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## RESEARCH

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# THE NEED FOR AESTHETIC EDUCATION FOR TRAINING IN GRAPHIC DESIGN: A METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL

*La necesidad de la educación estética para la formación en diseño gráfico: una propuesta metodológica*

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## ABSTRACT

This research studies the need to combine aesthetic education and the acquisition of visual culture as technical skills for graphic design. A double methodology is established: recovery and bibliographic exploration that analyzes the linking of the technical knowledge of both disciplines, as well as the practical analysis of the results obtained through its application in the teaching experience and the questionnaire as a qualitative research technique carried out to Degree students in Advertising and Public Relations. The results show that the transversal teaching method and historical and theoretical training on visual media are suitable for the application of digital techniques and the development of projects for the creation of branding, visual identity, and brand image.

**KEYWORDS:** graphic design - aesthetics - visual culture - communication - branding - visual identity

## RESUMEN

Esta investigación estudia la necesidad de combinar la educación estética y la adquisición de cultura visual como aptitudes técnicas para el diseño gráfico. Se establece una metodología doble: recuperación y exploración bibliográfica que analiza la vinculación de los conocimientos de carácter técnico de ambas disciplinas, así como del análisis práctico de los resultados obtenidos mediante su aplicación en

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la experiencia docente y el cuestionario como técnica de investigación cualitativa realizado a estudiantes del Grado en Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas en Educación Superior. Los resultados muestran que el método de enseñanza transversal y una formación de carácter histórico y teórico sobre los medios visuales es adecuado para la aplicación de técnicas digitales y el desarrollo de proyectos de creación de *branding*, identidad visual e imagen de marca.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** diseño gráfico - estética - cultura visual - comunicación - branding - identidad visual

## A NECESSIDADE DA EDUCAÇÃO ESTÉTICA PARA A FORMAÇÃO EM DESIGN GRÁFICO: UMA PROPOSTA METODOLÓGICA

### RESUMO

Esta pesquisa estuda a necessidade de combinar a educação estética e a aquisição de cultura visual como aptidões técnicas para o design gráfico. Se estabelece uma metodologia dupla: recuperação e pesquisa bibliográfica que analisa a vinculação dos conhecimentos de caráter técnico de ambas disciplinas, assim como a análise prática dos resultados obtidos pela aplicação na experiência docente e o questionário como técnica de pesquisa qualitativa realizada a estudantes da Graduação em Publicidade e Relações Públicas na Educação Superior. Os resultados mostram que o método de ensino transversal e uma formação de caráter histórico e teórico sobre os meios visuais é adequado para a aplicação de técnicas digitais e o desenvolvimento de projetos de criação de *branding*, identidade visual e imagem de marca.

**PALAVRAS CHAVE:** design gráfico - estética - cultura visual - comunicação - branding - identidade visual

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The need to adapt training to contemporary challenges forces the different subjects and professional specializations to find themselves in permanent change,

redefinition, and self-evaluation. Starting from the hypothesis of the need to incorporate and link the subjects of Aesthetics and Visual Culture and those of Graphic Design, the authors have evaluated the requirements for their correct adaptation to the training program, a start-up of the competences related to each of the subjects with each other, and an assessment of the obtained results.

As a result of the practical research, the reflection that gives rise to the present research work arises. Before being outlined as a definitive conclusion, it is proposed as an expanded field of research on the need to meet competencies between theoretical and practical subjects in the field of audiovisual communication and graphic design.

The origin of this research is found in the perception, as a result of professional practice in training development experiences in previous courses, of the need to influence greater historical, theoretical, and critical education on aesthetic notions related to contemporary visual culture. Through the development of this subject of knowledge and its theoretical and practical skills, the possibility of influencing a substantial and exponential improvement in the development of content and the learning of aesthetic skills is proposed.

The purpose of the review of the studies refers to the redefinition of competences and abilities for the new professional profiles demanded by the market. It has been detected that one of the main weaknesses of students is the scarcity of visual references and artistic and creative trends that serve to develop a sense of aesthetics to apply in their communications and knowing how to apply the seductive capacity of advertising. The aesthetic values allow the development of their capacity for reflection and analysis, enhancing their creative capacity and problem solving based on innovation and differential value.

