

“Connected to Self”

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Abstract

This article aims to show the contributions that the *Interdisciplinary Design* course, which we developed based on the assumption that the professional development of design and art students is not independent of their personal development, provides and can provide education both before and during the pandemic.

The workshop format titled *Who am I?* has been formed by making use of *Existential Counseling* approaches and methods. *Existential Counseling* is the general name of counseling aimed at facilitating the process toward existential goals such as finding meaning or a sense of meaning in life, living more authentically, taking responsibility for one's own choices, and creating a healthy awareness of oneself. Its method is to question one's self and relations with the outside world by using existential and humanistic philosophy. Although the content and methods of existential counseling are utilized in the course, the aim is not therapy, but for the person to think more deeply about himself/herself. *Existential Counseling*, which has many different schools and sub-branches, also offers content and methods for personal and professional development and training purposes. The topics and pedagogical methods discussed within the framework of this course have been blended in line with the needs of the students, especially by utilizing the Logopedagogy (Lukas, E., 2014) developed based on Logotherapy (*Meaning-Oriented Therapy*) called Viktor Frankl's Vienna Third Psychotherapy School and Existential Coaching (Deurzen & Hanaway, 2012).

In this context, the aim of this course is for the students to think about their existence, associate their artistic production and design activities with their existence, thus gain awareness in their journey of searching for their authentic self and meaning of life as an individual and a designer, and hence raise awareness to create a language of their own.



The course consists of three parts. The first part is a *self-reflection group study* using the existential group therapy format based on the sharing of feelings and thoughts experienced *Here and Now*. The aim here is for the student to understand him/herself and the forms of relationships she/he establishes through others within the group dynamics. In the second part, which includes theoretical narration, issues such as freedom, responsibility, authenticity and the meaning of life are discussed based on Existential Thought. In the third part, the work done by the students during the past week is discussed and suggestions are made. Students are expected to produce works and write a text during the week based on the concepts of that week. The important thing in these works is to freely express themselves, their thoughts, and their inner worlds; they are free in the medium or techniques they use. They are expected to put their 8-week worth of work into a conceptual framework in the last 6 weeks and design a book from these works.

In the article, the objectives, content, methodology, observed and expected effects of the course, as well as the positive and negative effects of the pandemic conditions on the functioning of the course are discussed.

Keywords: Art and Design, Education, Existential Coaching, Interdisciplinary Design, Logotherapy

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This article aims to show the contributions that the *Interdisciplinary Design* course, which we developed based on the assumption that the professional development of design and art students is not independent of their development, provides and can provide education both before and during the pandemic.

The Interdisciplinary Design course emphasizes *human education* in design education, which has evolved towards keeping up with the increasingly robotizing and digitizing world and training practical designers as *human resources* for creative industry sectors that serve this.

At the core of Design and Arts education is the goal of developing creativity and revealing one’s authentic language of expression. However, due to the pragmatic perception of the global economy and the high competitiveness within the business markets, many educational institutions force students to be graduated with the qualities to respond to the market demands in a short period or the student allows him/herself to be guided by the market conditions. Even though it manifests itself in more different ways in arts and design fields, it constitutes a risk for the artist and the designer. Often, the designer feels obliged to listen to the demands of the customer and the artist to the demands of the art market. This situation creates a very fundamental dilemma in the life of the artist or designer. When the professional stance of the artist or designer differs from his/her general stance in life, they become far from being sincere and authentic. That is why it is important that the artist and the designer are aware of their stance in life and art, they ask themselves the question “Who am I?” constantly and in return question and update their answers. The course aims to raise awareness by asking the prospective designers and artists the question they need to ask throughout their lives and to provide them with the basic equipment that will trigger or support the process of finding the answer to this question.

Although the increase in creative production and the availability of millions of works on the internet in parallel with the development of digital technology have numerous positive effects on the personal and professional development of artists and designers, its negative effects should not be ignored. For instance, some of our students preferred the easy way out within this fast production and sharing environment as they did not make an effort to improve themselves or to seek their authentic expressions with the belief that *every product does have a*

consumer; and we observe that others are in deep despair about how they can make room for themselves among so many artists and designers. The solution to this problem also depends on the student's ability to define himself/herself. In addition to developing an original stance and self-expression language, it is important for an artist and designer that they can define those elements, advocate for them before others and thus have self-respect at the end of the day.

