

WORKING PAPER

MA-AE Summer 2020

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Critical Pedagogy in Art Education | AAE-710

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Date | 11th July 2020

TITLE:

Learning through Informal Means

QUESTION:

How does Informal Education enhance the Learning Experiences?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

What kind of Informal Education is the best to trigger Curiosity, Motivation and Awareness?

- *How does curiosity leads to motivation to learn?*
- *How does motivation helps to find out answers?*
- *How does questioning and knowing more helps to bring awareness?*

KEYWORDS:

Informal Learning | Informal Education | Learning Experiences | Curiosity | Motivation | Awareness | Socially Responsible | Self-Aware | Self-Reflection | Knowing | Questioning

ABSTRACT:

In this research paper, the formal and informal education plays a vital role in the process of learning growth of an individual. Whereas formal education is meant to make an individual literate through systematic learning environment, how does informal learning enhance the learning experience for a person and leads towards curiosity to question and stay motivated to learn more which leads towards self-awareness and awareness of others around?

INTRODUCTION:

Thinking of the concept of learning, we often think of schools, courses, instructors, exams and assignments. All these are important aspects of learning, but do we only learn through these resources?

Informal education, as opposed to formal education where one learns outside the classroom, should not be considered as an inferior form of learning, this type of learning starts even before we start our formal education. Whether we realize it or not but unconsciously we learn on daily basis through our environment and settings. Informal learning is natural and unstructured, and this is how we learn most of the time and often develop a better understanding of the concepts which are taught through formal education.

SIGNIFICANCE & OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of my research paper is to mainly study the types of informal learning in an individual's life that can develop curiosity, motivation and awareness to understand one's self and the surroundings in order to keep learning as an ongoing process, which can foster into their formal learnings as well.

METHODOLOGY:

As my study mainly looks into the informal learnings and processes through which an individual builds up new meanings and understandings of their surroundings, I will be conducting online surveys, group discussions and one on one interviews with individuals who received formal education and as well as the ones who could not afford, to find out about their informal learning experiences and to get a better understanding of the differences both categories have.

I would also analyze the existing researches based on the types of informal learning which enhance and develop curiosity to question and stay motivated in order to find answers to their questions, to understand more which would lead them to be more self-aware and their surroundings, leading them to be more sensitive and act responsibly towards others.

RESULTS/FINDINGS:

After conducting my research and observe a setting, mentioned in the research methodology, I hope to find significant evidences that will allow me to determine what works best for a group of individuals to keep the ability and yearning to carry on learning.

DISCUSSION:

The aim of my research paper is to analyze how Informal Education enhance the learning experience by activating Curiosity, Motivation and Awareness in individuals. I will be conducting online surveys, group discussions and one on one interviews with both literate and illiterate individuals to understand the differences that formal and informal education might have on them. Unfortunately, not much research has been conducted within our local settings hence the data available is limited. But there have been efforts made on a smaller scale to study the role of informal education in Pakistan.

CONCLUSION:

While formal education is important to make people literate, I believe that more informal activities should be introduced at home, in kitchens, and workplaces in the contexts where knowledge is used to solve problems and add value to the learning experience, where you directly interact, learn and retain the lessons learnt in the process and be educated.

However, any final conclusion cannot be determined until and unless the research actually takes place and I find substantial evidences to support my argument.

FINAL PROJECT PAPER

MA-AE Summer 2020

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Date | 3rd August 2020

21st CENTURY EDUCATOR & STUDIO

Who you might be as a 21st century educator, and on what sort of design classroom you want to create based on the content of this course?

KEYWORDS:

| 21st Century Skills | Self-Reflection | Adaptable | Socially Responsible | Diverse | Flexible |
| Empathetic | Creative | Learner | Listener | Facilitator | Collaborator | Design | Studio |

INTRODUCTION:

The content of this paper reflects upon my understanding of 21st Century Skills and my role as a teacher which I can develop and improve upon to cater to the needs and demands of my students in a Design Studio course of undergraduate level, as a 21st Century Educator. Since I started my career as an educator in the field of Design, I have been observing and analyzing my student, as to what differences do they have from our times; be it cultural, social or technological, what experiences they go through which creates “Generation Gap”. Educational systems, as considered to be one of the basis for a child, also plays an important role in this change which can be noticed between each generation. So, the point is how we as educators, who are also referred as “*Rohaani Maa Baap*” (*spiritual parents*) in our culture, can bridge this gap and fill out any empty spaces in between.

