DESIGN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN LIEPAJA UNIVERSITY (LATVIAN)

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Abstract

The 21st century raises a number of problems to be resolved in education. One of the problems is the contradictory nature of global and individual phenomena. Globalization without losing the sense of belonging to one's living space, through implementing one's potential according to the well-kept traditions, active participation in one's own society life and its growth is also an important role of Design Education. Designers are the ones that can have a significant impact and can model the human living space, artistically designing and constructing the spatial environment and its elements as well as items of everyday use. The changing nature is influenced by public taste, technological progress, and reflection of national trends in design. This marks the need to study the Design Education opportunities. Educational research nowadays engages pedagogues, psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, persons who are interested in development of higher education in Latvian as a whole. In order to implement the best Design Education, it is important to understand the nature of personality and its development characteristics. Studying the development of human personality scholars take into account the individual needs and interests, choices and motivation for actions, self-esteem. Design education of Liepaja University is in close conjunction with its Research Activity Strategy for 2010 - 2016 and Development Strategy for 2008 - 2018 laying out that scientific research and creative activity at Liepaja University is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development. As well, that Liepaja University is open to international cooperation which promotes science and research based learning, development of the knowledge society and implementation of research results in the economy.

Keywords: Design, design education, personality, youth

Introduction

Today, the world is undergoing a rapid change in the social, political and economic fields; this also influences changes in the education space. Education is considered to be the scope of the human race, which most directly affects people's quality of life and well-being (Valbis, 2003). The aim of a democratic society, as noted by the pedagogue A. Špona, is to recognize people as the highest value and to ensure implementation of human potential in everyone (Špona, 2001). This objective is also applicable to implementation of Design Education. Scientist A. Špona characterizes implementation of human potential as a person's ability, the degree of strength, opportunity that is displayed and developed in the action and doing (Špona, 2001). It can be noted that during the process of education the individual needs and self-implementation is certified, the growth of creative personality is encouraged and career growth is fostered. Designers are the ones that can have a significant impact and can model the human living space, artistically designing and constructing the spatial environment and its elements as well as items of everyday use. As pointed out by C. and P. Fiell, design is defined in its global sense as the conception and planning of all man-made products, design

can be seen fundamentally as an instrument for improving the quality of life (Fiell, 2009). Representative of visual communications B. Bergström notes that design is one of our most important cultural phenomena in terms of architecture, fashion, interior design and industrial design as well as crafts and visual communication (Bergström, 2009).

It is believed that W. Morri's effort to combine theory and practice still leaves a significant impact on the modern trends in design. The origins of Design Education are linked to establishment of the world's most impressive design schools - Bauhaus in 1919 following the initiative of architect W. Gropius. W. Gropius integrated design theory with practice through new industrial means of production that modern design truly came into being. Gradually forgotten principle of Design Education was again updated at the New Bauhaus in Chicago, which was founded by Lazlo Moholy-Nagy in 1937, and at the Hochschule fur Gestaltung, Ulm, which was founded in 1953. Both design education institutions contributed substantially to new thinking about the unification of design theory and practice in relation to industrial methods of production (Fiell, 2009, p. 6). Major components of product design creation are - concept development, planning, cooperation of different personalities such as marketing specialists, designers, specialists in materials, cooperation between engineers, manufacturer representatives. While educating young designers there is a need to raise the issue of working in a team. The design philosophy, created products, styles and theories have a changing and complex nature, which undoubtedly influences implementation of Design Education. The changing nature is influenced by public taste, technological progress, and reflection of national trends in design.

However, it should be noted that designers and design groups in their activities both historically and now are trying to build a bridge between art and industry, hand in hand with an understanding of the principles of design, ecology and sustainability of the created products and their changing nature taking into account technological possibilities because a purposeful use of technology skills implementing Design Education opens up new opportunities and is an important tool in creating original products.

Implementation of the design education is significantly affected by the rapid development of new technologies. Targeted acquisition of the technology use skills for implementation of design education opens up new opportunities and is an important tool in the creation of unique products. This marks the need to study the Design Education opportunities. Educational research nowadays engages pedagogues, psychologists, philosophers, sociologists, persons who are interested in development of higher education in Latvian as a whole.

Object of the research: implementation process of Design Education. *Subject of the research:* opportunities of implementing Design Education for personal growth with undergraduate studies. *Aim of the research* – to theoretically and practically study and evaluate the Design Education development opportunities and to make recommendations for its improvement.

