

NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DESIGN: THE CASE OF CRAFTSWOMEN IN MARDIN

Tasarım ile Yeni Ürün Geliştirme: Mardin’de El Sanatı Yapan Kadınlar ile Vaka Çalışması

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the change in the textile products made by handcraft practitioner women in Mardin located in southern Turkey when supplied with outside product design “expertise.” The group of participants of this research have no formal design education, yet they have been making products with techniques used to prepare trousseau pieces such as lace making, felt making, sewing and crocheting since they were teenagers. Now, they wanted to incorporate new ideas to their designs to reach contemporary markets. With this aim, the designer (also the author) constructed two workshop series because instead of giving new design ideas to the participants, the designer spent extensive amount of time during these workshop series to teach the participants how to develop new ideas without imposing her own ideas. In the course of two workshop series, the designer developed a facilitation procedure to enable practitioners to pursue self-sufficient design innovation aimed at reaching contemporary markets more effectively. In the workshops, interactions between a university-educated designer and traditional handcrafts practitioners focused on collaborative learning as well as process for new product development. The subsequent work produced by the handcrafts practitioners was deemed by a panel of independent academics and professionals to have improved when compared to their initial work. In addition to this, the procedures followed by the designer have been elicited from the documentation of the workshops. These procedures formed as a research-based guideline may be repeated by designers and researchers who are pursuing similar community economic development projects especially in developing countries where handwork is still practiced.

Key Words

Design, handcrafts, women’s labor, Mardin

ÖZ

Bu makale Türkiye’nin güneyinde yer alan Mardin şehrinde el sanatları icra eden kadın katılımcıların ürünlerinin uzman ürün tasarımı bilgisi ile desteklendiklerinde ürünlerde gerçekleşen değişimi incelemektedir. Araştırmanın katılımcıları daha önce tasarım eğitimi almamış ama ergenlik yıllarından beri oya, dantel, keçe yapımı ve dikiş gibi tekniklerle önce çeyizleri için ardından da çeyizler için sipariş alarak ürünler üretmişlerdir. Dolayısıyla katılımcıların kendi üretim alanlarına hakim oldukları söylenebilir. Araştırmanın sebebi ise katılımcıların artık ürünlerine yeni fikirler ekleyerek büyük şehirlerdeki çağdaş pazarlara ulaşmak istemeleridir. Bu amaçla tasarımcı (aynı zamanda makalenin yazarı) katılımcılara hazır tasarım fikirleri vermek yerine onların kendi kendilerine fikir üretmeyi öğrenmelerini hedeflemiştir. Bunun için katılımcılarla Mardin’de iki çift çalıştay düzenlemiştir. Bu çalıştaylar boyunca birbir katılımcılarla çalışan tasarımcı, katılımcıların kendi kendilerine yeni ürün geliştirmeyi tasarımcı rehberliğinde ama yine kendi kendilerine öğrenmeleri için kolaylaştırma prosedürleri geliştirmiştir. Yeni ürün geliştirme hedefinin yanı sıra, çalıştaylar boyunca kurulan etkileşimde tasarımcı ile el sanatları yapan katılımcılar arasında işbirlikçi ve ortak öğrenmeye odaklanılmıştır. Bu etkileşim boyunca tasarımcı fikirleri empoze etmekten kaçınmıştır. Yeni ürünlerin uzun vadede çağdaş pazarlara ulaşması öngörülerek yönlendirme yapılmıştır. Katılımcılar tarafından çalıştaylar sonunda yapılan tasarımlar, konuda yetkin akademisyen ve profesyonellerden oluşan dış değerlendirme paneli tarafından değerlendirilerek ürünlerde zaman içerisinde çalıştaydan önce yapılmış ürünlere kıyasla değişim gerçekleştiği bulgulanmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra çalıştayların tamamlanmasının ardından çalışmaya ait belgelenmiş olan süreç analiz edilerek tasarımcı tarafından yerinde oluşturulan yönlendirme prosedürleri belirlenmiştir. Belirlenen prosedürler araştırma tabanlı bir yönerge önerisi olarak bu makalede ortaya konulmuştur. Geliştirilen bu yönerge özellikle el sanatları yaşamakta olan gelişmekte olan ülkelere benzer şekilde üretici toplulukların gelişmesinde diğer tasarımcılar ve araştırmacılar tarafından tekrarlanabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Tasarım, el sanatı, kadın emeği, Mardin