The need for visual training of an aesthetic nature that could be adapted to the acquisition of new knowledge, as well as developing critical thinking in the face of the different visual phenomena linked to the visual communication fields related to advertising and design, as with multiple ethical and deontological aspects with which advertising, as Pellicer and Parra (2015; 88-124) have highlighted, shares with the philosophical discipline, especially in its communicative and aesthetic aspects, is detected.

The testing of this modification through the teaching experience of the authors also required that it be carried out from different approaches. In the first place, from the academic structures themselves, taking into account the development of profiles oriented to the present and the future of professionals in the sector. Second, from the authors' professional practice as those in charge of the academic development of the subjects, and whose trajectory and teaching methodology was fundamental for the correct implementation and transmission of the methodological, critical, and professional content to be implemented in the degree, constituting a modification to

be evaluated with a view to future development and improvement by its permanent implementation.

These incorporations were predestined by two basic issues, which we will try to contextualize in the background study, about the relevance of preparing a curricular adaptation whose contents should be, linking the subjects of Aesthetics and Visual Culture and Graphic Design.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The study aims to be an applied advance of research and innovation in teaching. Based on a learning process in which it is intended to modify the behavior of the subjects during the learning process, which entails a behavior modification due to interaction with the environment (Skowronek, 1970), being learning that produces the modification of the behavior of the people who come into contact with the knowledge, regardless of the experience, moved by the interaction with the environment. This process can be divided into three dimensions: content, methodology, and means. From the relationship between the content and the student, there is a tension that is resolved in the modification of behavior. In the "encounter" (Klafki, 1963) there are moments of assimilation of content and experiences with the result of a relationship between the subject and the object, filling it with values and achieving a behavior change. It is the "experience of change" through knowledge, in which visual culture, the art of words and images, propose that the initial behavior of the subject (student), together with the development of the dimensions of the learning process, favor a different final behavior in the student.

The learning objectives are goals proposed by the subject himself, self-taught, and the result of the planning of the teaching activity determined by the desired behavior and devised in the student, final behavior designed in advance by the teachers.

This research develops a methodology measured in time (October -February), with a concrete learning content to be able to apply the teaching and learning techniques (Adobe) in a (digital) medium, with some freedom (interaction) and which ends with the justification, the sense, the value proposition that from knowledge, promotes the change in the student's response to the message. On the other hand, planning didactically by objectives favors the interests of the students, imposing certain techniques to carry out the learning process. The proposal guarantees the planning of teaching according to the objectives but respecting the values of the students in the content.

The effectiveness of teaching by objectives maximizes the results that recognize the expected behavior by exact planning of the activities and their exploitation, in which the students must show the expected learning. On the part of the teacher, this teaching has made it possible to verify and correct the instruction as a whole,

specifically the work of the teacher-student, allowing a constant review of the teaching plans.



**Figure XX.** Curriculum process according to Wheeler.

**Source:** Self-made

The image and the application of transversal methodologies offered from the students' training, with a work methodology developed to avoid the perception of the different subjects as watertight compartments among themselves. It is about understanding the process from the formation and acquisition of knowledge, the fluidity of the different spheres of professionalization, and work as an indispensable part of the new ways and work teams.

Highlight the relevance of the need to empower the student and provide them with the necessary resources that allow them to identify visual references, both in artistic and creative trends, and that serve to develop a sense of aesthetics to apply in their own communicative pieces. Specifically, the Aesthetics subject seeks to provide students with the ability to apply critical reasoning from the use of analysis and synthesis, and, above all, the ability to become aware of the concept of visual culture for their analytical and reflective development.

From the beginning of their training, it is intended to achieve a projection of the professional future, which allows them to qualify for interpretation, from the beginning of their higher education, acquiring some of the structures and methods of

inter and multidisciplinary work, that is, useful tools for their training and current visual experience, trying to promote not only professional profiles but also the need to combine them with the training of a humanistic nature. The students' understanding of the importance of the visual world as the main communication method of contemporary culture, and the assumption of critical patterns of discrimination and analysis of the different visual spheres in contemporary culture.

The research proposes, based on experience and analysis, a model of equalization and contribution of educational models so that it can be extrapolated to all training, especially in the field of human studies. Following the purposes of unifying theoretical and practical teachings in the field of higher education, a series of intra-curricular content has been tried to be developed, marking their need and interdependence, and among themselves, not only regarding the rest of the regulated teachings within the own degree but in a way that students can perceive the link that their work will have and has with disciplines that go beyond the degree itself.

