theoretical subjects, but there is not enough time to apply this knowledge in/out of class time. This is because of average 18-24 hours teaching time per week that does not leave enough time for applying each subject during the semester.

The course map at UT and QUT have been illustrated respectively (Figure 4 and Figure 5). Since UT has not provided any course map for its curriculum, the authors drew this map based on the category of subjects and related colors at QUT map to make it more convenience for comparison. The course maps have been required according to the following arrangements:

* Communication row moved to locate under Design row (row 2) to present more integration with design subjects at UT map (Figure 4).
* Technology related subjects form the fourth row from the combination of three subjects which are related to Technology and two subjects which are related to ‘Project Delivery & Project Management’ (Figure 4).
* Still there are a few subjects that cannot be classified under a specific group at UT map, so they have been titled as ‘Sundry’ (row 5). These subjects have been classified as essential in the UT curriculum.
* Urban and Rural Studies and Environmental Studies formed a new row (row 6) to separate this category from other subjects.
* There are also two rows named Public and Religious subjects (row 9 & 10) that do not exist at conventional architecture map in other countries including Australia.

Comparing the map of courses and subjects in both universities, reveals the following similarities and differences:

* Average number of subjects per semester at the Bachelor level for UT is 7 while the relevant number at QUT is 3.75, so students at UT are faced with various and different subjects each semester, which may result in unnecessary complexity that can makes it harder to bridge between theoretical subjects and design studios. Furthermore, when students are faced with a higher density of subjects per semester (at UT), assuming Design Studio as core of the curriculum, may result in considering the other subjects as secondary, so they may put less time during the semester. Also, the assessment criteria for most of the theoretical subjects are based on final exams. This condition has significant impact on semester eight when the students need to pass two design projects (including the Final Project) plus 2-3 other subjects. However, at the Master level the density is 2.75 for UT and 3 at QUT. This condition provides more concentration for students and enough space to think about the interrelation of different areas at both universities.
* Basic subjects at UT is almost equivalent to basic subjects of first year at QUT but is delivered in three semesters.
* Technology at UT curriculum consist of 7 subjects plus 4 related ones which involves the Bachelor students during their whole study. But most of these subjects are delivered as lectures and theoretical contents (excluding Building Technical Design and Construction Procedure) without any application in architecture design projects. At QUT there are just 4 Technology subjects which benefit from tutorial sessions for problem-based learning with some connections to apply their knowledge into the design studios.
* There is minimum link between categories of Sundry, Theory, Elective, Public and Religious subjects with architecture Design studios in UT curriculum. Most of these subjects are delivered as theory and lecture-based approaches with the rare opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in project-based learning.
* Both Bachelor curricula of UT and QUT offer different areas of elective subjects to the students who can choose several subjects at their own pace. Students at UT must select 4 random subjects from 11 elective ones at their Bachelor and 1 subject from 5 elective subjects at their master’s degree. At UT there is not any classification for four selected subjects as specialization on a specific area. While at QUT there is a structural relationship for each package which fosters a focused specialization within the Bachelor course, i.e. two 4 subject minors or a single 8 subject major.

[Figure 4: Map of Courses and Subjects retrieved from [12, 22]]

[Figure 5: Map of Courses and Subjects retrieved from [23]

1. **Discussion**

The aim of architecture education in each country is affected by historical, cultural, geographical, and economical characteristics which effects the curriculum [24]. While political and ethical focused curricula, which is popular in eastern countries tends to be objective focusing on rational acquisition of knowledge, the phenomenological approach as a common approach in western countries tends to be subjective, focusing on intuitive acquisition of practical experience based on constructivist epistemology [8]. Therefore, instead of dividing knowledge in a rational mode of curriculum, phenomenology ‘encourages students to discover and construct knowledge that has personal meaning and value for themselves’[8].

Each university should redefine their institution’s mission, vision, values, and strategic guidelines [25]. Architecture education in Iran presents a neutral program (without vision) with no specific attention to the challenges of place and time and no emphasize on human responsibilities about the social and ecological environment. The architecture curriculum is inflexible and similar for all students in Bachelor degree, but there are a few different curricula in Master program responding to various professional needs as their main missions [22]. In comparison, architecture education in Australia and New Zealand aimed for responding to the physical and ethical challenges and future needs of the real world such as sustainable environment [23].