The workshop titled *Who Am I?* that we have developed within the *Interdisciplinary Design* course has been constructed by utilizing the approach and methodology of Existential Counseling. *Existential Counseling* is the generic name of counseling aimed at facilitating the process towards existential goals such as finding meaning or a sense of meaning in life, living a much more authentic life, taking responsibility for one's choices, and creating a healthy awareness of ourselves. The method of such counseling is to use existential and humanist philosophy to question one's self and relations with the outside world through dialogue. Although the content and methods of existential counseling are used in the course, the goal is not therapy, but a more in-depth reflection on one's self. This field which has many different schools and sub-branches, also offers content and methods suitable for personal and professional development and training purposes. The topics and pedagogical methods discussed within the framework of this course have been blended in line with the needs of the students, utilizing especially Logopedagogy (Lukas, E., 2014) developed based on Logotherapy (*Meaning-Oriented Therapy*) called Viktor Frankl's Vienna Third Psychotherapy School and Existential Coaching (Deurzen & Hanaway, 2012) developed by Emmy van Deurzen's Existential School of Psychotherapy.

In this context, the course aims to make the student think about their existence, associate artistic production and design activities with themselves, so that they gain awareness in the journey of searching for their authentic self and the meaning of their life as a human and a designer, and to create a language of expression of their own.

The Interdisciplinary Design course had 19 students during the 2019-2020 term; 15 during the 2020-2021 Fall Term and 17 during the 2020-2021 Spring Term. The course has been carried out by Prof. T. Melih Görgün, Art and Design Instructor, Lecturer Mahir Namur, Culture and Arts Manager, Existential Psychological Counselor/Coach and Instructor together with Research Assistant Gülcenur Ertopuz. In this

collaboration, Mahir Namur is responsible for the concept development and verbal expression process in the workshop, and T. Melih Görgün is responsible for the visual expression process.

The lessons consist of three parts, and the first part is a *self-reflection group study* using the existential group therapy format, which is based on the sharing of feelings and thoughts experienced named as *Here and Now*. The aim here is for students to understand him/herself and the forms of relationships he/she establishes through others within group dynamics. The second part of the course deals with a theoretical narration of subjects related to human existence based on Existential Thinking. The third part elaborates on the works that the students have realized during the past weeks and suggestions are made. Students are expected to produce work and write a text within the week based on the concepts of that week. The important thing in these works is to express themselves, their thoughts, and their inner worlds freely, and they are free in the medium or techniques they will use. At the end of the 8-week period, they are expected to design a book by placing all their productions in a conceptual framework.

The first part provides a learning environment with the method of communicating within the group so that the students can better understand and make sense of their feelings and thoughts. The second part, which gives the theoretical content, sets the framework for the next week's group work. The process of comprehension and interpretation that takes place in these two parts creates an input for the third part, in which the students express themselves in artistic ways.

The word *design* in the name of the course refers to both the broader sense, which is the design activity of the human being who designs himself and his ecosystem and then realizes what he has designed, and also the narrow sense, that is design as a profession. In this context, the student reflects on his/her existence (*and designs his/her life*), expresses him/herself through different visual art and design tools, conceptualizes the whole process at the end of the semester, and combines and integrates it into a single work such as a book (*product design*). During the 14 weeks, the student gains the practice of reviewing him/herself and his/her worldview.

The interdisciplinary nature of the course indicates that the students can freely benefit from all fields of art and design to express themselves. The course is open to all Fine Arts Faculty students. In

addition, the content of the course, which is given by expert educators in the disciplines of art, design, psychological / philosophical counseling, and cultural management, also benefits from the knowledge and methods of different disciplines.

The fact that the course is open to students from both the design and art fields of the university also provides the students with the opportunity to peer- learning, and enables them to see the different understandings of production processes and expressions of the art and design branches. For instance, the production concept of painting art based on the artist's own inner world to express only himself and the production concept of graphic design for communication with a certain target audience or the production concept to fulfill a certain function of industrial design are different from each other. Students from disciplines that do not prioritize conceptual thinking, especially those that focus on crafts (*for example, Traditional Turkish Arts*), experience and learn to use their crafts as a tool to express themselves, put their work in a conceptual framework, and turn their products into a work of art. On the other hand, students from art disciplines also learn the *communication-oriented* approach of graphic design in the process of designing books consisting of their stories and works. Talking about production processes and jobs in groups enables students to learn not only from their educators but also from each other.

In general, art education, unlike many other fields of education by its nature, already directs the students to think about themselves and their lives. The necessity of such a course stems from the fact that it presents a framework and methodology for the student's self-reflection process. The knowledge of *Existential Counseling*, nourished by human philosophy which elaborates on questions "*What kind of a being is a human being?*" and "*What is human life like?*", helps one to clarify their vast worldview and self-view. The person gains an overview of oneself and one's life by thinking within the framework of the topics discussed. *Existential Counseling* acts as a booster in one's self-discovery.

In general, *Existential Counseling* focuses on universally applicable concepts to human existence such as freedom, responsibility, authenticity, and the meaning of life. It is less interested in curing mental diseases and rather instead interpretes anxiety, alienation, and depression as natural phases of human development and maturation. *Existential Counseling* anticipates facilitating the process of existential objectives such as to find a meaning and a sense of the meaning of

life, to live more authentically, taking responsibilities for one's choices, and creating a healthy awareness of ourselves.