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1. Introduction

Though handcrafts in developing nations like Turkey continued to be economically viable even as these countries' economies were recalibrated for industry, contemporary research gives evidence of their rapid decline (Kılınç, 2004). Handcraft practices in Turkey remain largely unstudied in the design community, and the need to develop autonomous creativity among craft communities remains largely unfulfilled.

Some recent studies have put forward cases where professional designers have empowered sustainable practices of traditional craft in diverse regions of the developing world such as Nepal, Jamaica, Africa and India (Wright, 2008; Wilson, 2010; Reubens, 2010; Shakya, 2011). In collaboration with local bamboo workers, Reubens (2010) developed a product library that enables the application of traditional knowledge in the development of new craft artefacts in India; Wright (2008) explored the development of coconut crafting to meet tourists' demand for souvenirs in Lamu; and Shakya (2011) investigated the influence of Western economies in the modernization of Nepali textile production.

Though efforts to respond to the demands of tourism, and modernise craft production have addressed the necessity to preserve traditional skills and develop local economies, these communities need more to flourish than just modernisation, market awareness, and catalogues of preserved designs. The simple injection of a new idea can cultivate the autonomy and creativity that underlie both tra-

ditional crafts as well as modern product design. At the same time immersing traditional craft communities into modern markets may diminish the integrity of the design and the quality of the craftsmanship if the method of innovation is left unaddressed. This research therefore concerns an interaction between designers and craftsmen that spurs self-innovation.

2. Value of Women's Handcrafts in Turkey: An Overview

In Turkey, handcrafts are a usual part of housewives' daily lives, particularly as women prepare the various textile items that fill dowry chests. The dowry often included utensils and furniture as well as jewellery and textiles (Karakelle, 2008), but since the 1980s, it has become common for newlyweds' families to share costs more equitably, and the comprehensive dowry has devolved into a smaller, representative dowry "chest" containing just textiles: embroidery, crocheted table cloths, handmade quilts, carpets, kilims, and the like (Kademoğlu, 1999).

In the late 1990s and 2000s, the production of certain types of Turkish handcrafts began to evolve into a vocation as demand rose for these women's artefacts in both national and international markets. The production of kilims, for example, has come to be a common source of household income along Turkey's Aegean coast (Önlü, 2010; Hardt, 2011). In order to spread the resultant social and economic empowerment to women in other parts of the country, the state (through the Social Support Program of the Ministry of Development, or SODES), the United Nations Development Program

(UNDP), European Union integration framework programs, and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have instituted life-long education and entrepreneurial development grants for craftswomen. Indeed, the fieldwork for the research in Mardin that constitutes the subject of this article was co-funded by an NGO – the Foundation to Add Value to Women’s Labour (KEDV) – in collaboration with local Multipurpose Social Centres (ÇATOM), which are in turn supported by the state-level SODES. Crafts practitioners in Mardin worked alongside an academically-trained designer (the present author) to see what aspects of professional knowledge may help foster self-motivated product innovation. As such, the research is part of a larger current on the social and economic empowerment of women in Turkey.

3. Location and Participants

Lying between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Mardin is the gateway to Mesopotamia and one of the oldest settlements in Turkey. For centuries, diverse ethnic communities have coexisted in the city: Turkish, Arab, Assyrian, Chaldean, Kurdish, Christian, Armenian, Hanafi, Shafi and Yezidi (Ağırakça, 2009). Of the many traditional crafts of the region, a few have earned a national and international reputation for their quality and value: filigree, hand-printed fabrics, and marble carving among them (Enşiçi, 2005). Among several different craft projects in Mardin, ÇATOM centres were self-selected for this fieldwork because the women themselves had requested professional assistance for product design.