SIGNIFICANCE:

As Educators, it’s important for us to understand the kind of skill set and approach we require to deal with the 21s century learners. It is as simple as knowing the target audience well and their needs before you design and present something in front of your audience. **EMPATHIZE**, the first step of the “*Design Thinking*” process, which is not only meant to be used by the designers only, is the way to approach towards any situation/person/problem/task. Once you know what is required, your work becomes easier, it saves time and better outcomes can be achieved. Something which should be our priority considering that we are dealing with individuals who are intelligent, more tech savvy, and smarter than the previous generations. Which leads to our role as an educator, while dealing with 21st Century Learners.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING & SKILLS:

In today's fast paced world, where due to globalization and the rapid modifications in the advancements in technology and exposure through media, the change is so frequent that what we learn in our lives, at work informally and at schools as formal education, is often not applicable by the time we finish or pass out from an institute. In order to succeed in life, we need new skill set and knowledge which is equally fast, updated constantly and relevant to survive in the 21st Century.

Our students require 21st Century Skills more than ever before. And to communicate with our students, it's important for us to learn these skills as well. So what are 21st Century Skills? As mentioned by *'Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel'* in their book named "21st Century Skills - Learning for Life in Our Times", the part two of the book explores, "the three main categories of 21st Century Skills: Learning and Innovation Skills; Digital Literacy Skills; and Life and Career Skills", where the Four C's are mentioned under "Learning and Innovation Skills in order to create together." (pg. 50-56).¹

4C'S OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS:

In 21st Century Skills, often the most common and essential skills to learn are ***Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Creativity***. The 4C's are the skills which are crucial for contemporary learners to adopt in order to succeed in life, school and at work. I personally feel that by acquiring these skills, one makes the biggest impact as a person in life and as a student when stepping into their professional lives.

One of the most essential C's is Critical Thinking, a concept that has been discussed by Socrates thousands of years ago. "He discovered a method called "Socratic Questioning" which is well known as Critical Thinking Strategy. His idea was to seek evidence, examine and analyze what is being said and done, common beliefs and explanations in depth to get the reasons right in order to bring clarity and logical consistency into profound thinking before we accept ideas as worthy of belief."²

Critical Thinking is the most important in order to identify the problems around oneself, from personal to everyday issues to something as big as looking in a bigger perspective for one's country/nation. A skill of high significance in order for one to start thinking and observing deep and evaluating your surroundings and your own self critically, only then you are able to identify the flaws, reflect upon them and find ways to improve in all aspects of life.

Being a social animal as humans are, we naturally feel the need to communicate and collaborate amongst each other and with our surroundings. I believe that these two skills goes hand in hand, there is no fixed order of which one comes before but the idea is to communicate your thoughts, share ideas, discuss problems and collaborate with like-minded or people with a different mindset to achieve your goals or come up with solutions.

In times when technology is at its peak, when everything is available on our palm tops, and communication has taken different forms altogether; one needs to be cautious of the ways to communicate and collaborate. In order to collaborate, we communicate mostly through text messages via our gadgets and with the lack of expression and tone available on text-based conversations, it is important for us to use the right kind of vocabulary in order to communicate

effectively. An important skill to acquire which is a good way to enhance one's vocabulary and writing skills regardless if you are conversing through text-message or face-to-face. Good communication skills are important for us to convey our thoughts as well as to collaborate.

Collaboration is also a natural phenomenon, we as humans cannot survive individually and it is important for us to interact with our surroundings on personal level and otherwise. Be it any aspect of life, we are dependent on others to reach our goals in personal as well as professional life. It is important for our students to realize that they will be most likely working with others during their education, their professional and even in their personal life. Whether one plans to work as an employee or as a freelancer, one always requires someone to work with at some point if not always.

