The Role of *Cangkruk* Culture in Developing Skills and Creativity of Junior Graphic Designers in Surakarta

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Abstract
The Javanese culture of Cangkruk, a tradition of casual social interaction, has a positive chain effect for aspiring graphic designer students. This research aims to analyze the role of Cangkruk in developing creativity in junior graphic designers in Surakarta. The method used is a case study on students majoring in fine arts education at Sebelas Maret University, with a Peer Teaching approach and analysis of the creativity process according to Wallas, which includes four stages, which are preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. This research found that Cangkruk culture functions as a space that supports peer learning and collaboration, a medium for reflection and design criticism, a source of inspiration and creative exploration, as well as emotional support and motivation. The creative process that occurs in Cangkruk allows designers to learn through real practice based on social interaction. By creating an open space that encourages dialog of ideas, collaboration, and reflection of design work, it can enrich the creative process to produce creative products that are compatible with the design industry. In conclusion, cangkruk can be positioned as an alternative pedagogical tool or informal learning space in developing the skills and creativity of junior graphic designers. This research recommends further exploration of the potential of Cangkruk culture in other disciplines and diverse cultural backgrounds and institutions.
Keywords: cangkruk culture, creativity,graphic design, peer teaching

Peran Budaya Cangkruk dalam Mengembangkan Keterampilan dan Kreativitas pada Desainer Grafis Junior di Surakarta

Abstrak
Budaya Cangkruk merupakan tradisi masyarakat Jawa berupa interaksi sosial santai, memiliki efek berantai positif bagi mahasiswa calon desainer grafis. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran Cangkruk dalam mengembangkan kreativitas pada desainer grafis junior di Surakarta. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi kasus pada mahasiswa jurusan pendidikan seni rupa di Universitas Sebelas Maret, dengan pendekatan Peer Teaching dan analisis proses kreativitas menurut Wallas, yang meliputi empat tahap, yaitu persiapan, inkubasi, iluminasi, dan verifikasi. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa budaya Cangkruk berfungsi sebagai ruang yang mendukung peer learning dan kolaborasi, media refleksi dan kritik desain, sumber inspirasi dan eksplorasi kreatif, serta dukungan emosional dan motivasi. Proses kreatif yang terjadi dalam Cangkruk memungkinkan desainer untuk belajar melalui praktek nyata berbasis interaksi sosial. Dengan menciptakan ruang terbuka yang mendorong dialog ide, kolaborasi, dan refleksi karya desain dapat memperkaya proses kreatif untuk menghasilkan produk kreatif yang seusai dengan industri desain. Kesimpulannya, cangkruk dapat diposisikan sebagai alat pedagogis alternatif atau ruang pembelajaran informal dalam pengembangan keterampilan dan kreatifitas desainer grafis junior. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan eksplorasi lebih lanjut terhadap potensi budaya Cangkruk dalam disiplin ilmu lain dan latar belakang budaya serta institusi yang beragam.
Kata kunci: *budaya cangkruk, desain grafis, kreativitas, peer teaching*

INTRODUCTION

Informal meetings in coffee shops or public spaces have become a ubiquitous aspect of daily life. In Javanese society, this practice is known as *nyangkruk* or *cangkruk*. The *cangkruk* culture is constituted by natural habits, which explains why *cangkruk* is a reflection of friendliness and familiarity (Nurhayati & Ni'am, 2021). The familiarity afforded by *cangkruk* activities allows for a free exchange of ideas and opinions, with no fear of offence, regardless of who participates (Husainudin, 2020; Ramadhani et al., 2014). *Cangkruk* is a phenomenon that is ubiquitous in various settings, including academic institutions. It can be observed in canteens, gazebos, and parks, among other locations. In the context of academic environments pertaining to the disciplines of art and design, this activity frequently serves as a conduit for the exchange of ideas between students and lecturers. Furthermore, the *cangkruk* culture facilitates the creation of an egalitarian atmosphere, wherein the hierarchical structure between lecturers and students becomes less rigid. This creates an environment conducive to freer dialogue and the exchange of ideas without the pressure of formality that typically characterises classroom teaching. In the context of art and design, creativity often emerges from unexpected conversations, and *nyangkruk* activities provide an opportunity for students to respond to trends, challenges and innovations in the art world in a more spontaneous and dynamic way. Therefore, *nyangkruk* in an art and design campus environment is an important element in enriching the learning experience and developing creativity.

