DRAWING THE PATH OF BASIC DESIGN AT IADE

Ana Neves[1], M.Sc., Emília Duarte[1], D.Sc., Diana Dias[2], D.Sc.

(1) Av. D. Carlos I, 4, Lisboa, Portugal, 1200-649
(2) Estrada da Correia, 53, Lisboa, Portugal, 1500-210
e-mail: [ana.neves; diana.dias; emilia.duarte] @universidadeeuropeia.pt

Design education in Portugal, Basic Design, Virtual Reality

1. Context

In 1969, fifty years after the creation of the Basic Design Course at the Bauhaus School of Design, the *Instituto de Arte e Decoração – IADE,* pioneered design education in Portugal. Subsequently, the current year of 2019 marks both Bauhaus first centenary and IADEs half century anniversary. In this context, the fundamentals initially formulated for introducing the students to the Design discipline, such as Basic Design, are continually being revised. One of the main reasons concerns the inevitable impact of the new technologies in the pedagogical scenarios. Accordingly, IADE welcomes a research that addresses the impact of Virtual Reality (VR) on the Basic Design teaching-learning experiences of 1st year design students.

By focusing Basic Design roots at IADE, this study aims to confirm or deny the advanced idea (NEVES; DUARTE, 2015) that, as in a great number of schools all over the world and despite the changes that have occurred since its creation, Basic Design is present in IADE´s current design courses. It will complement the findings of a synchronic analysis to the Portuguese Higher Education Design courses related to the presence of Basic Design (NEVES; DIAS; DUARTE, 2018).

It is noticed that since Bauhaus Design School (1919-1933), design education strengthened its presence in the world. The *preliminary*, later called *basic course*, was considered one of this school's main pillars (BONSIEPE, 2012) and, in the opinion of Cross (1983), Bauhaus' most important educational innovation. Basic Design was created by Johannes Itten (1888-1967) as a six-month course with the purpose of freeing and strengthening the imagination and creativity of the 1st year design students (ITTEN, 1975). The focus on creativity and the development of personal abilities was achieved by exploring the theory and practice of polar contrasts, as well as by performing relaxation and concentration exercises. These were part of a methodology for training intuition and the cultivation of self-knowledge, since "*outward looking scientific research and technology must be balanced by inward looking thinking and by spiritual forces*" (ITTEN, 1975, p. 9). The influence of Dewey's school of thought, as well as Floerbel and Montessori's, on Itten's pedagogical experiments, corresponds to a factor of innovation at the higher education teaching level (CROSS, 1983).

Basic Design is now internationally widespread and adapted to the present times (CETINKAYA, 2014). In general, Basic Design corresponds to a specific pedagogical approach that addresses the way design fundamentals or the Principles of Two-and Three-dimensional Design are taught and learned. By adopting a holistic, creative and experimental methodology, it focuses the elements: shape, color, texture, light, and rhythm, integrated in aesthetic and formal exercises.

Likewise, VR is a 3-D artificial environment that allows the users to experience artificial phenomena with the intensity once thought to be unique to real life. It creates the feeling of interacting with the objects presented, intuitively and in real time. VR technology is currently used in a broad range of applications, such as games, movies, simulations,

with focus on training, education, collaborative work, therapy and learning (LANYI, 2012). This technology allows the generation of phenomena and alternative experiences to reality, enabling some of today's most innovative pedagogical approaches (SCHANK, 2011). Much of its potential is, however, yet to be unveiled (JONES, 2013).

Basic Design faces the inevitability of VR presence in the future of design education (COLUCCI, 2011), where research must evidence the qualities of the partnership between VR and Basic Design. Only then can VR technology reveal, not only a new means of expression in Basic Design (innovation in terms of content), but also, effective procedures for human development (pedagogical innovation).
Two pedagogical experiments marked the origin of formal design education in Portugal: starting in 1965, the *Curso de Formação Artística*, at *Sociedade Nacional de Belas Artes - S.N.B.A.*; and in 1969, the *Curso de Decoração de Interiores*, at *Instituto de Arte e Decoração – IADE* (ALMEIDA, 2009; SOUTO, 2009).

However, the first reference to a Portuguese Basic Design course is the teaching-learning experience created by the designer and, at the time, teacher at *Escola de Artes Decorativas António Arroio – EADAA*, Daciano da Costa (1930-2015). Between 1962 and 1964 he undertook, in his own workshop, a private teaching course (COSTA, 2001). In the scope of Basic Design, design problems were analyzed according to a Bauhausian structure: the origin of the form was based on experimental didactics informed by Itten's theories of color and form, also influenced by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Josef Albers (COSTA, 2001).

The year of 1969 marks the foundation of *Instituto de Arte e Decoração – IADE*, with the opening of the three-year *Curso de Decoração de Interiores* (Interior Decoration Course). IADE was founded by António Quadros (1923-1993), a poet, philosopher, writer and professor. The painter Lima de Freitas (1927-1998) was the first director of the institute, replaced by António Quadros until the last year of life. The program of the course defined contained the syllabuses: *Desenho I*; *Desenho de Projecções*; *História da Arte Universal*; and *Tecnologia e Materiais*. Basic Design was not lectured at that time. Also, the expression "Design" was not integrated in the curricular program.

2. Method

The presented study is part of a larger ongoing research, which is divided in two major parts. The first aims to map current Basic Design learning outcomes and objectives, teaching-learning methodologies and programmatic contents by analyzing current Design program syllabuses. The second is a case study in which a VR tool will be prototyped and empirically tested in IADE's course, according to a User Centered Design - UCD approach, using a mixed, quasi-experimental design. The potential of the tool will be evaluated by comparing the performance of two groups of students. An active contribution is expected to promote the acquisition of more and better competences by the students, enhancing the Basic Design teaching-learning process.
In this sense, taking the advantage from the opportunity to carry out such a research at IADE, this study consisted on a Basic Design Curricular Unit diachronic analysis. It used official documents available at IADE´s academic services and library (e.g. statutes, regulations, course programs, proposals for the constitution of the courses, and syllabuses of the successive courses).

