

THE FASHION DESIGN COURSE AT FACULDADE SENAI CETIQT: A CURRICULUM READING

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ABSTRACT

This article assesses the curriculum grid of the course of Bachelor of Fashion Design at Faculdade SENAI CETIQT, pointing out some concepts that guide the distribution and organization of the disciplines and the way the resulting set creates a specific experience in the designer's role in his work environment. After briefly contextualizing the history of the creation and functioning of SENAI CETIQT, the article presents the curriculum structure of the Bachelor course in Fashion Design, analyzing the disciplines under the light of its pedagogical project. Through the disciplines position, content selections and periodization arrangements to which the students are submitted throughout the academic career, this article aims to understand some of the characteristics of the curriculum's design. In this way, it discusses some of the challenges observed in the daily experience with the current curriculum grid of the Bachelor course in Fashion Design at Faculdade SENAI CETIQT.

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Keywords: Fashion Design. SENAI CETIQT. Curriculum grid.

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1 INTRODUCTION

From the year 2000, in Brazil, the number of institutions of higher education offering undergraduate courses in Fashion has grown considerably. Back in the 1990s, the creation of degrees in fashion throughout the national territory had already been noticed, further beyond those pioneering schools in the State of São Paulo (PIRES, 2002, p. 3), but it was in the following decade that the number of courses tripled.

In general, according to Bonadio (2010, p. 60-62), the formation of the field of fashion in Brazil grew in intensity from the strategies of different actors in the mid-1990s. Among them, we can observe that the creation of graduate courses integrated the professionalization actions of the fashion industry which at that moment was trying to consolidate itself in view of the economic transformations of the domestic market. In addition, the creation of undergraduate courses was parallel to the increase in production within the *stricto sensu* graduate studies which approached Fashion as a research topic.

In this context, the Technology Center of Chemical and Textile Industry of the National Service for Industrial Training (SENAI CETIQT) held a pioneer position in the domestic scenario as it offered courses that promoted the training of professionals for the textile and clothing industry. Throughout its performance in the city of Rio de Janeiro, enhanced from the second half of the 20th century up to the present day, the institution dedicated itself to meet the industry expectations as it addressed the development of professionals' skills for the labor market. While in its early stages it focused occupations in the textile sector – primarily due to the context of local industries in the State of Guanabara³, with the development of the national industry in the following decades fashion and the clothing manufacturing fall within the SENAI CETIQT scope of action, marking its distinguishing position among the schools which provided training for future professionals in this sector in Brazil.

Given this, the aim of this article is to examine the curriculum of the Bachelor's course of Fashion Design⁴ at Faculdade SENAI CETIQT, indicating some concepts that

³ The State of Guanabara comprised the territory of the current municipality of Rio de Janeiro between 1960 and 1975, after the transfer of the Federal District to the city of Brasília. It is worth reminding that it was a period of heavy industrialization in Brazil.

⁴ We will adopt the phrase Bachelor of Fashion Design to designate the course, although the official degree is named Bachelor of Design, according to the registration in the Ministry of Education. We will keep the term Fashion associated with the name so we can emphasize the specific aspects of this formation in comparison to those in the area of design in general.

guide the distribution and organization of the disciplines and the way the resulting set creates a specific experience in the designer's role in his work environment. The point of view adopted in this article resides in the teaching nature of the authors. We are teachers transiting through different disciplines of the course and, therefore, we are in a position that enables us to note the possibilities and restrictions present in the curriculum design and assess the way this design sets directions to the professional profile the education institution aims to train.

After briefly contextualizing the history of the creation and functioning of SENAI CETIQT, we will present the curriculum structure of the Bachelor degree course in Fashion Design. Its disciplines are analyzed according to some institutional documents about the creation of the course and its pedagogical project. Finally, we address a reading of the curriculum grid, seeking to understand some of the characteristics of the curriculum design through the disciplines position, content selections and periodization arrangements to which students are subjected along the academic trajectory.