Prior research on *cangkruk* culture has concentrated on elucidating the significance of this cultural phenomenon (Bustan & Arifin, 2021; Nurhayati & Ni'am, 2021; Ramadhani et al., 2014; Santoso, 2017). This activity is indicative of not only the social lives of individuals but also the relationships between individuals within society. *Cangkruk* provides an unlimited space for participants to express themselves and engage in conversations on a multitude of topics (Husainudin, 2020). Despite the fact that *cangkruk* culture has been the subject of research regarding its potential as a training method for peer counselling in schools (Fuadi et al., 2020), there is still a paucity of research exploring the role of *cangkruk* culture in developing creativity, particularly in the field of graphic design. This is likely due to the perception that *cangkruk* is merely an unstructured chatting activity with no discernible purpose, and thus is considered less productive (Ramadhani et al., 2014). The phenomenon is even often viewed negatively, as an activity undertaken by individuals who are considered lazy and a waste of time, with activities such as smoking and drinking coffee with no useful purpose (Santoso, 2017).

This article aims to analyze the role of the *cangkruk* culture in the development of skills and creativity in prospective graphic designers. The article commences with an examination of the relationship between *cangkruk* and design learning that emerges naturally from the cultural interaction of *cangkruk*. Subsequently, the creative process of novice graphic designers is examined through

the lens of Wallas' theory of preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. This multifaceted approach enables a comprehensive examination of the creative process within the *cangkruk* culture. By elucidating these two aspects, this article discusses how the *cangkruk* culture functions as a tool for developing skills and creativity in graphic designers and proposes potential solutions for fostering creativity in the academic environment of art and design. The article further underscores the potential of the *cangkruk* culture as a social space that fosters informal learning and creative collaboration, serving as an alternative or complement to formal education methods in encouraging innovation and the exchange of ideas among junior designers.

In the contemporary global world, which is characterized by uncertainty, market forces, and the digital landscape, the creative abilities of designers are very important at the individual, organizational, and community levels (Cezzar, 2020). Moreover, the discourse surrounding rapid advancements in artificial intelligence technology, particularly in the domain of Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC), is profoundly altering the creative landscape (Lou, 2023). This transformation gives rise to significant inquiries regarding the role and identity of human creators, including graphic designers. This research posits that the *cangkruk* culture plays a pivotal role in the evolution of graphic designers' competencies and ingenuity. This assertion is predicated on the premise that graphic designers, by virtue of their professional engagements, are frequently implicated in informal or non-formal social interactions, such as *cangkruk*. In these settings, designers partake in unstructured knowledge and skill-sharing, as well as discourse that fosters the exchange of ideas, creative solutions, and innovation. The *cangkruk* culture, distinguished by its free atmosphere and absence of formal pressure, enables designers to explore diverse creative perspectives, experiment with novel concepts, and receive feedback from their peers in a supportive environment. In essence, *cangkruk* functions as an effective learning forum, promoting the development of creative and innovative thinking skills among graphic designers.

The cultural phenomenon of *cangkruk* can be explained in an academic context with students or prospective graphic designers as the object, and can be studied with several conceptual approaches. The concept of peer teaching, or peer learning, can be defined as a learning strategy in which students learn with and from each other without peers who have the same or equivalent status (Boud et al., 1999; Topping, 2005). In this pedagogical approach, educators assume a supervisory and monitoring role, while students serve as the primary learning resources for their peers (Boud et al., 1999). The facilitation of peer learning can be achieved through the integration of technological tools and direct interaction. This pedagogical approach has been shown to enhance students' cognitive understanding of technical material while cultivating critical graduate attributes, including communication skills, teamwork, and other competencies pertinent to the world of work (Arnold, 2021). A significant benefit of peer learning is the increased student engagement,

which is found to be closely associated with enhanced academic performance (Malan, 2020; Muñoz Miguel et al., 2023; Steenkamp & Brink, 2024). In the context of technical education, peer learning is regarded as an innovative learning strategy that incorporates a range of techniques that can be utilized both within and outside the classroom setting, thereby enhancing the overall learning process (Polkowski et al., 2020). A substantial corpus of research findings on peer learning indicates that this pedagogical approach often yields superior learning outcomes in comparison to conventional instructional methods.

