



# From Artifact-Oriented Teaching to Experience-Oriented Learning: Paradigm Reconstruction of Art and Design Courses under a Project-Based Learning Model — a Case Study of the Mural-Based Meditative Healing Space Course

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**Abstract.** In the context of ongoing transformations in contemporary higher education, art and design education is shifting from artifact-oriented teaching toward experience-oriented learning that emphasizes problem awareness, emotional engagement, and social responsibility.[8][9].Project-Based Learning (PBL) offers an effective pedagogical framework for this transition by integrating inquiry-driven learning, real-world contexts, and reflective practice.[2][3]Taking the course Mural-Based Meditative Healing Space as a case study, this paper examines how PBL can be combined with experience-oriented design education to reconstruct the pedagogical paradigm of art and design courses. Grounded in constructivist and experiential learning theories, the study analyzes the course structure and implementation process, focusing on how cultural healing functions as a pedagogical medium. Through the design of healing-oriented spatial scenarios, students are guided to explore the relationships between space, emotion, and human behavior, thereby enhancing spatial cognition, emotional awareness, and design responsibility.Using qualitative methods including classroom observation, student works, reflective journals, interviews, and exhibition feedback, the findings indicate that shifting the focus from artifact production to experience construction enables deeper engagement with spatial experience, emotional perception, and social meaning in design practice.

**Keywords:** Project-Based Learning; Experience-Oriented Learning; Design Education; Cultural Healing Space; Mural Art

## 1 Introduction

In recent years, transformations in contemporary higher education have prompted a critical rethinking of pedagogical paradigms in art and design education. Traditional studio-based teaching models have long emphasized formal skills, stylistic training, and the production of finalized artifacts. While these approaches have contributed to the

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development of technical proficiency, they often overlook learners' experiential processes, emotional engagement, and responsiveness to real-world social issues. As a result, a growing body of research has called for educational frameworks that foreground learning experience, problem awareness, and contextual responsibility in design education.[10].

Project-Based Learning (PBL) has emerged as an influential pedagogical approach in response to these challenges. Rooted in constructivist and experiential learning theories, PBL emphasizes inquiry-driven learning, collaboration, and the integration of knowledge with authentic contexts [1][2] Previous studies have demonstrated that PBL can enhance students' critical thinking, autonomy, and problem-solving abilities, particularly in interdisciplinary and practice-oriented fields. In art and design education, PBL aligns naturally with studio pedagogy; however, many existing applications remain focused on project outcomes rather than on the experiential and cognitive processes through which learning occurs.[3][4]

Parallel to the development of PBL, experience-oriented design education has gained increasing attention. Scholars such as Schön [6][7].and Sanders and Stappers (2008) have emphasized reflective practice, co-creation, and embodied experience as central components of contemporary design learning. These studies suggest that meaningful design education should engage students not only in making artifacts but also in constructing experiences that involve perception, emotion, and social interaction. [1][7] Nevertheless, existing research often treats experiential learning as a methodological supplement rather than as a structural principle for curriculum design.[5]

Within this context, cultural healing spaces offer a distinctive educational opportunity. As an emerging design theme, healing-oriented spaces address issues of psychological well-being, emotional regulation, and social care—topics that resonate strongly with contemporary societal concerns. However, current studies on healing spaces in design education tend to focus on aesthetic representation or symbolic interpretation, with limited discussion of how such themes function pedagogically within structured learning models such as PBL.

Against this backdrop, this study aims to bridge three strands of research: Project-Based Learning, experience-oriented design education, and cultural healing space design. Taking the course Mural-Based Meditative Healing Space as a case study, the paper investigates how cultural healing can operate as a pedagogical medium within a PBL framework to support students' spatial cognition, emotional experience, and sense of design responsibility.

The innovation of this research lies in its paradigm shift from artifact-oriented teaching to experience-oriented learning. Rather than evaluating learning outcomes solely through final design products, this study foregrounds the process through which students construct spatial experiences, engage emotionally with design themes, and reflect on the social implications of their design decisions. By combining case study and action research methods, this paper contributes empirical and theoretical insights into how PBL can be restructured to support experiential learning in art and design education.[6][7]

