COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACH IN EDUCATING DESIGN STUDENTS

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Abstract

This paper highlights the universal competences of the designer: personal, social, communicative, activity-related, special, artistic and design, design and technological, research. Mastering these competences in the process of education will help specialists marked by a stable professional motivation, self-management and self-fulfilment in creative professional activities to foster a socially active attitude, a civic stance along with discovering their individual qualities in their profession.

Keywords: creative personality, competence, motivation, orientation, activity

INTRODUCTION

The emerging cult of professionalism in society requires that an efficient system of education be established, one which would mold experts able to work for the benefit of their country and to mainstream national values and traditions. This situation serves to underscore the relevance of the problem of professional competence, which is perceived as an established personal quality of any person competent in a certain field.

Competencies draw upon acquired skills, expertise and experience; all ensuring the ability of persons to deliver on tasks at hand or to perform certain activities. By way of example, one can cite the extent of language proficiency relied upon by an interpreter in his or her day-to-day work.

Competence is predicated on a competency (a skill) previously acquired or mastered through training or experience gained, representing the qualities of a particular person along with his or her capableness as regards carrying out the tasks or activities described above. A thorough analysis makes it clear that there is no unique or generally accepted meaning to this term in relation to a single context. There being varying interpretations to the two concepts, a clear understanding and notion of them can be achieved only through a minute investigation.

While similar on the face of it, the concept of competency and that of competence are set apart by a number of differences. The former is interpreted by experts to encompass the acquired knowledge which makes up the foundation of skills and the extent to which students are trained to put it into practice. This one also extends to the expertise that individuals may have in certain pursuits together with challenges that they are able to take up and find solutions to by relying on skills previously acquired.

The concept of competence includes:

- The set of abilities with which an individual is endowed which help him or her solve problems in real life; the qualification which is of substantial importance here as it converts an action undertaken by a person into a final useful product through resources available;

- The authority of a person which is defined by both personal qualities and knowledge in a particular field all of which have to have been acquired earlier;

- Willingness and courage to rise to the challenge. Of essence is a solid grasp of one's field which also extends to skills and experience. The job of a trained expert specialist, apart from having a clear understanding of the methods and steps to tackle a specific problem, is also to be diligent and conscientious in enhancing his or her skills, stay up-to-date on relevant information and acquire new knowledge.

- It is the ability to make the right call based on knowledge acquired or experience gained in practice.

Competence should be regarded as a more extended concept, one applied in the professional environment to foster efficient and high performance among individuals in their activities. The general point shared by the two concepts is the knowledge that a person acquires to address different challenges, how that knowledge is applied in practice and the personal properties developed which help get ahead occupation-wise [1].

This paper is structured around the universal competencies of the designer which, provided that relevant individuals are professionally motivated, self-organized and self-fulfilled in their creative professional activities, help develop a socially active attitude, a civic position along with revealing individual qualities in the occupation. The professional field of the designer encompasses creative activities aimed at shaping an aesthetically expressive spatial environment as well as an architectural one along with systems and complexes of objects and an information space, one that integrates design and artistic activities as well as scientific and pedagogical activities. All this is intended to generate and improve competitive domestic products, drive the economy, enhance the level of culture and the quality of life of people and contribute to art education.

Given the specific nature of the design profession, the following types of professional competencies have been singled out to include personal, social, communicative, activity-related, special characteristics. In pursuing their profession, designers have their individual, unique artistic and design skills, communicative abilities, intelligence, will and creative characteristics revealed, which make these indivuduals competitive. The more original, emotionally and mentally stable, personally unique a design specialist is, the more accomplished and prosperous he or she gets.

With designers establishing themselves in their profession in the context of project activities, the manner in which they impact the development of professional competence has substantial weight [2]. Consequently, the analysis of the aforementioned competencies must also cover art and design, design-engineering and research activities. These competencies listed above happen to be universal (common) for modern specialists in various profiles of design as there is room for them to be put to use in different life situations to secure and guarantee efficiency, success and productive adaptation to new workplaces.

THE CONTENT OF THE COMPETENCIES

The personal competency is meant to further the creative side of design activity finding manifestation in the constant change of one's professional targets and in the focus on changes in the environment of modern realities. This competency is found to be consistent with the competency of self-development formulated by the Council of Europe in 1996 in Bern defined as "the individual ability for life-long learning through continuous personal, professional and social learning". The particularity of this competency is ascribed to the psychological essence behind the world view of the personality of the designer which manifests itself in professional activity, in their focus on value-based relations, the output of design work, awareness of their purpose in the profession, understanding of their place in society, in the integral structure of the project culture, the content and nature of artistic and aesthetic needs, the sustainability of cultural, national and professional interests, the skill-based ability to plan, organize and systematize their work activities. The personal competency implies that a designer should have well-developed and advanced cognitive, emotional and volitional skills along with critical thinking, the ability to solve non-typical problems on his or her own, will and firmness in rationalizing and validating his or her own solutions and the ability to gain new knowledge and educate himself or herself in new skills independently. Design being predicated on a constant striving to develop and put to use innovations, new technologies and attaching new cultural significance to objects and items of design, the personal competency must fall within the self-development competency group, which is extremely relevant for the designer profession.