2 THE BACHELOR DEGREE IN FASHION DESIGN AT SENAI CETIQT

The Technology Center of Chemical and Textile Industry (CETIQT) corresponds to one of the units of the National Service for Industrial Training (SENAI) and was founded in Rio de Janeiro in 1947. SENAI, as an industry body, dates from 1942, and its creation was a result of the Vargas Government's actions for the development of the domestic industry. After the creation of the Ministry of Education and Public Health in 1930, and the National Council of Education in 1931, the Vargas Government applied measures that aimed to meet the purposes of the training for the work in the industry sector, which was still incipient. The Minister Gustavo Capanema was the one in charge of the proposed laws that concentrated efforts on professional education. The set of changes declared in 1942 became known as Capanema Reform and comprised the creation of SENAI.

At that time, SENAI had been appointed as an integral part of the National Confederation of Industry (CNI), to which it is still linked. In the late 1940s, the physical facilities of what is now the campus of SENAI CETIQT were built in Riachuelo neighborhood⁵. According to the Plan of the Institutional Development (SENAI CETIQT,

⁵ Since then, SENAI CETIQT has been located next to the tunnel Noel Rosa in an area of 50000 square meters. This location is historically justified due to the proximity with the textile industries based in the region,

2015a, p. 10) in 1979, by means of a resolution of the National Council of SENAI, the Technical School of Chemical and Textile Industry (ETIQT) became the Technology Center of Chemical and Textile Industry (CETIQT). In the following decade, the institution began to offer the technical course of Fashion Styling in Industrial Manufacturing.

The first group of the Technical Course of Fashion Styling and Industrial Manufacturing started in 1984, becoming a pioneer in training professionals for the clothing sector in Rio de Janeiro. However, as it stood out as a reference in the network of SENAI schools, the institution received students from different regions of the country, which broadened the scope of the institution's activity. The curriculum model of the course started to be used by the network of SENAI schools in Brazil since other teaching techniques in the clothing sector began to be established in the regional departments of SENAI. In this way, the technical course of SENAI CETIQ was one of the few formations in fashion over the course of nearly 20 years in Rio de Janeiro, since the first higher education course in the area emerged in the city at the University Veiga de Almeida in 1995, under the title of Graduation in Fashion (UVA, 2016). From the Technical Course in Styling in Industrial Manufacturing, in 2001, the SENAI CETIQT launched the Bachelor of Design, with a major in Fashion.

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One can see that the development of the institution and the transition from the level of technical education to higher education in SENAI CETIQT can be contextualized by the educational policies that were in force between 1990 and 2000. According to the study conducted by José Marcelo Chacon and Adolfo Calderón (2015), over the two terms of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC: 1995-2003) there was an acceleration in the expansion of Higher Education Institutions (IES) in Brazil, especially in the private sector, which started to be monitored by the National Examination Courses (ENC). According to the authors, the examination allowed the private institutions of higher education and results were used by the institutions for their advertising to conquer a larger scope in the educational market. Under the FHC government, the number of enrolments in higher education almost doubled, concentrating the highest expansion of inscriptions on the private network, which grew 129.3% between 1995 and 2002 (CHACON; CALDERÓN, 2015, p. 87).

as it was the case of *Companhia de Tecidos Nova América* (New America Fabrics Company), whose space is currently occupied by *Shopping Nova América* (New America Mall).

However, the expansion of higher education did not end in Lula government, as shown by Kátia Lima (2011). The policy intensification of the IES and the courses diversification through programs like PROUNI⁶ and REUNI⁷ promoted a reformulation of higher education. For the author, laws and decrees corresponded to strategies which, in addition, represented the continuity of the FHC government's proposals. SENAI CETIQT, as an institution of higher education, is circumscribed to the private network, once its higher education courses are paid. Although the institution has not participated directly in PROUNI vacancies, one can realize that the expansion of access to higher education promoted by Lula Government programs helped SENAI CETIQT as regards the offer of undergraduate courses.

The Bachelor course in Fashion Design at SENAI CETIQT was created by a proposal to the Ministry of Education that included the formulation of a course of higher education in Fashion, considering all the experience and knowledge acquired over the years with the Technical Course of Styling in Industrial Manufacturing. The curriculum reform of the course is registered in the technical opinion delivered by Gustavo Amarante Bomfim⁸, PhD Professor, in 2003. In the document are the foundations supporting the proposal of the creation of the Bachelor course and the necessary changes that took place along the contact with the Ministry of Education to obtain its accreditation.

