



A Workshop Example of Basic Design Education in Interior Architecture

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ABSTRACT

The “Basic Design” is one of the common introductory courses in design disciplines. It has great importance in interior architecture education as it forms the basis of design practice. Education that proceeds through abstract concepts creates difficulties for students to internalize this course. To avoid these difficulties, learning by doing is of great importance. The learning-by-doing approach was carried out in the form of a workshop within the scope of the “Basic Design 1” course of the Department of Interior Architecture at Konya Technical University in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. Students were asked to produce three-dimensional designs using basic design principles and elements. The class was divided into groups of eight people and studies were carried out with a workshop coordinator in each group. The duration of the workshop was planned as four weeks. During the workshop, students learned to use materials and colors, to design an original composition. At the end of the workshop, students learned to embody the abstract concepts they learned during the year by creating a composition that considers functionality and aesthetics. In order to evaluate the efficiency of the workshop, a survey study was carried out after the course period ended. As a result, it has been seen that the intelligibility of Basic Design 1, which is a course taught through abstract concepts, has increased thanks to the workshop.

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Introduction

Basic Design is one of the basic courses in all educational institutions related to the visual arts. Offered in the first year at all design schools, the aim of this course is to teach the general rules of design so as to develop students’ design skills and empower them to make decisions in a limited amount of time (Ustaömeroğlu et al., 2015). Basic Design courses aim to enable students to produce designs from an original and aesthetic point of view that meet the needs of current social, cultural and technological developments. Interior Architecture Basic Design courses use disciplines such as music, literature, graphic design, cinema, performance arts, visual and digital arts to develop creative thinking (Aşkın, 2018).

Basic Design is a preparatory process in which art and design education is provided. With this education, students are expected to be able to learn the basic principles and elements of design and transfer this knowledge and skills to their designs. In this direction, they gained the ability to shape matter, use different materials together, color arrangement, convey basic design values such as integrity, rhythm, emphasis, and balance (Yıldırım, 2019).

The prominent studies in the literature in the last decade are as follows: Bağlı and Gelmez’s (2013) study is a study that focuses on group work to reinforce the awareness of collective studying by moving away from individualism within the scope of the basic design course. Akbulut’s (2014) study deals with the attempt to create a common basic design programme for students with a science background and students with an art background, studying in two different disciplines at Gazi University. Çetinkaya (2014) examined three universities from Europe and six universities from Türkiye in terms of basic design course methods. Neves and Duarte (2016) examined the advantages and methods of using Virtual Reality (VR) technology in basic design courses. Bostancı et al. (2016) in order to examine the method of using music in the basic design course, asked the students of the basic design course to listen to three separate pieces and transform these pieces into abstract three-dimensional designs. As a result of the study, students gained awareness about establishing interdisciplinary connections. Özdemir (2016) established a relationship between the academic performances of students taking a basic design course by classifying their learning styles. He suggested that students can increase

their success by being aware of their learning styles and internalizing their advantages and disadvantages. Düzenli et al. (2017) asked landscape architecture students to design a building environment in the last weeks of the basic design course, and as a result of the evaluations made at the end of the study, they observed that the basic design course increased creativity in design studies. Kasap and Türkmen (2018) evaluated form production in the transition from two-dimensional works to volumetric works in the basic design course, through student works. Felek (2020) compiled the scientific studies conducted between 2000 and 2019 in the field of basic design education in Türkiye. Kahraman (2020) measured students' experiences of the basic design course conducted via remote learning during the pandemic period with the help of a survey. Türkmen (2020) evaluated the effect of abstract and concrete concepts given to students for their study in the basic design course on the success of the work. Kılıç and Arabacıoğlu (2021) held a workshop with a four-day distance education model in five universities and supported the basic design course with a special parametric software in the computer environment. As a result of the study, it was seen that students showed more interest in the parametric workshop model than the typical distance education system. Coşkun and Çağdaş (2022) evaluated the design experience with the help of the computer game Minecraft as a part of the basic design course. Game-based learning has increased in-class communication and interaction. Yilmaz et al. (2023) theoretically examined the relationship between the basic design course and creative thinking.