		Group 01	Group 02
		Age: 25-40	Age: 17-26
		Meydanbaşı ÇATOM	Ömerli ÇATOM
		Two master teachers	
Workshop 01	29 September 2009	workshop 01 day 01	-
	30 September 2009	-	workshop 01 day 01
	01 October 2009	workshop 01 day 02	-
	02 October 2009	-	workshop 01 day 02
	03 October 2009	workshop 01 day 03	-
	04 October 2009	-	workshop 01 day 03
	05 October 2009	workshop 01 day 04	-
	06 October 2009	-	workshop 01 day 04
INTERVAL			
Workshop 02	07 December 2009	workshop 02 day 01	-
	08 December 2009	-	workshop 02 day 01
	09 December 2009	workshop 02 day 02	-
	10 December 2009	-	workshop 02 day 02
	11 December 2009	workshop 02 day 03	-
	12 December 2009	-	workshop 02 day 03
	13 December 2009	workshop 02 day 04	-
	14 December 2009	-	workshop 02 day 04

TABLE 1 The workshop plan of the research.



Figure 2 Examples of participants' prior work. This photo was taken by the author at two ÇATOM centers where the research was conducted to document participants' initial work. Photo: Çiğdem Kaya, 2009.

Workshops were held at studios in ÇATOM educational facilities. At each ÇATOM centre there is a full-time master trainer certified by the Ministry of Education. The participants who joined this project were already selling crafts at local and national fairs and farmers' markets, and their activities generated income for their families. Their practice of craft was already self-reliant: some participants were paying-off their children's schooling, while others had invested further into their craft by purchasing their own sewing machines.

While the participants in the project were skilled, they reported that their portfolio of work was not doing well in the marketplace. A couple factors contributed to what they perceived as the limitations of their practice: firstly, their labour-intensive dowry crafts were deemed overpriced by potential buyers, and secondly, buyers found the pieces difficult to wash, dry, and iron. For these reasons, the products only appealed to a niche market for "authentic" dowry artefacts. Seeing

limited potential in dowry crafts that were expensive and time-consuming to produce, the participants wanted training to create products that would connect with an expanded, contemporary market. They sought the assistance of a designer/facilitator (who is the author of the present research).

At the education centre, the craftswomen who would participate in the workshops had acquired most of their skills by traditional apprenticeship system, learners focus on skill acquisition by imitating their masters (Lee, 1979; Clarke, 1992; Pratt, 1992; Gamble, 2001). Coming out of this tradition, the craftswomen were reluctant to experiment. To facilitate self-motivated innovation, they were asked to step into the role of a designer for the first time, guided by the gentle coaching of the academically trained designer.

4. Participation

A philosophy of participation informed the practical methodology that was developed for the project. Indigenous crafts exist as such because they have been developed gradually over centuries in a specific environment, to meet specific needs, and to conform to a local standard of beauty. Local craftspeople have a communal and inherited sense of pride and ownership over the designs, as well as over the quality of the workmanship. The work has personal, social, and cultural meaning that has developed organically. The challenge of the project was to stimulate growth and change that would maintain that same level of integrity. A participatory methodology was requisite (Kaya, 2011).

Pedagogically, the workshops were designed for experiential and transformative learning, as well as reflective practice (Dewey, 1933; Mezirow, 1978; Schön, 1983). The design facilitator pursued a learning relationship with the participants accordingly: the workshop experience was not structured around pre-planned interventions, rather the designer waited and took opportunities to intervene when participants naturally offered them up. This approach emphasised the ownership of ideas and allowed for mistakes, which in turn maintains the integrity of the practice even as new ideas are tested.

