

FROM THE CONCEPTS OF MEDIATION, LEARNING AND COLLABORATION TO PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PRACTICES LINKED TO THE ETHOS PROJECT.

Marli T. Everling¹, Dr., Luiz Eduardo Souza², M.Sc. Miguel Cañas Martins³ M.Sc.; Maria Odete Duarte Stahn⁴, M.Sc. Edson Korner⁵, M.Sc.; Morgana Creuz Ganske⁶, M.Sc.

(1) Rua Paulo Malschitzki, 10 - Zona Industrial Norte Joinville - SC 89219-710.

E-mail author¹: marli.everling@gmail.com

(2) Rua Paulo Malschitzki, 10 - Zona Industrial Norte Joinville - SC 89219-710.

E-mail author²: dudu1803@gmail.com

(3) Rua Paulo Malschitzki, 10 - Zona Industrial Norte Joinville - SC 89219-710.

E-mail author³: miguelcanas@gmail.com

(4) Rua Paulo Malschitzki, 10 - Zona Industrial Norte Joinville - SC 89219-710.

E-mail author⁴: odetestahn@uol.com.br

(5) Rua Paulo Malschitzki, 10 - Zona Industrial Norte Joinville - SC 89219-710.

E-mail author⁵: edson.korner@pr.senai.br

(6) Rua Paulo Malschitzki, 10 - Zona Industrial Norte Joinville - SC 89219-710.

E-mail author⁶: morganaCreuz.mc@gmail.com

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1. Context

This study started between 2007 and 2011 with the development of a thesis connecting mediation, meaning, collaboration and cognitive ergonomics to the design of learning content. This study was linked to Laboratory of Ergodesign and Usability of Interfaces (LEUI) and the Design Doctorate Program of the Catholic Pontifical University. In 2012, with the arise of the Design Postgraduate Program maintained by the University of Joinville Region (PPGDesign /Univille) came the opportunity to contribute with the knowledge related to design and user relationships.

The project is a way to promote technological and scientific actions, besides of researchers responding to challenges from sectors as social public and industry/services connected with the content 'Design and user relationship', especially when it comes to participative approaches.

2. Method

The methodology considers: (1) the connection between the concepts of learning, mediation, collaboration and meaning as a starting point for participatory processes in design concepts considering the realm of Ethos project; (2) the meanings associated with 'design' and 'new design' from authors such as Nigel Cross (2004), Manzini (2008; 2014), Lee (2012), Sanders (2002; 2008) and

Sanders and Stappers (2008); (3) a connection of this discussion with the meaning of "user relationships" (which incorporates the scope of ergonomics); (4) the review and analysis of the projects (developed between 2013 and 2016) linked to the Ethos project that explore concepts of design, user relationships and participative perspectives; It is important to clear that were selected only works that explore this theme.

3. Results

In participatory processes, well-defined boundaries between groups people/participants, researchers and designers are merged; this dynamic requires, above all, that designers/researchers also act as mediators facilitating the flow of activities and creativity of the participants. For Sanders and Stappers (2008) the User (or participant) is an expert of his own experience and plays a significant role in knowledge building, generative sessions and new concepts development; the role of the researcher (supporting the user through ideation tools to express his/her insights) overlaps with that of the designer (who plays a critical role in shaping ideas). The designer and researcher may even be one person.

From Significant learning also came some relevant principles supporting participatory design processes as: (1) to consider the participant's repertoire and pre-existing knowledge; (2) to emphasize attitudes

such as willingness, enthusiasm, and reduced resistance; (3) welcome meaningful associations derived from participants experiences; (4) handling strategies involving experiences, simulation and immersion in real situations, helping to apprehend the subjective universe of the participant. The value of these principles lies in the development of attitudes such as openness and acceptance, as well as, deepening in aspects associated with values, beliefs and culture.

The beliefs of collaborative learning that shaped the way in which participatory processes have been used in the field of the Ethos project are: (1) cultivation of search and sharing attitudes; (2) creation of new strategies for sharing perceptions and displaying information; (3) willingness to 'learn to know' to associate information gathering with the spirit of adventure; (4) willingness to learn, to live together, to stimulate the development of interpersonal skills as argumentation and defense of their opinions, and willingness to consider other's mindsets, articulating ideas in a collaborative way; (5) stimulation of information sharing, the cultivation of attitudes and behaviors that favors team work and humorous reactions to the unexpected.