Education that proceeds through abstract concepts creates difficulties for students to internalize this lesson. In order to avoid these difficulties, "learning-by-doing" is of great importance. In this context, learning-by-doing approach was carried out in the form of a workshop in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year, within the scope of the Basic Design 1 course of the Department of Interior Architecture at Konya Technical University. This study was carried out on the basis of the hypothesis that the workshop, which supports the learning by doing process, can increase the intelligibility of the lesson. After the lecture period was over, a 10-question survey on the efficiency of the workshop was applied to the students. Thus, it was evaluated whether the workshop reached its goal or not. Ethics committee permission for the survey study was applied on 5.09.2023 and approved by the scientific research and ethics committee of Konya Technical University at the meeting numbered 2023/7.

Materials and Methods

Basic Design Courses

The English word "basic" is derived from the Latin root "base" and means belonging to the foundation. Epistemology, on the other hand, expands both the meaning and the usage area of the word and refers to providing support not only physically but also intellectually. It has a determining feature of the physical or intellectual structure that will be built on it. "Design" comes from the Latin word "signare", which means to show and point (Civcir, 2015). This corresponds to the words "Dessin" in French and "Disegno" in Italian.

Furthermore, it is explained as thinking or forming in the mind, formulating a purpose, finding a method, planning systematically, having a purpose, goal, or intention, to create, find, and invent on a subject that requires high skill. Design is the name of all these processes, as well as the name of a designed original example, visual presentation plans or draft doodles of a designed production process (Seylan, 2020).

The first studies on design education were made with the establishment of Bauhaus in 1919 by Walter Gropius. Aiming to combine arts and crafts, Bauhaus has adopted an educational curriculum centered on practice. Education at the Bauhaus includes all scientific and practical areas of creative work; students are trained in a craft, they learn techniques such as drawing and painting, and they are also developed scientifically and theoretically. In the Bauhaus curriculum, technology-art-science forms a three-floor structure. The biggest expansion Bauhaus brought to Basic Design Education through architectural education; The aim of this course was to start an introductory course on design, which is consciously organized, at the same time insightful and applied, and adopting a modern education program intertwined with art for this introductory course. The design education in this period allows the student to learn by doing, develop freely and get rid of stereotypes (Erkan, 2006). Figure 1 shows the basic design education formation process diagram. As can be seen in the figure, the development process took place under the influence of different artists and architects in different countries.

In general, the course curriculum includes topics such as:

- Elements of design: point, line, direction, size, shape, value, texture, color
- Visual perception: figure-ground relationship, organization principles, proximity relationship, similarity, shape properties,
- Principles of design: balance, concept, contrast, harmony, hegemony, repetition, unity
- Space, form and geometry: two and three dimensional concepts (Akbulut, 2010)

The course aims to develop the ability to use many concepts, techniques, and materials. In addition to the act of creation in the design process, manual dexterity is also expected from the student in the interpretation phase. Although the design process constitutes the essence of the studies, the student must be able to choose the materials used in the application phase and use them in the most appropriate way in the design. By providing this information, the educator acts as a guide for the student to implement the best practices using various techniques (Atmaca, 2014).

Basic design education at Konya Technical University is carried out in the form of a 8-hour training that covers the whole day. In the first two hours, basic design elements and principles are explained theoretically. Afterward, students are asked to create two-dimensional compositions related to the subject (Figure 2). These studies are collected at the end of the course and evaluated by the instructors. Students are given a two- or three-dimensional composition study on the subject as homework. Classes continue in this way throughout the semester.