The creative process, as posited by Wallas, encompasses four distinct stages: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification (Kim, 2020; Munandar, 2002). The preparatory stage, also known as the gathering of information and the establishment of a problem, is followed by the incubation stage, during which ideas are allowed to develop in the subconscious. The subsequent illumination stage marks the moment of inspiration or the conception of a solution, and the final verification stage involves the testing and realization of the idea. This theoretical framework finds particular relevance in the context of analyzing the creative dynamics inherent in the *cangkruk* culture, as the four stages of the theory naturally align with the practices associated with *cangkruk*. Consequently, this theoretical framework is anticipated to facilitate an in-depth examination of the *cangkruk* culture as a manifestation of creativity among junior graphic designers.

METHOD

This research project examines the role of the *Cangkruk* (hanging out) culture on the creative abilities of graphic designers, with a special emphasis on junior graphic designers enrolled in the Fine Arts Education Study Program at Sebelas Maret University in Surakarta. The Gazebo of Building E, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, was selected as the site for this study due to its function as a popular gathering place for junior graphic designers enrolled in the Fine Arts Education Study Program. This assertion is further substantiated by the findings of researchers' observations, which demonstrate that graphic designers frequently congregate in the gazebo.

The present study employs a qualitative research design with a case study approach (Sumartono, 2017), adhering to the methodology proposed by Creswell (2015). The primary focus of this study is on the experiences of design students involved in *cangkruk* activities. The present study explores the role of *cangkruk* in fostering creativity through the peer teaching approach and Wallas's creative process.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the case, observations, in-depth interviews, and archival documents were conducted with graphic designers. The participants were selected based on the research theme. The objective of these interviews was twofold: first, to gain insight into how *cangkruk* activities are

utilized as a medium for peer learning, and second, to ascertain the development of their creativity.

The study's participants included undergraduate students majoring in Art Education at FKIP UNS who were actively engaged in graphic design. The following graphic designers were identified as key participants in this study: M. Rafi Fathurrohman, Naufal Farasvanaya, Bagas Arta Mukti A.P., Anggi Dwi Pradita, Octovany Pradwitya Nugroho, Naufal Abdurrohman, Guntur Cahyo Priyambodo, Panca Saputra, and Danang Panji. The participants were selected based on their status as junior graphic designers and their affiliation with the UNS Bachelor of Fine Arts program. These individuals were identified as those who frequently utilize the designated "*nyangkruk*" space within the Gazebo of Building E. The data collection process entailed three primary methods: observational studies, interviews, and a comprehensive review of the graphic designers' works. The observations were meticulously conducted, with a particular emphasis on nyangkruk activities that occurred within the Gazebo of Building E. In addition to these observational studies, semi-structured interviews were carried out with individuals involved in nyangkruk activities. The data collection process was carried out from April 2024 to July 2024. The collected data was then subjected to analysis, employing Cresswell's (2015) analytical model. This qualitative analysis employed an inductive approach, beginning with specific data sets, including interviews and observations, which were then coded to identify common themes. This process was carried out concurrently with data collection, enabling the researchers to immediately identify significant patterns. This analysis was conducted iteratively, necessitating multiple visits to thoroughly explore the subject matter. The researcher meticulously examined the data to gain a profound understanding, employing an eclectic methodology that is congruent with the context of the graphic designers' nyangkruk activities. The interpretive nature of the research entails the incorporation of a subjective perspective by the researcher, facilitating the evaluation of the circumstances and themes that emerge. This approach culminates in the attainment of profound insights into the dynamics and contributions of graphic designers' *nyangkruk*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
The Correlation between *Cangkruk* Culture and Design Learning

