From praxis to design teaching

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Introduction
Brief analysis of the field of Design

The idea that the designer's doing is focused on creating beautiful utilitarian objects seems to have become common sense, as Adrian Forty (2007) recalls. To think that design consists of a set of methods and methodologies, capable of solving any kind of problem, has led to a thought that this field of study has little or nothing to do with capitalism. To those who have undergone initiation in the field, thinking about money or being concerned about it does not seem to be good tone. On with Forty, one cannot forget that Design blossomed during one of the phases of capitalism and much contributed to the development of the industry. A meaningful critique is seldom seen about the role of design and the symbolic violence it can cause, even more lasting than advertising and the media.

With dexterity, Alberto Cipiniuk (2014) discusses the constitution of the field of Design, based on the theories by Pierre Bourdieu, as he raises the question: how do these agents who dominate the field construct the representation of their practice? In the words of Marcelo Lacerda, in the presentation of Cipiniuk's *Design: the Book of Whys*, the field does not seem interested in doing a self-analysis and chooses to reproduce and relaunch teaching and learning methodologies, implying that the designer is a special being with a special quality, almost a "chosen one", substantiating a charismatic notion of Design itself. At the other end, there is a functionalist notion that preaches that the designer, equipped with his prescription pad, is capable of solving anything.

Cipiniuk, in short, criticizes this apparent lack of will for creating a fundamental theory for the field, seeking a parallel to what occurred in the field of Art, for example, where authors such as Bourdieu have long been looked up to, as well as in Pedagogy and Fashion among many others beyond Design itself, internationally acknowledged for their contribution in the field. It is interesting to note that Forty, in the introduction to book *Objects of Desire,* mentions the same author although he regrets not having known his writings as he was preparing his book.

Both authors call for the construction of a strong body of knowledge that questions the power of Project Methodologies. Design must justify the social reality of its production. A critical theory is yet to be developed.

The world has changed

Evoking Umberto Eco (2017), in one of the "*butinas*", titled "What's the use of the teacher?" a student willing to pester a teacher, asked: "sorry, but in these internet days, what exactly do you do? "

From the students' standpoint, we have lost function, that is, to inform, since this information is less than two clicks away in an electronic device. Still agreeing with Eco, this is clearly a half-truth, since the teacher's basal function is to instruct, to stimulate the student for reflection and action: it is not about reproducing design methodologies or magical schemes capable of solving any kind of problem.

Students have changed, we have not. In fact, the world has changed, social relations have become more fluid; Bauman's "liquid world" appears in every corner, a scandal in Paris and the Kuala Lumpur stock market shoots, or worse, breaks. The idea of a globalized world is banal today, we turn our computers on and, instead of buying from the grocery store around the corner, we shop in another country, all without the need for cash, yet a transnational virtual flow. We can crave anything because it will be within reach at a click.

A not less important issue concerns the way we welcome and the profile of these new generations of students arriving at universities for an undergraduate course. Meeting and sharing with this new student profile are a necessary asset.

In such a complex context with so many variables, one cannot overlook the constant technological advances that introduce a new panorama every day; and, for better or worse, they keep altering human relationships and behavior. New technological terms are put, and somehow, we either adjust to their functionalities or reject them when their complexity is beyond the understanding of most users. This technological package brings new forms of work – the creation of activities and of experts that perform in uncommon or unknown situations – or even present themselves as occupations for the future.

The new agents to be educated

In the wave of radical changes in the world of work and interpersonal relations, which follow the logic of postmodernity (according to David

Harvey), the student coming to university also changes in this new nebulous society typical of an era of uncertainties. He lies parallel to the period defined as modernity, where the social agents, displaced from rural areas to work in the new factories branched from the Industrial Revolution, felt alien to the "new social order."

Our student body is sick, forced to make decisions for which they have not been properly oriented. Gender issues, discussions about race and politics are on young people's agenda, whether through media bombardment or new models of artists who are breaking the last barriers of traditional education standards. To the extent that teachers tend to sublimate these matters, which for young people are fundamental, they begin to feel even more lost and unwelcome.