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As pointed out by Queiroz and Moraes (2015, p. 69) in their discussion about the transition process of the curriculum of the Fashion course at the Federal University of Ceará, which earlier addressed the training of the stylist designer, in the mid-2000s the fashion-related higher education courses were inserted in the design area of knowledge. Deborah Christo (2013) contextualizes the transition in the case of SENAI CETIQT.

From 2004, following the guidance of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), all courses, new or old, of training of professionals responsible for the creation and development of clothing as object, should adapt their pedagogical projects to the National Curriculum Guidelines of the Graduation Course in Design, established in Resolution CNE/CES No. 05, March 08, 2004. In the mid-2000s, the new courses

⁶ Created by law No. 11,096 of January 13, 2005, PROUNI is a program of the Ministry of education whose objective is the provision of integral or partial scholarships to Brazilian students without a diploma of higher education. The scholarships are intended for private institutions of higher education in undergraduate and sequential courses of specific training.

⁷ Established by Decree No. 6,096, of 24 April 2007, REUNI is one of the actions included in the Plan of Education Development (PDE) and is the Support Program for Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities. The program started in 2003 and was completed in 2012.

⁸ Gustavo Amarante Bomfim, who served as associate professor of the Department of Arts and Design at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, provided consulting services to SENAI CETIQT to produce a technical report on the implementation of the degree in design at the institution.

were authorized and accredited as they followed the educational guidelines adopted for the teaching of design and they were all included under the general term design. This is the case, for example, of the course of the Bachelor Degree in Design – Major in Fashion of the Technology Center of the Chemical and Textile Industry of the National Service for Industrial Training (SENAI CETIQT), in Rio de Janeiro, which was authorized in 2001 and accredited in 2005. (CHRISTO, 2013, p. 59-60).

One realizes that, despite having been created before the resolution that established the term design, the Fashion course of SENAI CETIQT followed the new guidance in the design area of knowledge. Thus, Bomfim's technical opinion (2003) emphasizes the negotiations that took place so that the course could meet the limitations resulting from the circumscription of the field. The Fashion Design course of SENAI CETIQT pioneered, at the national level, the adoption of the design parameters for the training of students. However, it also suffered with the debate that the Ministry of Education raised in relation to the professional profiles proposed by the new emerging courses. In his technical opinion, Bomfim (2003, p. 3) pointed out that the SENAI CETIQT had two points to observe in the proposals of the course: the context of scope and the equation between the generalist and specialist training models.

The proposal related to the creation of the Fashion Design course of SENAI CETIQT represented a major difference in the context of Rio de Janeiro, especially compared to other courses that were offered in the city and were not inserted in the tradition of the sector training. However, in addition to its local services, CETIQT stood out for its nationwide scope and, in the justification for creating the course, it was presented as a receiver of demands coming from different parts of Brazil. This aspect was a challenge for the course, as it should confront a specific context among the diversity of the fashion market in the country⁹.

As regards the opposition between general training and specific training, it is necessary to state that the emphases given to the curriculum elaboration of a course are prerogatives of the educational institutions. In the case of the Fashion Design course of SENAI CETIQT, in its original proposal, the emphases mentioned by Bomfim (2003, p. 2) were exchanged for the major in Fashion, which started granting the content of fashion to the course and, therefore, placing it in a specific locale in opposition to the vast territory a degree in design represents. In his technical opinion on the course, although MEC had

⁹ Over the years, the course began focusing on the local demands of the city and, in a more restrained way, in the regional demands of the State of Rio de Janeiro.

signaled that textile and printing knowledge should compose the emphases of the major in Fashion and that this would mean the deepening of disciplines of the basic core of the training, Bomfim (2003, p. 6) made clear that in both the analysis of the curricula of the original proposal and in that of the proposal resulting from MEC indications, there was no clear definition of the goals of the disciplines according to the separation between the Basic Common Core, the major in Fashion and the emphases.

In general, since its beginning, the SENAI CETIQT Design course has been structured in a grid divided into seven semesters, which is attested by the technical opinion of Bomfim (2003, p. 5) and by the pedagogical project of the course (SENAI CETIQT, 2015 (b)). In comparison to the grid transcribed in Bomfim and to three other grids in the academic system of SENAI CETIQT, what we see is that there had been no change in the overall structure of the curriculum over the years. Some disciplines had their names changed, others were created, but the central axis of the course has been still maintained to this day since its creation. Basically, one can notice this permanence due to the disciplines of the project present in every semester, indicating a formative journey guided by the design assumptions as regards product development, i.e. in this case those related to clothing.