We have to briefly touch upon the subjects in the theoretic part so that the impact of the pandemic on the students can be better understood. The content of the theoretic part of the course is based on human philosophy. We have previously dwelled upon the search for answers to questions such as *What type of a being is the Human?* and *What is human life?* According to the humanistic philosophy on which the existential approach is based, a person with free will does not have to be a prisoner of the conditions he/she is in (*his/her own physical and emotional state and social, economic, political, etc. conditions*). The human is an entity capable of visualizing his/her future and realizing the future he/she has fictionalized.

In one's life, one is free to choose to adopt a passive attitude in which only the conditions in which he/she is in shape himself/herself, or to adopt an active or pro-active attitude in which he/she shapes himself/herself and his/her environment with his/her decisions and actions, despite the circumstances. According to Logotherapy, when a person chooses the latter, he/she creates his/her life like an artwork, finds meaning, pursues an *authentic life* and develops an authentic personality. According to Paul Tillich, this requires the "courage to be" (Tillich, 20140) and to Rollo May, this requires the "courage to create" (May, R., 1994). When a person chooses the first option, he/she may have difficulties in finding meaning in life, as in the words of Frankl, a person *may face an existential vacuum*, and the distress and the anxiety may reach a disruptive level. One of the main goals of Logotherapy (and Logopedagogy) is that people gain a perspective on taking a proactive role in life with this awareness and better review their attitude in this direction and change their attitude if necessary. To do that, it focuses on encouraging and making the person aware of the power of their free will. Whatever perspective we have and whatever stand we take determines the quality of our lives. Epictetus says that whatever happens to us is neither positive nor negative; it is our perspective or attitude towards them that makes them positive or negative.

According to Emmy van Deurzen (Deurzen & Hanaway, 2012), the problems of human life can be addressed in four main titles: uncertainties, paradoxes, dilemmas and limitations. In the course, these four titles are examined in detail, and it is aimed that the students

to gain awareness about their perspectives and attitudes towards the problems under these four titles:

In life, there will always be uncertainties; they are unavertable and inevitable. The fact that even the uncertainty of our life span is enough to understand how fundamental this issue is to our existence. In this sense, anxiety is also an inseparable part of human existence. The Danish Philosopher Kierkegaard says that "*Anxiety is the dizziness of freedom*" (Kierkegaard, 2014, p. 188) in which he pointed out that anxiety is a natural and positive consequence of our freedom. Whichever option we decide to choose, it is uncertain whether it is the right option or whether we will succeed in what we have decided. Neuroscientists have determined that anxiety has a positive impact on our performance. Anxiety can only be destructive when it exceeds a certain limit. One of the reasons for the increase is that we fear anxiety and that's why we attempt to intervene in it. In such a case, the anxiety that we feel from this anxiety, draws us in like a whirlpool. Good planning helps us deal with uncertainties to some extent, but does not completely eliminate them. It is best for people to harmonize planning and improvisation, to gain experience by evaluating their goals and actions, and to do so in the face of the uncertainties of life. The subject of *Meaning-Oriented Strategic Planning* covered in the course helps the students gain an idea about this methodology and approach.

Life is full of paradoxes. In life, for example, happiness and pain, successes and failures, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, what we can and cannot change coexist. However, the nature of the human mind has difficulty in comprehending that the two opposing understandings that form a paradox with the influence of our emotions are part of the whole and shows a tendency to choose one or the other. For example, it is of course difficult for a person to comprehend happiness while feeling pain. That's why people develop certain belief patterns that are not realistic such as *life is all about pain* and creates attitudes related to it. Existential Counseling recommends that we adopt both elements of the paradox with dialectical thinking. For example, when a person determines and accepts the aspects that they can change and the ones they cannot change in a certain situation and focuses on what they can change; they fulfill the necessary condition to have a proactive attitude in life. As they achieve their goals over time, they realize that they may have an impact that they cannot change in the long run. On

the other hand, living only with the guidance of their conditions may cause the person to be passive and not be able to realize themselves. This may result in the person's inability to realize themselves, not being able to form their authentic personality, in short, having difficulty finding meaning in life.

Dilemmas cause people to be caught in the middle, to stagger, sometimes give up on what they can achieve, and sometimes postpone what they can do. Giving up can lead to existential depression, and procrastination can lead to negative anxiety and stress. In the course, the decision-making process of human beings is examined, the concepts of decision, determination, ambition, motivation, positive-negative stress (eustress-distress), existential depression are questioned and defined. Methods of setting goals are explained, perspectives and tools are presented to cope with dilemmas.