## 2 Organization of the Text

Theoretical Foundations of Project-Based Learning and Experiential Design Education Project-Based Learning (PBL) is grounded in constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed through engagement with real-world problems rather than passively transmitted through instruction. Scholars such as Dewey and Kolb have argued that learning is most effective when it is rooted in experience, reflection, and action. In this sense, PBL aligns closely with experiential learning theory, as it situates learning within authentic contexts and encourages learners to integrate cognition, emotion, and practice. In design education, PBL has been widely adopted as an instructional model that supports open-ended inquiry, iterative problem-solving, and collaborative knowledge construction. Unlike traditional studio teaching that prioritizes formal outcomes or artifact production, PBL emphasizes the learning process itself, including problem definition, contextual research, experimentation, and reflection. This shift is particularly relevant for contemporary art and design education, where designers are increasingly expected to respond to complex social, cultural, and environmental issues. Experiential design education further extends the theoretical scope of PBL by highlighting the role of embodied perception, emotional engagement, and situational awareness. According to experiential design theory, spatial cognition and design understanding are formed through sensory interaction with environments rather than abstract reasoning alone. Learning activities such as field observation, sketching, and material experimentation function as mediators between perception and design thinking. Within this theoretical framework, mural art serves as an effective experiential medium. Its integration of color, line, symbolism, and spatial scale enables students to engage simultaneously with visual perception, emotional response, and cultural meaning. When embedded in a PBL-based curriculum, mural design facilitates a holistic learning process in which students actively construct design knowledge through experience, reflection, and iterative making.

## 3 Aesthetic and Experiential Values of Mural Art

### 3.1 Color Systems and Emotional Regulation

Eastern mural art commonly employs natural mineral pigments, producing restrained chromatic relationships characterized by low saturation and contrast. Such color systems reduce visual stimulation and contribute to calm psychological environments, which has been widely supported by studies in environmental psychology. [10] In course practice, students analyze tonal hierarchies in mural compositions to understand how color influences emotional responses within spatial contexts. This approach encourages students to treat color as a key variable in experience construction rather than as a decorative element.

### **3.2 Linear Language and Rhythmic Experience**

Line drawing in Eastern mural art emphasizes continuity and rhythm, guiding visual movement and generating gradual perceptual transitions. This rhythmic visual organization supports attentional focus and contemplative perception. In experience-oriented design education, such linear logic is translated into spatial circulation, lighting modulation, and focal organization, helping students understand the relationship between formal structure and experiential perception.

### **3.3 Symbolic Imagery and Emotional Projection**

Abstract symbolic imagery in Eastern mural art allows open-ended psychological projection and avoids fixed interpretations, contributing to emotional comfort and perceptual openness [7]. In the course context, students analyze the placement and scale of symbolic elements to explore their experiential effects. Principles such as holistic composition, rhythmic balance, and intentional spatial blankness are thus transformed into analytical tools for experience-oriented design, enabling traditional mural language to inform contemporary design education.

## **4 Research Methodology and Course Design Case-Based and Action-Oriented Teaching Framework**

### **4.1 Course Structure and Data Sources Empirical Evidence from Course-Based Practice**

To strengthen the empirical basis of this study, course-based practice from the Mural-Based Meditative Healing Space course was examined using a qualitative approach. The course was conducted over one academic semester (16 weeks) for undergraduate students majoring in environmental design and was structured according to a Project-Based Learning (PBL) framework. Mural art was integrated into the overall spatial design process rather than treated as an isolated artistic task.

The course was organized into three interconnected phases, Fig. 1: perceptual exploration design translation Fig. 2, and spatial integration Fig. 3. In the initial phase, students conducted field observation and sketching to analyze color, line, texture, and symbolic imagery in traditional and contemporary murals. In the second phase, perceptual and emotional insights were translated into spatial and mural design concepts, with attention to meditative experience, emotional regulation, and cultural resonance. In the final phase, mural elements were integrated with spatial organization, lighting strategies, and material selection to form complete healing-oriented design proposals.

Empirical data were collected from multiple sources, including classroom observations, student design works, reflective journals, interviews, and exhibition feedback. Analysis of student works revealed a clear shift from formal imitation toward experience-oriented design strategies, such as restrained color palettes, rhythmic linear compositions, and symbolic imagery guiding emotional perception and spatial flow. Reflective journals and exhibition feedback further indicated that mural-integrated spaces

were perceived as more immersive and emotionally coherent than designs in which murals functioned merely as decorative surfaces. These findings suggest that mural art, when systematically embedded in curriculum design, plays an observable role in enhancing students' experiential awareness, spatial cognition, and design responsibility.

## 4.2 Course Structure and Learning Objectives

The course Mural-Based Meditative Healing Space is positioned at the intermediate stage of the environmental design curriculum. Its primary objective is not merely the completion of a spatial artifact, but the cultivation of students' ability to construct coherent and perceptible experiential pathways. Three key learning objectives are emphasized:

First, to enhance students' capacity to define design problems grounded in social and everyday contexts; Second, to guide students in understanding experience as an analyzable and constructible design object; Third, to strengthen reflective awareness, enabling students to revise design decisions based on feedback and evaluation.