The practice of *cangkruk* among design students is a social activity that fosters a sense of community, openness, and spontaneity, thereby contributing to the cultivation of creativity. Beyond its role as a social space, *cangkruk* fosters interaction among design students, thereby facilitating a dynamic exchange of ideas and perspectives. This interaction facilitates the exchange of ideas, visual exploration, and discourse on various topics related to graphic design, including design trends, design tools, design marketplaces, and design projects (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Cangkruk* Activity by Students in the Gazebo Building E,
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Sebelas Maret.
Source: Personal Document, 2024.

The practice of *cangkruk*, which literally translates to "hanging out," is observed to take place both prior to and following class, in this case focusing on the gazebo in the E FKIP UNS building. Based on interviews with several students, it is understood that *cangkruk* activities benefit every junior graphic designer, such as facilitating the formation of a system of cooperation or collaboration among them, which ultimately improves their quality in the field of graphic design. This finding is supported by interviews conducted with junior graphic designers (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of Interviews

Junior Graphic Design	Summary of Interviews
JGD 1	I'll always be grateful to my friends for being there for me as I was learning to be an illustrator. They were always there to discuss my work with me and share their own experiences. We all have our own unique design styles and areas of focus, like dark art illustration style, but we also enjoy comparing and learning from each other's styles.
JGD 2	My friends have been such a huge support system for me as I've been learning and growing in my application skills. We're always learning together, and they're always there to support me and share their own experiences. Second, we have different skills and different levels of creativity, so we can evaluate each other's work on details, layout, fonts, and so on. Third, we share experiences about design and marketing.
JGD 3	When it comes to skills, friends are always there to provide guidance or input, acting as role models for delving into graphic design. When I'm experimenting with new design tools, I love reaching out to friends who are pros in their own right. When it comes to trends and marketing my designs, I tend to rely on my own instincts as an illustrator because we all have our own unique way of creating projects.

JGD 4	I really appreciate being able to share experiences with my friends, like Rafi, Naufal, and others. We talk about all things design. We chat a lot about how to keep our work looking appealing, how to put together a portfolio that will wow clients, and the best ways to chat with clients. We even had time to chat about how to handle price negotiations and unexpected schedule changes! When it comes to references, I asked my friends, like Naufal and Bagas, especially about car illustration designs, which are often searched for on Instagram. We also talked about the best times to post work on social media, the use of hashtags, and special techniques in the Procreate app.
JGD 5	I'm so thankful to all my friends who've cheered me on in my journey as an illustrator! From the very start, I was so lucky to have friends who helped me learn how to use design applications to market my work. They've given me such great advice and feedback, and I'm so grateful for their support in helping me grow as an illustrator. I'm so lucky to have such a supportive network of friends around me..
JGD 6	My peers have been so helpful! They've given me great feedback, both positive and negative, which has really helped me grow. In the design world, chatting with friends is a great way to bounce ideas off each other, share experiences, and learn from each other. This has been so helpful for my growth as an illustrator, especially when it comes to honing my skills and expanding my knowledge.
JGD 7	My friends are always there for me, cheering me on and encouraging me to keep developing my illustration design skills. They help me to keep my options open and not get stuck in just one style. They're a great source of inspiration, helping me explore different styles, bring my work to life, and expand my network. While they've had a huge influence on my development, I try to combine it with my own approach to create a unique design formula.
JGD 8	My friends have been so helpful, especially when it comes to developing the skills I need to break into the world of illustration and design. They've been there for me every step of the way, from learning how to enter the market for the type of illustration I want to sell, to keeping up with the latest trends in the illustration and design industry. I'm so grateful for their support and guidance, and I'm thrilled to see my design skills growing.
JGD 9	We're always there for each other, chatting in places like gazebos, *angkringan*, and *warmindo*. We share our thoughts on the latest illustration trends and what the market is looking for right now. We're always ready to help each other out with whatever we can. When it comes to drawing tools, we tend not to comment much because we all use different tools and focus on developing the skills we have.