In this sense, the character of teaching in visual culture seems especially relevant, due to the necessary interconnections that it establishes regarding technological, sociological, psychological, and even legal disciplines (Kavin, T. 2009; 20 and ss). An attempt has been made to propose and transmit not only a certain professional skill but the underlying logic of that skill, which can be extrapolated both to training and to the professional and personal development of students.

To initially verify the effectiveness of these first objectives to be achieved in the evaluation period, anonymous surveys were carried out and analyzed by the students of the course. They have been able to serve those responsible for research and the respective subjects as a response and contrast of the decisions and methods used in the implementation of these subjects, as well as a possible verification, after technical evaluation, of the relevance of the elaborated academic news.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Already mentioned as the purpose of this curricular adaptation, when making the decision to implement and modify the degree subjects, introducing and linking the subjects of Aesthetics and Visual Culture and Graphic Design in the first year of the degree in Advertising and Public Relations, aspects that justified its suitability were assessed.

#### **Communication profiles and competencies**

To determine the evolution of studies in the area of Communication, the RESET study of Agencies of Spain (Reset, 2018) reveals that the professional profiles that will be most in-demand by advertising agencies will be specialists in Data Analysis and strategic planners. Also, among the pursued skills, strategic thinking, innovation, adaptability, as well as communication skills, will stand out.

On the other hand, among the most in-demand skills are Digital Advertising (27%), content management and creation (23%), content strategies (20%), communication skills, and the ability to solve problems. (McKinley Marketing Partners Company Study, 2018).

The studies show how new professional profiles should know the ways that consumers experience advertising and their relationship with brands. Even agencies and consultancies must develop their thinking and execution skills, with profiles by areas of specialization (*thinkers and doers*). To become developers, with the capacity for observation, and analysis to be able to logically structure the contents. It seems that the traditional positioning of the consultancy has changed (Fernando Polo, Good Rebels 2015).

To understand the current panorama of the communication situation at an international level, the activity of some of the best advertising agencies in the world has been analyzed. According to the first global index of excellence "Best of the best" of WARC that adds the results of three Rankings Creative 100, Effective 100, and Media 100, it states that among the best agencies are BBDO, New York; adam and eveDDB, London; McCann, New York. The observation of their activity revolves around the business idea, with the value of "Brand" as the epicenter of all the integrated communication and marketing campaigns in which marketing actions, brand design and identity construction, social media strategies, brand strategy, integrated campaigns, mobile app development, and website design, among others, are developed

### **The advertising industry in a visual society.**

As Mirzoeff (2003; 17) mentions in his *Introduction to visual culture*, everything happens today on screens. The digital society and the current culture of the image have led to the importance and pre-eminence of audiovisual languages being fundamental in audiovisual training. The process, often analyzed as "aestheticization of the world", according to authors such as Lipovetsky and Serroy (2015), has not only transformed the very way of using the image through the various methods and means of digital communication (Instagram, gifs, meme), but the visual grammar itself has changed.

As the philosopher Vilem Flusser (2019; 79 et seq.) already intuited at the end of the 80s, at the beginning of the so-called postmodernity around the change of the visual paradigm and the development of the technical image, the current moment requires a new training around the learning and use of visual information. Currently, we do not move in a universe of new forms of "imagination", but in a universe of creation of technical images. This is: a new form of creation and distribution of audiovisual messages that are not exclusively encoded by their producers but must

adjust to the predetermined conditions, among others, of audiovisual creation programs, and new media and transmission channels.

This causes a need for control by current audiovisual creators and designers, and the obligation to know and control the handling and operation of the images and the messages and communicative information that they carry not only before their creation, but also taking into account, the subsequent drift that they will have in the current "iconosphere", as defined by authors such as Franco "Bifo" Berardi in his analyzes of what he calls contemporary "iconocracy", or the reign of visual culture through which the largest number of messages throughout the day to day are received (Berardi, 2017; 49 and ss).