## 4.3 Project-Oriented Course Process

Project-Based Learning serves as the core organizational framework of the course. The overall process is divided into four phases: problem introduction, concept generation, design development, and presentation with reflection. Rather than progressing linearly, these phases form an iterative cycle through repeated discussion and evaluation (Fig. 2).

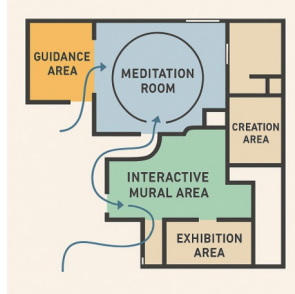


Fig. 1. Mural-Based Healing Space Flow Diagram

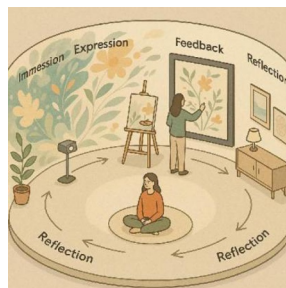


Fig. 2. Immersive Healing Zone

During the problem introduction phase, instructors guide students to analyze contemporary emotional stress phenomena through social observation and precedent studies, establishing “healing experience” as the central design focus. In the concept generation phase, students develop preliminary experiential hypotheses through research and group discussion, translating mural art language into spatial experience elements. The design development phase emphasizes the coherence of experiential pathways, requiring students to integrate circulation, visual focus, and perceptual rhythm. Finally, the presentation and reflection phase validates experiential outcomes through public exhibition and feedback. This project-oriented structure allows experience construction to become an explicit, testable, and revisable component of the design process rather than an abstract concept reserved for final outcomes.



Fig. 3. Spiritual Comfort Zone

## 5 Discussion and Implications

The analysis of project implementation and learning outcomes demonstrates that Project-Based Learning (PBL) functions not merely as a teaching technique, but as a structural mechanism capable of reshaping the logic of art and design education. By shifting instructional focus from artifact completion to the continuous construction of experiential pathways, PBL redefines evaluation criteria in design education. Rather than treating finished artifacts as direct indicators of competence, the course emphasizes problem identification, process development, and experiential coherence, making learning processes explicit and open to reflection and revision [2]

The experience-oriented course structure further reveals strong pedagogical transferability. Although this study is grounded in a mural-based meditative healing space, the underlying framework—centered on experience construction, staged evaluation, and iterative feedback—can be applied to a wide range of design domains, including public space design, exhibition design, interactive installations, and service design. The key factor is not the design object itself, but whether experience is treated as an analyzable and verifiable focus within the curriculum [6]

However, experience-oriented teaching also places higher demands on course organization and instructional capacity. The construction of realistic or quasi-realistic scenarios, combined with continuous feedback cycles, requires instructors to possess

strong project coordination skills. Moreover, project complexity must be carefully calibrated to students' learning stages to prevent cognitive overload. These considerations highlight the need for adaptive implementation when applying experience-oriented PBL frameworks across different levels of design education.

## 6 Conclusion

This study has examined the paradigm reconstruction of art and design education under a Project-Based Learning framework, using the course Mural-Based Meditative Healing Space as a representative case. By integrating experiential learning theory with studio-based pedagogy, the research demonstrates how PBL can move beyond artifact-centered teaching toward an experience-oriented learning model.

The findings indicate that positioning cultural healing as a pedagogical medium enables students to engage more deeply with spatial cognition, emotional awareness, and design responsibility. Through the design of healing-oriented spatial scenarios, students were encouraged to reflect on how color, material, light, and narrative influence human emotions and behaviors. This shift in focus facilitated a transition from formal exploration to experiential construction, reinforcing the role of design as a socially responsive practice.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study highlights the value of organizing learning around a progressive structure—from individual perceptual units to natural spatial expansion and finally to composite healing environments. This structure allowed students to experience design as a continuous process of perception, reflection, and action, rather than as a sequence of isolated tasks. The use of multi-source data, including classroom observations, student works, interviews, and exhibition feedback, provided empirical support for the effectiveness of this approach. Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. The research is based on a single course case and a specific cultural context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research could extend this framework to other design disciplines or compare multiple PBL-based courses to further validate the experience-oriented learning paradigm.

In conclusion, this paper argues that Project-Based Learning, when combined with experiential and reflective practices, offers a viable pathway for reorienting art and design education toward experience construction and social engagement. By shifting the emphasis from artifact production to experiential learning, design education can better respond to contemporary challenges related to psychological well-being, cultural meaning, and social responsibility.

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