This approach negates the inherent imbalance of power between a university-educated designer and a group of craftspeople who have not had the benefit of such formal, institutional

training. Furthermore, waiting for intervention opportunities to emerge on their own facilitates self-learning, which is essential for reflective practice (Schön, 1938). This compels participants to adopt sustainable, self-directed, independent practices. Raising awareness in this way has been termed “transformative learning” by Mezirow (1978), following on Freire’s (1970, 1974) concept of “conscientisation” and Habermas’ (1981) “communicative learning.” To explain, Mezirow (2009: 104) dusts off the old cliché: “Give a man a fish and he can eat for a day; teach him to fish and he can eat for his lifetime.” This quality of transformative learning clearly distinguishes it from “informative learning”: while informative learning proposes changes in “what we know” or “learning what,” transformative learning proposes

VIDEO FOOTAGE EVALUATION FORM		no: 1 a
Date: 30-09-2009 Location: Meydanbaşı ÇATOM, Mardin, Turkey Description: workshop 1		evaluated: 02.01.2010
	Workshop evaluation forms of KEDEV are handed out. Questions & they can write their thoughts MY STORY "I have to stand on my own. What can I do?"	meeting my role as participant and not as studio teacher. instructions
TRIGGER	Our bag project...reasoning choices: material+design+marketing	
SOLUTION	"I dont know technique but i know how to find ideas and reduce cost"..... THEY NODD " i work with whatever is hand, simple, cheap solutions and stuff that is always available. AGREES (their tea dye) " the important thing is figuring stuff out with what is at hand"	Conceptual instructions
	asks how I made the magnets. I tell her to buy a puncher from Istanbul. It is cheap and very easy to use. They got eyelets and magnets made at stores (4 pieces for 1 lira) I tell them to buy the puncher	
	Here i notice: sits right by my left very close to me. arrives and she also comes and sits to ther very front next to . I ll later notice that they are very willing to learn.	Intrinsic motivation
SOLUTION (çizim yoksa evde yap. kırkale yoksa bir mastan dikielim)	Example: we cant make eyelets but we can make two holes and tie up a piece of chord or fabric to fasten the flower. NODDING	formal instructions

Figure 3. Sample Annotated Video Evaluation Form

changes in “how we know” or “learning how” (Kegan, 2009: 43). Learning thus arises as dialogism between the so-called student and the so-called instructor. It is a mutually educative experience. It is organic in its development and democratic in its process. To avoid the external imposition of ideas, the design facilitator thus adopted a dialogical approach that would create a sustainable process of innovation in the practice of craft. This approach is abbreviated as “coaching” for the purposes of this article.

The workshops were fully documented with the intent to analyse the interactions at a later time. Figure 3 shows a sample of the video evaluation method. Field notes were taken during and immediately after the workshops, which included detailed summaries of the actions and verbal reactions of the participants, as well as the facilitator’s own insights.

Video and photographic documentation of the workshops was also made and subsequently analysed. In particular, the *ex post* analysis of the documentation looked for “learning bridges,” which Wood (2006), in her study of craft knowledge transmission, identifies as a supporting behaviour by a master that fills a gap in the novice’s knowledge, thereby opening up a new opportunity for the novice’s independent, reflective learning.

5. Summary of the Workshops

The fieldwork consisted of four, week-long intensive workshops with two groups of craftswomen at two different ÇATOM centres. Two groups of participants, Group 01 and Group 02¹ who were already attending to

the handcrafts classes at two different ÇATOM centres took part in the workshops which were held in the studios of the two different ÇATOM centres in Ömerli and Meydanbaşı. Each workshop was held in parallel for 4 full days with a free day in between each working day, approximately from 10.00 am to 17.00 pm.

Both groups had twelve participants. The first group were between the ages of 25-40 and the second group were between the ages of 17-26. Both groups of participants came from a similar background. They were born and raised in Mardin. Most of them were junior high school graduates except one participant who went to high school and few participants who were primary school graduates.

