

Chapter 18

A Creative Teaching Strategy to Generate Concept Designs and Their Possible Application in Tourism

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this chapter is to present the activities and results from a didactic strategy developed to generate concept designs that can be perceived as possible objects to be manufactured. This strategy is directed towards university students on an intermediate level with low performance in the industrial design major. Similarly, this chapter analyzes the importance of creating concept designs for promoting touristic destinations through a logo. The methodology for the present study is of qualitative nature and employs action research. Some methods stemming from a focus on user-centered design and creativity procedures were utilized. The collage technique and a semi-structured interview were the tools utilized on focus groups. It was concluded that the pedagogical proposal contains activities that assist the student in generating ideas in a systemized way. These actions can be applied with different purposes such as creating a design with the aim of promoting a product and a touristic destination.

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INTRODUCTION

Students with low academic performance in the Industrial Design (ID) major at Autonomous University of Ciudad Juárez, Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ), show deficiencies towards generating concept designs that reflect aspects regarding function, usability, aesthetics, and manufacturing at an abstract level. These minimum requirements are essential to conceive the possibility and viability of a design proposal. The students' inability to create concept designs is present due to three reasons: first, students show deficiencies in their competence to associate and produce ideas according to collected data about the consumer; thus, they cannot structure coherent ideas that can be depicted visually. Second, there is a lack of training in research tools that are frequently used to obtain an understanding of consumers' necessities; these instruments include surveys and interviews, which require the use of statistics for their design and validation. Students need to be knowledgeable in the methodological aspect in order to avoid mistakes due to intuition in the data analysis. The third reason, is that students do not have guidelines for the selection of ideal manufacturing materials and processes to demonstrate the viability of a concept design.

The didactic strategy in the present study has the intention of responding to the problem faced by an artisan association in the community of Creel, a town located in the highlands of the state of Chihuahua in Mexico. The purpose is to improve the design of products currently offered by artisans in order to break into a segment of the market or town's population which presently shop in supermarket chains, such as Wal-Mart or Soriana.

In view of the foregoing, the design of a pedagogical proposal for the conceptualization of industrial products should fulfill four qualities: (a) explore the expectation of consumers through the use of qualitative research tools, (b) offer a procedure for the analysis and interpretation of collected data in a population under study, (c) orient towards the proposition of a considerable number of sketches, and (d) provide students strategies to elaborate guidelines for the development of design proposals which express relevant and coherent features of the manufacturing process. Consequently, the objectives of the present study are the following:

1. To propose a creative didactic strategy for students to generate design proposals that, in general, fulfill functional, aesthetic, structural, and manufacturing requirements, through a pilot test with learners in fourth and fifth semesters.
2. To identify the advantages and disadvantages of the didactic strategy that the students carried out.
3. To analyze the importance of concept design in the creation of a logo as part of destination branding in order to promote a touristic destination.

This didactic proposal must not be considered as a design method; it is a reference to be used by teachers who encounter similar problems with students who struggle to create sketches. It is a procedure that intends to provide a general vision regarding concept designs that are viable for the solution of a problem that befalls a social group. Therefore, this strategy does not include activities planned to satisfy requirements for commercialization, transportation, sustainability, legal affairs, and regulated issues.

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