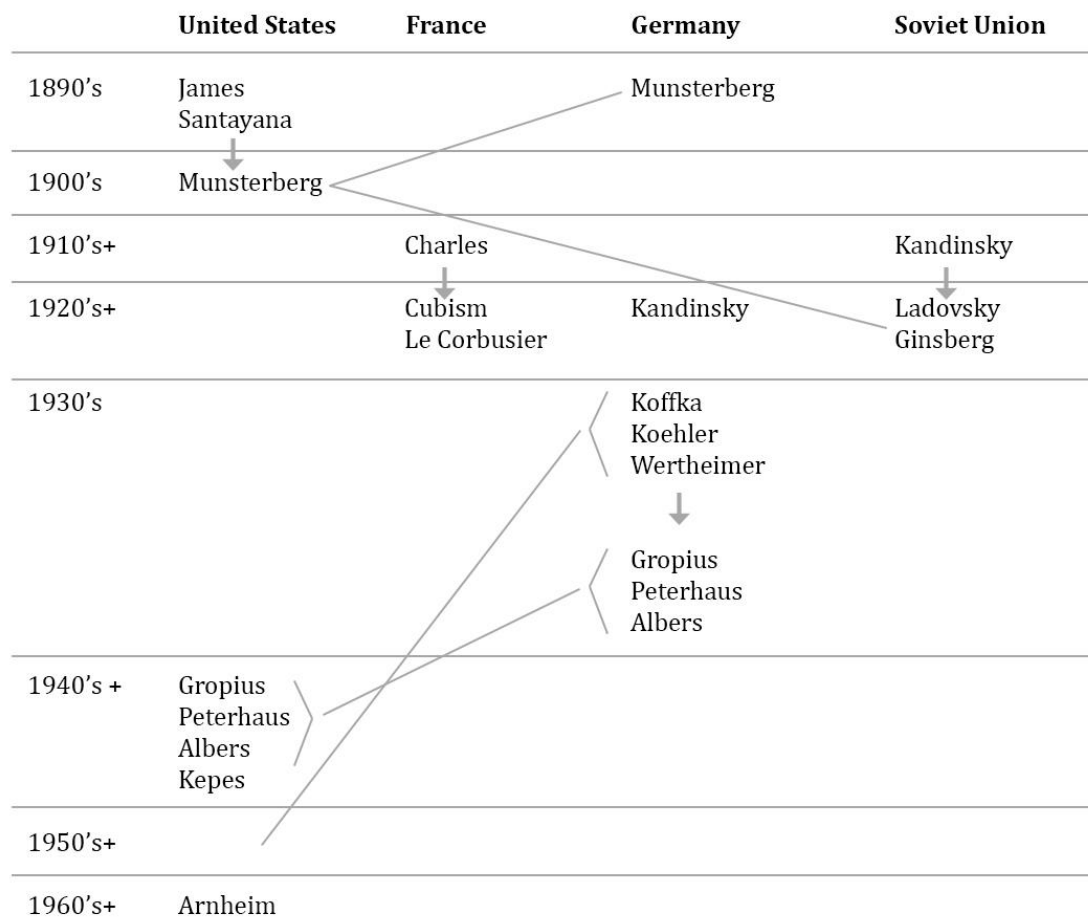


Figure 1. Basic design education formation process diagram (Erkan, 2006)



Figure 2. Some of the compositions which was designed within the scope of the course

At the end of the year, in the last four weeks, the class is divided into groups of 8 people and the workshop process is started. Each group is led by an instructor. During the workshop, each group produces a joint work and an individual work. Studies should be designed according to the basic design elements and principles learned in the first weeks. The workshop is based on the learning-by-doing approach.

Workshops in Design Education

Workshops, which mean short and intensive training studies, are frequently used in every field. Workshops are formations outside the functioning order; They enable people from different characters, different professions, different schools, jobs and countries to work together. At all stages of the workshop, facilitators and participants must be prepared to make changes and be flexible. Flexibility is one of the most important features of informal education (Yürekli and Yürekli, 2004). In order to define formal and informal learning environments; formal education means an education system based on a certain curriculum. The purpose of formal education is to teach people about the prevailing order and the values, norms and judgments associated with it. Informality, which aims at going beyond the ordinary, provides an environment excluding the current order and rules where hierarchy is taken down. A communicative environment where different ideas come together, expressing oneself individually, and gaining self-confidence are the main advantages of informality (Karşlı and Özker, 2014). In this context, workshops are important in terms of providing informal learning environments.

