

The merit of teaching introductory architecture courses in general education

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People must be aware of architecture and related sciences and technologies, and architectural education to nurture conscious citizens is as important as it is for professionals. A recent quantitative survey with 2,000 respondents in Japan revealed only about 15% are interested in 'shelter' out of three essentials in everyday life: food, clothing, and shelter. They did not acknowledge architecture as essential in their lives. This tendency probably occurred because people stopped maintaining their homes by themselves after prefabricated houses and industrialized building materials prevailed after WWII. Renovation and do-it-yourself finally appeared in the Japanese market about twenty years ago, but the lack of knowledge in architecture is still causing serious problems there.

Introduction to Architecture can be a valuable general education subject for all majors in higher education. Primary and secondary school education can only help a little because of the need for teaching hours and specialized teachers for architecture. However, more teaching hours and architectural educators are available in tertiary education. Architecture is interdisciplinary and can inspire students to study science, art, history, law, economy, and various scholastic fields. It may offer an opportunity to develop oral, verbal, and visual communication skills. The author will present the result of such experimental teaching for the last seven years with the student responses.

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