The participants have been attending to handcrafts classes at ÇATOM centres for 3 to 5 years. That is why; they had previous experience in sharing the studio for their daily practice and during the intense preparation before handcrafts fairs.

The first group served as a control group, while the second group was an experimental group. In the first series of workshops, one and the same project was introduced to both groups and only the subsequent level of coaching – i.e. the level of the designer’s input into the participants’ work – differed.

By way of introduction and motivation, both groups were presented with a former business venture of the design facilitator. In 2003, the designer and two colleagues had begun making affordable tote bags to sell at farmers’ markets in Istanbul, as seen in Figure 3. In time, the entrepreneurial experiment grew into a start-up business.



Figure 3 The design facilitator's own design used as introductory material

After introducing the tote bag project, the designer provided both groups with local materials with which to make their own bags. Participants in the control group workshop did not receive further stimulus or instruction from the designer: the designer simply acted as a participant observer, and the bags were subsequently collected for later evaluation.

With the experimental group, the designer also acted as a participant observer, but provided further hands-on demonstrations and freely expressed her own ideas about choices of material and technique. The bags made in this workshop were also collected.

After the first workshop series concluded, the bags were presented to a panel of professional evaluators. The group consisted of four people with extensive experience in craft history, design, research, and practice. Their assessments involved the comparison of works produced by the participants before and after the workshops, and they were provided with documentation of the participants' previous work,

a brief summary of the workshop, and detailed images of the new products. The evaluators were asked to identify and discuss what the participants in the two different groups may have learned based on characteristics and changes in their production as illustrative and written assessments.



Figure 4 (a) A well-crafted tote by a craftswoman in the control group (b) The facilitator's own design



Figure 5 A poorly constructed tote bag body made by participants from the experimental group in the course of trying out ideas

In the first round, evaluators reported that the work of the control group was constrained by accepted ideas and prior practice, but more confident than the experimental group's work because it was better executed. Figure 4a shows a bag made by a member of the control group, which is quite similar to the bag made by the designer in Figure 4b. The participant attached the leaves of the flower to the body with beads, while the leaves are unattached in the design facilitator's design. Also, the participant added a filament of beads to the middle of the flower, perhaps so that it would be more safely bound to the body. The participant may have wished to realistically illustrate the flower, whereas the designer was content to leave the design abstract.

Figure 5 shows a bag made by three participants from the experimental group and the designer together. It was deemed to be more creative, but in comparison with the work of the former group was found lacking in terms of the refinement of the craft. As seen in the images, the left handle was improperly attached. It was the first time participants had attached ruffles to calico, and they had difficulty ad-

justing the machine to sew these two fabrics together in such an unfamiliar way. According to the field notes, they spent a good amount of time trying to sort out this issue, and no matter how much they tried, they were unable to obtain a satisfactory result. Though evaluators found the idea of this tote novel, they honed in on the poor execution.

The independent assessments of the work conflicted with the design facilitator's *in situ* observations and past research, in which coaching by a designer had consistently, positively influenced both creativity and craftsmanship. Hypothesizing that the participants needed more time to absorb new stimuli, the designer determined to create a second opportunity for practitioners to apply their newly acquired knowledge. In the second round of workshops, participants in both groups would work unaided.

	Control Group	Experimental Group
Workshop 1	No coaching	Coaching
Initial result	Inhibition/ Good craftsmanship	Innovation/ Poor craftsmanship
Workshop 2	No coaching	No coaching

Table 2 Plan for the second workshop in light of the results of the first

A new prototype was selected as the subject of the second workshop series, again to provide motivation and inspiration for the participants. It was a keychain made via a particular technique for attaching a double-sided fabric module to a metal key ring, as seen in Figure 6.



Figure 6 Keychains designed and sewn by the facilitator in 2009

In the second workshop series, the designer began by teaching both groups the basic process for making the keychain. Both groups then worked unaided for the remainder of the workshop. The same evaluation process was repeated.