In the Bachelor curriculum at UT [12], it is implied that undergraduate students are responsible for bridging their knowledge in design projects. Dividing a discipline into different subjects may leads to breaking a big problem into small ones, but it is not the most appropriate approach, since it will result in independent components which are not properly integrated. Teaching unrelated components of a syllabus and content of a curriculum, while expecting students to apply them in design studio, is likely to give students multiple pieces of a puzzle without giving them the whole picture yet still expect them to build the whole image in their mind.

The main reasons for problematic architecture schools can be attributed to an inefficient organizational system, non-active learners, lack of an appropriate curriculum, and not enough harmony between content and aims of course in the curriculum [26]. Providing integrated subjects begins with connecting different parts of the outline through appropriate aim, content, approaches, and assessment. Outlining elements of each subject including teaching time, content, and assessment should support learning aims. In the same way, program elements should support course goals.

In Iran, the Council of Educational Planning does not consider ‘learning outcomes’, ‘teaching-learning approaches’, and ‘overall assessment’ as necessary parts of course outline for evaluating and confirming the proposed curriculum. The new curriculum of UT did not provide a ‘Map of Courses and Subjects’ which presents data for enough course analysis, including: the distribution of subject in different semesters, timetable management, and subjects’ relationships analysis. The analysis of subjects’ outlines at QUT indicates that a few practical subjects have been linked to the theoretical ones, but there is a lack in assessing of knowledge gained from theoretical subjects in design projects. Moreover, the way of linking the two (how) has not been outlined.

For the purpose of reviewing and improving architecture curriculum, UT established a committee to provide an overview of its architecture education, its aims and challenges in 2011. This committee ran a survey among academic members, graduates and students to investigate the limitations and changes [27]. Some of the comments are as follow:

* Providing various educational programs
* Redefining various fields of architecture education based on international approach
* Increasing selective subjects based on students’ needs and preferences
* Linking design studio to technology or theoretical subjects

The committee emphasized on the need for continuous revision (e.g. every five years) and response to social, cultural, local, national and international needs [27]. They also provided two recommendations which were not actioned;

* Decreasing public subjects and orient the remained ones toward specific educational needs of each course.
* Allowing each university to define 30% of their subjects based on their local needs, aims, and academic abilities.

Architectural education in Iran needs to change to respond to contextual condition. Since curriculum should be planned based on specific context yet these contexts are different around the country, one option would be local planning through authorizing universities for planning their own curricula relating to local conditions.

The proposed Map of Courses and Subjects has been presented for UT to maximize integration of the related subjects based on previous findings (Figure 6). This map has been designed for the course of Architecture Engineering. In the Master, the course should focus on an expertise area through choosing related subjects in both theoretical and elective categories. Moreover, one of the Ar. D. studios has been deleted to finish the course in 4 years appropriately.

In each column, the subjects of Rows 3 & 4 can be integrated to Design studio project of the same, last, or next semester through:

* Linking knowledge gained from previous semester/s (theory subjects) with design studio of the next semester (such as the first and the last arrows). In semester 8, the key subjects of previous semesters can be linked to apply the whole theoretical subjects as well as design principles through analytical, critical and creative thinking in a coherent design process and building documentation.
* Integrating theoretical subjects to practical ones (design projects) at the same semester (such as the second arrow).
* Investigating for a meaningful understanding of knowledge through testing a Design Project in the Theoretical subjects of the next semester (such as the third arrow).

Elective subjects have been packaged into two minors or one major area (including 4 subjects) in Bachelor and one minor for master’s degree. These packages should be provided by each school based on their local needs and abilities.

There are also some other initial changes in the name, order, position or combination of the subjects through redefining various fields of architecture education based on a review of international approaches and architecture curricula. For instance, Ar. Programming and Conversation exchanged their position in bachelor’s and master’s programs. In addition, the sequential subjects such as Contemporary Ar. 1 & 2 in the previous map (which has been changed to Modern Ar. in the new map) have been combined with each other which help to decrease the number of subjects. This also increases the opportunities for knowledge application through problem-based learning by increasing the teaching hours from two to three. Furthermore, the name of some subjects such as World Ar., Contemporary Ar., and Islamic Ar. have been changed to better represent their field of knowledge or their focus of geographical area.