3. Results

The main results can be resumed as follow:

- IADE's first curricular program mentioning Basic Design, available for this study, dates the academic year 1979-80, from the *Curso de Design de Interiores e de Equipamento Geral*.

- In 1989, the Basic Design syllabus (IADE - ESCOLA INTERNACIONAL DE DECORADORES, ARTISTAS GRÁFICOS E DESIGNERS, 1989) includes creativity for the

first time, which is reinforced over the subsequent years. It mentions "*creative proposals*" in an introductory text at the student's objectives, the "*creative explorations*" as a fundamental vector.

- Breathing and relaxation exercises do not appear in any version of the Basic Design syllabuses.

- From the present IADE syllabuses that derive from Basic Design, *Laboratório de Design 3D* develops more abstract and exploratory approaches to form creation while *Laboratório de Design 2D* focuses also projectual exercises.

- The topic "textures" represented in the Basic Design content until 2002-03, was abandoned and presently is not found in any of the two Basic Design-based syllabuses.

4. Conclusion

At IADE, *Design Básico* - Basic Design, has been consistently integrated in the curricular programs of the Design course, since 1979. Until the 2002-03 biannual scission, it used the same precise expression. Despite different designations were found in subsequent years, Basic Design continues until the present times, in two distinct versions, according the content: (i) *Laboratório de Design 3D* derives from 2002-03 *Análise Morfológica* - Morphological Analysis, which adopted the Basic Design content related to the form creation and transformation, focusing 3D; (ii) and *Laboratório de Design 2D* represents the latest version of 2002-03 *Análise Cromática* - Chromatic Analysis, which adopted the content of Basic Design related to color in 2D creations. Both branches apply teaching-learning methods based on experimental approaches, also collaborating to the idea that Basic Design continues, although the second focus also projectual exercises.

The diachronic analysis presented shows the path of Basic Design at IADE. Its persistence over, at least, forty years, draws attention to the importance of the syllabus and its evolution in design education, in Portugal. This fact adds the results of a synchronic analysis of the current syllabus, at the Portuguese Higher Education design courses (NEVES; DIAS; DUARTE, 2018). Both highlight and confirm the dynamic nature of Johannes Itten's centenary pedagogical invention: grounding the design education research and guiding its next steps, particularly concerning the integration of VR-based tools in the complexity of the teaching-learning process.

5. References

ALMEIDA, V. **O Design em Portugal, um Tempo e um Modo. A institucionalização do Design Português entre 1959 e 1974**. doutoramento—Lisboa: Faculdade de Belas Artes, Universidade de Lisboa, 2009.

BONSIEPE, G. **Design como Prática de Projeto**. Brasil, S. Paulo: Edgard Blucher, 2012.

CETINKAYA, C. Basic Design Education Parameters in Turkey. In: **Humanitas International Journal of Social Sciences**. [s.l.] Central and Eastern European Online Library, 2014. p. 31–46.

COLUCCI, K. What role will technology play in the future of design education. In: **Icograda Design Education Manifesto 2011**. [s.l: s.n.]. p. 63–67.

COSTA, D. **Curriculum Vitae**, 2001.

CROSS, A. The educational background to the Bauhaus. **Design Studies**, v. 4, n. 1, p. 43–52, 1 jan. 1983.

IADE - ESCOLA INTERNACIONAL DE DECORADORES, ARTISTAS GRÁFICOS E DESIGNERS. **Programas do Curso de Design de Interiores e de Equipamento Geral dos anos letivos 1988/89 e 1989/90** (doc interno),1989.

ITTEN, J. **Design and Form: Basic Course at the Bauhaus**. Revised edition edition ed. London, England; New York: Titles Supplied by John Wiley & Sons Australia, 1975.

JONES, D. An Alternative (to) Reality. In: CHILDS, M.; PEACHEY, A. (Eds.). . **Understanding Learning in Virtual Worlds**. New York: Springer, 2013. p. 1–20.

LANYI, C. (ED.). **Applications of Virtual Reality**. [s.l.] InTech, 2012.

NEVES, A. G.; DIAS, D.; DUARTE, E. **As Basic Design promotes the design learning: Featuring the Portuguese Higher Education setting**. (L. Gómez Chova, A. López Martínez, I. Candel Torres, Eds.) **Anais**. In: ICERI 2018 - 11TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION. Seville, Spain: IATED Academy, 12 nov. 2018

NEVES, A. G.; DUARTE, E. **Using Virtual Environments in Basic Design Education**. (E. Duarte, C. Duarte, F. Carvalho Rodrigues, Eds.) Senses & Sensibility'15: Design as a Trade **Anais**... In: SENSES & SENSIBILITY'15: DESIGN AS A TRADE. Lisboa, Portugal: IADE - Creative University / Edições IADE, 5 out. 2015

SCHANK, R. C. Teaching Minds: How Cognitive Science Can Save Our Schools. [s.l.] Teachers College Press, 2011.

SILVA, A. S. Modos de aprender. In: **Daciano da Costa Designer**. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian ed. Lisboa: [s.n.]. p. 12–17.

SOUTO, M. H. **História do Design em Portugal I**. Edições IADE ed. Lisboa, Portugal: Edições IADE, 2009.

Acknowledgments

This study is supported by a doctoral grant, ref. (SFRH/BD/132233/2017), attributed by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia – FCT, (the Portuguese Science Foundation) to Ana Glória Neves.