Figure 7 Introduction of the key-chain module to Group 01 in the second workshop

According to the evaluators, the performance of the control group was similar: they demonstrated both the same inhibition and the same high level of craftsmanship as in the first workshop. Their handiwork can be seen in Figure 7. Needlework at the edges of headscarves is one of the most common handcraft techniques in Turkey, and they choose to apply the same technique for the rim of the fabric modules of the keychains.

Participants in the experimental group also applied needlework around the keychain module, as seen in Figure 8a, but the use of a large button to connect the pieces, and particularly the use of the red thread to attach it, was considered by the evaluators to be a sign of experimentation. Participants in the experimental group further examined whether the fabric module could be used to make new products, such as chokers, hair bands, and the belts seen in Figure 8b. Their fabric modules were deemed remarkably individual and experimental. Novel materials such as felt, beads, and buttons were used. The modules were more three-dimensional even than the designer's own examples. Lastly, the evaluators reported that the group's level of execution had increased in this second workshop when compared with the first.



Figure 8 Examples of key chains made in the control group



Figure 9 Keychain and belts made by the experimental group

6. Impact of the Workshops

By the end of the study, both groups had improved upon their craft. However, the evaluators identified evidence that the facilitator's initial coaching resulted in the development of novel ideas in the experimental group. As one evaluator put it, these participants were "learning the logic, starting to look at familiar techniques and materials from a different perspective" (Evaluation reports, 2010).

The participants in the control group focused on the facilitator's own tote bag, closely observing the manufacturing details and breaking in to ask questions about how it was made. When the keychain was introduced in the second workshop, a similar pattern was observed, and the participants limited their production to derivatives of the prototype.

In the first workshop, participants in the experimental group examined not only the model bag, but also constructively considered the designer's actions and trains of thought in the course of producing new bags. At first, the group had difficulty understanding the new techniques: what they were doing and why they were doing it.

They took the coaching literally, carefully following the facilitator's ideas as if they were instructions. But in the second workshop, they were compelled to interpret their new knowledge on their own terms, and they produced remarkably unique products. One evaluator expounded on this development of differentiation: "They don't take ideas and copy them. They take what they need and what makes sense to them. Your ideas triggered and challenged something. I observed that they considered the prototype, kept what they wanted, and omitted what they did not." (Evaluation reports, 2010).

The experimental group needed time to process the facilitator's coaching in order to fully assimilate new knowledge. Once the ideas and techniques presented were internalized, they were able to apply the acquired experiences to their next project independently. The impact of the first workshop became apparent in the second. In spite of initial insecurities, the coached group produced the most innovative work in the end.

7. Coaching

From the video footage, four effective strategies of coaching were identified. These strategies, which follow from Wood's concept of "bridges" in craft learning, are explicit interactions between master craftsmen and novices that create conditions for learning by allowing learners to have a shared understanding with the "expert." The four bridges that emerged in the course of these workshops have been conceptualized as follows: triggers, suggestive thinking, seeing problems as opportunities, and multiple ways of seeing. Each is explained below.

Triggers

Models were used to trigger engagement. Each workshop began with the introduction of designed items, tote bags and keychains, respectively. These were presented to provide motivation, as well as to focus the participants' attention and subsequent creative production. As soon as the prototype models were introduced, the participants carefully examined them and discussed among themselves how one might make them. They exhibited this behaviour without any prompt from the facilitator.² The triggers created a common ground of practice that lasted through the workshops and provided a stimulus to the participants for action.

Suggestive Thinking

During the workshops, the design facilitator would suggest a variety of solutions to a given question posed by a participant. The idea was that at least one of these solutions may resonate with that person's experience, and thereby initiate reflection (Schön, 1983). When a participant asked which fabric she should use for a particular purpose, the facilitator would suggest a few workable alternatives. The participant was then compelled to reflect on the possibilities and make her own decision.³ "What if...?" formulations likewise led participants toward active reflection and away from the mere memorization of new principles.