In addition, the architecture profession has changed over the past few decades, but in some institutes the curriculum has not kept up with this change (the curriculum is still based on an outdated mode of practice). Many architects, and practices, have become more specialized, but the curriculum is still very generic. The curriculum at QUT has been approved and endorsed by the ‘Architects Accreditation Council of Australia’ (AACA) which made it more responsive for application in professional environment [23]. The AACA sets the competency standards and conducts the accreditation process. This process typically involves review of curriculum documents, a five-yearly visit to the university for assessment of the students’ works, the staff, and the facilities. In Iran, industry and authorized organizations could also be involved for evaluating the curriculum based on their needs.

According to curriculum guidelines [20] and [12], the purpose of Bachelor of Architecture course is to gain knowledge and develop the ability to produce an architectural design, conduct of research and critical analysis of architectural works. Based on the introduction of these curricula, architectural design is the core of the course which needs to be integrated to the theoretical subjects. Therefore, one way to improve the components of a program is to link each subject to one of the design studios.

[Figure 6: The proposed Map of Courses and Subjects for UT to maximize the integration of different subjects]

1. **Conclusion**

Overall, the comparison indicates that although architecture curriculum at UT benefits from more subjects (twice), wider content, and teaching time (triple), it provides less opportunity for integrating theoretical and practical subjects. The curriculum is also still very compartmentalized, and it needs to be better integrated between subjects; this is the modern approach to curriculum development – integrating theory and practice, and ‘authentic learning experiences.

It is also reasonable to critique the programs against each other and suggest that the depth of knowledge in the Iranian program highlights that the Australian program may not be covering the full content field, and that as such may be leaving graduates with a limited knowledge base. Conversely the Iranian program does not offer students much opportunity to apply their knowledge through project-based learning, and as such leaves graduates unable to fully use knowledge to make design decisions. Neither is perfect or perhaps even optimal, though both offer ideas that might be applied in similar contexts.

The main weakness in the course mapping for both universities is the lack of horizontal (serial) as well as vertical (parallel) connections between subjects in terms of integrating knowledge to practice and vice versa. The paper demonstrates the importance of course maps for effective analysis through vertical and horizontal relationships between subjects and their distribution, the absence of curriculum matrices can lead to a lack of awareness of critical pedagogical relationships.

An integrated curriculum should be supported by effective educational systems and learning environments. Moreover, an integrated curriculum should coordinate subjects’ elements and program’s elements in harmony with each other to support the course goals. In addition, flexible architecture programs should be responsive to local contexts and international global needs.

This paper contributes to the recent debate of bridging different subjects in architecture curriculum focusing on teaching time and the map of course. This research was limited to document analysis and did not involve in pedagogy and empirical studies. Therefore, examines how much the curriculum is really being taught in each school, can be in the focus for further studies.

Architectural education is based on problem based and project-based learning, the result of this research has a wider application in the research on higher education. Also, the results of this study can help related schools to enhance their curricula through integrating different subjects.

**Acknowledgment**

This research was supported by the Art University of Isfahan (AUI). We thank our colleagues at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) who provided insight and expertise that greatly assisted the research. We especially thank Associate Professor Philip Crowther for his comments that greatly improved the manuscript.

**References**

1. Bishop, G., *Curriculum development: A textbook for students*. 1989: Macmillan publishers.

2. Syomwene, A.J.J.o.E. and Practice, *Factors affecting teachers’ implementation of curriculum reforms and educational policies in schools: The Kenyan experience.* 2013. **4**(22): p. 80-86.

3. Heath, T. and R. Jones, *Learning architecture, teaching architecture : a guide for the perplexed* 2010, Toowong, Qld: Denarius Design Books.

4. Salama, A.M., *A theory for integrating knowledge in architectural design education.* International Journal of Architectural Research: ArchNet-IJAR, 2008. **2**(1): p. 100-128.