Human beings are subject to an infinite number of tangible and intangible boundaries and limitations such as geographical, political, moral, legal, physical, mental, emotional boundaries, and these boundaries are the unchangeable facts of their existence. Throughout one's life, human beings contemplate over issues such as comprehending, accepting, protecting, exceeding, drawing new ones, and trying to cope with the problems arising from them. In the course, the paradox between borders, limitations and human freedom is discussed, and the students are asked to question their limits and their perspective and attitude toward them.

The *Self-Reflection Group Study* part of the course reveals how the aforementioned theoretical content (main problems of human life) finds reflection in students. It allows them to share their experiences with each other in their daily lives, thus deepening and strengthening their reflections. In the first part of the course, the format of existential group therapy is used in the part we call the Self-Reflection Group Study. In short, this format is for establishing a communication within the group and learning from this communication. In this format, the group sits in a circle. The group members share what they think and feel *now and here* with only using *I* phrases. They only focus on the reactions, emotions, and decisions they give to the incidents and not the incidents themselves. What distinguishes this study from a discussion is that the subjects are not based on knowledge but on experience. In the brainstorming technique, it is possible to speak

through free association, unlike brainstorming, what is shared is not ideas or scientific facts, but what they experience at that moment based on what others say, their own feelings and thoughts. The members can share their own experiences in a similar situation but it is necessary not to give any advice or information to others. Trust develops over time with the principle of mutual respect in the group.

What makes a group work in this format *pedagogical* rather than *therapeutic* is its purpose and the content of the issues raised for this purpose. In this study, the content is guided by the frame drawn in the theory section of the course. The goal is for instance not to solve past traumas. The role of the educator, who also has the profession of Psychological Counseling, is to draw the frame at the beginning, then to ensure that it remains in the framework, connect the subjects when necessary, and sometimes to draw conclusions by asking questions. Shares of one member in the group may arouse thoughts and feelings on similar issues among other members. On such occasions, the subjects can be interrelated, deepened thus, it can be possible that similar and different points of view and reactions may arise. The course is an elective course. After the first lesson (*in the add and drop week*) where the content and method of the lesson are explained, the student has the freedom to decide to take or drop the lesson.

In light of the information gained during the theoretical part of the seminar, in addition to self-reflection, students continue to explore themselves in the third part of the course which is the process of expressing themselves. Because perceiving and transferring, in other words, self-understanding and self-expressing. In the art workshop courses, the student already expresses him/herself. But in this course, the student has to first bring forward his/her inner self and their relation with the outer world at the "Self-reflection Group Study" and then has to brainstorm about the subjects for 8 weeks and has to create a work. The subject of their production is always themselves (*the work that the artist is always related to, however here the subject is directly their inner and outer world*). This process allows the student to express themselves simultaneously with both verbal and artistic means, which supports, develops, and enriches each other. This is quite similar to the effect of writing a text both in German and English or translating it from one language to the other. The translation activity in the brain enables a person to better define the concepts and the emotions. Emmy van Deurzen's Existential School of Psychotherapy uses the phenomenological questioning method in order to make the client's

subjective reality become more in-depth. The effect of expressing oneself in different languages makes a similar effect as of the phenomenological method.

The fact that the course is open to both design and art students it increases the expressions used and this effect, as mentioned before. Although the students are free to use the language of their choice in weekly projects, in order to express their inner self in their production, generally designers tend to produce in the design language they are familiar to and so do artists tend to express themselves in their own artistic language. The course encourages the students to step out of their comfort zone and fuels them to use new techniques, tools and languages of expression. For instance a student from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, naturally didn't have the knowledge and experience to express himself like an artist or make a book like a graphic designer. Throughout the semester, we have observed that he has learnt from other students and based on the planning language that he knew, he developed his own language of artistic expression and his work has evolved.



Image 1

(A. K., by Faculty of Arch. – Dept. of Urban and Regional Planning Student, a page from the book Who Am I?)

Image 2

(by Faculty of Fine Arts - Graphic Design Department Student, a page from the book Who Am I?)



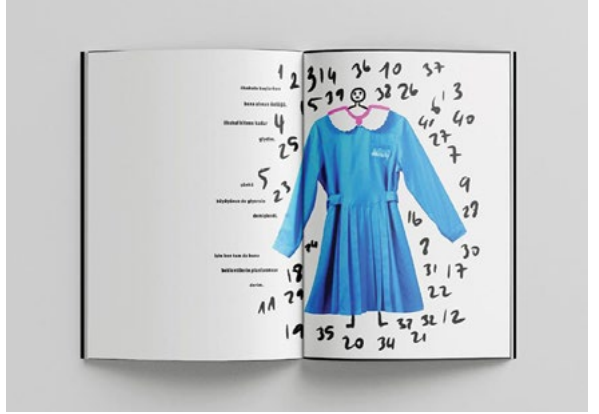
By using topographic map that they have used to express themselves he has thought about how to make an abstraction just like ones from art school. Working with a graphic designer, they experienced how one could use typography in his work (see image 1) more effectively. This gave him the experience of interdisciplinary collaboration. Simultaneously, we observed that another student used the language of planning based on systematic thinking, categorization and coding.