Lectures and psychological follow-up to students and teachers try to alleviate this huge gulf between generations. It should be noted that these new super-segmented generations, such as Y and X, already attending or completing their university courses, and generation I, that of individual electronic devices who has not yet reached universities, are subject to wild competition for success, counted in the number of likes. If goals happen not to be reached, they are called losers and they enlarge the suicide statistics.

We should note that our responsibility as teachers is greatly enhanced. It is not enough for us to lead to graduation, we must educate, even if many of us have avoided these political discussions. The lack of this basic postulate of the University, that is, the space of "higher" studies, has left these young people to their fate.

Education for the third millenium

Many are the challenges faced by educators and, if the structural reality of the guideline systems for teaching in our country were not enough – old-fashioned in many respects, sluggish in the face of changes, whether conceptual or of evolutionary nature – in fact, it is perceivable that revolutions should happen in a daily basis. However, small revolutions can occur when educators in their art of properly instructing, leave their comfort zone, think conceptually and create possible ways for a reflection by the student towards the construction of reflective knowledge; in this process, the teacher acts as an instructor leading the students to "think of what they do, as they do it and see for themselves"[1]. This reveals a

1. (DEWEY, 2010).

process of adjustment in the face of a reality posed as an opportunity for the reflective construct.

The programming or systematization of design processes presents a very marked, standardized, saturated, apathetic and scarcely innovative way in the face of the world. This reflexive experience we are referring to is the adjustment of a reflexive action of the now as a synesthetic effect in a confluence of senses, another way of seeing and acting emerges from this action when the parties involved act in unison. We mean that much of the tooling used in the current design courses comes from other areas, and still, to a large extent, continue to be applied, even with expired validity for the specificities of the area and of what we aim at as education for this new millennium.

Given the complexity in design, the systemic approach is necessary. However, there must be space for the configuration of more open approaches, which allows the experimentation and rearticulation of the involved, teachers and students, in connection with the real world.

Any well-intentioned course is prepared by a team of teachers, committed to teaching, after lengthy discussions and bureaucratic processes. At least a concept of pedagogical project and curriculum apparently well structured results from the team's efforts to offer a quality product.

The anatomy of design teaching in Brazil shows signs of exhaustion in pedagogical political projects, in which concerns its curricular structure in the classic approach to disciplinary contents, in the face of reality outside the university. The same applies to a marked change in the behavior of the new generation of incoming students in the universities, unmotivated and, for the most part, unprepared for this new reality that presents itself. The outcome of this mixture transforms the lived experience within the university into a calvary of disillusionment without any prospects for the future, save for a few exceptions. It is fundamental to know this new student profile and to have an innovative project that will lead them on their academic and citizen journey.

The lack of experience and reflection in the application of content by teachers gives rise to the inefficient use of current methodologies, methods and auxiliary techniques, blocking the design process, mainly in the design practices and methodology disciplines, generating bureaucratic and little relevant activities, leaving aside the space for curiosity and experimentation. Here the talent and potential skills of students are not put to the test.

Rafael Cardoso (2012) considers that

> school is only a partial reflection of a whole thought, and that any activity must exist before it can be taught and, moreover, it must have a prior history before assuming an institutional dimension. The author comments that it has become commonplace to think of the history of design as a history of its teaching, and what one sees is "a culture of reactive didacticism" based on imported models (CARDOSO, 2012, p. 123).

Many young doctors with no practical experience replicate theoretical and methodological models of twenty years ago. This prescription model does not create an environment of empathy and natural involvement for the student. Such practice drags on and usually, in the fourth phase of the course, students seem to be living dead wandering the aisles or dozing off in the classroom, or even abducted by their smartphones in a parallel and ineffective universe; it is an escape to nowhere. All this increases the displacement of the real-world academy, often generating a production of artificial contents, sometimes mediocre and of dubious contribution.

If not enough, we came across a profusion of designations for the usual design, and much of the essence of design dissipates, it fades into obvious recipes for more of the same. These initiatives aim to broaden design performance, seek more respect, prestige and strategic positioning, and sometimes improve their status.

It is well known that design in Brazil has reached maturity and recognition in the national and international scope. Prestige has come with meaningful awards, along with Brazilian professionals taking prominent positions in international companies. However, this condition calls for discipline, updating and evaluation of processes used with a focus on reality. We mean that it is necessary to keep an open mind and beyond the boundaries of design, to bring meaningful experiences that can be replicated in the practice of design.