5. Boyer, E.L. and L.D. Mitgang, *Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education and Practice. A Special Report*. 1996: ERIC.

6. Salama, A.M., *Spatial design education: New directions for pedagogy in architecture and beyond*. 2016: Routledge.

7. Bothwell, S.E., Andres M. Duany, Peter J. Hetzel, Steven W. Hurtt, and Dhiru A. Thadani, *Book Review: Windsor Forum on Design Education: Toward an Ideal Curriculum to Reform Architectural Education*. 2002, Vero Beach, Florida: New Urban Press.

8. Wang, T., *Toward a Productive and Creative Curriculum in Architecture.* Arts and Humanities in Higher Education, 2009. **8**(3): p. 277-293.

9. Salama, A.M., *Knowledge and Design: People-Environment Research for Responsive Pedagogy and Practice.* Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2012. **49**: p. 8-27.

10. Bednar, A.K., et al., *Theory into practice: How do we link*, in *Constructivism and the Technology of Instruction: A Conversation*, T.M. Duffy and D.H. Donassen, Editors. 1992, Laerence Erlbaum Associates: USA. p. 17-34.

11. Mackintosh, L., *Just Doing It: The Role of Experiential Learning and Integrated Curricula in Architectural Education.* The International Journal of Pedagogy and Curriculum, 2014. **20**(3): p. 67-78.

12. University-of-Tehran, *Architecture Engineer Curriculum for Bachelor Degree*, U.o. Tehran, Editor. 2014, Council of Educational Planning: Tehran.

13. Bowen, G.A., *Document analysis as a qualitative research method.* Qualitative research journal, 2009. **9**(2): p. 27-40.

14. Fox-Wolfgramm, S.J., *Towards developing a methodology for doing qualitative research: The dynamic-comparative case study method.* Scandinavian Journal of Management, 1997. **13**(4): p. 439-455.

15. University-of-Tehran. *UT at a Glance*. 2019 [cited 2019; Available from: <https://ut.ac.ir/en/page/757/ut-at-a-glance>.

16. Education, T.H. *World University Ranking* 2019 [cited 2019; Available from: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-tehran>.

17. Saed Samiee, A. *The organization of education in architecture department*. in *The Second National Conference on Architectural Education; Challenges and Solutions*. 2003. Tehran, Iran: University of Tehran.

18. Hojat, i. and a. Sedaghati, *Investigating contiguous master's and non-countiguous master’s degree Courses of Architecture and comparing their adaptability with Architecture Education Factors* Technology of Education, 2018. **9**: p. -.

19. Council-of-Art, *Architecture Engineer Curriculum for Bachelor Degree*, T.a.R. Ministry of Sceince, Editor. 1998, Council of Educational Planning: Tehran.

20. QUT, *Australian and New Zealand Architecture Program Accreditation Procedure*, Q.U.o. Technology, Editor. 2016, QUT: Australia.

21. Crowther, P. and S.M. Savage. *The changing role of universities and flexible course re-development*. in *International Conference in Building Education and Research*. 2008. Sri Lanka.

22. University-of-Tehran, *Architecture Engineer Curriculum for Master Degree*, U.o. Tehran, Editor. 2014, Council of Educational Planning: Tehran.

23. ANZAPA, *Architecture Program Accreditation Procedure in Australia and New Zealand*. 2018, Architects Accreditation Council of Australia: SYDNEY NSW

24. Gharibpour, A. and M. Toutounchi Moghaddam, *Comparative Revising the Curriculum of Basic Design Studios in Undergraduate Studies of Architecture* Honar-Ha-Ye-Ziba: Memary Va Shahrsazi, 2016. **20**(4): p. 59-72.

25. Pucciarelli, F. and A. Kaplan, *Competition and strategy in higher education: Managing complexity and uncertainty.* Business Horizons, 2016. **59**(3): p. 311-320.

26. Shayan, S. and S. Molanaee. *Effect of course plan on content and educational aims and its relation with inefficiencies of Education centers of newly established architecture in Iran*. in *The Fifth National Conference on Architectural Education; Challenges and Solutions*. 2014. Tehran, Iran: University of Tehran.