This example can also be a good example of how the theoretical content of the course is reflected in the student's attitude towards professional development. We all have different physical, mental, and emotional limits, different strengths and weaknesses, talents, knowledge, skills, experience, and opportunities. It is our choice to see our boundaries as obstacles or not. Depending on our point of view, our boundaries do not always stand in our way. The effort to cope with difficulties strengthens the person in that area. Boundaries, and limited opportunities force people to develop unusual and alternative solutions, thus increase their creativity. The students' effort to improve themselves in other disciplines in which they don't have much knowledge and experience, will make them different from others. In general, this point of view and approach contribute significantly to the creation of an authentic lifestyle, and for the art and design student to develop an authentic language of artistic expression. (see image 2)

It is possible to give many examples on the numerous effects of the course on students in terms of personal and professional development based on our observations. However, effects differ from person to

Image 3

(by Faculty of Fine Arts –Graphic Design Department Student, a page from the book Who Am I?)



person and considering that Existential Counseling is based on the assumption that each person is an authentic and unique being, we refrain from generalizing.

Considering the aim of the course to encourage experimenting, we evaluate the students by the degree of acquiring new knowledge and skills through new experiments, that they have not acquired in their main discipline before as well as by their progress during the semester.

Examples of students' remarks about the course:

Bora Tıgılı (*Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Graphic Design, Spring 2019-20*):

"The interdisciplinary design course has been a turning point in my life. We created very authentic works of art and had intellectual conversations during this pandemic, which we witnessed in person and had been carved in world history. Everything we learned in the course can be put into practice in real life and enable us to live a better life. In particular, I think that this course should be covered in the first semester when we enroll in the school. If I had to give an example from myself; in the first semester I started school, I was trying to create good quality work and ended up failing. My time and effort were wasted. The theoretical background that we learned in this course taught me how to run a good practice. I got a BA this term from a graphic design project whereas I got an FF last term.

In addition, I think that by carrying the course to different channels outside of school (such as YouTube), the interest shown in this course lesson, the school, and our profession will increase.”

Aygen İncel (*Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Graphic Design, Spring 2020-2021*):

“I took the Interdisciplinary Design course just during the pandemic period when I lost my motivation for school and my work. At first, I did not expect that this course would change me. But the impact of the course on me has been a complete transformation. As a result of the topics we talked about and the questions we asked at the beginning of each lecture, I realized who I am as a designer and how I can reflect this identity in my work. At the end of the semester, I was able to solve the conceptual infrastructure of any project more easily and express myself better in my work. Besides, I can say that working with people from different departments broadened my perspective.”

Firat Rüzgar (*Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Graphic Design, Fall 2020-21*):

“You’ll get nowhere if you just run. I thought I’d been running my whole life, I even thought I was running a marathon. Because I was only running, the finish line had become blurry. I was beginning to forget whether the line existed or what it even was. I had to stop and rest now and then. I should have had to stop sometimes and take a deep breath, maybe look around and to the other runners. More importantly, I had to look back and embrace the distance I ran with a smile. I know that when you do all this, the marathon will turn into a sweet walk. Those who run, who fall and those who get up again... It was impossible for me to see all that while I was just running. The Interdisciplinary Design course made me realize that I was just running, it showed me what is surrounding me. I wish I had taken this course earlier, my legs wouldn’t get so tired for no reason.”

The Effects of Pandemic on the Course


The pandemic has both negative and positive effects on the operation of the lectures. The positive effect on the lesson is that the pandemic has created a common crisis that requires everyone to deal with more or less similar problems. We already have said that existential

coaching categorizes the basic problems of human existence under *uncertainties, paradoxes/dilemmas, and boundaries*. Even though these problems are not specific for the pandemic situation, the pandemic process has heavily exposed these problems under all three headings. More or less, we've all dealt with the anxieties of the uncertainty, faced dilemmas and limitations, faced our own mental and psychological limitations, and feared of losing. This common situation led to the fact that the examples were selected from the current experiences while these topics were discussed in the lessons. That way the subjects were easier to understand, the problems were expressed lightly, and the students shared their inner self more easily. Although *Existential Therapy* methods and approaches are used for pedagogical purposes rather than therapeutic purposes, this provided an environment in which they can express themselves freely throughout the isolation period which helped the students not to feel alone. They shared solutions which they developed against challenges, and admitted when in the evaluation session held at the end of the semester, that they felt themselves better.