It is observed that these discussions privilege attitudes, sharing of scenarios, openness and acceptance, availability and trust that are essential for activities such as cooperation, collaboration and participation. This understanding has guided the participatory processes conducted over the years.

The years between 2013-2015 were marked by the beginning of participatory approaches. In this biennium two proposals were developed; one contemplated the development of packaging for a local food industry and in the other were discussed affinities among architecture and design in order to expand the creative possibilities (and strengthen the identity) of an architecture office in the city. Both proposals resulted in valuable solutions.

The packaging for the food industry (related to user experiences in the process of purchase and prepare the product) due to the collaborative creation session highlighted important information and values of the brand, facilitating its recognition. The last participatory activity relied on participant's feedback from users who engaged in the process from the beginning.

The discussion of affinities between architecture and design reflected in two instances: the first, in the

prospect of a new creativity-oriented enterprise, and the second, in the integration of participatory Design approaches in the activities of the architecture office aiming to engage the users.

Based on experiences and results in 2014 and 2016, the emphasis of Ethos project was strongly directed to articulate design, collaboration and empathy with educational processes. During this period, two works with participatory approaches were conducted. The first proposal contemplated training process for a social group, and the second one, was driven to professional qualification in the fashion area.

The training process oriented to social groups, due to its characteristics and its 40-year journey, aimed the development of products through design capacities, convergence, sensitivity and empathy, respecting the vernacular knowledge. In this context, the participatory strategy proved to be a great alternative.

At the same time, the alignment of training process to the structure of fashion design collection disciplines offered by the Advanced Technological Course on Senai/Curitiba/BR allowed the engagement due to participation. One strategy of alignment, was offer workshops as a living process, embodied by a whole team rather than a document used only to manage the daily routine.

In 2015 and 2016, participatory processes were explored more intensively. A partnership was established with the 'Instituto Caranguejo e Educação Ambiental' to address challenges related to environmental awareness considering the Babitonga ecosystem.

In participatory terms, this experience was more intense and involved weekly meetings between the Ethos team and representatives of the Instituto Caranguejo de Educação Ambiental due to the need to explicit the tactical and subjective knowledge of the Institute directors.

Consequently, an advance in the role of the researcher/designer as mediator, synthesizer, organizer, facilitator of the flows of creativity was achieved. The same happened with the development of ideas visualization instruments. The result was a service system associated with the mangrove route (stakeholder maps, app/site, blueprint of the service, design of journeys of users with different goals and, at last, interactive infographics as a way to replicate the proposal in other contexts).

4. Conclusion

This analysis has contributed to the realization that, rather than techniques or tools, the link between design and participative process depends on attitudes associated with mediation; it also depends on the ability of the designer/researcher to mediate, to instrumentalize processes for the visualization of ideas and the emergence of patterns to facilitate the flow of activities or creativity of the participants, and, to support the participant (due to the ideation and expression tools to support the flow of experiences and insights), as well as; their availability to synthesize and shape ideas; this perception is also in line with how you talk about mediation, meaning and collaborative learning.

Participatory processes allow reaching the subjective universe (values, beliefs, culture) of the participant; so it requires: ethical and respectful attitudes to establish trust; consider the participant's preliminary repository; cultivate attitudes such as listening, openness and skills whereas collaboration and perception of the meaning.

Harari (2014) by discussing the nature (and culture) of homo sapiens points out the relevance of collaboration for this species and for the social mood. For the author, the cognitive revolution, constituted by new forms of thought and communication, and moreover, creation of myths established the contracts of trust in activities involving groups. In recent years, Design (as in Ethos project) has explicitly reoriented its possibilities far beyond the industrial and corporate scenario. Design definition has released its emphasis on the concrete artifacts and nowadays considers that the design of social systems and complex problem solving processes also should be part of its scope.

Such a scenario does not mean that such point of view never has catch the attention of previous designers. It reveals that, in the last years, new narratives, approaches (or in the words of Harari, myths) of design have been structured; these narratives grounded a shared mental model that enables action in the world objective and concrete reality.

In this sense, Ethos Project is also a narrative that aims to mobilize a team for action. One of the authors that sustains the proposal is Sanders for whom people shifts from users to engaged

participants.

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