The changes in the way of relating to images in current culture, in turn, force not only that there have been profound changes in the methods of analysis and research on it, as analyzed by Martínez Luna (2019, 101 and ss) in his work on visual culture, but, very specifically, it forces the training methods of those professionals who are going to use images as content creators and a means of communication to varying. The purpose of this visual education shared with practices such as design and advertising ensures that professionals have sufficient training in their analysis and characteristics to carry out what we could call a "responsible use" of them, by the time that, clearly and logically, contributes to creating a *branding* following the needs of the present, as shown by studies and reports such as the one carried out by Sandra Virginia Contreras (2012, pp 105-136)

## **Content design**

To ensure this knowledge and management of visual strategies, and their adaptation to the necessary prerogatives of the design and advertising industry in today's culture, a specific program of analysis and comparative teaching has been established between the subjects of Aesthetics and Visual Culture and Design, by which to value the different elements shared between the two as visual languages, and their correct conceptualization (Català, 2005).

For this sharing between both subjects, a teaching approach has been made in which both should be linked from three points of view: planning of the subject, in which the necessary curricular link of it is contemplated, and the theoretical and practical contribution with which each of the subjects of the degree had to complement each other. The teaching planning in which the references to the methods, discourses, analysis, and practices of design, both from historical importance (with inescapable references to the work of the Russian avant-garde, Bauhaus, Op-Art or Advertising Posters) as part of the contemporary theoretical and critical discourses of both a formal and symbolic character. And finally, to verify the adequacy of the teaching methods and proposals in the implementation of the subjects in the degree, an anonymous questionnaire has been carried out among the

students of it, to verify the level of understanding of the need to link and transfer information shared by both subjects.

The selection of the survey model, both from a theoretical point of view (carried out on December 11<sup>th</sup>), and a practical point of view (survey carried out on January 21<sup>st</sup>), brought closer the interest in knowing the quantitative values confirmed by the data collection. It was, in this way, both to endorse and question the procedures and hypotheses and, using them and, following the model of Dillon, Maddie, and Firtle, to approach a model of evaluation of the sampling close to market research procedures related to advertising research. The choice of the terms in which it was carried out, just at the time of completion of the subject of Aesthetics and Visual Culture (theoretical survey) and at the beginning of the development of the subject of Design (practical survey) tried to avoid the bias of learning in conducting surveys that could provide prior information to participants, thus conditioning their responses.

With the present objectives and methodology, both for the teaching design and the evaluation of the hypotheses and results, the reorganization of contents and materials has been based on the following methods and objects of analysis:

1. Communicative capacities of the image: Starting from the general theories about the image as a form of communication, the need for knowledge and use of the theories of the creation of communicative messages has been emphasized, taking into account their semiotic and semiological characteristics. Through the Theory of creation of audiovisual messages, the relationship of the formal (connotative) and meaning (denotative) components of images has been analyzed historically and currently, as an inexcusable part of the creation of cohesive and effective messages.
2. Through the historical approach to the different visual forms and technologies (from traditional drawings and paintings to the technical formulations of photography, film, or digital technologies), it has been observed how the interpretation and creation of the mentioned communicative messages have been modified and transformed according to the following needs; **Social.** Taking into account the canons and the importance that social changes and contexts have had in audiovisual communication, an attempt has been made to consider them as a necessary part of the teaching program. Through them, future professionals have been able to observe the importance that the adaptation to the forms and content of today can have the use of one or other image designs, and the variety of possible readings to which they can submit once introduced into the so-called contemporary "iconosphere". To control the reception of audiovisual messages produced in advance, technical training and knowledge of the use and social circulation of images in contemporary visual culture are considered essential as part of the training. **Techniques.** Influencing the need for understanding and analysis that the different formulations and technical advances may have in the creation and dissemination of designs and communicative messages of a visual nature. On

the one hand, the historical perspective offered them, in this sense, multiple catalogs of possibilities and examples of technical and semantic adaptations, while making it possible to approach formulas, styles, and works whose communicative capacity could be contrasted with their practical use in the framework of creating their own designs. **Critics.** The interpretation of each of the different sections above based on the theory and interpretation of a semiotic nature that has accompanied their creation, dissemination, and interpretation, requires the development of certain critical and interpretive tools for approaching visual culture, which enables a correct use in the design, production, and circulation of audiovisual communication messages. The deontological components that audiovisual communication possesses have been observed from the knowledge and analysis of certain techniques related to representations from the point of view of gender and racial identity, as well as from the point of view of the implications and possibilities of technical dissemination through the different channels available, and the need to adapt the technical characteristics of the creation of designs to the methods, target audiences to which they are addressed, technical needs, and practical implications that are necessary to know and control in advance as professionals of advertising communication of an audiovisual nature (Mulvey, 2001; 365-377, and Mitchell, 2017).

