"UNITY" THEMED STUDIES IN THE BASIC DESIGNED PROCESS

Tuğba DÜZENLİ
Prof. Dr.Department of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of Forestry, Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, TURKEY, Email: tugbaduzenli@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-6957-3921

Elif Merve ALPAK
Assoc. Prof. Dr., Department of Landscape Architecture, Faculty of Forestry, Karadeniz Technical University, Trabzon, TURKEY, Email: elifmervealpak@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-2306-4299

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ABSTRACT

Design education is one of the indispensable elements of education as a whole, encompassing a lot of processes. It is important to create a systematic design product that meets the principle of unity throughout this process. Unity is one of the most important design principles in achieving order in design. When unity is achieved, both formal and functional integrity and coherence are established in the design. Basic Design course is highly significant in landscape architecture and all design disciplines. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the principle of unity in the Basic Design course of landscape architecture. The aim of the Basic Design course is to cultivate students' visual sensitivity, in which the concept and importance of unity play a significant role. The purpose of the course is to enhance students' problem-solving capacity and analytical thinking ability through the concept of unity. In this study, the works carried out within the scope of the course at Karadeniz Technical University Landscape Architecture Department are discussed based on the theme of unity.

Keywords: Basic Design, Unity Principle, Landscape Architecture

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Introduction

Basic Design emerged as one of the fundamental elements of Modernism and the Bauhaus school in the 1920s. When the Bauhaus school came to an end with Nazi Germany, its educational influences continued to spread (Lloyd Jones, 1969). The Bauhaus school significantly influenced disciplines related to architecture and design. The influence of Bauhaus in the field of art and design in Turkey between 1870 and 1950 is quite pronounced (Artun, 2009). According to Yürekli (2014), the design discipline in Turkey, influenced by fine arts, turned towards a design understanding based on Bauhaus principles starting from the 1920s. The modern design approach and the ongoing main product of the Bauhaus School is the Basic Design course (Sarıoğlu Erdoğdu, 2006). Although the principles of Gestalt design adapted from the perception psychology of the Bauhaus school are generally applied in this course, the connection is not always very clear. Design education fosters creative societies by enhancing individuals' creative powers. In a society, well-trained designers are needed for significant design products to emerge. Findings obtained from student views on the teaching-learning processes of the Basic Design course can be guiding in addressing deficiencies, errors, and problems in the course implementation. Design can be defined as trying many times before doing what you want (Jones, 1980). It encompasses all the phenomena such as projects, drawings, models, etc., which guide the realization of a product, formed within the intellectual and material work process aiming to produce a product (Gence and Orhon, 2006). The main goal of the Basic Design course, through Design Education, is to impart aesthetic education by enabling students to express and develop their observations, impressions, feelings, designs, and images by putting forward their creative powers. Design education is one of the indispensable elements of education as a whole, encompassing all these processes. It is important to create a systematic design product that meets the principle of unity throughout this process. In this study, final projects presented in the Basic Design course are examined from the perspective of unity.

Process of Basic Design Course

The Basic Design course is a process that involves creativity. In daily life, individuals constantly encounter different events and solve them through creative processes. What distinguishes an individual is the ability to design and create. Intuition and premonition are also important in design. However, a design does not emerge solely from instincts. It is necessary to know the design principles and to use them where necessary (Çellek, 2006). In both basic design and design in general, there are different perspectives, positions, and definition differences, and it is natural (Teymur, 1998). Design education is an activity like designing and, like any activity, requires a methodological infrastructure. The main aim of design education is not the result but how the process, the method, should be conducted (Özkan et al., 2016). Basic Design education allows students to engage with their field by activating their perception, impression, observation, research, association, invention, knowledge, evaluation, and many other cognitive processes, while also being a process that reaches original forms with new arrangements (San, 2010). Design education starts with seeing. The aim of Basic Design Education is to acquire visual sensitivity. Basic design education is based on teaching the elements and principles that constitute a visual composition. In the process of basic design education; it is aimed to teach the unity of elements such as point, line, color, by integrating them in a compositional understanding within a system, and applying design principles such as repetition, dominance, balance, contrast, harmony practically (Wong,1993; Wender and Roger, 1995; Yılmaz et al., 2016).

