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Basic design, theory and practice

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Abstract

The study deals with the process in which Course of Basic Art Teaching is transformed into a street fashion show with the slogan “from theory to practice” at the Textile Department of Trabzon Vocational High School of Karadeniz Technical University. Course of Basic Design Teaching was at first a basic course at the educational institutions that taught art but having evolved with the advancement in science and technology it has now been equally connected with the education of every discipline as well as art and has taken the current form. During the academic term; point, drawing, pattern bright colors, dull colors, integrating color pairs, figure-ground relationship were the course contents. In line with the principles taught, students prepared each topic as an intra-course activity in accordance with the problem given using various materials on a drawing paper. For the semester work, all of the works of the each student were evaluated and one of them was selected and placed upon the apron made by nettle cloth using different materials. Designs on the drawing papers were drawn on the aprons and assessments were made in accordance with the abilities and skills of the students. When designs were used on different materials; different and various aprons were produced.

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1. Introduction

Basic Design Courses were first started with the foundation of Bauhaus, which brings art, industry and craft

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together, by Walter Gropius in 1919. Bauhaus aimed to make trials with color, form and material based on apprenticeship on the issues such as art, industry, aesthetics and social relationships, to provide art and craft training at equal levels. The principles introduced by Bauhaus and the fact that it is the center for modernism and functionality still continue to affect industrial design (Bayazit, 2008).

1.1. What is Basic Design?

Basic design is a discipline which adopts doing entirely abstract researches and studies which are not directed to a specific function, instead of the studies based on the old styles of the 19th century by imitating them (Sozen and Tanyeli, 1992). In other words, the basic design is a discipline that takes the principles of a specific art branch as a goal while taking the relationships, the common laws, rules and methods of various fields of art into consideration. Basic Design Training initially started as the main course in the institutions providing only art education, evolved significantly in line with the scientific and technological developments and developed to its current state addressing not only to art but also to each discipline equally (Gurer and Guler, 2004). In this context, basic design has the same effectiveness and validity almost in every field of art and craft in the contemporary world (Bayraktar, 2012).

Basic design training essentially aims to create the optimum environment for the development of creativity and present new methods that will improve students' abilities to produce new and authentic solutions by purifying them from prior knowledge. The objective is to reveal the intuitive bringings of geometry through its abstract world in order to constitute the new and the authentic for the students who are stuck in certain patterns, who cannot get over the known world, who have never tested their creativity skills and who cannot bring these skills out of the usual order (Ozcan, 2012).

The students get into the process of using the equipment, building a composition, expression, communication and acquire the skill of designing with the basic design training (Usta, 2000). It was decided that basic design studies contribute to that

- Students observe the environment in a sensitive way and respond,
- Students learn discernment and judgment
- Students' visual expression skills increase (Gurer and Guler, 2004).

2. Method And Course Program

The Basic Art Training course is conducted with second grade students two hours a week during the 2011-2012 Fall Semester. At the beginning of the semester, the students who had no knowledge of technical drawing were taught simple drawing using T-square and miter. The course was initially presented as theoretical knowledge in order to provide the students with the ways and awareness of creative thinking, and then practices were performed in each lesson in order to consolidate theoretical knowledge (Ataoglu, 2013). (Figure 1)

2.1. Phase: Transferring theoretical knowledge

During the semester, the design elements annotated as point, line, direction, size, form, value, texture, color; the design principles which were repetition, harmony, order-contrast, gradation, dominance, balance and unity were explained; the visual perception theories such as proximity, similarity, principle of good form (good continuity - closeness) were referred. Within the scope of the course, while abstract concepts are emphasized, concrete formations and visual documents are presented to students as examples.

Assignments that would support problem solving to increase the awareness and observation skills of the students were given. For instance, they were asked to:

- Realize the line orders by the collages they made with the checked patterned drapes.
- Transfer textures by replicating from the nature and environment to the sketch paper with charcoal pencil.
- Examine the exhibited works of the artists such as Kazimir Malevich, Gustave Klimbt, Kandinsky, Fernand Leger, Paul Klee, Picasso, George Braque, Piet Mondrian, El Lissitzky, August Macke, Mark Rothko, Joan Miro, Henri Matisse, Theo van Doesburg etc. in terms of form, color, texture and composition usage.

Individually given assignments were exhibited on boards during the semester and it was detected by interviews with the students that these assignments were helpful as they created awareness and raised consciousness.