The results of the interviews in Table 1 reveal several patterns. When viewed through the lens of design education, these results indicate that the practice of *cangkruk* intersects with Vygotsky's constructivist approach, wherein learning occurs in a social and cultural context through scaffolding or support between individuals (Anwar, 2017; Schunk, 2015). This is evidenced by the majority of junior graphic designers who stated that they take on each other's roles (JGD 1, JGD 2, JGD 3, JGD 4, JGD 6, JGD 8). However, the provision of support to designers

based on their respective areas of expertise is inseparable from the fluid interaction between them.

The results of interviews with junior graphic designers (JGD 1–9) indicate a relationship between the *cangkruk* culture in Gazebo Gedung E, which refers to casual gatherings for discussion, and informal learning spaces. The following points offer an explanation of the relationship between *cangkruk* and design learning:

Peer Learning and Collaboration Space

Cangkruk fosters an environment conducive to peer learning. Casual discussions in *cangkruk* often facilitate peer learning, where novice designers gain insights from more senior experience without the pressure of formality. Junior designers benefit from the exchange of ideas and experiences among their peers, fostering a collaborative environment where they learn from each other's design styles, applications, and marketing strategies. This phenomenon aligns with the principles of peer learning propounded by David Boud, wherein junior graphic designers engage in mutual support and assume responsibility for the development of their peers' skills and knowledge (Boud et al., 1999). In addition to fostering collaboration and reflective practices, peer learning enables junior graphic designers to develop their autonomy and community-based skills.

The results of the interviews in Table 1 also reveal that most junior graphic designers consider the influence of their peers to be an important factor in the advancement of their technical abilities and design sensitivities. The primary method of learning in *cangkruk* is through discussion. These discussions encompass the utilization of design applications, such as Procreate and Photoshop, which are prevalent among the participants, in addition to the exchange of counsel on design techniques and stylistic decisions (JGD 1, JGD 2, JGD 5, JGD 6). This suggests that *cangkruk* activities foster a collaborative and supportive learning environment, allowing for the adaptation and exchange of knowledge in a flexible and dynamic setting.

It is noteworthy that these junior designers frequently utilize a range of tools and applications, selecting those that align with their individual requirements and preferences. It is noteworthy that a mutual respect for each other's design application preferences is prevalent, and technical assistance is offered only when it is truly required. Furthermore, some designers engage in independent skill development, utilizing the work of their colleagues as a reference point (JGD 1, JGD 3, JGD 9). This observation underscores the notion that the utilization of design applications fosters a collaborative and discursive environment conducive to skill development through social interaction.

Learning interactions during socializing have been shown to improve collaborative abilities, with designers expressing appreciation for various devices and applications, including tablets, laptops, Procreate, and Photoshop. Furthermore, the designers exhibited an enhancement in their comprehension of diverse

illustration techniques, encompassing dark art and automotive illustration design (JGD 1, JGD 3, JGD 9). The designers expressed appreciation for each other's perspectives and approaches to their work, reflecting an appreciation for diverse perspectives. Peer collaboration has been shown to reflect views on collective activities (Schunk, 2015). Peer teaching has been demonstrated to yield gains in transferable social and communication skills, as well as in affective functions, including heightened self-esteem, a strengthened sense of belonging to their field of study, and a more profound understanding of graphic design (Topping, 2005). Consequently, the *cangkruk* activity, in which junior graphic designers engage, functions as a platform for peer learning, teaching, and evaluation of design work.