In the Basic Design course, students' problem-solving capacity and analytical thinking ability become important. Teaching the course in a studio environment, the critique process, and jury evaluation are unfamiliar and challenging for students. Intuitive teaching methods make it one of the most challenging courses for students in the first semester of university education. While studio and basic design courses are quite challenging for students accustomed to working with written texts and formulas, defining an abstract learning process consisting of lines, surfaces, shapes, colors, and textures (Sarıoğlu Erdoğdu, 2016). The goal is not the result but, on the contrary, the representation itself is part of thinking about the problem and generating thought (the process) (Doğan, 2009). For these reasons, it has a more abstract language of expression compared to other courses. During the process of transforming information gathered from the concrete world into abstract visual narratives, students' visual perception and thinking skills develop (Tekel et al., 2015). Basic design is learned by designing and experimenting. The hands-on learning method

(Özkar and Steino, 2012) is fundamental for Basic Design, although it may not be present in other design studios. Discussion and idea development through concepts, and asking questions are the determining factors of the Basic Design course. As a result, putting forward an idea in environmental design requires complete integrity. Unity means that all parts are in harmony, that is, all parts are interconnected in such proportion and connection that nothing can be removed or changed (Moughtin, 1999).

Creating order while creating a design-composition, and thus reaching a consistent and meaningful, in other words, a unified design, is important for Basic Design (Koffka, 2000). Composition can be defined as the bringing together of elements within the framework of principles in a unity understanding (Çellek and Sağocak, 2014; Alpak et al., 2018). Unity-Discipline is a tool that cannot be distinguished in the last study but traces of it can be read, it is definitely abstract, and sometimes Cartesian (Günay, 2007). Unity is considered as a whole formed by multiple components, conceptual or physical, created to achieve a purpose or result, consisting of multiple components, each of which has specific relationships with one another and is also related to the external environment, functioning as part of a larger system (Koçel,1984). From another perspective, while creating unity, interconnected small parts are used, but it is a whole that functions as part of a larger system (Hodgetts,1991). Components within the design are dynamically related or dependent on each other. Elements outside the design constitute its environment. Creating unity involves a systematic and harmonious operation. The unity approach is a complex or indivisible whole formed by the combination or bringing together of multiple things or parts. In other words, it is a whole formed by various components designed to accomplish a specific purpose (Koçel,1984). By creating order with a unity approach, designers can make different languages and designs possible. The aim in a design is to achieve unity. Without unity, there is no design-composition. Unity is the formation of individual elements or units into a whole, with specific relationships between these parts, which are also related to the external environment, as part of a larger system, either physical or conceptual, created to achieve a purpose or result.

Method

Within the scope of the "Basic Design (4+4)" course given to the 1st semester students in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Karadeniz Technical University, examples of midterm assignments conducted throughout the semester are shown in Figure 1. In the fall semester of 2022-2023 academic year at Karadeniz Technical University, Department of Landscape Architecture, students are expected to obtain a concrete design product in the final application of the Basic Design course, where all the design principles learned throughout the semester are integrated. This concrete product entails students creating an urban object using the design principles and elements they have learned. As a result of these assignments conducted over a semester, the final applications themed on "Unity" put forward by the students based on the concepts they have learned are the materials of this study. The Basic Design course at KTU Department of Landscape Architecture starts from abstract elements and concepts, and ends with systematic design composition on a conceptual basis. In this process, the transition from abstract to concrete, which is followed from the beginning to the end of the semester, has been explained, and the applications have been examined.

The analysis examined how design elements such as form, color, scale, texture, and direction, which are significantly associated with the concept of unity, were addressed in student final projects. Furthermore, their utilization of design principles such as harmony and contrast was evaluated.