Although the philosophy and general methodology of the course has not been changed, the used formats have changed due to the pandemic and the limitations of digital education. The first part of the course, which is inspired by the group therapy format, which is much more efficient in terms of conveying the intellectual and emotional exchange through body language for in-person learning.

The circular seating arrangement is important in group therapy. In the online platform, students cannot sit across from each other in a circle, they can not even see each other completely and clearly. In the Interdisciplinary Design course, students were specifically asked to allow camera access through the devices they used. Every student who had no problem with technical accessibility complied with this request. However, exceptional situations that occurred due to the lack of technical means of some students were tolerated.

The second part of the course, which is theoretical, is the part that is least affected by online education. The third and the most affected part of the lesson is the part where they share their products they made during the week. Due to the necessity of working at home, students tended to produce more digital works, or they had to transfer the works they produced in other mediums to a digital context. This situation has created a problem, especially for a few students who did not have



the required design applications or who were unable to use these programs. This problem was solved by collaboration between students. These emerging problems have helped the boundaries subject in the course to be understood better. Boundaries in life are changeable, but there is always an area of freedom within these limits. From this point of view, students did not get stuck with impossibilities and tended to seek new methods, create solutions, use new tools, and thus improve their creativity and abilities.

Students' participation in class increased compared to the pre-pandemic. According to the number of students choosing the course in each semester, the subjects were covered with an average of 2 students less on average per week, and it was determined that those students participated in the online course as prepared for the next week. Besides, the participating students gained a discipline for submitting their work weekly. This is a positive contribution to the good and efficient use of time. Anxiety created by uncertainties in the first semester decreased in the second and third semesters, and the students gradually adapted to the new situation. Since the success criteria of the course is based on active participation in the course and learning through producing regularly, we can conclude that an increase in success is observed.

During the pandemic, apart from Microsoft Teams provided by the university, a platform called Trello was used. Since Trello displays all the productions of the students in order, it has been useful in terms of making the relations and continuity of the works with each other also the development and changes visible in the process.

In order to work and present comfortably during the pandemic process, the students were expected to assemble a book created from their works as output. Outputs can be diversified after the pandemic. For instance, organizing an exhibition of their work will add a new collaborative design and application area to the course and enrich it.



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Note: In the literature review that we have made, numerous publications have been found in the field of art therapy, where art is used as a therapy tool, but no similar studies have been found in which Existential Counseling methods and approaches are used for art and design education.

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Özet

Bu makale, tasarım ve sanat öğrencilerinin mesleki gelişimlerinin kişisel gelişimlerinden bağımsız olmadığı varsayımından yola çıkarak geliştirdiğimiz *Disiplinlerarası Tasarım* dersinin, hem pandemi öncesinde hem de pandemi sırasında eğitime sağladığı ve sağlayabileceği katkıları göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Ben Kimim? başlıklı atölye formatı, Varoluşçu Danışmanlık yaklaşım ve yöntemlerinden yararlanılarak şekillendirilmiştir. Varoluşçu Danışmanlık, hayatta anlam veya anlam duygusu bulmak, daha otantik (özgün) yaşamak, seçimlerinin sorumluluğunu almak ve kendimiz hakkında sağlıklı bir farkındalık oluşturmak gibi varoluşsal hedeflere yönelik süreci kolaylaştırmak amaçlı danışmanlıkların genel adıdır. Yöntemi, varoluşçu ve hümanist felsefeden yararlanarak kişinin kendini ve dış dünya ile ilişkilerini diyalog kurarak sorgulatmaktır. Derste her ne kadar varoluşçu danışmanlığın içerik ve yöntemlerinden yararlanılıyor olsa da, amaç terapi değil, kişinin kendi üzerine daha derinlemesine düşünmesidir. Genel başlığı *Varoluşçu Danışmanlık* olan ve birçok farklı ekolü ve alt dalı olan bu alan, kişisel ve mesleki gelişim ve eğitim amaçlarına uygun içerik ve yöntemler de sunmaktadır. Bu ders çerçevesinde ele alınan konular ve pedagojik yöntemler, öğrencilerin ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda, özellikle Emmy van Deurzen’in Varoluşçu Terapi Ekolü’nün geliştirdiği Varoluşçu Koçluk (Deurzen ve Hanaway, 2012) ile Viktor Frankl’ın Viyana Üçüncü Psikoterapi Ekolü olarak adlandırılan Logoterapi (*Anlam Odaklı Terapi*)’yi baz alarak geliştirilmiş olan Logopedagoji’den (Lukas, E., 2014) yararlanılarak harmanlanmıştır.