No matter how qualified design education is offered, it is not possible for people to learn to design without having personal design experience and making their own effort. This effort is experienced more intensely with learner-driven desire in workshops that create independent environments for design. One of the important features of workshops is not to have a rigid curriculum, there is no single path to follow. It allows for more open-ended, more

independent work. The reflection of the atmosphere created by sharing ideas on joint production ensures that the production, although personal, is now a product of the current atmosphere and common thoughts, in short, everyone participating in the process. Dialogue between students is strengthened in workshops. Communication skills increase. The studio managers' approach to the work with the curiosity of students, removes the boundaries between them and creates the opportunity to reinforce the knowledge learned in theoretical courses and understand the issues from different perspectives. A dialogue occurs between the instructor and the student. Being together all the time provides a more uninterrupted and fluid environment; as people get closer, tension decreases, and thus more information is shared (Ciravoğlu et al. 2009).

Method of the Study

The learning-by-doing approach was carried out in the form of a workshop in the fall semester of the 2022-2023 academic year, within the scope of the Basic Design 1 course of the Department of Interior Architecture at Konya Technical University. Students were asked to produce three-dimensional designs using the basic design principles and elements they learned during the year. The difference between this workshop from the two- and three-dimensional applications made throughout the year is that the product is larger in size and freely designed without being limited to a specific theme. In this context, students realized their designs by choosing one or more principles and elements. For the workshop, the class was divided into groups of 8 people and studies were carried out with a workshop coordinator in each group. The division of the class into small groups strengthened the one-to-one communication environment with each student. The duration of the workshop was planned as four weeks and the work was progressed in the company of the workshop coordinator during a total of four lessons. The studies were exhibited at an event held at the university at the end of the semester (Figure 3).