Both these are important skills to learn to understand that not everyone around you, even your friends/family have similar thoughts and that you might not always end up working with like-minded people. The sooner and more often one practice these skills, the more absorbent one becomes and accept the diversity of opinions, resulting in improvement of minds and souls for the betterment of self and others.

One of the outcomes if we practice the above three C's from the 21st century skills, is Creativity. When you start thinking critically and starts questioning, a new angle towards a certain thing/issue comes to the surface, that initiates a conversation between individuals and one starts sharing thoughts and that leads to collaboration which starts with the exchange of ideas with different people. All of this process often lead towards achieving common goals and coming up with creative and inventive solutions to the problem discussed. We are surrounded by a very strong Visual Culture which is full of Creative ideas and visuals, in these times it is not meant for just few but Creativity is now owned by many around us, which I think is a great idea as I strongly believe that there is creativity in all fields and aspects of life. From cooking, to making art, designing clothes or advertisements, or teaching any subject, it is important to learn these 21st Century Skills, which are more the "Needed Skills" to live and survive.

21ST CENTURY EDUCATOR:

The term 21st Century seems to hold a very heavy character but if you look closely, it's all about how one as a socially responsible human being should spend life. The 21st Century skills, the 4C's is the basic skill set one requires to live a life which is beneficial for one's self and others around him/her. But as simple and basic it seems, we often tend to forget how important it is to adapt to these consciously and thoughtfully, which make things different and more meaningful.

As I have mentioned multiple times earlier in my reflections during this course, I feel that a 21st Century Educator must "Self-Reflect" more often. **Self-reflection** and looking within yourself and your surroundings helps identifying problems, accepting your own flaws and finding solutions to make the process of improving oneself easy. And that is when you learn to be more adaptive toward others, which is one of the qualities of an educator. **Adaptability** towards the ever-changing digital tools and mediums, a constant up gradation and passion to **learn** new things is required on the teachers end to match the skill set of her students. Critical and in-depth self-study also helps you look at the systems critically which initiates questioning and analyzing situations in depth, enhancing ones **Critical Thinking Skills**.

Being **flexible** and acceptable towards your students and their problems makes it comfortable for the students to communicate with the teacher and for the teacher to empathize with her students. It is essential to understand the need to **empathize** with our students, be it in the past or 21st century, empathizing is equally important in all times and maybe more crucial for our generations because of the times and systems we are living in. It is necessary for a teacher to recognize the core problem/need of the student in order to connect one-on one and guide them, the learning curve will not be able to improve and there will be difficulties in communicating if we don't understand our students on **humanitarian level**. Once an educator achieve the skill of being humane, flexible and empathizing towards people around or the students, they are automatically being inclusive and accept **Diversity** within your students.

Coming back to **Communication**, the key behind making connections. I strongly believe that lack of communication is one of the main factors in abolishing any kind of relation or situations, be it personal or professional. Communication is the basics of interaction and is a natural built-in factor in humans, whether through discussions, questioning, debates or exchanging views, one convey ideas through communicating which leads to more in-depth discussions on a certain topic where you get different views and answers to a question/problem. Which is a great way for learner/student to get multiple opinions on a specific topic to approach and building on to their thoughts and bringing clarity in their concepts.

Communication brings a vital characteristic with it which is **Listening**, another skill which a teacher must learn and master for her students. We often discussed Pedagogy of Listening during this course and how important it is to hear your student's voice. Once you start listening, you can **facilitate** and guide them with questions which will lead the students to think on their own. I believe the better you are as a listener, the better you will be able to make connections with your students.

A 21st century educator must lead a student centric approach in the class which turns the role of an educator into a **facilitator**. Teacher as a facilitator always takes the students verdict on a certain topic through discussions and unconventional means before giving a definite answer or any idea to the students. It's turns out to be a good stimulus to trigger ones brain to think and reconnect to their own experiences and understandings. This way the ideas penetrates more deeply and it helps to retain the concepts even better when all the students adds to the class discussions, resulting in thought provoking questions and more ideas to ponder upon.

For me, **Socially Responsible** is above all what we do as humans, if one understands the intensity of being responsible towards others as an individual and learn to put other before themselves, I feel they will make some good changes in the society. Here I would like to mention Sir Ken Robinson's video "*How to Change Education*", which was shared with us during this course and the points extracted from it in class reflection.