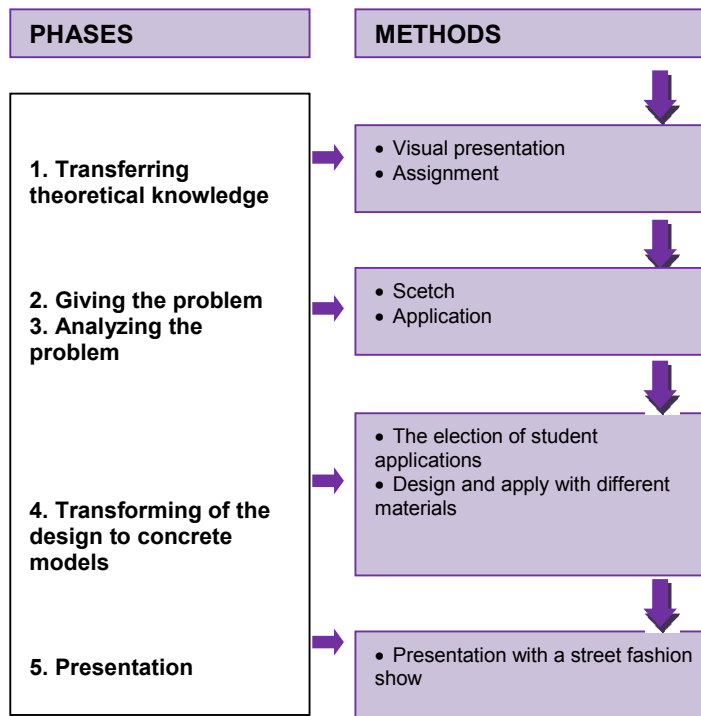


Figure 1. The Phases followed in Basic Design Training Course

2.2. Phase: Giving the problem

In this phase, a problem is defined regarding the theoretical subject and its solution is asked. The students are directed to use different materials and expression techniques for problem solving.

2.3. Phase: Analyzing the problem

Point, line, texture (hard texture, soft texture), warm colors, cool colors, supplementary colors, form-ground relations were among the practice subjects. In line with the taught principles, students prepared each subject with regard to the given problems, using various materials on 30x30 cm - drawing paper as in-class activity. During the lesson, students are expected to interpret, analyze and design the given problem. The studies which are sketched and criticized are designed using various materials. (Figure 2)