Media for Design Reflection and Criticism

The findings indicate that the *Cangkruk* activity, undertaken by junior graphic designers, encompasses constructive design criticism, feedback, and reflection. Feedback from peers, including criticism, suggestions, and comments, is frequently cited as a means to develop and enhance design quality. This process enables designers to not only rectify deficiencies but also to emulate the working methods of their peers. As one participant noted, "...so we can evaluate each other's work on details, layout, fonts, and so on" (JGD 2). As one participant noted, "They've given me great feedback, both positive and negative, which has really helped me grow..." (JGD 6). This phenomenon aligns with Boud's assertion regarding the significance of reflection in collective learning (Boud et al., 1999). The establishment of trusting relationships with colleagues who do not hold positions of authority can facilitate the disclosure of ignorance and misunderstanding, thereby enabling further correction (Topping, 2005). This atmosphere, characterized by the absence of authority, fosters a safe and conducive environment where each designer is able to interact and reflect on the contributions of their peers. Consequently, this collaborative environment fosters introspection, enabling designers to reflect on their learning experiences. Peer feedback provides novel perspectives, aiding in the identification of strengths and areas for design enhancement.

Inspiration and Exploration in Graphic Design

Inspiration and exploration are foundational to the creative process in graphic design. Inspiration, in this context, is defined as the catalyst for the generation of ideas, while exploration serves to expand the visual and technical boundaries. A relaxed social atmosphere, characterized by casual conversation or aimless wandering, fosters the expression of spontaneous ideas. This relaxed and unstructured atmosphere encourages designers to think more freely, without fear of making mistakes, coming up with fresh ideas, new style inspirations, and even solutions to design problems that designers experience. As JGD notes, "In the design world, chatting with friends is a great way to bounce ideas off each other,

share experiences, and learn from each other" (JGD 6). "They're a great source of inspiration, helping me explore different styles, bring my work to life, and expand my network" (JGD 7). This notion aligns with Csikszentmihalyi's concept of creativity, which posits that creativity emerges from the interaction between individuals, domains of expertise, and the social environment (Munandar, 2002). Furthermore, the cultivation of creativity among young individuals is contingent upon their capacity to engage in harmonious social interactions (Faisal, 2022). In this context, *cangkruk* can be conceptualized as a social environment that fosters the exchange of ideas among junior graphic designers and their exploration of ideas with their peers.

Emotional Support and Motivation

The emotional aspect of *cangkruk* cannot be ignored. This activity becomes a support system for junior designers to stay motivated and confident in pursuing their profession. As articulated by several designers, " My friends are always there for me, cheering me on and encouraging me to keep developing my illustration design skills" (JGD 7). " I'm so thankful to all my friends who've cheered me on in my journey as an illustrator..." (JGD 5). Beyond the tangible support, these relationships often extend to emotional support, fostering a sense of comfort and confidence in the designers' professional pursuits. This emotional support has been shown to enhance designers' self-efficacy in the domain of learning design. Confidence in oneself is defined as a form of self-assurance related to one's abilities (Anwar, 2017; Schunk, 2015). This finding aligns with Csikszentmihalyi's perspective that communication and interaction with influential colleagues in the field is crucial for gaining recognition and appreciation (Kim, 2020; Li et al., 2024; Munandar, 2002; Rahayu, 2022). The provision of motivation has been identified as a factor that helps them maintain focus and self-confidence throughout their studies and careers in the field of design. Consequently, it can be posited that *cangkruk* fosters a conducive learning environment for graphic design.

Furthermore, emotional support can be derived from challenging discourse. In Javanese, this phenomenon is referred to as "pisuhan," a term frequently employed in *cangkruk* scenarios. This phenomenon, which can be likened to verbal bullying, has been observed to have a significant impact on the emotional well-being of individuals in these settings (JGD 6). Despite the fact that the sentence is employed as a form of verbal bullying, it is interpreted as a form of familiarity and motivation. Consequently, the phenomenon of *cangkruk* can be understood as a multifaceted tool for emotional support and motivation, fostering self-confidence and propelling individuals to continue learning about graphic design.