Bu bağlamda dersin amacı, öğrencinin kendi varoluşu üzerine düşünmesi, sanatsal üretim ve tasarım faaliyetlerini kendi ile ilişkilendirmesi, böylece bir insan ve bir tasarımcı olarak otantik benliğini ve yaşamının anlamını arayış yolculuğunda, farkındalık

kazanması ve kendine ait bir ifade dili oluşturabilmesi konusunda bilinçlenmesidir.

Dersler üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm Şimdi ve Burada yaşanan duygu ve düşüncelerin paylaşımına dayanan varoluşçu grup psikoterapi formatından yararlanılarak yapılan özyansıtma grup çalışmasıdır. Burada amaç, öğrencinin grup dinamiği içinde başkaları üzerinden kendini ve kurduğu ilişki biçimlerini anlamasıdır. Teorik anlatım içeren ikinci bölümde Varoluşçu Düşünce üzerine temellenen insan varoluşu üzerine, özgürlük, sorumluluk, otantisite ve hayatın anlamı gibi konular ele alınmaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde ise öğrencilerin geçmiş hafta boyunca yaptığı işler üzerine konuşulmakta, öneriler getirilmektedir. Öğrencilerden o haftaki kavramlardan yola çıkarak hafta içinde iş üretmeleri ve bir metin yazmaları beklenmektedir. Bu işlerde önemli olan kendilerini, düşüncelerini ve iç dünyalarını özgürce ifade etmektir. Bunun için kullanacakları medyum ya da tekniklerde serbesttirler. 8 haftalık çalışmalarını, son 6 haftada bir kavramsal çerçeveye oturtmaları ve bu işlerden bir kitap tasarımları beklenmektedir.

Yazıda, dersin amaçları, içeriği, metodolojisi, gözlenen ve beklenen etkilerinin yanı sıra, pandemi koşullarının dersin işleyişine olumlu ve olumsuz etkileri ele alınmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sanat ve Tasarım, Eğitim, Varoluşçu Koçluk, Disiplinlerarası Tasarım, Logoterapi

Genişletilmiş Özet

Bu makale, tasarım ve sanat öğrencilerinin mesleki gelişimlerinin kişisel gelişimlerinden bağımsız olmadığı varsayımından yola çıkarak geliştirdiğimiz *Disiplinlerarası Tasarım* dersinin, hem pandemi öncesinde ve hem de pandemi sırasında eğitime sağladığı ve sağlayabileceği katkıları göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

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Bu bağlamda dersin amacı, öğrencinin kendi varoluşu üzerine düşünmesini, sanatsal üretim ve tasarım faaliyetlerini kendi ile ilişkilendirmesini, böylece bir insan ve bir tasarımcı olarak otantik benliğini ve yaşamının anlamını arayış yolculuğunda, farkındalık kazanmasını ve kendine ait bir ifade dili oluşturabilmesi konusunda bilinçlenmesidir.

Dersler üç bölümden oluşmaktadır: İlk bölüm varoluşçu grup terapi formatından esinlenilerek yapılan özyansıtma grup çalışması'dır. Şimdi ve buradaki düşünce ve duygularını paylaştıkları bu bölümde amaç, öğrencinin grup dinamiği içinde başkaları üzerinden kendini ve kurduğu ilişki biçimlerini anlaması, teorik anlatımda ele alınan konuları kendileri ile ilişkilendirmesidir. Teorik anlatım içeren ikinci bölümde *Varoluşçu Düşünce* üzerinde temellenen insan varoluşu

bağlamında özgürlük, sorumluluk, otantisite ve hayatın anlamı gibi konular ele alınmaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde ise öğrencilerin geçmiş hafta boyunca yaptığı yaratıcı üretimleri üzerine konuşulmakta ve öneriler getirilmektedir. Ve bu bağlamda, öğrencilerden o haftaki kavramlardan yola çıkarak hafta içinde iş üretmeleri ve bir metin yazmaları beklenmektedir. Bu işlerde önemli olan kendilerini, düşüncelerini ve iç dünyalarını özgürce ifade etmektir, kullanacakları medyum ya da tekniklerde özgürdürler. 8 haftalık çalışmalarını takip eden 6 hafta içinde tüm üretimlerini bir kavramsal çerçeveye oturtarak, kitap tasarımları beklenmektedir.

İlk bölüm, öğrencinin duygu ve düşüncelerini daha iyi anlayabilmesi ve anlamlandırabilmesi için grup içinde iletişim kurma yöntemiyle öğrenme ortamı sunar. Teorik içeriği veren ikinci bölüm, bir sonraki haftaki grup çalışmasının çerçevesini belirler. Bu iki bölümde gerçekleşen “anlama ve anlamlandırma süreci”, öğrencinin kendini sanatsal yollarla ifade ettiği üçüncü bölüm için bir girdi (input) oluşturur.