- *To construct activities where students can explore new ideas and think out of the box.*
- *Make connections between the content and history, culture and values (**Thezeeb-o-Tamaddum**) in order to develop strong cultural groundings.*
- *Think around the concepts of Social Welfare of the community and society, main target should be student's Wellbeing! (**Huqooq-o-Faraiz/Huqooq-ul-Ibaad**).*
- *Understand the students according to their diverse backgrounds, knowledge and thought process.*

21ST CENTURY DESIGN STUDIO:

Being a designer by profession and a design educator, I strongly feel that we have the capability to change mind sets and bring change in the way societies and nations think and perceive. The process will be a long one and the only way to go about it is to connect to your students who are the agents to bring change in the times to come.

I believe that teaching and learning is a two-way process, and I would ideally like to have my studio in a way where students feel a sense of ownership of what they do, of the course, the space they are in and lead the show. As mentioned above in the 21st Century Educator, I would like to play a role of a facilitator and provide my students with a comfort zone for my 5 hour long studio class. A place where they get comfortable interior and ideally well-equipped technically as well, i.e. have an excellent Wi-Fi connection, multimedia and an Air conditioned space because being design students, they work on laptops 90% of the time and the systems generates heat with having 15-20 students in the class.

Apart from providing a comfortable space, I would make special efforts to make the class environment such where they discuss their ideas openly and do not hesitate in sharing, critiquing, collaborating with each other by choice or in random groups made fairly by the instructor and where they help constructing each other rather than bringing anyone down. I aim to create lifelong learning experiences in my studio, which is beyond a classroom and will help them move beyond the student role into the real world, as they will not stay with me for more than 1 year. I strongly believe if our students take away the gist of being ***Socially Responsible*** from their classes/educational institutes, they will bring some positive changes in the society.

REFERENCES:

1. <https://www.wiley.com/en-pk/21st+Century+Skills:+Learning+for+Life+in+Our+Times-p-9780470553916>
2. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED437379.pdf>

COURSE OUTLINE

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN ART EDUCATION

UME LAILA HASAN | Sum19-004

COURSE TITLE	Design Studio
CREDIT RATING	3.00
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	20
DURATION	16 Weeks (<i>twice a week, 5 hours per day</i>)
LEVEL	Undergraduate - 2 nd Year
INSTRUCTOR	Ume Laila Hasan

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is specifically designed for individuals who are interested in pursuing their undergraduate studies in the field of Communication Design. It looks at the Elements and Principles of Design and their application in Graphics and Design practice. Students learn to approach Type and Design from a communication point of view and develop critical and analytical skills.

The course introduces students to various theories, specially focused on all the aspects of Graphic Design, and theories & practices that deals with visual communication: **Semiotics & Gestalt Principles of Design** through assignments based on Compositions / Layouts, Graphics and Typography (in English and Urdu). Design Movements are also introduced to the students and their functions and influences in '**local context**' with the aim of investigating how design works as a problem solving activity.

The Design Studio functions as a '**making space**' for students to engage and learn about design methods and processes. The students learn to integrate **Design Thinking** process in developing design solutions and hone their critical and analytical skills and explore problem solving methodologies, transitions in technology, digital use of color and the importance of continuous learning and developing a visual design language and to cope with the concerns which are aesthetic, functional and critical, using various methods to generate creative and innovative ideas / concepts – research, brainstorming, mind mapping and lateral thinking.

Design Software – Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator will also be introduced in this course to enable them to expand visual and conceptual options and to address technical aspects of Type and Design.

The assignments will be shared and submitted through Google Classroom and will include posting their final outcomes on Google Classroom for open discussions and feedback on each other's work, documentation of their process and final works, maintaining a digital journal on Instagram to showcase their design works, and compiling a digital portfolio. This will eventually lead the students to apply all the skills and knowledge learnt and project themselves as a designer out there.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the third semester curriculum is to start with the basic principles, terminologies, guidelines and methods necessary to solve any problem with a design based solution, and learn to communicate through the visual design language.