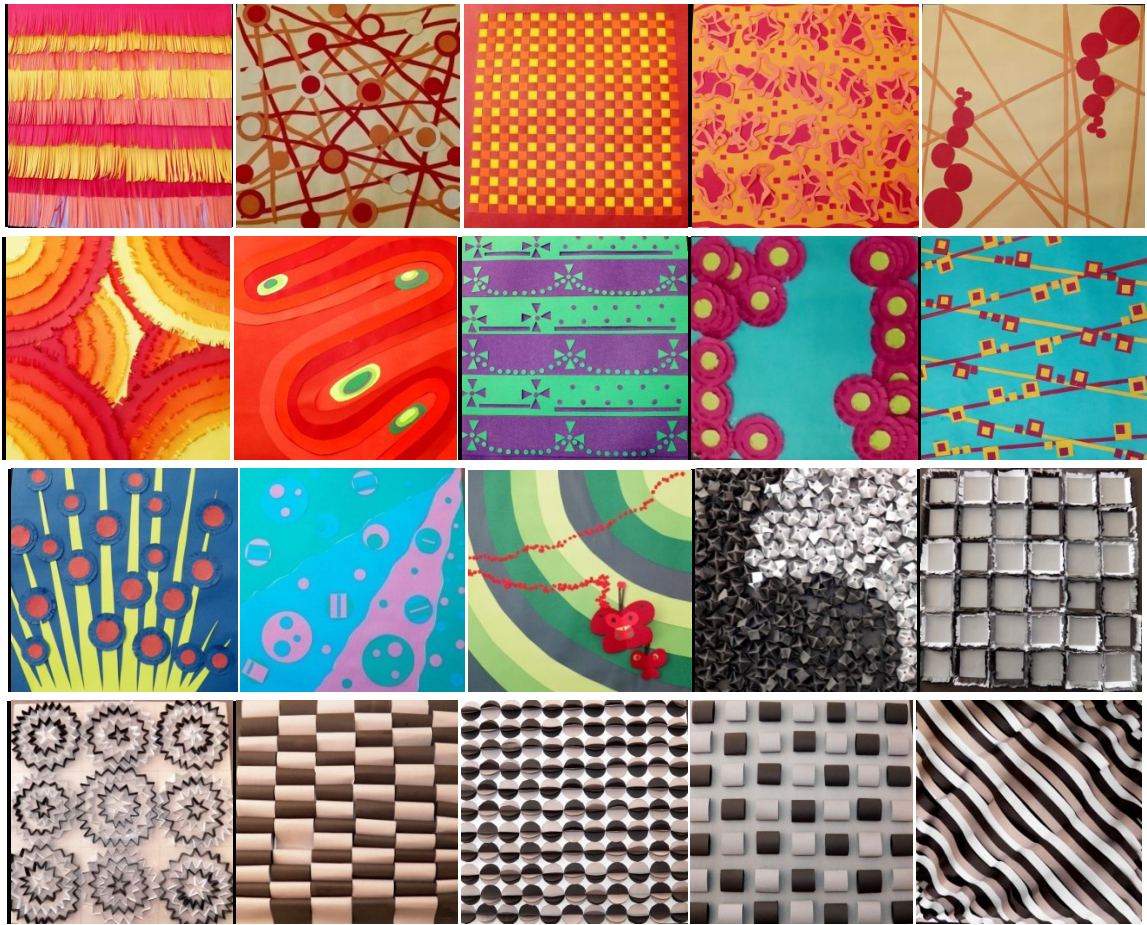


Figure 2. An example of studies on warm color, cool color, supplementary colors and texture taught during the course.

2.4.Phase: Transforming of the design to concrete models

The point to take into consideration in basic design training is that basic design should not remain as an abstract content; on the contrary it should always be related to the main objective (Bayraktar, 2012). In this regard, basic design training could be relieved of the program which followed creating two-dimensional abstract compositions, transformed into a concrete product and applied on the goods used in daily life.

For the final assignment, all studies of each student were evaluated, one study among them was selected and it was applied on the aprons sewed with calico using the various materials the student has. While the designs on paper were applied on the aprons, evaluations were made in line with the students' skill and abilities. For example, various decorations and applications such as beadwork, needlework and embroidering were included. Any kind of material such as lace, various fabrics, sackclothes, ribbons, threads, flakes, sequins, beads, felts, buttons, leather and tulle were used in the design of aprons. With the application of different designs on different materials, quite different and various aprons were produced. Accessory designs matching apron designs were also applied and designs were diversified.

2.5.Phase: Presentation

The final products of the course taught within the triangle of theory, design and practice are exhibited at the end of the semester by presenting these three stages and consequently a discussion environment is provided. The theoretical studies and final products obtained at the end of basic art training course are presented on two interrelated platforms. At the end of the semester, the most successful ones among the two dimensional studies through which theoretical knowledge is analyzed and designed are exhibited on a platform. Around the platform on which these abstract studies are exhibited, a podium is installed. The final products through which these two dimensional designs are transformed into practice are presented on the podium of a street fashion show with the voluntary model group comprising of students. (Figure 3, 4)



Figure 3. Presentation of aprons with a street fashion show, Activity poster (Design by Oguzhan Mumcu)

3. Results

The design elements and organization principles approached under the name of basic design or basic art training are the subjects that are approached in all kinds of design training process from graphic design, architecture, product design to city planning. Because even its scale, boundaries, functions are different, the common language of design is composed of the concepts such as point, line, plane, volume, size, color, texture, direction and the principles of composition, arrangement and perception (Cellek and Sagocak, 2014).

The program that is followed in the direction of those principles that have been used for many years in basic design is maintained by firstly giving theoretical infrastructure and then generally asking two dimensional designs. When the course is applied in this scope, the student cannot form enough opinion about the ways to use those theoretical information in his/her career and other design courses (Usta, 2000).

For the course to be able to be transferred from theoretical knowledge to practice, the course followed these phases: Transferring theoretical knowledge, Giving the problem, Analyzing the problem, Transforming of the design to concrete models, Presentation.

With the Basic Design Training course which was taught with the association of theory and practice following these phases:

- The common language of design and the principles of composition arrangement were learned.
- The students created authentic solutions with the learnt principles.
- Creativity, source of inspiration, imagination and instinct of the students were activated.
- Hand-brain-eye abilities of the students were improved.
- Their perspective and perception capability of nature and the environment were improved.
- They gained awareness about evaluating different materials.
- The course was relieved of its two dimensional physical compositional form and transformed into a physical product.
- It could be applied on the goods used in daily life.
- This application which was followed with theoretical and practical processes taught the students while they were having fun.
- It was quite exciting and reassuring for the students to see that their abstract studies on paper has transformed into aprons through their own skills and abilities.



Figure 4. Designed aprons

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