Dersin adındaki *tasarım* sözcüğü burada hem geniş anlamına, kendini ve ekosistemini tasarlayan ve sonra da tasarladığını gerçekleştiren bir varlık olan insanın genel olarak tasarım faaliyetine; hem de dar anlamına, bir meslek olarak tasarıma işaret etmektedir. Bu bağlamda öğrenci derste, kendi varoluşu üzerine düşünüp (*ve yaşamını tasarlayıp*), kendini farklı görsel sanat ve tasarım araçlarıyla ifade etmekte, dönemin sonunda tüm süreci kavramsallaştırıp kitap gibi tek bir işte birleştirmekte, bütünleştirmektedir (ürün tasarımı). 14 haftalık süreçte, kendilerine ayrılan ders saatlerini verimli kullanmaya da özen göstermesi beklenen öğrenci kendilik ve dünya görüşünü gözden geçirme pratiği kazanmaktadır.

Dersin *disiplinlerarası* oluşu, kendini ifade etmek üzere tüm sanat ve tasarım alanlarından özgürce yararlanabileceğine işaret etmektedir. Ders, Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi, Mimarlık Fakültesi, Konservatuar ve Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi'nin öğrencilerinin katılımına açıktır. Bunun yanında, sanat, tasarım, psikolojik/felsefi danışmanlık ve kültür yönetimi disiplinlerinde uzman eğitimci tarafından verilen dersin içeriği de farklı disiplinlerin bilgi ve yöntemlerinden yararlanmaktadır.

Dersin üniversitenin hem tasarım hem sanat alanlarından öğrencilere açık olması, öğrenciye karşılıklı öğrenme olanağı da sunmakta, sanat ve tasarım dallarının farklı üretim anlayışlarını ve ifade biçimlerini

görmelerini sağlamaktadır. Örneğin; resim sanatının, sanatçının kendi iç dünyasından yola çıkarak sadece kendini ifade etmek üzere üretim anlayışı ile grafik tasarımın belli bir hedef kitle ile iletişime yönelik üretim anlayışı ya da endüstriyel tasarımın belli bir fonksiyonu yerine getirmek üzere üretim anlayışı birbirinden farklıdır. Kavramsal düşünmeyi ön plana koymayan, özellikle zanaatlara yoğunlaşan disiplinlerden (örneğin; Geleneksel Türk Sanatları) öğrenciler zanaatlerini kendilerini ifade etmek için bir araç olarak kullanmayı, işlerini kavramsal bir çerçeveye oturtmayı, üretimlerini bir sanat eserine dönüştürmeyi deneyimlemekte ve öğrenmektedir. Buna karşın sanat disiplinlerinden öğrenciler de benzer şekilde, hikayeleri ve işlerinden oluşan kitap tasarlama sürecinde grafik tasarımın iletişim odaklı yaklaşımını öğrenmektedir. Üretim süreçleri ve işler üzerine grup içinde konuşulması, öğrencilerin sadece eğitimcilerden değil, birbirlerinden de öğrenmelerini sağlamaktadır.

Genel olarak sanat eğitimi, doğası gereği başka birçok eğitim alanından farklı olarak öğrenciyi kendi ve yaşamı üzerine düşünmeye zaten yönlendirir. Böyle bir dersin gerekliliği, öğrencinin kendi üzerine düşünme sürecine bir çerçeve ve metodoloji sunmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Genel olarak insan nasıl bir varlıktır? ve insan yaşam nasıl bir şeydir? soruları üzerine düşünen insan felsefesinden beslenen Varoluşçu Danışmanlık bilgisi kişinin uçsuz bucaksız dünya görüşünü ve kendilik görüşünü netleştirmesinde yardımcı olur. Kişi, ele alınan başlıklar çerçevesinde düşünerek kendine ve yaşamına üstten bakış kazanır. Varoluşçu Danışmanlık, kişinin kendine bakmasında bir güçlendirici görevi üstlenir.

Pandemi öncesinde geliştirmiş ve uygulamaya başladığımız bu ders, içeriği ve yöntemi açısından, özellikle hem içinde yaşadığımız eko-sistemde hem de günlük yaşamımızda yol açtığı kriz nedeniyle çoğunluğun yaşamı sorguladığı pandemi döneminde öğrencinin artan sorgulama ihtiyacına cevap vermiştir.

Varoluşçu Danışmanlığa göre insanın varoluşunda koşullar ne olursa olsun mevcut olan temel sorunlar (*belirsizlikler, sınırlar, paradokslar ve ikilemler*) üzerine düşünme ihtiyacının, pandemi döneminde çoğu öğrencimizin gözünde daha büyük önem kazandığını gözlemledik. Yazıda, dersin amaçları, içeriği, metodolojisi, gözlenen ve beklenen etkilerinin yanı sıra, pandemi koşullarının dersin işleyişine olumlu ve olumsuz etkileri ele alınmaktadır.

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