***Cangkruk* as a Creative Process Space for Graphic Designers**

The first stage is preparation, the junior graphic designers in the *cangkruk* (a place for young people to hang out) gather ideas and solve problems in the middle

of a conversation. This process involves soliciting insights from their peers, a method that fosters a collaborative environment for problem-solving. They also engage in discussions about their respective experiences, compile portfolios, and formulate promotion strategies. As one participant articulated, "We all have our own unique design styles and areas of focus, like dark art illustration style, but we also enjoy comparing and learning from each other's styles" (JGD 1). "We have different skills and different levels of creativity, so we can evaluate each other's work on details, layout, fonts, and so on" (JGD 2). The initial provisions in the creative process were among the subjects addressed. This notion is consistent with the concept of preparation, which involves the process of equipping oneself with the necessary skills and knowledge to address challenges by engaging in thoughtful reflection, seeking solutions, and seeking guidance from others (Munandar, 2002). Consequently, social interaction becomes a crucible for the genesis of novel concepts. This underscores the notion that ideas can emerge from a dynamic social context.

The subsequent phase, known as the incubation stage, is marked by designers who cultivate ideas in a non-formal setting. The presence of light conversation, joking, or back-and-forth discussions serves to provide a respite from the active thinking process. The relaxed and non-judgmental atmosphere fosters a space for designers to reflect on their ideas without the pressure of immediate evaluation, enabling them to either develop these ideas further or retain them in their cognitive reserve. As one designer articulately puts it, "They've given me great feedback, both positive and negative, which has really helped me grow" (JGD 6). The use of harsh verbalization in this context is a unique method of reflecting on ideas, offering a novel perspective on the incubation stage. During this incubation stage, individuals temporarily disengage from problem-solving to allow their ideas to develop in the subconscious. In essence, *cangkruk* offers a designated time and space for individuals to engage in casual reflection as part of the incubation phase within the creative process.

The subsequent illumination stage is marked by the spontaneous emergence of creative concepts that designers experience after the incubation period. *Cangkruk* activities that are characterized by their relaxation, fluidity, and high level of interaction have been shown to encourage the emergence of insights such as visual inspiration, design styles, and other previously unthinkable design approaches. When junior designers engage in discussions on diverse subjects, including design, personal experiences, social media trends, and lighthearted topics, they inadvertently create opportunities for novel insights to emerge. This phenomenon is further elaborated by one designer, who stated, "While they've had a huge influence on my development, I try to combine it with my own approach to create a unique design formula" (JGD 7). This unique formula in design emerges from the diverse perspectives of each designer, contributing to a rich and multifaceted approach. This phenomenon aligns with the concept of illumination, which refers

to the stage of insight or the emergence of novel concepts, accompanied by the psychological processes that precede and follow the emergence of new ideas (Munandar, 2002). Consequently, the collaborative process becomes a catalyst for novel concept generation, which is then validated through the verification stage.

The final stage is the verification stage. During this stage, the ideas that have been discovered are tested through design creation and feedback from other designers. Junior designers present their work to their peers, solicit their feedback, and engage in discussions to enhance the quality of their work in terms of shape, proportion, color, layout, and other relevant aspects. "We have different skills and different levels of creativity, so we can evaluate each other's work on details, layout, fonts, and so on " (JGD 2). The efficacy of this process is further underscored by the observation that "they've given me such great advice and feedback" (JGD 5). At this stage, new creations undergo a process of verification or evaluation, during which they are assessed for their degree of realism (Munandar, 2002). In essence, at this stage, the design idea undergoes a process of validation by other designers, ensuring that the final creative product aligns with the industry's or market's expectations and standards.

The anticipated outcome of this process is a creative product that is not only accepted by the market but also, in the context of illustration design, is endorsed by the client. It is acknowledged that designers possess diverse backgrounds, preferences, and design styles, which are reflected in their work and subsequently become fluid when they engage in social interactions. The influences exerted during these social interactions may encompass personal experiences, local cultural influences, or global trends, collectively contributing to the evolution of design ideas. In practice, adherence to all design principles is imperative to ensure that the final product aligns with the characteristics of the product, client, and environment (Murtono et al., 2023). Consequently, the designers' design works can be regarded as creative products that meet the criteria proposed by Roger (Munandar, 2002). As dynamic entities that are born, live, and evolve, works of art and design are inherently immersed in the interactions of the members of the group (Saidu, 2020). Consequently, the graphic design works produced by junior designers in Surakarta, as illustrated in Figures 2-10, can be regarded as valid creative products in accordance with Roger's criteria. The creative process in design is influenced by both technical aptitude and the influence of social and cultural milieu. In this regard, the *cangkruk* culture emerges as a dialogical and exploratory space that contributes to the enrichment of the creative process.