Explanation of Personality Awareness

Design is not just a mechanical production, but it includes implementing personal hopes and ideas in the progress towards achievement and communication with the public. Activities of a designer as a personality combine interrelations of intellectual activity, practical ability, commercial opportunities and aesthetic awareness through the artistic endeavour and exploitation of new Technologies (Fiell, 2009). In order to implement the best Design Education, it is important to understand the nature of personality and its development characteristics. Scientist V. Batna indicates that we as individuals become personalities through relationships at the same time it should be noted that there is no single personality theory (Batņa, 2001).

It is recognized that there is a problem in psychology of personality defining; in order to do that each person individually should be taken into account (Svence, 1999). Since this is not possible, scientists are trying to find correlations that make up the similarities and differences. Studying the development of human personality scholars also take into account the individual needs and interests, choices and motivation for actions, self-esteem. It is recognized that personal development is driven by the need for self-implementation and is influenced by heredity on the one hand and external culture on the other. Social psychologist S. Omarova indicates that an individual is both a biological and social being, which brings together native-born, genetically programmed, and the mastered while living in the community. The scientist believes that the personality is the aggregation of social features of the individual, formed while person is living in a particular society, acquiring and processing social experience in a peculiar way (Omarova, 1997). Psychologist G. Svence (1999) indicates that the personality is each individual's internal dynamic organization that includes motivation systems, habits, and personal characteristics that in the relevant environment determine the uniqueness of personality. It should be noted that scientists believe that personality concept includes both stable and inherent to every human being unique ways of thinking, emotional responses and behaviours, they are conditions that help the individual to adapt to the social environment and the specific life situations. It may be noted that there are no two identical personalities; therefore each person is individuality, personality, formed in a society, gaining further experience in contact with members of the society, engaging in social relations and cultural life as a whole. Culture is closely interrelated with everyone's internal culture.

The Design Education has the ability to influence spiritual development and education of the new generation which is reflected in young people's views, actions, attitude to life and life-events in their immediate neighbourhood, county, country and the world. In this context, while implementing Design Education it is significant to base on such structural components of the value education as: personal self-confidence, self-esteem awareness, self-reflection and the development of creativity. Thus, young people can make it easier for successful preparation for life, without being subject to influences, to be more open to the world, accompanied by the ability to distinguish the essential from the inessential, the important from the less important, highlighting the most important, freely developing thinking and building stable system of values. It is believed that this is an opportunity for a democratic dialogue, laying the foundation for future reconciliation and peace, to be tolerant towards other cultures.

Opportunities for Implementation of Personality Resources in the Psychological Well-being Perspective

The author of the psychological well-being is C. Ryff (1989), which indicates optimal functioning of psychological well-being from the point of view of personality implementation, putting forward six important aspects:

1. Self-acceptance. If it is high, the positive attitude towards oneself dominates, he adopts and accepts different aspects of own personality, recognizes both the good and the bad qualities.
2. Positive relationships with others. For the person whom this figure is high, relationships are trustful. This includes the ability to sympathize with others, to provide support to others.
3. Autonomy. It is the ability of self-determination to be independent, to evaluate oneself according to own standards and to take responsibility.
4. Implementation of the daily requirements. The ability to process information in order to implement their choices and feel good.

5. Determination. Personality, which has a sense of guidance, has faith and hope. Guidance suggests a sense of personal self-actualization.

6. Sense of personal growth. A person perceives oneself as being developed by extending own boundaries and is open to new experiences (Ryff, 1989).

This approach is also important in implementation of Design Education for it creates a structured and sound self-confidence in each student of oneself as individuality, develops self-confidence and understanding of oneself, evaluates own abilities, the acquired experience, the achievements and attitude towards the chosen profession.

While carrying out his activities the designer adds some fantasy, imagination and understanding of the financial capability of the client, ideas and preferences, stylistic needs, information about marketing and previously unimplemented projects. The designer as a personality must be able to clearly define activity objectives, understand what exactly will be achieved by that, and find time for critical reflection. Visualization of the idea and the skill to see the positive in the ideas of others are important aspects of personal career development (Pricken, 2007).

