Students' Approaches to Participation in Informal Architectural Education Environments: 'Betonart Architecture Summer School (BMYO)' as a Case Study

NESLIHAN İMAMOĞLU — F. PINAR ARABACIOĞLU
Yıldız Technical University — YTU

There have been various paradigms, which effect the architectural practice as well as education (Salama, 1995). Environmental, social, economic, political and technological aspects of these are being often discussed in the last decades, throughout the world (Nicol, D.; Pilling, S., 2000). The way of learning and performing practice, the tools and methods that are being used for it and the spaces that these processes take place are shifting with the change of information and technology. Under these circumstances architectural education has faced difficulties in being up to date in particular about curriculum, program and physical requirements. While instant solutions give instant results, it is inevitable that rooted solutions will be encountered to keep up with this rapid change. For this reason, countless 'informal education' activities are being implemented, such as competitions, workshops, assemblies, forums, publications, etc.

Definition of 'informal education' as well as 'formal' and 'non-formal education' has various meanings both due to region and/or discipline and in time (Werquin, 2008) (Rogers, 2004). According to Werquin, these concepts should be defined in relation to each other in accordance to main characteristics: whether the learning involves objectives, whether it is intentional and whether it leads to a qualification. Similarly Ciravoğlu emphasises that 'informel education' consists the practices out of the formal curriculum (Ciravoğlu, 2001). While some of these practices are initiated by students in an attempt to become a union to discuss problems of architecture education, to create and to build together such as EASA, they might also be organized and/or sponsored by the industry in order to develop a cooperation with the academy and introducing themselves to future architects or organized by universities, NGO's and professional chambers. During the education life, architecture students take various roles in these activities such as organizer, tutor, moderator, participant, etc. Informal practices in architectural education can differ by their program (meeting, workshop, etc.), organization (initiating person/company, the aim behind it), actors (roles, disciplines, etc.), time, duration, period, fee or the place/city/country where they take place. This paper focuses on BASS (Betonart Architectural Summer School) as a case to understand the motives of participating in such activities from the perspective of architectural students. It tries to demonstrate that students are aware of the importance of informal educational activities, furthermore they are increasingly demanding.

BASS has been held since 2002 continually by TCMA (Turkish Cement Manufacturers' Association) for architectural students with the aim of combining theory and praxis in

architectural education. As a national, cost-free, architectural workshop which focuses on concrete and takes place in a different city along with a different theme every year, BASS is defined as a case study. Each years' theme defined by different curator, and different moderators that related to the theme are being invited to tutor approximately 20 students. In the scope of the research the application forms for BASS between 2012 and 2017 -which means around 1000 applicant's documents- have been analyzed via coding methods through Nvivo. To show architectural students' awareness about the contribution of informal education on their formal studies and how likely the components of learning environments affect their motivation, this paper focuses on the informal learning environment that is shaped by the process, by the actors, and by the physical dimensions.

Today's students are no longer like former students. Students realize that they are not passive receptors in the studio and that they are partners in the work are increasing (Yürekli, H., Yürekli, F., 2004). The results show that today's architectural students are aware of the contribution of informal learning environments to their formal education as well as their lifelong education. Neither they see this kind of workshops as an in-between academy and practice only, nor do they just think of it as an alternative to design studios. They place almost equal emphasis on the social and physical attributes of an informal environment. Within the process, which is intense, playful and rich with new methods; where the actors' roles are fluid and the places where the workshops are being held are giving the student an opportunity to relate with the context, the students believe the time they spend together has a productive outcome and plays an important role in their architectural education. Both challenged and supported by the borders between formal and informal education environments, today's architectural students are choosing to be a part of this informal education in order to complete themselves and keep up with the high speed of change.