In Bomfim's description (2003, p. 5), the axis of the project comprised the disciplines of Design Theory I and II, and Product Design I, II and III, each present in a school semester from the first to the fifth. In the last two semesters, respectively, would be the Final Degree Project I and II. Although we do not have access to the subject grids of the disciplines of the time to make a comparison with the current curriculum, we can realize that there are similarities with the distribution of grid n. 207, currently in force. As one can see in the grid, the disciplines are: Fundamentals of Design; Methods and Design Process; Design and Retail; Design and Logistics and Project and Industry. In the same way as in the previous grid, at the end the disciplines Project I and II are offered.¹⁰

Analyzing the set of disciplines in grid n. 207, one can separate the two introductory courses (Fundamentals of Design and Methods and Process in Design), more generic in relation to the design area of knowledge, and the other three (Project and Retail; Project and Logistics and Project and Industry), whose approach focuses on the different stages of product development in the clothing area. According to the Pedagogical Project

¹⁰ The current curriculum grid can be found on the link:
<<http://www.portaldaindustria.com.br/senai/canais/senai-cetiqt/cursos/graduacao/>>.

of the Course (SENAI CETIQT, 2015b), the discipline of Fundamentals of Design explores the theoretical and historical contextualization of design and addresses the definitions of the term and the specifics of the fashion design practice so that they differ from the other emphases of the area. Following the former, the discipline of Methods and Process in Design focuses on project methodology. It features different methods and techniques in design for product development and students start their project exercise by creating uniforms. Next, the disciplines identified by the word Project begin. The first, Project and Retail, focuses on the approach to the fashion market from the stages of creation, production and commercialization of clothing products. As it concentrates on product development for sales, the project is targeted to the particularities of the fashion collections, such as its themes of creation and the relationship between the products and the way they will be presented to the consumer — visual merchandising. Project and Logistics is the second discipline and proposes a relationship between the development of a project in design and the organization of the means and materials for the development of clothing. In this sense, it embodies supply storage procedures, processes of products production and distribution operations applied to the development of clothing. The project addresses the proposals for organization of production flows and management of materials and products for distribution to sales channels. Finally, the discipline of Project and Industry devises the structuring of the development of collection from the quantitative parameters in industry. In this sense, the calendar, the segmentation of the market profile and product lines are addressed and emphasized in the proposed project that aims to create a collection of fashion products to a particular brand. Thus, the path set by the disciplines of project in design ends as the discipline of Project and Industry comprises the last stage before the student enters his Final Degree Project, whose goal encompasses more than the previous disciplines and presupposes the development of a project from a problem of research established by the student.

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Facing this broad view of the axis of the project, the other disciplines that are part of the curriculum can be arranged in other secondary axes that are divided into different areas of knowledge, complementing the central axis of the project. In this way, one can see various groups: 1) formed by the disciplines of historical, sociological and philosophical nature, such as art history and clothing history, Aesthetics, ethics, Brazilian Culture and Fashion Theory; 2) focus on knowledge of graphical representation, which comprises disciplines such as Fundamentals of Color, Visual language, Visual identity and

Fashion Portfolio, besides the Drawing chain – from the discipline of Design Laboratory to the CAD Technical Design¹¹; 3) pattern, ergonomics and sewing; 4) disciplines involving the field of verbal language and their relationship with academic research, such as Oral and Written Communication, Research Methodology, Semiotics and Laboratories of Scientific Research; 5) textile chain, such as Fashion Research, Textile Materials, Product Management and Manufacturing Technology; 6) Pattern; 7) disciplines that involve the field of Fashion Communication; and 8) the disciplines of management, namely, Marketing and Entrepreneurship and Business. They are 61 mandatory disciplines the student must attend and be approved for at least seven semesters.

3 A CURRICULUM READING

When analyzing the curriculum arrangement, we identified that the approaches of the disciplines of the course emphasize the professional profile of the designer as designer of clothing parts. The number of disciplines involving practical knowledge about the products of fashion and the manufacturing procedures represents the largest part of the curriculum. As Fashion presupposes different profiles of professional roles, the disciplines of product development stand out when compared to other groups, such as that of fashion communication or that of management, for example. To some extent, this observation reinforces the directions set out in Bomfim's technical opinion (2003) on the institution's investment in an emphasis on the design course that was closer to its tradition of training, namely, textile and manufacturing area.