Art pedagogue J. Anspaks states that everyone has the opportunity to choose their own future and to implement their potential in accordance with the traditions and cultures, to capture opportunities for lifelong learning, to expand own circle of knowledge, improve skills and develop attitudes to adapt to a changing and dynamic world (Anspaks, 2004). Reasonably scientist A. Smite indicates that in order to think about development of human resources, teachers need to know what our young people are, their ideals, values and life skills in the current activity (Šmite, 2004).

Characteristics of Young People in the Context of the Era

Scientist H. Gudjon has focused on current youth research aspects. The scientist believes that young people are the creative layer of culture, which is the distributor and promoter of latest trends in older generation, as well as in emerging cultural constellations. The author points out that compared to other individual development issues of youth, adaptation to work environment dominates in this development stage. This demands for solution of difficult issues, because life has reached the abstract and the inconceivable position, which is characterized by the need of a large amount of knowledge for professional qualifications. Major contradictions of youth development influence this process, because it reveals gradual fuse of generational boundaries and at the same time, an increase in the intensity of the conflicts between the young people and adults. University studies are one of the means for young people to get educated and to further be able to assert oneself in the work environment. There is an issue: whether the university is able to provide it? H. Gudjon has bitterly characterized the living space of young people nowadays as an intractable tangle of individual self-determination and material dependence (Gudjon, 2007, p. 157). Therefore, it is important to understand why young people want to study and how young people study. H. Gudjon stresses that the main criterion of values in the context of the era is operational efficiency in the sense of solidarity, humanity, communication, interest in fellow human beings, ecological lifestyles; of course, this does not exclude the opposite trends. Given youth as a complex personality development phase, the issue of learning in the process of exchange of competences, interaction, rather than single-ended operation, raises in the pedagogy of youth. Shaping young people's pedagogy, H. Gudjon stresses that the leading idea must be: development of the best possible human determined orientation, for which he is responsible. On the other hand, a teacher must be truthful, must respect young people's differences and accept their society (Gudjon, 2007, p. 157). Consequently, the main key dimensions of education emphasized by H. Gudjon can be attributed to young people’s Design Education. One of them is the applied dimension that defines acquisition of certain education content,

thus significantly affecting their interests and motivations. The next one is the time dimension for Design Education today to get meaningful content. Social, communicative interaction in the study process, as well as education based on scientific research and self-perception are also important. This raises the need for continuous follow up to the era-raised trends, improving and expanding basic knowledge and basic skills of pedagogues and youth.

Experience of Implementation of Design Education of Liepaja University (Latvia)

Design education of Liepaja University is in close conjunction with its Research Activity Strategy for 2010 – 2016 (Zinātniskās darbības…,2010) and Development Strategy for 2008 – 2018 laying out that scientific research and creative activity at Liepaja University is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development. As well, that Liepaja University is open to international cooperation which promotes science and research based learning, development of the knowledge society and implementation of research results in the economy (Liepājas Universitātes…,2008). Analysis of the study programmes reveals in chronological order changes in Design Education in Liepaja University (the first and the second table). The study was conducted based on the curriculum for 1999 – 2014, studies of the licensing and accreditation materials, and annual self-evaluation reports of Liepaja University (Latvia).

Higher education (Bachelor) programmes in design at Liepaja University (1999 – 2014)

Table No 1

Title of the study programme	Year of desig-ning	Year of accreditation or licensing	Year of transforming or closing	Length of studies	Awarded qualification and / or degree
Teacher of Applied Art, Designer	1999	2000	2007 (transformed)	4 years	Teacher of manual work, Designer
Visual communication art	1999	2003	2005 (closed)	4 years	Visual communication designer
Computer design	2002	2003	2011 (transformed)	4 years	Bachelor degree of Computer designer, computer designer
Product Design	2009	2009	2011 (transformed)	4 years	Bachelor degree of Art, Product designer
Design	2011	2011	Accredited on 29 June 2011until 31 December 2017	4 years	Bachelor degree of Art, Computer designer / Product designer / Interior designer

Implementation process of higher education programme in Design Education in Liepaja University has started in 1999 with implementation of the study programme "Teacher of Applied Art, Designer" (Liepaja Pedagogical…,2004). As a result, it can be concluded that:

- Bachelor degree in Computer Design is being awarded since 2002;
- Alongside with the preparation of art teachers, professional study programme of non-pedagogical nature is being gradually introduced (Computer Design, 2002),

Given the current situation in Latvia and its economy, as well as due to financial and resource-saving reasons Design Education programs have been gradually improved combining them into a single bachelor study program called "Design" (2011) with the following directions - Computer design, Product design and Interior design.*The purpose* of the study program shall be to provide such conditions which allow for acquisition of qualitative and competitive education higher professional intersectoral education in design,

by preparing such specialists, who are able to realize such innovative ideas of the particular sphere of specialization, which are rooted in research and artistic creativity.