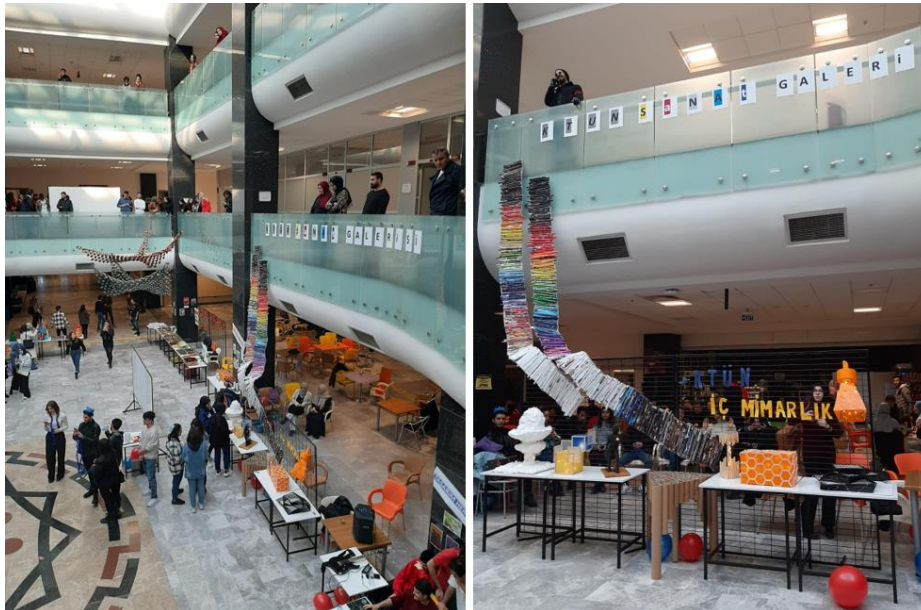


Figure 3. Workshop Exhibiton

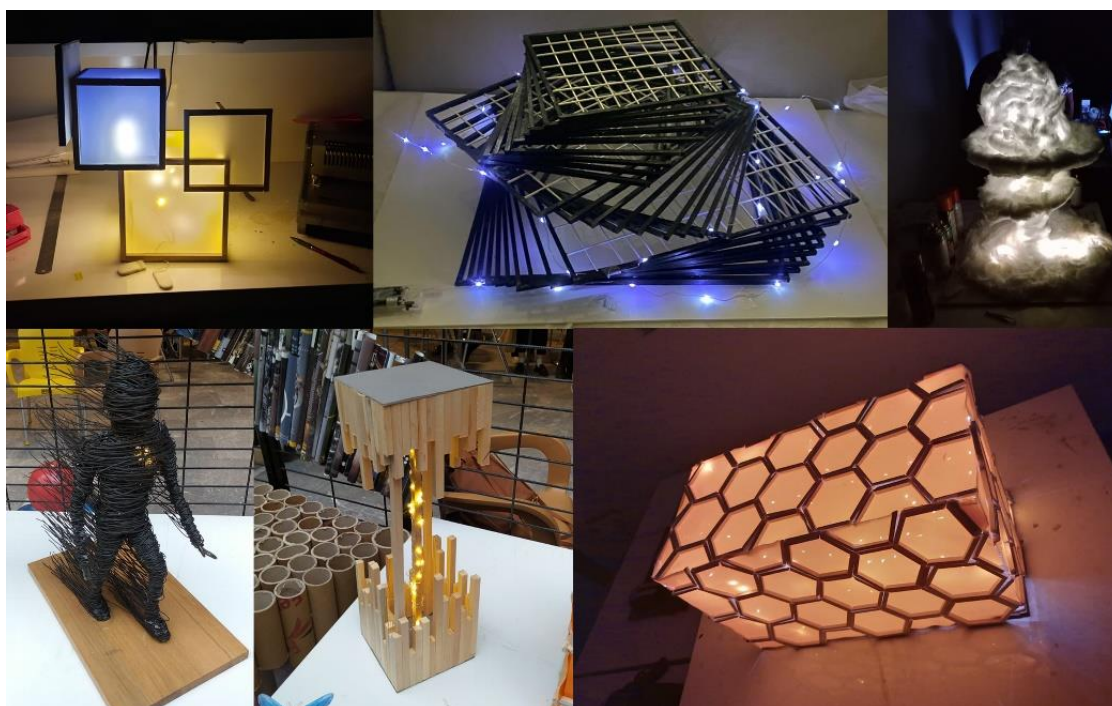


Figure 4. Some of the works produced within the scope of the workshop

Figure 4 shows the products of a group working within the scope of the workshop. In order to increase the functionality of the studies in the group, it was requested that the studies be designed as lighting elements. The type of lighting is released. With the addition of the lighting parameter to the design, the study has been transformed into a design problem by emphasizing the aesthetic features of the composition as well as its functionality. During the workshop, the students learned to use materials, to use color, to design an original composition and to integrate the lighting element into the design by experiencing it during practice. Concealing the lighting element in the design and standing still the design were some of the difficulties experienced by the students.

After the lesson period, a survey study was carried out with the workshop evaluation process. 30 volunteers from the 38-person class participated in the survey. The survey consists of 10 questions in total. The answers were created in the form of a 5-point Likert scale. In this context, it includes an answer template with 5 options: I strongly agree, I agree, Uncertain, I cannot agree, and I strongly disagree. The survey questions are as follows:

- In the workshop process, an approach was adopted in which theory and practice, design and construction are applied as a whole.
- With the workshop, a process-oriented learning environment was created within the scope of Basic Design 1 course.
- The creation of a student-centered design environment was provided during the workshop.
- During the workshop, studies were carried out for this purpose by emphasizing the culture of learning together.
- Workshops supported students' creative thinking skills.
- Workshop contributed to the development of students' design skills by transforming ideas into reality,

empathizing with each other, reading, discussing, and experimenting with different production methods.

- During the workshop, the communication between the students and the instructors was strengthened.
- Learning in the workshop process is more fun when compared to theoretical learning.
- I used the elements and principles I learned in Basic Design 1 course in the product I designed within the scope of the workshop.
- With the workshop, the principles and elements I learned in Basic Design 1 were better understood.