However, we can see that, although the suggestion recorded in the document indicated the area of stamping as a possibility of emphasis for the course of fashion design, in the curriculum grid this area of knowledge is reduced to two disciplines, which is little, especially compared to others in the textile area. When we observe the pattern disciplines, for example, we realize that until the second-last term the student is subjected to a specific technique, to draping or flat pattern, and to a kind of segmentation, i.e. the female, infant, male patterns in a stretch fabric, being the latter mainly linked to segments of lingerie and swimwear.

The comparison becomes even more uneven when one adds to the pattern disciplines the other disciplines which have emphases on the textile and manufacturing

¹¹ Computer-aided design (CAD).

area. If, on the one hand, this fact attests to the absence of emphasis on stamping, despite the direction suggested by Bonfim's document (2003), on the other, it attests that manufacturing became a differential in the constitution of the curriculum grid, thus establishing a training proposal for the designer closer to the knowledge about the form of clothing and the materiality of the objects. In addition, the number of disciplines of pattern shows that the curriculum grid confirms the dominance of knowledge over the productive sector and over the means of production, as the National Curriculum Guidelines (BRAZIL, 2004) recommend.

This observation led us to verify that the other emphases, those initially proposed by the project of the course creation, such as Communication and Business, were placed in the curriculum as isolated disciplines. Their contents shyly appear through few discipline distributed at the end of the course. The disciplines addressed to communication and business management can be identified in two curriculum units per area, as it is indicated on axis 7 and 8 of the curriculum grid mentioned above.¹² The specific location of these disciplines fragments the construction of knowledge, because one cannot find any justification for the presence of these disciplines in the corresponding semesters and, either, an approach of integration between the contents of the other disciplines which are also an integral part of his studies during the semester.

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The pattern curriculum units allow us to see a particular problem in the grid, which is market segmentation applied to the division of disciplines. This aspect is reinforced by another group of disciplines, such as those of fashion design. Women's, men's and children's qualifications show that the curriculum grid underwent the customer segmentation traditionally set in the fashion market. Segmentation corresponds to a process of division of the different groups of people who form the audience for a consumer market according to the characteristics of gender, age group, geographical location and/or purchasing power. In the case of pattern and drawing curriculum units, we realized that segmentation occurred by gender and age group, which corresponds to a process of content separation and stiffness of the curriculum structure. As Rita Couto (2008, p. 29) states, "curricula are long-term programs and modifications to their structure should be oriented not only by the experience crystallized in the past, but also by prognoses or possible future scenarios".

¹² In the case of the area of Fashion Communication, disciplines are: Communication applied to Fashion and Fashion Production. In relation to management, they are: Marketing, and Entrepreneurship and Business.

The curriculum flexibility highlighted by Couto (2008) is not effective when disciplines are divided by market segmentation since the knowledge starts to be defined by the technical categories of procedural performance that target that segmentation, decreasing the space dedicated to the experimentation of the students themselves. Furthermore, this type of segmentation is risky, considering its commitment to the fashion market itself. The way the market creates needs and niches is accelerated, distinguishing the products for the growing adherence of a consumer audience. Given that a curriculum has a long-term development, the adoption of market segmentation for classification of disciplines can generate a dated curriculum compared to the professional profile it will form. It can also restrict the performance of students and teachers in the quest for product differentiation and innovation.

We observed that the segmentation of the disciplines of pattern and drawing does not favor a dialogue with the other curriculum units of the semester where they are located. We believe that the Project disciplines are the most appropriate to promote the experience of crossing the knowledge developed in the different disciplines. However, even the Project disciplines are divided into market categories, as is the case of the proposed approaches: Retail, Logistics and industry.

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It is also important to point out, in relation to the topic of the contents, that the curriculum of the course of Fashion Design presents a fairly traditional curriculum division as regards the disciplines. In general, we note that the way the disciplines and knowledge are segregated represent an ideology linked to the social division of labor in industrial production. When we realize that the courses reflect the separation of the different stages of production within the fashion industry, such those of sewing, pattern, drawing, management and project, and that some are still subdivided in different techniques, we see the permanence of a Taylorist/Fordist model of production in which there is a division of activities marked by production processes.