The social competency cultivates a set of qualities that unveil the social essence of the designer as an active and conscious actor in social relations. The professionalism of designers is in direct dependence of this competency. This stems from the fact that design has an impact on the relationship between the human and environmental objects, the degree to which it is filled with objects while also translating them into new states. A comfortable environment for human existence, which also incorporates moral and semantic components, is created through social relations in the system of design. This competency involves an active civic position, defined by the range of one's professional tasks and the willingness to take responsibility for the products of

one's work. It should be pointed out that the social competency is developed in the process of joint professional activity of actors in the field of design. This competency is intended to create artistically, aesthetically and socially harmonized objects of design [3].

The communicative competency is a universal form of development of human relations leading to the transformation of social relations as well as being the highest level of interpersonal interaction between designer and service consumer. It manifests itself in joint creative activities through the co-creativity of actors who are engaged in creative work shaping a new objective reality. The communicative competency of designers contributes to the emergence of a favorable creative atmosphere for participants in professional communication as well as helping them foster an understanding of the value of their work as correlating with socially significant work. The communicative competency makes up the key component of the professional competency of the designer, which finds expression in the verbal and visual interaction of the designer in the field of subject-object interactions.

The activity-related competency must be viewed as a basic one incorporating the personal experience gained in research, educational, artistic, project and other activities geared towards developing professionalism in any field of design. The design activities of designers are organized in such a way as to focus on the process of helping students grasp the aesthetic, moral and spiritual significance of objects of applied value. The content of this competency is comprised of artistic and aesthetic, design, technological, information and communication activities [4].

The special competency represents a set of professional knowledge, skills and personal qualities (all deemed as objectively required) of an individual receiving training in the field of project activity. This competency is defined by a broad range of tasks of aesthetic form-making in environments of items and spaces which meet the human needs for exploration and transformation of the world around us. The special competency builds on the relationship between the human lifestyle and the morphology of design objects. This helps saturate the special competency with moral and spiritual content grounded in the values and traditions of national culture.

The set of special knowledge and skills which allow for pursuing scientific and creative research in design is shaped by the research competency through students carrying out systematic scientific activities in the format of practical (project) activities. The research competency is made up of: a variational synthesis of material under examination; a comparative assessment of the initial and new properties and qualities of objects; a selection of the functionally expedient, design-layout underlying stratum of objects; the ability to generate theoretical generalizations, establishing logical links between design processes, etc.

The design and engineering competency defines the engineering side of the design profession across all areas of design activity. Design form-making serves to determine the essence of the developer's activities, who views the relevance of the form as being dependant on both semantic meaning and original design and engineering concepts. Given that any form is built on the foundation of rationality, tectonicity and ergonomics, the use of appropriate design and engineering solutions in any objects and items of design appears to be necessary. If designers have a good command of design and engineering expertise and skills, they will be able to develop a profound and comprehensive perspective of objects of design. Another significant aspect to this competency can be seen in the activation of the biprofessional nature of expertise and skills possessed by designers, a factor which enable them to expand the scope of their powers. The design and engineering competency is comprised of expertise and skills in engineering and technical activities in the process of designing.

The artistic and design competency allows individuals to adapt to different environments in society together with significantly enhancing their opportunities in employment by helping their design activities keep pace with the times. Aside from improving social activity, design also plays a part in reinforcing the designer's own value which is geared towards transforming the human environment in different contexts [5]. Design represents the fulfillment of the concept authored by an individual by means of specific research and artistic means. The central point in the design process comes down to students being able to obtain new information, to achieve mastery of new kinds of artistic and design activities all of which is conducive to designers developing their own personal stances on things. The upshot of design activity can be observed in designers fostering socially important professional and personal qualities coupled with sustainable professional motivation, conscious professional creativity and ways of creative behavior and self-expression.

CONCLUSION

Managing the motivation of students from a professional perspective, getting through to their inner strength and the emotional side of their personality will translate into the formation of conscious needs. Galvanizing

the motivation of students to set high goals establishes an enabling environment for development of creative abilities among designers helping them address daunting challenges in discovering their professional identity as well as in being a success in their activities. Motivating people towards creativity, mastering the ways of creative behavior and self-expression in artistic and design activities along with the structure of the world view and the goals to which individuals strive in their work all translate into a stable professional motivation, conscious professional creativity, harmonization between the motivational and operational sides of activity, professional learning ability, openness to new experience, competitiveness as well as sensitivity to socio-cultural problems.

With the socio-psychological aspect of an individual developed in the process of learning which is made to resemble an environment of professional activity and communication leads to the development of professional competence in individuals establishing themselves as competitive professionals in demand on the labor market.

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