Results and Discussion

The results in Table 1 were obtained in the questionnaire of 30 people after the workshop. 28 out of 30 people agreed with the idea that theory and practice were handled as a whole during the workshop. During the workshop process, 83.3% of the students agreed that a process-oriented learning environment was created. 73.4% agree with the idea that a workshop environment that puts the student in the center is created. While 16.6% remain undecided on this issue, 10% do not agree. 86.7% agree with the idea that the culture of learning together is applied in the workshop, which refers to joint group work. 80% of the participants agree with the idea that the workshop supports creative learning. 83.4% of the students agreed with the idea that the process improves students' design skills. 73.4% of the students agree that the relationship between students and instructors is strengthened during the workshop. 86.7% of the class agree that learning with a workshop is more fun when compared to theoretical learning. 83.4% of the class stated that they used the basic design elements and principles they learned in Basic Design 1 theoretical courses. Thanks to the workshop, 70% of the class agrees that the Basic Design 1 course is better understood.

Table 1. Workshop assessment survey results

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. In the workshop process, an approach was adopted in which theory and practice, design and construction are applied as a whole.	%16.7 (23)	%76.7 (5)	%6.6 (2)	-	-
2. With the workshop, a process-oriented learning environment was created within the scope of Basic Design 1 course.	%13.3 (4)	%70.0 (21)	%16.7 (5)	-	-
3. The creation of a student-centered design environment was provided during the workshop.	%26.7 (8)	%46.7 (14)	%16.6 (5)	%10 (3)	-
4. During the workshop, studies were carried out for this purpose by emphasizing the culture of learning together.	%26.7 (8)	%60 (18)	%6.7 (2)	%6.6 (2)	-
5. Workshops supported students' creative thinking skills.	%26.7 (8)	%53.3 (16)	%10 (3)	%10 (3)	-
6. Workshop contributed to the development of students' design skills by transforming ideas into reality, empathizing with each other, reading, discussing, and experimenting with different production methods.	%23.4 (7)	%60 (18)	%10 (3)	%3.3 (1)	%3.3 (1)
7. During the workshop, the communication between the students and the instructors was strengthened.	%23.4 (7)	%50 (15)	%20 (6)	%3.3 (1)	%3.3 (1)
8. Learning in the workshop process is more fun when compared to theoretical learning.	%36.7 (11)	%50 (15)	%6.7 (2)	%3.3 (1)	%3.3 (1)
9. I used the elements and principles I learned in Basic Design 1 course in the product I designed within the scope of the workshop.	%30 (9)	%53.4 (16)	%13.3 (4)	%3.3 (1)	-
10. With the workshop, the principles and elements I learned in Basic Design 1 were better understood.	%6.7 (2)	%63.3 (19)	%26.7 (8)	%3.3 (1)	-

The results of the study revealed the positive contribution of workshops to education, in line with Ciravoğlu's thesis and Kılıç and Arabacıoğlu's (2021) studies. In addition, the positive results of the group work environment in the study of Coşkun and Çağdaş (2022), who integrated an informal education format into the basic design course, are compatible with the results evaluated in the 6th survey question of the study, which reveal the positive contribution of the exchange of ideas and trying different production methods to design skills. When the literature is examined, there are few examples where different learning styles are tried in basic design courses (Neves and Duarte, 2016; Bostancı et al. (2016); Coşkun and Çağdaş (2022)). Informal education given within the scope of the basic design course under the title of the workshop was examined in the study of Kılıç and Arabacıoğlu (2021). In this context, it can be seen that informal training organized under the title of workshops within the scope of the basic design course are few in the literature. For this reason, the positive results of the study encourage workshops that can be held within the scope of this course and contribute to the literature.

Conclusion

At the end of the workshop, the students learned to embody the abstract concepts they learned during the year by creating a composition that considers functionality and aesthetics at the same time. As a result, it has been seen that the intelligibility of Basic Design 1, which is a course

taught through abstract concepts, has increased thanks to the workshop application.

In this context, workshops that create more democratic and independent production environments and where mutual information exchange comes to the fore, instead of only one-way information transfer, should be included in the education process in Basic Design courses. In workshops, students should be encouraged to share their ideas and produce new collective ideas.

In future studies, in order to further expand the design visions of students, coordinators from other branches of art can be included in the workshop to create a multi-disciplinary environment and test its efficiency.

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