Study Content and Organization

The study program volume is 160 (240 ECTS) in the full time (4 years) and part time study (4.5 years) mode. Compatibility of the content of the study profile "Computer Design" to the Profession Standard of "Computer Designer" (Profesijas standarts, 2002), compatibility of the content of the study profile "Interior Design" to the Profession Standard of „Interior Designer" compatibility of the content of the study profile "Product Design" to the Profession Standard of "Product Designer"lies on the bottom of the study program elaboration (Profesiju standarti, 2010). The mandatory or Compulsory Part (Part A) of the study program stipulates acquisition of general education study courses, theoretical basic courses of the particular branch and information technology courses, providing 56 credits (84 ECTS), and such study courses shall be arranged in four blocks mutually supplementing each other. The Compulsory Part (Part B) of the study program provides acquisition of professional competences in the professional specialization courses of the particular branch, providing 60 credits (90 ECTS) in compliance with the specifics of each qualification. The Free Choice (Part C) study courses, providing 6 credits (9 ECTS), improve professional competence of the students in conformity with the chosen qualification. The practice, providing 26 credits (39 ECTS), provide, that the students are able to get themselves engaged in the sphere of professional sphere, based on acquired knowledge, skill and techniques. The Bachelor's Thesis, providing 12 credits (18 ECTS), verifies the students' skills to carry out research and to elaborate practical work. Under the condition, that the study program has been acquired successfully, the students shall be conferred the qualification: Computer Designer / Interior Designer / Product Designer – depending on the title of the acquired study program.

Higher education (Bachelor) program's content in design at Liepaja University (2014)

Table No 2

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Study courses</td><td>Practice</td><td>Bachelor's Thesis</td></tr>
<tr><td>General education study courses</td><td>Theoretical basic courses of the particular branch and information technology courses</td><td>Professional specialization courses</td><td>Free Choice</td><td rowspan="4">26 CP (39 ECTS)</td><td rowspan="4">12 CP (18 ECTS)</td></tr>
<tr><td>20 CP (30 ECTS)</td><td>36 CP 54 (ECTS)</td><td>60 CP (90 ECTS)</td><td>6 CP (9 CTS)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Computer design – 60 CP (90 ECTS) Interior design - 60 CP (90 ECTS) Product design – 60 CP (90 (ECTS)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Part A – 56 CP (84 ECTS)</td><td>Part B– 60 CP (90 CTS)</td><td>6 CP 9 ECTS)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">160 CP (240 ECTS)</td></tr>
</table>

Research and creativity of the students reflect itself in the elaborated course works and Bachelor's Thesis. Student research and creative activity has been purposefully envisaged in the study program and in the curricula of the particular study year. A few examples on the content of the Bachelor's Thesis (2014): "Modern visual and technological

solutions in commercial e-mail" (M. Barbare), "Evolution of photomontage in fine art photography. Game and experiment" (A. Grinberga), "Corporate identity graphic standard and significance of its development process in corporate environment (R. Karklins), "Design in papercutting technique" (A. Kolevinska), "Latvian characters in wallpaper ornament" (L. Launaga), "Company "Art Design group" portfolio creating" (S. Mistre), "Visual and technological solution from sketch to an animation" (M. Pumpure), "Souvenir "Liepaja Jugendstil in linocut"(L. Striznova). Within the study process significant impact is left by engagement of lecturers and students into art and design related projects, conferences, seminars, discussions and other events, thus, providing support to the Professional growth of the students and manifestation of their interests into reality.

Implementation of thestudy program is promoted by the didactic concept which is based in problem directed education, which stipulates a purposeful and planned co-operation of the lecturers of the design related study courses of – discussions, qualitative evaluation of forms and methods, in order to improve the study process quality and to optimize the volume and quality of the independent work, which is carried out by the students, as well as, to promote engagement of students in the activities of the creativity, which is carried out by the lecturers, thus ensuring perfection of the professional skills of the students and upgrading of their theoretical inquest within the sphere of the chosen specialization. Quality of the study program and the study process is enriched by the possibility for each student to carry out his or her independent work in the workshop of the University of Liepaja.

