

Project Name: Objects of Pedagogy

**Prof. Swati Piparsania, Assistant Professor of Industrial Design
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The project at CTL was a desire to invite the body into the learning space. Traditionally within design, we have been pushed to work conceptually, with ideas that perpetuate behavior overtime creating more space for the designer's mind than body. But my fellowship project will expand that scope and view body as a central location for experiencing and imagining during the classes. The project asks pedagogical questions of how do we orient ourselves to use objects as a catalyst for creating an interactive, communal and explorative space within the classroom alongside other mediums of education such as lectures, readings and learning skills.

During the spring semester, the main focus was on researching the expanse of Object-Based Learning (OBL) through literature. I collaborated on initial thinking and creating frameworks with Prof. Olivia Vien, also a CTL fellow. We were able to brainstorm ideas as our focus was similar and she has practice of working with students in the scope of found objects. The book *Engaging the Senses: Object-Based Learning in Higher Education* by Helen J. Chatterjee and Leonie Hannan proved to be a valuable resource in understanding and supporting this concept. It has been so rewarding to read this book as I am finding concrete evidence of multi-modality education as an impactful experience for the students in the classroom. There are many classroom activities described and types of objects mentioned that create specific associations. I have made the notes below that summaries some of the key thoughts in the book.

Objects can also serve as prompts for discussions, encouraging students to express their thoughts, emotions, and interpretations, thereby fostering critical thinking and communication skills. By actively engaging with objects, students develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter, fostering a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom.

Object-based learning, also known as object-based education, is an approach that emphasizes the use of real objects or artifacts

as primary sources of learning. This method has several key benefits for students:

1. **Active Engagement:** Object-based learning actively involves students in the learning process. By physically interacting with objects, students become active participants, manipulating, examining, and exploring the objects to gather information. This hands-on engagement promotes deeper understanding and knowledge retention.
2. **Multisensory Experience:** Objects provide a multisensory experience by engaging various senses. Students can see, touch, and sometimes even hear or smell the objects, creating a rich sensory environment. This multisensory approach strengthens memory formation and facilitates connections between different parts of the brain, leading to more holistic learning experiences.
3. **Authentic Learning:** Objects offer an authentic and tangible connection to the subject matter. They provide real-world examples, historical artifacts, or scientific specimens that students can directly observe and analyze. This authenticity enhances students' understanding by bridging the gap between abstract concepts and concrete, relatable objects.
4. **Critical Thinking and Inquiry:** Object-based learning encourages critical thinking and inquiry skills. When presented with objects, students are prompted to ask questions, make observations, analyze evidence, and draw conclusions. This process fosters independent thinking, problem-solving, and the development of analytical skills.
5. **Cultural and Historical Appreciation:** Objects can have cultural, historical, or social significance. By studying objects from different time periods, cultures, or regions, students gain a deeper appreciation for diversity and develop a broader perspective on the world. Object-based learning promotes cultural awareness and empathy among students.
6. **Collaboration and Communication:** Object-based learning often involves group discussions, debates, and collaborative activities. Students can share their observations, interpretations, and insights, fostering effective communication and teamwork. This collaborative

aspect enhances social skills and nurtures an inclusive classroom environment.

Initially I was thinking of designing a kit with a set of objects for each of these above attributes but as the researching went on- I was able to see a building critique of western design thinking and classroom practices. I have pivoted to think of this kit as a catalyst to think beyond mainstream practices. This kit will focus on designing for decolonization through cultural objects, native stories and multiple histories. It will also build for collective experiences over one experience by providing objects that many can use, touch and emote simultaneously bringing the possibility of meaning making while experiencing- creating a space for people to ideate/ think together.

In these scenarios, the knowledge will be constructed by the students together and will practice long-term retention as it will be assisted by eyes, mind and the hand- living beyond the listening from the lecturers.

In the Fall semester, I would like to practice some of the activities and object series mentioned in the literature in the Industrial design classes (about 5). They would be hosted like workshops 45 min to 1 hour workshops. For these, I might collaborate with Prof. Olivia to increase the scope of our research and observe the outcome through multiple perspectives. I think of these as workshop based surveys and hope to document using photography, video and voice transcriptions. I will aim to do a variety of workshops that respond to the ones I did before- as a way to build and work towards seeking a specific goal of 'how do students extend their learning through storytelling about objects'. Finally, this exercise will have the potential to bring a new design knowledge that is self-produced and imagined.

The final outcome of the project will be documented in open form- either through a zine of activities or a set of objects that perpetuate the OBL thinking. It will be more concrete after the workshops.