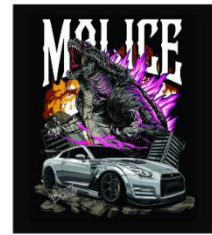**Figure 2**. Artwok by JGD 1   **Figure 3**. Artwok by JGD 2   **Figure 4**. Artwok by JGD 3   **Figure 5**. Artwok by JGD 4   **Figure 6**. Artwok by JGD 5
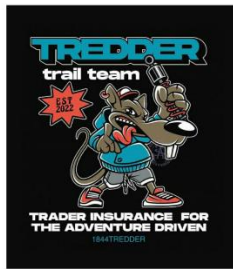

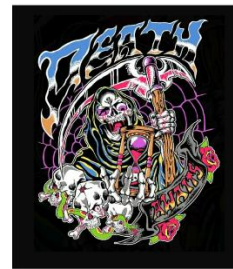**Figure 7**. Artwok by JGD 6   **Figure 8**. Artwok by JGD 7   **Figure 9**. Artwok by JGD 8   **Figure 10**. Artwok by JGD 9

The creative products produced by junior graphic designers demonstrate a close connection to the cultural practice of *cangkruk*. The *cangkruk* activity, which occurs in the Gazebo of Building E, functions not merely as a form of social interaction but as a milieu for the exchange of ideas, critical discussion, and collective reflection on the process and results of design work. In this context, the *cangkruk* culture functions as a creative incubation space that facilitates dialogue between designers from diverse backgrounds and visual tendencies. This intersection with Vygotsky's constructivism approach underscores the notion that learning takes place within a social and cultural context, facilitated by scaffolding or support between individuals (Anwar, 2017; Schunk, 2015). Through this scaffolding process, designers receive feedback on their work and gain new insights into design trends, application techniques, and contextual visual communication strategies. The final design products, therefore, serve as a reflection of the designer's personal expression, as well as the outcome of a creative process that is immersed in dynamic socio-cultural interactions. Consequently, the c*Cangkruk* culture emerges as a distinctive local practice that fosters the evolution of creative products.

CONCLUSION

The *cangkruk* culture among junior graphic designers plays an important role in developing technical skills and creative processes. This is due to the fact that *cangkruk* functions as a space that encourages peer learning and collaboration, a medium for reflection and design criticism, a source of inspiration and creative exploration, as well as emotional support and motivation. *Cangkruk* functions as a forum for experiential learning, where discussion, critique of work, and collaboration occur organically and without a rigid structure.

The creative process that unfolds within *cangkruk* enables designers to acquire knowledge through authentic practice, underpinned by social interaction. The four stages of the creative process—preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification—demonstrate the role of *cangkruk* in the creative process of junior graphic designers. By fostering an open environment conducive to dialogue, collaboration, and introspection, *cangkruk* serves as a catalyst for enhancing the creative process, thereby yielding products that are aligned with industry standards. Consequently, *cangkruk* can be regarded as an alternative pedagogical instrument or an informal learning environment, contributing to the cultivation of junior graphic designers' competencies and creativity.

While this study offers insights into the role of *cangkruk* in developing skills and creative processes, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study. One such limitation is the restriction of data collection to a specific spatial context, namely art education campuses, as exemplified by the Gazebo of Building E FKIP UNS. Consequently, the findings may have limited applicability to non-art educational environments. Consequently, while *cangkruk* has been demonstrated to contribute to the enhancement of creative processes, future research endeavors should consider expanding the scope to encompass other informal spaces, thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of the role of diverse learning environments in graphic design. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between local culture and the process of developing creativity in design education, future researchers should consider expanding the scope to include participants from diverse levels of education and institutional backgrounds.

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