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

Based on the proposed objectives, and to obtain objective data that can be contrasted with the hypothesis of the need for a transversal and complementary combination of the theoretical and practical aspects of the subjects of Aesthetics and Visual Culture and Graphic Design, it was decided to test and evaluate the implementation of training in aesthetics and visual culture before working with design tools. It was carried out during the 2019/2020 academic year by students of the Advertising and Public Relations degree, as well as the double degrees in Marketing, Design and Corporate Communication, and Event organization.

In previous years, the curriculum did not contemplate the option or the need for prior training in aesthetics or art, as a support for teaching quality and the students' acquisition of digital skills. Regarding the specific competencies and objectives, it was decided to provide the student with the ability to gather and interpret relevant information, which allows them to evaluate and make judgments that include being able to reflect on relevant social, scientific, and even ethical issues. For this, the incorporation of the subject of Aesthetics and visual culture was considered to favor the proposal of acquisition of specific competencies, among which is to be able to professionally apply knowledge and achieve the competencies that are usually demonstrated through the development and defense of arguments and problem solving within their area of study. In the same way, it was sought, following arguments such as those presented by Freedman and Stuhr (2004; 818-820), to carry out a curricular adaptation of the new technologies of visual creation and

contemplating the new social and cultural needs, as well as to gather and interpret excellent data, that allows them to make judgments that include a reflection on relevant social, scientific, or ethical issues. It is, therefore, a matter of continuing with the proposals that for years have advocated for education (especially oriented to the territory of communication and arts) in which transversal knowledge "enables students of democratic societies to understand and participate of the necessary cultural conversations generated by the visual arts, film, as well as the rest of creative practices" (Gude, O., 2007; 10)

On the other hand, regarding the evaluation of the objectives, a simple questionnaire was made consisting of four closed, dichotomous, and categorized suggested questions. The choice of the questionnaire as an analysis tool was because the specific questions favored the quantitative results, which are essential to meet the study objectives. According to content, it is intended to know the action, intention, and information about the relationship of the values between the two subjects. More than a month apart, the second questionnaire was made with four questions with a structure similar to the first questionnaire, but on this occasion, the respondent was provided with two open questions to optionally justify the answer to some questions.

### **Sample selection**

For the selection of the sample, all the students enrolled in the first year of the Degree in Advertising and public relations and double degrees of the Antonio de Nebrija University (UAN) have been taken into account. The sample is made up of 45 students enrolled in the indicated degrees. The participation rate in the first questionnaire was 82.2 percent of the total, and the response to the second questionnaire dropped to 66.67 percent.

The two questionnaires are sent to the total sample through Microsoft's Forms tool in different periods through corporate emails in different periods. The first phase of research is in December coinciding with the end of the Aesthetics and Visual Culture course, and the second phase is in February 2020, once the Graphic Design course has begun. It should be noted that these are first-year students who appear on the portal in Teacher Service (SSP) as students in the group lists.

## **5. RESULTS**

The research consists of two qualitative and quantitative phases. The observation of content and analysis of results obtained from the questionnaire.

### **4.1 Quantitative phase:**

To contrast the theoretical need observed in the connection and introduction of visual culture and aesthetics together with the training and professional development related to advertising and design, a questionnaire was prepared with the students of the subject "Aesthetics and Visual Culture", taught in the first year of

the degree. The results that were attempted to be obtained and evaluated through it, tried to analyze the students' prior knowledge, the level of involvement, the relevance of their training in these areas.

The first questionnaire was carried out on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019. It had the active participation of 37 respondents, from a group of 45 students enrolled in the undergraduate course. Therefore, 82.2% of the students took part in this survey. We consider, in this evaluation period, that it is a sufficiently large percentage to be taken into consideration as contrast and scale of our methodology and the results obtained so far.