By the end of the course, the students should be able to:

- Use various problem solving methods to develop creative, critical thinking and analytical skills through Design Thinking process.
- Develop a visual vocabulary and language for Design.
- Develop both manual and digital skills to enable design practice.
- Develop familiarity with Communication and Design manifestations and practices (Local and International) to understand the scope of Design as a practice.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students should be able to:

- Integrate text, shape, image, and color in creating unified design compositions/solutions.
- Understand how color, text, shape and space affects a composition, form and layout.
- Handle 2D-3D space in multiple formats (print and digital) and scale (small to real life).
- Use the above to communicate ideas effectively and creatively.
- Be able to propose multiple solutions to design problems.
- Learn to collaborate and work in groups as a team.
- Develop the habit of critical and analytical approach as part of the design process.
- Be able to articulate and present their concepts and ideas both visually and verbally.
- Experiment with different techniques and processes to generate design solutions.
- Self-reflect, critically evaluate themselves and build a positive approach towards “change”.
- Understand the importance of peer learning and constructive feedback at both giving and receiving end.

LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

All tasks and activities will be shared and submitted on the Online Portal.

- Readings – Articles, materials for better understanding.
- Guest Lectures and Workshops.
- Online Portal – Introduction and making accounts on the Online Portal.
- Communication – Class Whatsapp group for queries and sharing.
- Online Lectures – Presentations and Demos.
- Design Process – Development and Documentation through sketchbook.
- ‘Making’ – Practical work, Testing, Revisions and Presentation.
- Critiques – Open discussions and feedback on online portal.
- Maintaining a Digital Journal – Documentation & sharing images on Instagram.
- Digital Portfolio – Final outcomes & Reflective Analysis on your experience and learnings.

**Required reading and research will be given with the assignments.*

COURSE ASSESSMENT METHODS

- Assignments: 60%
- Quizzes: 20%
- Portfolio: 10% *(Digital)*
- Online Class Participation: 10%

**Assessment for each assignment varies but follows the broad breakdown given below.*

PROCESS: 40%	FINAL SUBMISSION: 60%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process Submissions & Discussion • Digital Journal – <i>(Research & Brain Storming process shared on Google Classroom.)</i> • Feedback. • Class Participation <i>(Commenting on Student’s work in Google Classroom & Group Discussions.)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieved Objective of the Assignment. • Complete Submissions. <i>(Incomplete submissions will be downgraded)</i> • Digital Journal <i>(Instagram Account)</i> • Final Digital Portfolio & Presentation Skills <i>(PDF Format)</i>

**Research and Process is also graded from digital journal on Instagram and PDF files in the final assignment submissions, so keep visual references, term definitions updated and documented.*

RESOURCE / READING LIST

**Others might be added.*

- **Design for Communication**

By Elizabeth Resnick

- **Thinking Design**

By S. Balram

- **Design Basics**

By Stephen Pentak

- **History of Graphic Design**

By Philip B. Meggs

- **Thinking with Type**

By Ellen Lupton

ASSIGNMENT BRIEFS

WEEKLY COURSE PLAN

Week 1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INTRODUCTION TO DESIGN (Assignment 1)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is Graphic Design?• Elements & Principles of Design• Design in our Society
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DESIGN THINKING (Workshop)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is Design Thinking Process?• 1 Day Group Activity
Week 4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COLOR PSYCHOLOGY (Assignment 2 A, 2 B & 2 C)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Color Wheel• Eye Movements through Color• Using Color with Specific Local Context
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INTRODUCTION: ANATOMY & CLASSIFICATION OF TYPE (Assignment 3 A & 3 B)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic Letterform Construction• 5 Historical Classification of Type
Week 8-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INTRODUCTION: INVISIBLE ART OF TYPOGRAPHY (Assignment 4)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kerning, Tracking & Leading• Post Card Design (cultural context)
Week 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL IDENTITY (Assignment 5)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is Logo Design?• Brand Image Building through Logos• Logo Application
Week 13-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PACKAGE DESIGN (Assignment 6 A & 6 B)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Package Design for Local <i>Thelas</i>/Carts• Application on the <i>Thela</i> & Presentation