Urgent changes in our model for design teaching should consider an ontology based on guiding principles focused on good living, that is, on human relations and their responsibility to the environment – there must be an understanding of the world and of a purpose. What kind of life do we want? How are we going to interact with each other? How to deal

with the resources available? Whom are we going to pay for products and services? What am I going to do with my free time? What should I learn? Many are the anguishes, but it is necessary to establish an understanding of the scenario and to act as to compose a project rich in content that offers stimulating experiences.

> Students cannot be taught what they need to know, but they can be instructed. They must see for themselves and in their own way the relations between means and methods employed and results achieved. No one else can see them, and they will not manage to see just by speaking to them, even if the right speech can guide their gaze and help them in what they need to see (DEWEY, 2010, p. 25).

In the academic environment, the prototyping phase leads the student to practical exercise, where he can test and evaluate what he has conceived by putting his talent and abilities into doing. However, this usually occurs at the end of the project cycle, with no time to backtrack, refine, or even make a conceptual change to the product or service design being developed. An immersion in the early stages of the design process with stakeholders could lead to a range of conceptual possibilities and help decision making for a more timely design response as a solution. Bringing fruition to the process creates a positive atmosphere and a natural commitment among those involved.

En route to a perception of scenery, Tim Brown (2010) comments that there is always a starting point. He calls them useful references from the standpoint of what would be desirable and meaningful to people, what would be feasible and what is functionally possible in the near future, and finally, what would be feasible and what could become a sustainable model.

We do not start anything from scratch, a key and initial point is the understanding of the phenomenon. Knowing our student, their desires, aspirations and values, helps design educators to look for references in the successful practices, once involving these students in the process diminishes noise and creates an atmosphere more favorable to teaching/learning. It is up to educators to leave their comfort zone and discuss a teaching model for design articulated with reality, and especially focused on our social responsibility.

In his book *The Semantic Turn,* Klaus Krippendorff (2006) approaches the trajectory of artificiality, presents and discusses the evolution of design in the

part of projects with social feasibility and which have a direction and commitment. As for design discourse, it must be generalist, articulator and supportive.

A beginning for a successful design is in its practice as a regular discipline in the education of children in elementary school, introducing concepts about design principles and its social role, contemplating an education for the present and the future. Design in elementary school can aid in the educational training of children, aiming to awaken an improved world perception in which concerns the artifacts: how they are made, for what purpose, the resources used in their manufacture and their relationship with the environment; and also it can illustrate and educate the child about the behavior of people in relation to consumption based on the family nucleus. There could be a playful, investigative and exploratory character, present and bring the children to know the world from the exercise of citizenship. Those who want to graduate in design in the future will come with a keen insight into design concepts. This process can generate masters' and doctorate research that corroborates the effectiveness of these actions in a pedagogical political plan.

Building scenarios in a vision of future and social reach, experiencing new processes that stimulate creativity and offer new learning. There will be nothing finished; creativity needs curiosity, restlessness, immersion, change of place and much experimentation.

Creating a space for discussion in line with social, economic and cultural demands, to feed a dynamic model of education in design, connected with teaching, research and extension (integration between undergraduate and graduate levels).

Systematization of the design process is important for the production of knowledge about the area, which allows us to investigate in depth and create iterative models. However, one should note the particularities of a theoretical approach towards a practical approach for concrete purposes. The process should be an invitation to fruition in all its phases.

Accompanying and guiding young doctors in their teaching practices, presenting a coherent discourse, being a regular discipline for the education of children in elementary school and introducing concepts about design principles and its social role is to think of an education for the present and the future.

Making more use of technology and ubiquity for the development of products and services, focused on areas such as health, education,

transportation, security and the environment. The more effective use of technologies while teaching ubiquity as omnipresent networks to create desirable scenarios can contribute to the generation of semantic configurations for the conceptualization and development of projects of social outreach. Multidisciplinary research in this direction has much to contribute, whether in the academic or professional environment.

What is perceived is that design does not walk alone. It is necessary to expand the look, broaden its objectives, knock on the doors of other areas and of the ones interested in sharing knowledge. This perception will give educators and design professionals elements to build scenarios that are desirable and social in scope, centered on the human being.

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