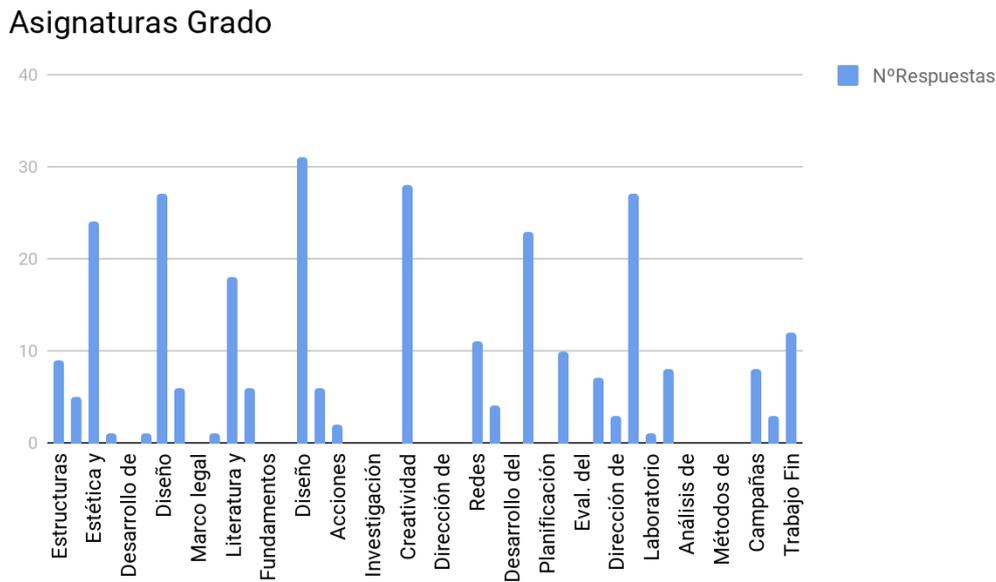
The questionnaire was specified in three questions to which the participants had to answer by marking numerical options, and to which they could add their personal comments in case they did not find the necessary reflection of their personal opinion, among the offered answers. In all the cases observed, the personal comment offered an endorsement of the obtained numerical assessment or was not evaluable for the research, as it offered evaluative comments on the subject that exceeded the scope of the research and the data collection from the sample.

Among the questions posed in the questionnaire, we want to know the personal opinion that the subject of Aesthetics and Visual Culture raised as typical of the degree, and its relationship with the rest of the subjects of the course.

Next, the students were offered the complete list of subjects of the degree, of which they had to indicate those options that they considered could be adjusted to the correct answer, and among which the subject in which the collection of data was carried out, was included. Through this procedure, an attempt was made to carry it out in the most objective way possible, helping the surveyed students to perceive the necessary distance between the subject and the link with the rest of the subjects of the degree regardless of the character.

In the information collection and to obtain the best response, Microsoft's Forms tool is used. With a response rate of thirty-seven results, with an average of 7.41 points. The results show that 0% of the users who completed the questionnaire (0 out of 37) answered this question correctly.

Next, the results of the possible relationships between the subject of Aesthetics and Visual Culture with the rest of the subjects of the Degree and the number of responses are presented:



**Graph 1:** Response relationship of subjects with Aesthetics and Visual Culture  
**Source:** Self-made

The analysis of the results obtained in the questionnaire highlights that there are more than eighteen subjects, that the students find no relationship between the subject of Aesthetics and Visual Culture, with different courses of the Degree. On the contrary, the results show that the perception between the reason to be of the transmission of aesthetic values is closely related to the four design subjects (Graphic Design, Advertising Design, Web Design, and Art Direction) and Advertising Creativity.

It seems that the perceptual relationships established *a priori* respond to early knowledge and little experience, in which the initial hypothesis on which the proposal is based coincides in the first place.

The results denote the need to enter to assess the specific competencies and even contrast them with the teacher satisfaction surveys and the results of the ordinary evaluation, they will increase the effectiveness of the research. They have been grouped in ascending order and in intervals of five responses. There are two groups with the subjects that had no response and the opposite, with more than twenty-five associations.

The highest association of responses coincides with the subjects of Graphic Design, Advertising Design, Advertising Creativity, Web Design, and Art Direction.

In contrast to these responses, among the subjects that stand out for not having been associated with the subject of Aesthetics and Visual Culture are Professional competencies, Legal Framework, or Applied Statistics, even subjects more related to

the profession such as Audience Research, but that clearly stand out from the concept of visual aesthetics.

In the second survey, carried out on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the first day of class in the second semester of the course, a response of 30 was obtained out of a total of 45 students, enrolled in the first course and the subjects being learned. That is why 66.67% of the students took part in the said survey, thus being a lower percentage than the first, but broad enough to be able to consider the obtained results.