27. Mahmoudi, A., S. *A step towards the evolution of educational planning; Review of Undergraduate subjects in Architectural Engineering*. in *The Fifth National Conference on Architectural Education; Challenges and Solutions*. 2014. Tehran, Iran: University of Tehran.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Category of subjects | NO. of subjects | T. teaching hours | P. teaching hours | % to whole |
| Bachelor | Basic | 10 | 48 | 768 | 24 |
| Essential | 31 | 688 | 1408 | 61 |
| Elective (from 11 choices) | 4 | 96 | 64 | 4 |
| Public (and religious) | 11 | 320 | - | 11 |
| Total for bachelor’s degree | | 56 | 1152 | 2240 | 100 |
| Master | Essential | 9 | 160 | 448 | 73 |
| Elective (from 5 choices) | 1 | 32 | - | 4 |
| Master Thesis | 1 | - | 192 | 23 |
| Total for master’s degree | | 11 | 192 | 640 | 100 |
| Total for Both Degrees | | 67 | 1344 | 2880 |  |

Figure 1: UT subjects’ categories in Bachelor (B.) and Master of Architecture (M.A.) based on [12, 22]

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Category of subjects | NO. of subjects | T. teaching hours | P. teaching hours | % to whole |
| B. | Design | 9 | 117 | 377 | 37 |
| Technology/Documentation | 3 | 39 | 78 | 9 |
| Environment | 1 | 13 | 26 | 3 |
| History & Theory | 6 | 117 | 117 | 18 |
| Communication | 3 | 39 | 78 | 9 |
| Elective in QUT | 8 | 104 | 208 | 24 |
| Total for bachelor’s degree | | 30 | 429 | 884 | 100 |
| M.A. | Design | 2 | \_ | 182 | 54 |
| Technology/Documentation | 1 | 13 | 26 | 12 |
| History & Theory | 1 | 19.5 | 19.5 | 11 |
| Project Delivery & Practice Management | 2 | 26 | 52 | 23 |
| Total for master’s degree | | 6 | 58.5 | 279.5 | 100 |
| Total for Both Degrees | | 36 | 487.5 | 1163.5 |  |

Figure 2: QUT subjects’ categories, based on [20]

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Different factors | QUT | | UT | |
| Bachelor | Master | Bachelor | Master |
| Number of subjects/ Number of Years | 30/ 4 | 6/ 1 | 56/ 4 | 11/ 2 |
| Lecture hours | 429 | 58.5 | 1152 | 192 |
| Practical hours | 884 | 279.5 | 2240 | 640 |
| Practical teaching time to the whole | 67% | 83% | 65% | 77% |
| Total of teaching hours | 1313 | 338 | 3392 | 832 |
| Number of weeks per Semester | 13 | 13 | 16 | 16 |
| Teaching amount (hour Per week) | 13 | 13 | 18-24 | 12-14 |

Figure 3 Comparison analysis of architecture curricula at UT and QUT

**Bachelor** **Master**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Row** | **Subjects’**  **Category** | **Year 1** | | **Year 2** | | **Year 3** | | **Year 4** | | **Year 5** | | **Year 6** | |
| 1 | Design | Intro. to  Ar. D. 1 | Intro. to  Ar. D. 2 | Intro. to  Ar. D. 3 | Ar. D. 4 | Ar. D. 5 | Ar. D. 6 | Ar. D. 7 | Ar. D. 8 | Ar. D. 9 | Ar. D. 10 | Ar. D. 11 | Master Thesis |
| 2 | Communication | Ar. C. 1 | Ar. C. 2 | Ar. C. 3 | Sketch 1 | Sketch 2 |  |  | Final Project |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | Technology | Statics | Steel Structure | Concrete  Building | Building  Structure | Building Constr. 1 | Building Constr. 2 | Technical Design |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 | Technology related subjects | Building Materials |  |  |  |  | Electrical  Acoustics | Mechanic  Services | Project Management |  |  | Construction  Procedure |  |
| 5 | Sundry |  | Nature  & Ar. | Computer Aided Ar. | Design Process |  | Surveying | Estimating | Conservation | Ar.  Program | Environ.  Psychology |  |  |
| 6 | Environmental Studies |  |  |  | Environment  Control | Urban Planning | Urban Design | Rural Design |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7 | History and Theory |  | World Ar. | Islamic Ar. 1 | Islamic Ar. 2 | Contempor.  Ar. 1 | Contempor.  Ar. 2 |  |  | Ar. Research | Ar. Wisdom  In Iran | Ar. Rights & Regulation |  |
| 8 | Elective  (4+1 of 11+5) | Math.  & Ar. | Comp. D.  & Fabric. | English for Ar. | Interior  Design | Construct.  Technology | Internship | Landscape  Ar. | Re-use  of Ar. | Modern Structure | Site Analysis | Ar. & Develop | Ar. Theory |
| 9 | Public | English Language | Persian  Literature | Physical Practice | Physical Practice |  |  | Family & Society |  |
| 10 | Religious  (6 of 13) | Religious 1 | Religious 2 | Religious 3 | Religious  4 | Religious  5 | Religious  6 |  |  |

