Teaching/Learning Strategies through Art:  
Art and Basic Design Education  

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Abstract  

“The ultimate aim of any creative activity is building… architects, sculptors, painters, we all must become craftsmen again… no essential difference exists between the artist and the craftsman, the artist is a craftsman of heightened awareness… but the basis of craftsmanship is indispensable to all artists. It is the prime source of all creative work”, Walter Gropius, from Bauhaus Manifesto of Foundation/Basic Course, 1919. “Basic Design”, also known as “Foundation Courses” or “Enseignement Préliminaire”, formed the basis of the pedagogy of the classical schools of design and architecture. That is, the “Vhutemas”, the “Bauhaus”, the “Chicago Bauhaus”, and the “Ulm School” (Hochschule Fur Gestaltung). This teaching approach, which has undergone multiple changes since the 1920s, lost much of its importance from the 1960s onwards, and at times even disappeared from educational programs in Germany. However, the past 20 years or so have witnessed a rebirth of “Basic Design Education” through many debates and pedagogical propositions (Boucharenc, 2006). In the light of this truth, it can be said that, the basic design has the same importance at all disciplines, although it differentiates on applications in the educations, and this importance is being increased day by day. In the context of this research, especially it will be focused on the basic design education in art and architecture and this concept will be related with these disciplines. The aim of this research is to put forward the right definitions for basic design concept and to evaluate it with relating its own elements and principles, if the design steps are built with a concept, it will be able to see the differences in its properties and right thought, in producing an idea and the effect of composing a concept on defining design power.

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1. Introduction

Basic Design has the content formed by the information that will help students to adapt themselves into a discipline providing visual education who received verbal education during secondary schools. Since Basic Design is far out from memorization, it activates and enriches the student opinions. Students are tried to be provided to have skills on building coordination among eye, mind, and hand during the process of constructing-animating the image in mind and transferring this image onto the design area in visual way through the applications towards development of visual perception, visual language, and visual expression. The effort on development of students’ visual thinking ability underlies this approach. Another purpose of this effort is to help mental, understanding, and intuit ability of the student, open up new horizons, enrich, and elaborate.

2. Basic Design Education

2.1. The History of Basic Design Education

The industrial revolution occurred at the end of 18th century is the reason for a new method based on mechanization instead of different requirements and production systems, but spiritless objects were produced with the limitation of the knowledge and ability of technicians and experts. In 1847, Henry Cole founded the association of Art Manufactures and advocated the transformation of machine products into aesthetic forms (Atalayer, 1994). Instead of commercial determination of industrial revolution in art and design, it was begin to spread reflections from England. Against to industrialization, it was advocated to eliminate the difference between art-craft and reformation of production based on hand work (Sozen & Tanyeli, 1992). In this way, an art movement was emerged named as “Arts and Crafts”. William Morris lead the movement which advocates the understanding of a design produced by hand instead of cheap and poor quality mass production (Becer, 2005, p99). Morris wanted to reform the art education, to have new art education for the new requirements, and to make it part of everyday life (Atalayer, 1994).

The first school on design education with the name of “Bauhaus” was founded by the presidency of Walter Gropius in Germany in 1919. At the approach of Gropius’ Bauhaus, it was aimed to create a unity of hand crafts which is able to combine picture, sculpture, and architecture. It was purposed to raise designers and craftsmen who have the ability to create beautiful and helpful object convenient to new life system through developing a program based on hand crafts. Bauhaus combined both the design education and elements of fine arts. In Bauhaus school, a program was formed that the students were able to contribute to building design and various internal hardware through gathering visual arts and technique. It is the school that provided the opportunity to perform courageous experiments and use imagination through considering the purpose of design (Ozsoy, 2003).

After Bauhaus School abolished by the Nazi regime in 1933, many of the teachers went to different countries and tried to spread the Bauhaus philosophy. Among them, Josef Albers immigrated to America in 1933, Vassily Kandinsky immigrated to France in 1933, Paul Klee immigrated to Sweden in 1933, Walter Gropius immigrated to Great Britain in 1934, to America in 1937, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy immigrated to Holland in 1934, to Great Britain in 1935, to America in 1937, Marcel Breuer immigrated to Great Britain in 1935, America in 1937, Herbert Bayer immigrated to America in 1938 and Walter Peterhans immigrated to America in 1938 (Bauhaus Archive).

In world, the basic design education has been implemented by different names such as “Visual Design”, “Foundation Design”, “Applied Design”, “Introduction Design”, “Gestaltung Lehre”, “Formund Gestalt”, “Design Communicatione” (Atalayer, 1994).

2.2. The Definition of Basic Design Education

The source for human knowledge is senses. However, not all of the knowledge obtained through senses is true. Human explores the shapes, structure, and existing qualitative-quantitative features of nature, universe, and finds the rules. Human convert the existing qualitative-quantitative truth of the universe into knowledge which is only the product of human mind and stated through the concepts produced by abstraction. The formation of human,
emotional accumulation of human soul enable new functional values to be seen as concrete with aesthetic value and
objects as an expression way (Atalayer, 1994).

Many educator, philosopher, pedagogue, art educator thought on the investigation of “what is basic design
education” and tried to make a convenient and effective opinion and description by their own. Some of them bring
the opinion of basic education until Plato while the others affirm the attained importance that can be discussed in
20th century.