The questionnaire consisted of six questions, four of them with four mandatory responses and two open, optional ones that allow the interviewee to complete the answer by arguing two of the three closed questions. This type of response intended to obtain qualitative information that would allow the information to be expanded and, therefore, interpret the results.

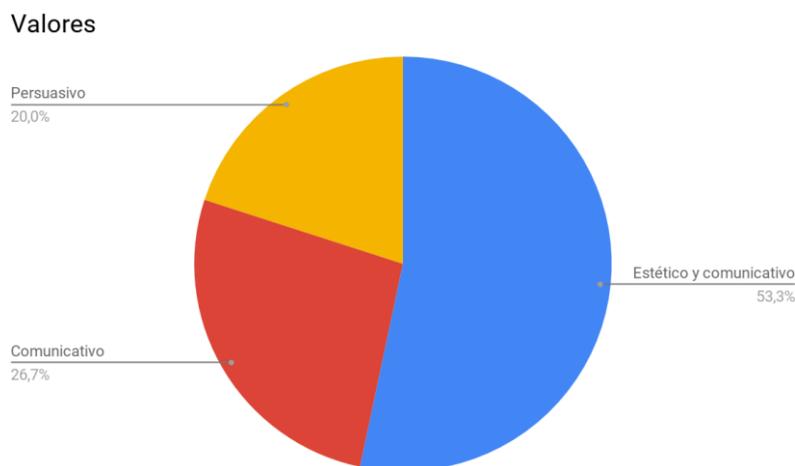
The questions posed in the questionnaire were directed to the value of the brand image based on the knowledge acquired in the subject of the first semester. Different aesthetic issues were raised. First, it asks about the color palette (clear, eye-catching, high-contrast, or grayscale); the purpose is to segment the subjects by preference group. With the results, it can be deduced that more than 50% of the sample (17 people) prefer light and relaxing colors, while 6% prefer bright and strident colors.

However, to collect as much information as possible, the next question allows an option to argue the answer to the first question. For their part, only 20% of people decide to explain the reasons for their choice; Among the answers, that they are colors with which they usually dress, they transmit peace, they reinforce and highlight, are easily combined, among others, stand out.

Besides, an approach to morphological, positional, typographic codes, among others, that define users' traits and symbolic values, relevant for the research, is proposed. Among the answers is the preference for angular, rounded shapes, reinterpreted images, or fonts, being able to give reason to the answer. Half of the respondents prefer angular and expressive shapes, compared to those who prefer rounded shapes. The low response rate related to typography stands out with 3.3%. Among the responses to question three, criteria such as originality, expression, and evolution stand out.

The description of the main function of the logo and/or brand image is framed in persuasion, communication, aesthetics, or aesthetics together with the communicative function.

This suggested question confirms one of the starting points of the research, in which more than 50% of the subjects relate the main function of a logo or brand with the aesthetic and communicative function. Mentioning that no answer links the decorative function with the brand image.



**Graph 2:** Response to the main function of the logo and/or brand image

**Source:** Self-made

The last part of the questionnaire analyzes the interpretation in the evolution of the corporate identity of an *NBA*<sup>2</sup> brand; From the pictogram, the subject chooses the reason why they believe the change has been made. Among the answers, it is intended to link with a social value of the "American", or a more directed intention such as the need to establish an analogy with the sport, underlining the idea of the stylized and vertical figure. In contrast, from a more functional point of view, the change could respond to the objective of achieving a shorter logo or even giving more importance to the icon. With a 53% response in which the modification of the visual identity of the *NBA* brand is associated with the need to adjust the logo to the idea of stylization and verticality of the sport itself. The other three responses are at 20% of the total.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

From the experience based on the learning objectives and the knowledge needs of the students, there is a change in behavior that goes beyond the experience. The design of an action plan based on the active participation between the teacher and the student guarantees the efficiency of the learning results.