Seeing Problems as Opportunities

The lack of easy access to materials and resources was an issue about which participants repeatedly complained.⁴ In such situations, the facilitator encouraged participants to explore the possibilities of local materials and

redesign products as necessary to accommodate substitutes for desired materials. To produce a viable product, there has to be a process of negotiation among ideas, techniques, and the materials at hand, a concept which was new to the participants.

By way of illustration, when the design facilitator offered her own tote bag design as a prototype, she suggested that the metal eyelets with which the flowers were bound could be replaced with another binding alternative, as an eyelet puncher was not available at the workshop. Instead of an eyelet, the flower could be sewn to the body of the bag through holes, like a button, as in Figure 9.⁵

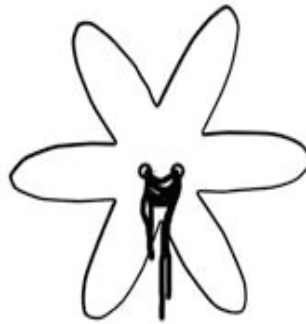


Figure 10 A flower attached by tying it onto the body of the bag.

Participants then recalled solutions they had developed previously on their own and reported these to the designer. One participant suggested that, in order to save on cost and time, they could use industrial rather than handmade felt for the body.⁶ For example, when the facilitator pointed out that she works with whatever is at hand, seeking "simple and inexpensive solutions ... stuff that is always ava-

ilable,” another participant re-joined “Us, too! We dye fabric with tea.”⁷

Multiple Ways of Seeing

When talking about an object, the facilitator verbally articulated design elements such as colour, use, texture, weight, and meaning. When showing the tote bag to the experimental group, the designer compared the decorative flower on her bag with flowers used on items made by the participants:

The difference in the flower used on the tote is how the petals are designed [showing the contour of each petal]. I never use round flowers because then the product looks as if it is for kids. Instead, I like to use long and pointed petals to make it feminine.⁸

The examples show how the facilitator designer managed to regulate her interactions with the participants to inform but not train them. The strategies identified by the research may serve as guidelines for intervention in similar design-related community development projects. They illuminate the relationship between changes in the work and self-confidence of the participants and the facilitator’s own actions and interaction style. Following from the learning bridges identified in the experimental group’s workshops, a set principles for more productive learning encounters was developed for basis for further research in this field.

8. Conclusion

In the course of the project, the goal of the participants to learn to make new products was surpassed. By using a strategy of coaching instead of teaching, the facilitator released control over the workshops, and an open, participatory learning environment

was created where new ideas could be integrated and changed by traditional knowledge and experience.

In facilitating exploratory paths, the design facilitator’s actions arose as a natural, unplanned extension of her presence in the workshops. Without being prompted, participants in both groups reported that they were motivated to experiment further with more varied handcraft pieces. Even after the project ended, new work has been sent to the designer by the workshop participants with requests for feedback. In addition to differentiation in the production, a significant change in participants’ self-esteem has been observed as they have begun to seek out and grapple with new knowledge on their own.

Although the projects started as a way to help craftswomen add value to their products, in the end it uncovered an untapped potential for self-innovation, giving practitioners ownership over their own work.

NOTES

- 1 Also referred as “the first group” and “the second group” in the thesis.
- 2 Field notes, 2009, [HP, 01_01_01:12.13-16.46]
- 3 [R, 01_01_02: 00.16, 02.29, 09.08, and 25.06], [R, 01_02_01: 19.49]
- 4 [A, 01_02_02: 17.46], (FA, 02: 11.55), (PS, 02: 05.24, 05.41, 12.14), (GB, 02: 27.45), [HP, 01_02_01: 07.00]
- 5 [R, 01_01_01:7.21, 7.46-8.00]
- 6 [A, 01_01_01:12.33]
- 7 [NE, 01_01_01:04.43]
- 8 [R, 01_02_01: 28.55]

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