In our view, we agree with Geraldo Pinto's considerations (2007) when he assesses the characteristics generated by Taylorism and Fordism in industrial production. Roughly speaking, the Taylorist and Fordist systems complement each other to the extent that they cause the expertise level of the working activities to rise, establishing a process of "limitation and simplification" of the professional skills (PINTO, 2007, p. 33). With that, we realize that the curriculum grid has an organization of work in which Taylorist/Fordist

concepts emerge since skills and learning tools are distributed in an evolutionary line, standardizing development operations.

The segregation of disciplines of pattern and sewing, for example, marked the separation of activities that are highly complementary in the construction of knowledge about the material properties of clothing. The separation of the disciplines of drawing and the way technical drawing is assumed to be the end of the development scale of the students' skills influence the way in which the thinking about the product representation is simplified compared to the materiality of clothing as object and to forms of viewing it.¹³ In addition, the chain built on the focus of Project disciplines – Retail, Logistics and Industry – signals the linearity of the reality of the production and distribution of objects in industrial production. When they are grouped together, all these factors directly affect the project capacity of the student, since the fragmentation resulting from market segmentation applied to training contents, as mentioned above, is enhanced by the social division of labor implicit in the classification of disciplines found in the curriculum grid.

5 CONCLUSION

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The considerations of the political economist Harry Braverman (1981) strengthen the arguments about the limitation and simplification of the worker's thinking and, in our case, of the professional to be trained by the educational institution. The author points out the main effects of scientific management in the control of production, indicating how the social division of labor creates the "principle of the separation of conception from execution" (1981, p. 104), i.e. the separation between what we call project in the design field and what are the physical processes of production. For Braverman,

the production units operate like a hand, watched, corrected and controlled by a distant brain [...]. Thus, in the setting of antagonistic social relations, of alienated labor, hand and brain become not just separate, but divided and hostile, and the human unity of hand and brain turns into its opposite, something less than human. (BRAVERMAN, 1981, p. 113).

The rupture created by the application of scientific management on the production processes causes a limitation on the subjective professional training, especially as regards the relationship between his manual work and thinking. According to Geraldo

¹³ A more detailed analysis on the aspect of the limitation on the designer's skills can be observed in the doctoral thesis entitled "Between image and fashion: a study on the visual *habitus*" (ROSA JÚNIOR, 2017).

Pinto (2007, p. 34), “the level of simplification prevents any conceptual abstraction about the work and that is, in other words, a goal of the system”. Thus, in certain situations, when students meet some teachers who demand cohesion between the theoretical and practical contents, it is understandable that these students lack the skills necessary to manage this concept and what is implied by it, because the curriculum grid do not address knowledge as an abstraction – an important stage in the student’s education. We see, then, that the separation of the activities leads to the promotion of a simplistic and depleting look on manual activities which often appear to the student body as displaced from the construction of knowledge about the goals created.

With these considerations in mind, we currently notice a scenario of changes in culture, in which some initiatives emerge due to the way they present alternatives in relation to the practices of design and their context of consumption that do not reaffirm the capitalist system in its more reductive and depleting sense, which deprives humans of their essence. Within the scope of design education, we believe that these changes may be associated with the notions that Richard Sennet (2009, p. 137-199) points out when he analyzes the work of the architect through the concept of “material consciousness”. The term refers to the knowledge acquired about the materiality that involves man’s labor and the way the material imposes certain situations that drive the craftsman to the act of thinking about his practice. Material consciousness demonstrates that hand, brain and all the senses must be combined to the development of the human capacity to think, create and work. Thus, a curriculum grid that seeks to propose the training of design practice can get closer to the craftsman’s learning models, considering the characteristics of his workspace and the way he promotes integration between the different kinds of knowledge.

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Although we do not find, in the curriculum grid of the course of Bachelor degree in Fashion Design at Faculdade SENAI CETIQT, a profile that prioritizes the training proposed by Sennet, mentioned above, we understand that changes are already beginning to happen in so far as the curriculum is being reviewed. This shows that time is an element necessary for the assessment of the scope of the curriculum and, also, a decisive factor in the maturation of new proposals.

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