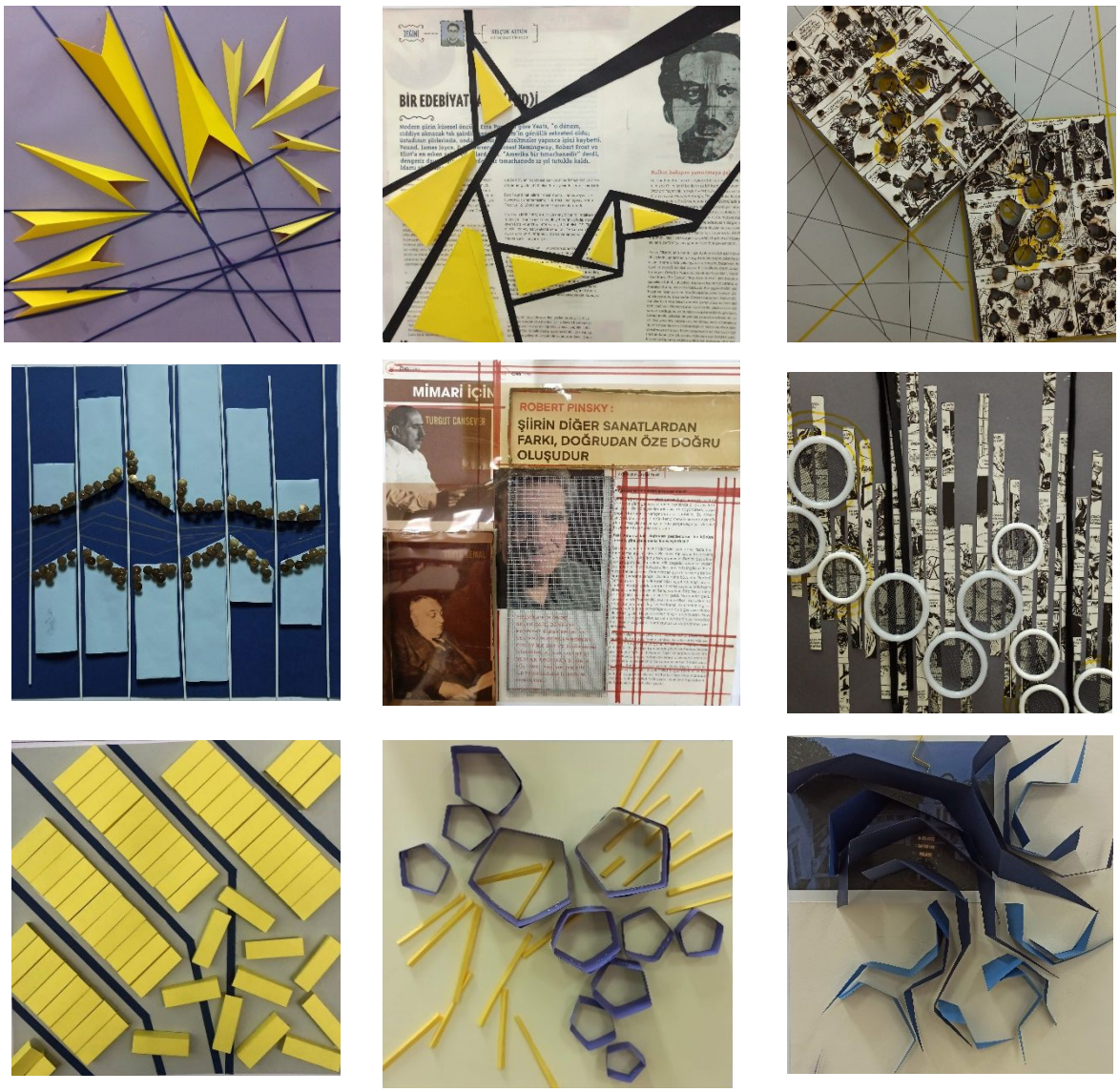

Figure 1. Examples of midterm designs

Findings

Four of the selected final projects were analyzed in terms of unity. The analysis focused on how form, color, scale, texture, and direction were addressed in student final projects, and how they were designed according to the principles of harmony and contrast (Table 1). The principle of unity in design is concerned with creating a harmonious and meaningful whole from the components of a design. It ensures that the elements of a design are connected, generating a strong visual coherence. The evaluation of the principle of unity in design education is based on certain criteria. These criteria focus on the elements that contribute to the visual integrity and order of the design. The success or failure of the unity principle can be assessed based on the following criteria:

Harmony: This refers to whether there is coherence among all components of the design. Harmony involves the integration of colors, shapes, lines, textures, and other visual elements to form a cohesive whole.

Successful unity: When colors and forms are related, a natural flow and visual balance emerge within the design.