Figure 4: Map of Courses and Subjects retrieved from [12, 22]

**Bachelor Master**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subjects’**  **Category** | **Year 1** | | **Year 2** | | **Year 3** | | **Year 4** | | **Year 5** | |
| Design | Ar. D. 1  Small project | Ar. D. 2  Small project | Ar. D. 3  Residential houses | Ar. D. 4  Commercial Ar. | Ar. D. 5  Sustainable Ar. | Ar. D. 6  Mixed use Ar. | Ar. D. 7  Industrial Ar. | Ar. D. 8  1 Complex Building Design  2 Complex Building Document | Ar. D. 9  1 Urban Design  2 Complex Building | Ar. D. 10  1 Urban Design  2 Complex Building |
| Introducing  Design |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Technology/  Documentation |  |  |  | Ar. Tech 1 Small- scale  Bldg. Const. | Integrated Tech 2  Structures | Ar. Tech 2  Bldg.  Services |  |  | Project Management |
| Environment |  |  |  | Integrated Tech 1  Environ.  Principles |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| History and Theory | Intro Design  Sustainability | Intro Design History | Ar. of the 20th C |  | Ar. and the City |  | Research Methods |  | Contemporary Ar. Culture |  |
| Ar. Culture and Place |
| Project Delivery & Project Management |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Professional Practice | Contract Administration |
| Communication | Ar. Visual. 1 | Ar. Visual. 2 | Ar. Visual. 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Electives |  |  | Minor | Minor | Minor | Minor | Minor | Minor |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  | Minor | Minor |  |  |  |

Figure 5: Map of Courses and Subjects retrieved from [23]

**Bachelor** **Master**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Subjects’**  **Category** | **Year 1** | | **Year 2** | | **Year 3** | | **Year 4** | | **Year 5** | | **Year 6** | |
| Design | Intro. to  Ar. D. 1 | Intro. to  Ar. D. 2 | Ar. D. 3 | Ar. D. 4 | Ar. D. 5 | Ar. D. 6 | Ar. D. 7 | Final Project | Ar. D. 9 | Ar. D. 10 | Master Thesis | |
| communication | Ar. C. 1:  Form | Ar. C. 2:  Material | Ar. C. 3:  Sketch |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Technology & Project Management | Building Materials | Building  Structure | Building Services |  | Building Construction | Technical Design | Project Management |  |  |  | Construct.  Procedure |  |
| Environmental Studies |  |  |  | Environ.  Studies | Rural Design | Urban Planning | Urban Design |  |  |  |  |  |
| History and Theory | Art, Design, and Ar. | Computer Aided Ar. | History of Ar. | Iranian Ar. | Modern  Ar. | Place and Society | Ar.  Program. | Ar. Rights and Regulation | Ar. Research | Conservation | Environ.  Psychology |  |
| Elective  (4+2 of 12+6) | English for Ar. | Comp. D.  and Fabric. | Internship | Construct.  Technology | Sustainable Ar. | Interior  Design | Landscape  Ar. | Re-use  of Ar. | Site Analysis | Ar. & Develop. |  |  |

Figure 6: The proposed Map of Courses and Subjects for UT to maximize the integration of different subjects