On the other hand, observing the needs detected for the fusion and coordination of both subjects in the formation of the degree in Advertising and Public Relations, the following results have been obtained in the first phase of research:

**Validation of transversal methodologies implemented:** Both through the teaching practice, and corroborated by the surveys carried out with the students. We found

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<sup>2</sup> National Basketball Association

that, despite the strangeness that subjects such as aesthetics could offer them initially, by overcoming the technical profile that they initially associated with undergraduate training, once learning has developed, both the perception of it and the relationship with the rest of the degree subjects, changes. It is striking that the link has occurred more with subjects of a practical nature (Design) than with similar subjects of a theoretical nature (Literature and creation), which complements the choice and impression of the transversality of its objectives and methods as one of the values to highlight from the subject.

**Verification of the interpretation of the communicative capacities of the image:** Far from being the everyday and ordinary element to which visual culture (in its practical and non-educational nature) accustoms us as spectators, the students of the degree have been able to verify, internalize, and critically assess the importance that communicative messages have as necessary elements of contemporary communication. This is what can be interpreted from the number of implications found in the questionnaires carried out with undergraduate subjects, and specifically with those that are not exclusively limited to the visual. It is striking, and especially relevant for our research, that the results offered by the surveys offer coordination with those subjects that are linked to discursive, formal, and critical elements. We include in these sections those destined both to the correct iconic foundation of branding and image creation work, as well as to the correct and effective transmission of them in the development of audiovisual designs and brands.

**Iconic formation.** Using examples of a historical nature, the students seem to have assimilated two fundamental characteristics of iconic culture, especially applicable in audiovisual design and communication tasks: the need to pay attention to historical-social characteristics (including movements related to ideological, political, social, or stylistic characteristics that greater resonance and social impact may have in the world of communication) as elements of necessary evaluation, use, and updating in the elements of communicative creation themselves. Likewise, through them, the need (as was initially contemplated in the merge of content and introduction of new teaching subjects) to generate transdisciplinary communication channels is made evident, linking general characteristics with necessary "medial" character evaluations, even from a temporal point of view.

In this way, we verify that the students have assumed the culturally "universal" character (based on the given space-time coordinates) of certain communication and design formulas linked to the Western tradition, as well as the capacities to question them depending on the specific objectives to be achieved through their own interpretive and communicative strategies.

Finally, and fundamentally, the samples taken have come to verify how the grammatical elements of design achieve a communicative value that was not immediately perceived and has remained inextricably linked to formal interpretation from the previous theoretical support. Formulations and elements such as

composition, line, color, or, radically important, the design that accompanies all of them, cannot be understood as an isolated communication element or formula. The teaching experience to which the fusion and complicity between both subjects have given rise ensures, as was clearly shown in the second questionnaire carried out, that the students had both the intuition and the methodological basis necessary to understand how the formal elements associated with design and *branding* strategies could make use of elements related to classic - or contemporary, but linked to its formal values- visual composition to enhance the enunciation and transmission of communicative elements.

In this way, and as a final conclusion, the results obtained in the questionnaire indicate the positive perception of the students regarding the decision to include the subject of Aesthetics and Visual Culture, after having completed it and before starting the second semester, understanding the vitality of the theoretical role that it shares with subjects related to it of a practical nature. A priori, it seems that the answers coincide with the purpose of the change; It is understood that the study is "alive" and will be evaluated again, once the second semester of the first year is finished, and it can be extended to the second stage of this evaluation, which we would place at the final period of the degree. With these new takes and samples, we will try to complete the result of the obtained information, to interpret the value and importance that they give to the subject as an instrument of understanding and analysis regarding the complete training received. With this, besides, we think the rigor of its observation would be guaranteed much more effectively.

The final interest of the authors, which we believe to have resolved satisfactorily in this first stage of implementation and initial evaluation of the obtained results, lies in the development of a methodological proposal based on a transversal teaching method imposed by the current situation in which teaching is also transversal, in which the diffusion of knowledge is commonly developed, and learned between the subjects.

As mentioned, there is a real problem, which is the low motivation to develop visual education and training of historical and theoretical nature of knowledge. The educational proposal involves a change in the communication process (Arroyo, 2012) and visual training of an interdisciplinary and referential nature, in which both theory and practice play an extensive role in the development of the competencies linked to the student, in their theoretical training, and in the possibility of implementing their creative and critical aptitudes in the elaboration of creative works of a personal nature. Works whose effectiveness, both in the formal and semantic level, are a reflection of the value and mastery of the communicative work that the competences in design and aesthetics have been able to contribute in the formation and excellence of the communication strategies deployed by future visual communication professionals and the branding strategies linked to them.

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