Insufficient unity: Discordant colors, disorganized forms, or unbalanced layouts hinder the connection between parts, resulting in a disjointed appearance.

While the principle of unity ensures that visual elements are brought together in a cohesive and consistent manner, the principle of contrast introduces differences within this unity, creating a dynamic and engaging composition. Although unity and contrast may seem oppositional, when used together effectively, they produce a strong design. Contrast is employed to highlight specific elements, create focal points, and draw attention, while unity ensures that these differences are integrated into a harmonious whole.

Contrast: This refers to the oppositions between different elements in the design, which are used to enhance visual interest. Examples include:

- Color contrast
- Form contrast
- Size contrast
- Texture contrast
- Direction contrast

Balance between unity and contrast: The balance between unity and contrast is a critical factor in determining the success of a design.

Successful contrast and unity: Contrast adds interest and guides the viewer's attention, but when cohesion and consistency among elements are maintained, the design is still perceived as a whole. Contrast highlights certain parts of the design without disrupting the overall composition; instead, it enhances the meaning of the design.

Insufficient contrast and unity: If contrast is used excessively or without planning, it can lead to a sense of fragmentation and chaos in the design. Excessive contrast can overwhelm the viewer, creating a visually exhausting and disorganized impression. In such cases, the design is not perceived as a cohesive whole and feels fragmented. Student work has been analyzed within this framework.

Table 1. Analysis of Final Examples in Terms of Unity

DESIGN 1		**ANALYSIS**	
		DESIGN PRINCIPLES	
		UNITY	
		Harmony	**Contrast**
DESIGN ELEMENTS	Color	+	+
	Form	+	-
	Scale	+	+
	Texture	+	-
	Direction	+	+

DESIGN 2		ANALYSIS	
		DESIGN PRINCIPLES	
		UNITY	
		Harmony	Contrast
DESIGN ELEMENTS	Color	+	-
	Form	+	-
	Scale	+	+
	Texture	+	-
	Direction	+	+

DESIGN 3		ANALYSIS	
		DESIGN PRINCIPLES	
		UNITY	
		Harmony	Contrast
DESIGN ELEMENTS	Color	+	-
	Form	+	-
	Scale	+	+
	Texture	+	-
	Direction	+	+

DESIGN 4		ANALYSIS	
		DESIGN PRINCIPLES	
		UNITY	
		Harmony	Contrast
DESIGN ELEMENTS	Color	+	+
	Form	+	-
	Scale	+	+
	Texture	+	-
	Direction	+	+

In conclusion, when student works are considered overall, it is observed that harmony is the most commonly used principle and can be utilized with all design elements. This indicates that the concept of harmony is more easily perceived by students in their quest for unity and can be more comfortably reflected in their works. Contrast is generally used in scale and direction, while in some works, contrast is also employed in color. However, harmony predominates in form and texture. It has been determined that it can be used with all design elements. This situation is a search for unity. The concept of harmony can be perceived more easily by students and this shows that it can be reflected more easily in your work. Through an imaginary basic design, carrying out the process both develops students' imagination and provides formal. It means enriching their repertoire. Additionally, this is for students provides flexibility and students can choose the model that best suits their design skills. are encouraged to develop.

Results and Conclusion

The Basic Design course holds significant importance in landscape architecture education. Within this course, detailed explanations are provided on achieving unity through the fundamental principles and elements of landscape design, aiming to teach students the partially functional, mostly aesthetic dimension of this unity, which should be provided in a functional, aesthetic, and meaningful manner. Conducting an imaginary artistic sculpture design process not only enhances students' imagination but also enriches their style repertoire. Additionally, it provides flexibility to students and encourages them to develop their own design skills by selecting the model that best suits their design abilities (such as three-dimensional, manual skills, and creative idea generation, etc.). With the freedom to showcase their own understanding of form through three-dimensional models, each student experiences and learns elements such as form, color, texture, and direction, and learns how to combine them with principles like harmony and contrast, and most importantly, how to achieve unity in design. As a result, by making determinations in the design process based on design knowledge, students are enabled to achieve mastery-balance unity by using design elements and principles and find creative solutions. The use of three-dimensional models provides students with the opportunity to experience the practical aspects of design. This process not only develops their basic design skills but also enhances their aesthetic perceptions. This process, aimed at achieving unity, helps students understand the complexity of basic design and develop a professional perspective. Consequently, the Basic Design course enables students to develop their skills in achieving unity and finding creative solutions by providing both theoretical and practical education. This is a fundamental step for their successful careers as designers in the future.