The art is a complete and modern education in educating the artistic tendency, capacity and ability of an
individual, using and controlling the experience and accumulation related to vision and visual perception. The art
education is the education and teaching of a creative individual in terms of purpose, scope, and program. This
technique is not an education-teaching, because of its structure, it is the education and teaching of cognitive
settlement for visual perception-knowledge-opinion and aesthetic realisation, process of exploration-inspiration-
creation, developing and raising the abilities of hand-eye-brain, activation of dream-imagination-intuition. There can
be said that basic design education is the basic-artistic education of a creative individual (Atalayer, 1994).

In general meaning, basic design education is the most reliable environment including the development of an
individual, because person implements his/her natural tendencies and uses his/her individual experiences in parallel
with own pace in this environment. The studies in each level of education should be in parallel with this natural
tendency (Gokaydin, 1990).

The basic design education is the effort of expressing the abilities and power of creativity in aesthetic level and
transfer of thinking, emotions, and impressions of a person. It is the understanding that reinforces the creative design
producing side of the person in any area. Therefore, the imagination is formed, elaborated, and the meaning
enlarges, thus all mind depending abilities improve. Basic design education comprises all expressional ways.

Basic design education has various purposes. The purposes can be mentioned as; using the basic language of
design, educating the personality, enabling to construct relation among design constructs, enabling to construct
relation with environment through design.

It is at the preparation quality for the students who are going to enrol in basic design course. During this course, it
is aimed to comprehend the elements of art (point, line, direction, dimension, proportion, shape, texture, colour) and
principles (repetition, hierarchy, domination, balance, unity) and transfer the gained knowledge and ability into their
studies. In this way, students acquire the ability of transferring components into their studies such as giving form to
matter, using different materials, making relations, using colour, mass and void, rhythm, balance, light and shadow,
movement, unity by using their creativity. A person develops his/her own peculiar form of expression through
exploring the ability given to him/her.

In basic design education, students learn in which way and how to develop their ideas and knowledge. In these
courses, it is possible to understand personality that they have, perception opportunities, amount of goodwill, power
of their own expression, memory, desire and depression each of every student (Gurer, 1990).

2.4. The Importance of Basic Design Education

The course of basic design is the first step to design education for design principles. At this step, there is a need
for a system that will describe the implemented education understanding with certain lines in terms of theory during
the implementation. This system should be the formulation manipulated for the perceptions that need to be
preserved from being complex. The emergence of basic design education in design education is the result of an
emergence of the opinion of theory formulation that purposed to relate human behaviour and viewpoint through
material, design, and industrial technology with visual compounds in unusual way. All of these were completed in
the context of formal education in Bauhaus.
Another result of Bauhaus is the value that basic design enriched to architectural design. The principle of interprofessional work placed at the core of this education attains an identity through basic design education. Another Bauhaus period characteristic of the basic design education is being the architecture of instructors. Denel was evaluated this situation as: “The artist who are the instructors of basic design education in Bauhaus was interested in plastic arts, but they were not architects. This contributed a different perception to architectural understanding in basic design principles such as hierarchy, balance, form, beauty etc. In addition, the understanding of field that balanced and related with surface and line over canvas (paper) in two dimensions described the concept of “space” in different form in architecture. In order to prevent the deficit of depth effect that can be on two dimensions, the field-space was perceived as a ground that can enlarge in all directions. Thus, each figure placed on was seen as “the eye of mind” but always in a limited framework” (Denel, 1979).

In the of the previous chapters, it was propounded that as the relation with the existing creatures in nature in itself or other forms and logic in this relation was the source for the design as basic design forms the fundamentals of design education. Here, relation of design principles with this form and processes of nature and implementation of this into design composes the basic design.

In Bauhaus doctrine, it was claimed that the variety of forms provided through combining the same elements in different ways. The effect of those natural powers onto design is the reason for process is more important than the result (Alexander, 1977).

3. Conclusion

Art and architecture are the design based education. In these disciplines, education that aimed to combine design with technical and functional solutions, students were tried to gain design concepts and philosophic point of view behind those concepts.

Basic design education is based on developing the aesthetic anxiety, thought and opinion of a person in terms of unity of all spiritual and physical education, maturing the power of ability and creativity, effort of approaching to art values with tolerance (Artut, 2002).

A person produces a product in order to express himself/herself at first and propound ideas in a concrete form. The certain aesthetic principles and design elements and principles are considered during this process. This activity converts into a more effective, creative, express itself, and find itself structure that enrich with the application.

One of the most important purposes of basic design education is to teach seeing, hearing, touching, and tasting. It is the first condition necessary for a person to understand the environment and lead to formation.

The basic design education helps students to comprehend the principle and elements of art and improve their creativity through using different materials and techniques while enable students to construct background for their further studies and courses. Students learn how and in which way they can improve their ideas and knowledge. In these lessons, it is possible to understand personal characteristics, apprehension opportunity, and measure of goodwill, power of self-expression, memory, desire, and depression of each student. Design is related with the description of outer world.

In all of the art movements reach until today, we see that studies were conducted through considering some of the rules. We see that those rules are sometimes intuitional, sometimes logical and sometimes in certain conceptual design fiction and purpose. In studies, considering certain rules while gathering the objects together, organizing rhythmic relations in this contrasts and contradictions is one of the essentials for a product to have artificial value.

For this reason, an artist or an architect or sculptor should depend on principles related to basic design while designing a work.
References