Having studied Design Education's conformity with the laws and regulations and recommendations of the European Higher Education Area, it can be concluded that it complies with the Regulations by the Cabinet of Ministers on State professional education standards (Project) in accordance with the 6th level (Bachelor) programmes of frameworks set out in the classification education in Latvia, the objective of the program "to provide for obtaining scientifically substantiated wide range of learning outcomes" is respected as well. Design Education curriculum has an appropriate volume (professional bachelor programmes – 160 CRP, 240 ECTS). Design Education programme has been designed in accordance with the Latvian and the European Education Area development requirements:

1. Study programme's learning outcomes are agreed with the cycle descriptors of Latvian Qualifications Framework (EQF 6th level) (Compare Qualifications…,2005) incorporated in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 990 "Regulations on classification of education in Latvia" (Regulations on…,2008).
2. Study programme is designed according to the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy (LSDS), which specifically emphasizes the concept of interdisciplinarity of studies and creativity education. Education in this strategy constitutes not only accumulation of specific competences and skills, but also critical thinking, creativity and collaboration skills in general - human talent, development of emotional and social intelligence (Sustainable Development…,2010).
3. Ideas of the programme development are linked with the Strategy of Liepaja City Culture Department's Culture Policy Division (2009-2014). Evaluation of Liepaja culture and its sub-fields is contained in the strategy (conducted by collecting information on the sub-fields as well as during interviews and workshops with representatives of Liepaja culture, art and design industry).

In clarification of importance of design education were involved 87 prospective designers. Results which were obtained in research are illustrated in table No 3.

Significance of design education in personality development

Table No 3

Meaning of design education	Number of respondents	Answers (%)
Development of communicative skills	87	27
Development of cooperation skills	87	27
Intelectual development	87	25
Development of commercial opportunities	87	25
Development of visualisation skills	87	24
Development of personality	87	19
Sense of personal growth	87	19
Aesthetic devolopment	87	18
Understanding of design variety	87	14
Self - esteem	87	8
Spending of free time	87	4

In result it was clarified that the most part of respondents – 27% of inquired ones consider that the aim of design education is development of communicative and cooperation skills of personality, whereas 25% of respondents see the importance of design education in development of person's inetelectual field and understanding of commercial opportunities. Aspect of visualisation skills is identified by 24%, but overall development of personality and sense of personal growth 19%, aesthetic devolopment is identified by 18%, understanding of design variety is identified by 14% of inquired people. Self - esteem options of personality are shown by 8% of participants. 4% point out to opportunity to get education for valuable spending of free time.

In the result we get conception on real situation in understanding of the aim of design education in contemporary context.

Recommendations: Development plan of study division Design in Liepaja University (Latvia):

- To become the design research centre of Liepaja City, Kurzeme region (Latvia) and European importance;
- To extend publishing of design research outcomes on international level (at international conferences and exhibitions, congresses, seminars, plenary sessions, symposiums);
- To elaborate development of design division in conformity with state determined priorities in artistic innovation and internationally important development directions in art and design;
- To initiate operation of Design Research Laboratory in implementing innovation in art and design in cooperation with entrepreneurs, activating development of national economy, promoting young generation's interest in design innovation, creating basis for a successful career: to carry out scientific research in design and to promote practical application of the research results; to develop the branch of design by training new designers and by engagement in the fulfillment of national or international projects and programs; to forecast development directions of design technologies, as well as, necessity for the resources; to provide that the students fulfill their practice tasks by carrying out their research and practical work as close as possible to the real labor conditions.
- To ensure creative freedom for a designers, promote development of discussions on topical issues in design.

Conclusion

Discussion of the focus group (2013, 2014) in the sphere of design verify the complicated situation of changes in the country, however, at the same time employers are convinced, that the graduates from the University of Liepaja acquire qualitative education, but were not able to define concrete number of such specialists who would be necessary either at present moment or in the future.

Particular attention in the focus group was paid to the development of the design profession and potentially closer co-operation between the higher school and professional institutions. After graduating from the University, the graduates are engaged in design activity related institutions. Within the study program content a solid development potential and co-operation possibilities for a regular dialogue on topicalities in the sphere of design may be discerned.

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