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction Basic Design education constitutes a fundamental component of design disciplines, tracing its origins to Modernism and the Bauhaus school of the 1920s. Within the context of design education in Turkey, the influence of Bauhaus principles has been significant since the 1920s, shaping a design understanding that prioritizes aesthetic education and creative problem-solving. The primary objective of the Basic Design course is to cultivate students' visual sensitivity, enabling them to express observations and feelings through creative forms. A central tenet of this educational process is the principle of "unity." Unity is essential for achieving order, establishing both formal and functional integrity, and ensuring coherence within a design. This study aims to examine the application of the unity principle within the Basic Design course of landscape architecture, specifically analyzing how students integrate design elements to create a systematic and harmonious product.

Methodology The research was conducted within the scope of the "Basic Design (4+4)" course offered to first-semester students in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Karadeniz Technical University during the 2022-2023 academic year. The course curriculum progresses from abstract elements and concepts to concrete design compositions. For the final application, students were tasked with creating a concrete design product—specifically an urban object—that integrated all design principles learned throughout the semester under the theme of "Unity".

The study analyzed selected final projects to evaluate how design elements (form, color, scale, texture, and direction) were utilized to achieve unity. The evaluation criteria focused on the application of two main principles:

- **Harmony:** The coherence among components, such as the integration of colors, shapes, and textures.
- **Contrast:** The use of oppositions (e.g., in color, form, size) to create dynamic interest without disrupting the overall whole. The analysis determined whether the unity and contrast achieved in the designs were "successful" or "insufficient" based on the visual flow and balance of the compositions.

Findings The analysis of four distinct final design projects revealed specific trends in how students approach the concept of unity:

- **Dominance of Harmony:** Harmony was identified as the most frequently used principle across all student works. It was successfully applied across all design elements, including color, form, scale, texture, and direction. This suggests that students find the concept of harmony easier to perceive and reflect in their work when striving for unity.
- **Use of Contrast:** While harmony was predominant, contrast was generally utilized in the elements of **scale** and **direction**. Some works also employed contrast in color. However, contrast was rarely used in form and texture, where harmony remained the dominant choice.
- **Design Integration:** The findings indicate that students tend to rely on harmony to establish a connection between parts, ensuring a natural flow, whereas contrast is used more selectively to add dynamism. The works demonstrated that successful unity is achieved when colors and forms are related, while insufficient unity results from discordant elements.

Conclusion The Basic Design course plays a critical role in landscape architecture education by teaching students to merge functional and aesthetic dimensions into a meaningful whole. The study concludes that the process of creating imaginary artistic sculpture designs (urban objects) enhances students' imagination and enriches their style repertoire.

- **Educational Impact:** The transition from abstract concepts to concrete 3D models allows students to experience the practical aspects of design, developing their aesthetic perception and professional perspective.
- **Achieving Unity:** Students successfully learned to combine design elements (form, color, texture) with principles (harmony, contrast) to achieve unity.
- **Student Development:** The flexibility of the course encourages students to choose models that suit their individual skills, fostering creativity and enabling them to find unique solutions to design problems. Ultimately, the study confirms that basic design education is a fundamental step for future designers, equipping them with the skills to establish "mastery-balance unity" in their professional work.

Keywords: Basic Design, Unity Principle, Landscape Architecture

BİLGİLENDİRME / NOTICES

Etik Kurul Onayı / Ethics Committee Approval: Bu çalışma; ders kapsamında üretilen öğrenci projelerinin (tasarım ürünlerinin) biçimsel ve kavramsal analizine dayalı olduğundan ve insan üzerinde doğrudan bir deneysel uygulama veya anket içermediğinden etik kurul onayı gerektirmemektedir. Ethics committee approval was not required for this study as it is based on the analysis of design products (student projects) produced within the scope of the course and does not involve direct experimental intervention or surveys on human subjects.

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