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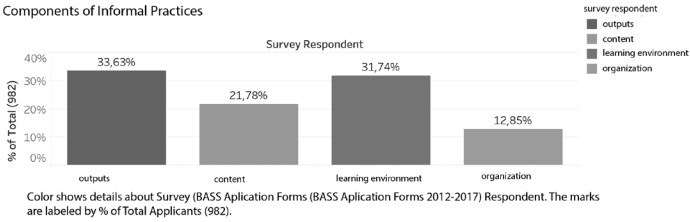Applications of BASS 2012-2017
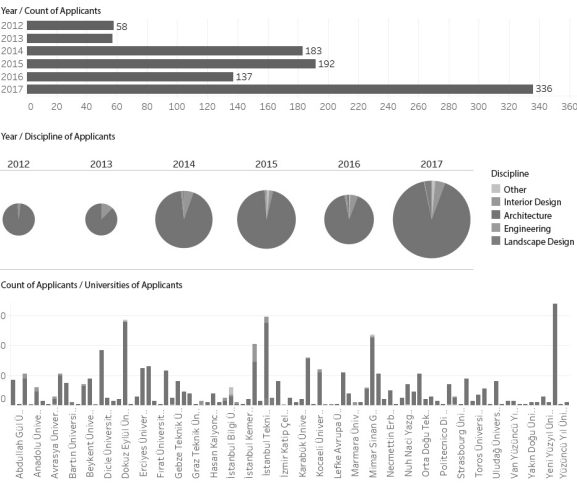
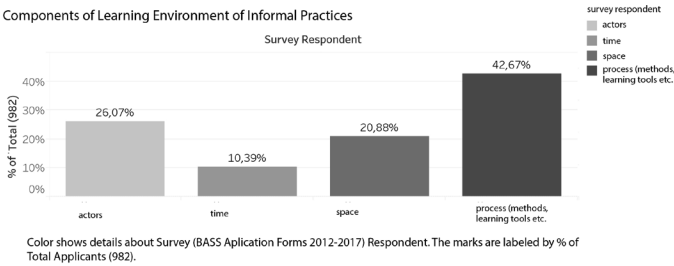1: 2012–2017 count of applicants-universities-disciplines
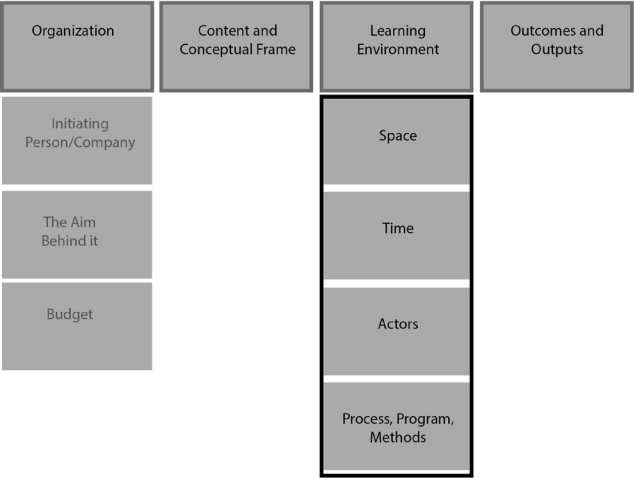
2: scheme that shows components of informal education practices

Components of Informal Practices

Color shows details about Survey (BASS Aplication Forms (BASS Aplication Forms 2012-2017) Respondent. The marks are labeled by % of Total Applicants (982).

Components of Learning Environment of Informal Practices

Color shows details about Survey (BASS Aplication Forms 2012-2017) Respondent. The marks are labeled by % of Total Applicants (982).

3: scheme that shows percentage of components of informal practices and components of learning environment in informal practices. Source: bass application forms. 2012–2017
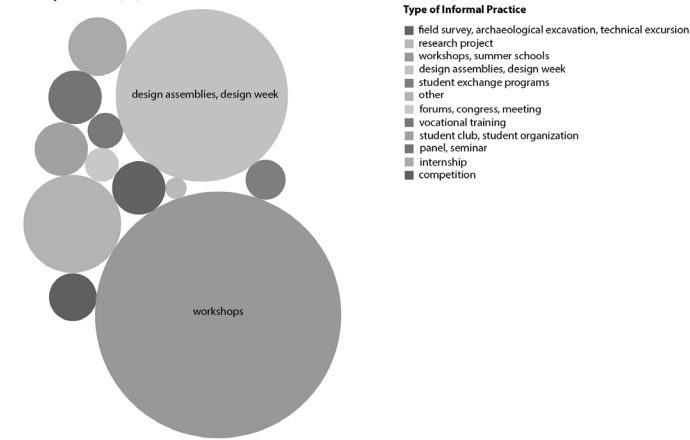
Roles that Architecture Students Take in Workshops
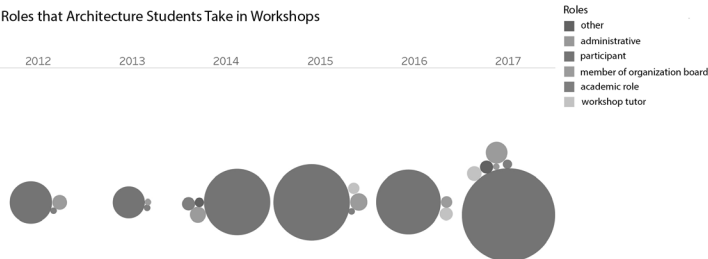
Roles of Students in Informal Environments (color) and distinct count of BASS applicant no (size) broken down by Year. The data is filtered on Type of Practice (main categories), which keeps "workshops, assemblies and design weeks.

4: roles that architecture students take in workshops. Source: bass application forms. 2012–2017

Diversity of Informal Practices in Architecture Education

Type of Informal Practice
- field survey, archaeological excavation, technical excursion
- research project
- workshops, summer schools
- design assemblies, design week
- student exchange programs
- other
- forums, congress, meeting
- vocational training
- student club, student organization
- panel, seminar
- internship
- competition

design assemblies, design week

workshops

Type of informal practice (color) and distinct count of BASS applicants (size).
Source: BASS Aplication Forms 2012-2017.

5: diversity of informal practices in architectural education. Source: bass application forms. 2012–2017