

# SANAT VE TASARIM EĞİTİMİNDE PROJE TEMELLİ ÖĞRENME SÜRECİ: “MASALINI ANLAT KİTAP OLSUN”

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## ABSTRACT

**Keywords:**  
Fairytale, Book,  
Story, Project-based,  
Illustration

In this article, we aim to introduce and analyze in an intercultural illustration project, the process of collaborative production in a project-based learning approach with visual communication design students in Sakarya University Faculty of Fine Arts<sup>3</sup>, Sakarya, Turkey. This Project, entitled “Tell your Fairytale, Let It Become a Book” aiming to attract especially the international students’ attention at the first step by calling them to bring a fairytale from their own culture. In the second step, students from Visual Communication Design Department illustrated the fairytales in a collective workshop process and completed a book of fairytales from different cultures with many individual illustrative perspectives. At the end of this Project, supported by Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Presidency of Turks Abroad and Related Communities, intercultural exchange has been realized through the similarities between different cultural products. During project students transformed into active subjects determining their own needs and completed their learning with project-based production.

## A PROJECT-BASED LEARNING PROCESS IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION: “TELL YOUR FAIRYTALE, LET IT BECOME A BOOK”

### ÖZ

**Anahtar kelimeler:**  
Masal, Kitap,  
Hikaye, Proje-temel-  
li, İllüstrasyon.

Bu makale Sakarya Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Fakültesi Görsel İletişim bölümü öğrencileri ve uluslararası öğrencilerin katılımıyla gerçekleşen kültürlerarası illüstrasyon projesi kapsamında işbirliğine dayalı proje-temelli öğrenme yaklaşımı içinde analizine dayanmaktadır. İlk aşamada projenin çağrı başlığı “ Masalını Anlat, Kitap Olsun” uluslararası öğrencilerin dikkatini çekerek kendi kültürlerine ait bir masalı getirmeleri sağlanmıştır. Ardından ikinci aşama olarak ortak bir atölye çalışmasının ardından Görsel İletişim Tasarım Bölümü öğrencileri farklı kültürel masalları farklı yaklaşımlarla illüstrasyonlarını yapmışlardır. T.C Başbakanlık Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı tarafından desteklenen projede farklı kültürler arasındaki benzerlikler üzerinden kültürlerarası alışveriş gerçekleşmiştir. Proje sürecinde öğrenciler kendi gereksinimlerini belirleyen aktif özneler dönüşmüş ve öğrenmelerini proje-temelli üretim ile tamamlamışlardır.

## Introduction

Narrative and visual communication as two aspects of human collective memory functioning together and completing parallel missions in human history pave the way for similar archetypes and a possibility for a common language between various cultures which is commented as 'monomitos' from a psychoanalytic perspective. Narrative and visual arts emerged from a dialogue between the eye and the ear, told us stories during history and enabled the transfer of human culture and memory.

In art and design education narrative and visual tools are as well as important and offer different medium to transfer a story by its own language. Especially in an illustrated fairytale book design, stories are depicted with words and images together which requires the collaboration of oral, written and visual cultural production. In art and design education the collective and project-based production of the composition of words and images in a single page as well as the design of a full book give art students an opportunity to solve design problems motivated by a common purpose. "Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an innovative approach to learning that teaches a multitude of strategies critical for success in the twenty-first century. Students drive their own learning through inquiry, as well as work collaboratively to research and create projects that reflect their knowledge" (Bell, 2010).

In this project we aimed to bring students together in an intercultural communicative medium through fairytales and design language. Students from various countries and studying in Sakarya University, shared fairytales from their own culture by reading them and visual communication design students illustrated these oral cultural products after they have been written at the end of a seminar which provided them to discuss, to comment and to interact. This brainstorming process is followed by a book illustration and design workshop where design students selected their fairytales, working groups, materials and also designated collaboratively their own design problems and solutions. An electronic book is a concrete outcome of this workshop to be published on Internet.

The whole process provided us to observe the students' behaviours, their will to participate in an extracurricular design project, their stability to sustain the creative work which ran on approximately a month and their completely volunteer given time and effort were remarkable. So we decided to analyse this process in an

art education approach and through project-based learning context. Same students were attending our classes during their academic education but the participation level of most of them, the will to complete a design work in a classroom and even the ability to finish an artwork are less than their volunteer participation and persistence to stay in studio to finish their creative work. We observe that through intercultural communicative medium, a project-based design process effects directly productivity, performance and permanent learning process of art and design students and that observation drive us to analyse the project process to expose the consequences as findings.

### 1. Intercultural Interaction Via Fairytales

Every culture produced myths and fairytales. Like visual language, the language of literature is universal and fairytales originated from mythological stories and archetypes, as oral cultural products form today a common language to communicate between different and distant societies. The idea of 'monomitos', described by Joseph Campbell in his work "The Hero With Thousand Faces" has been a start point for our illustrative fairytale book project to provide an interaction between international students and design students who can speak visual language that provides a universal tool to communicate. As a term borrowed from James Joyce's *Finnegan Wake*, monomitos means all myth and rituals are the various appearances of a same and unique story even if their places and times vary from each other (Tecimer, 2006:107).

Fairytales and old public stories originated from myths and rituals of ancient oral cultures have old archetypes that have to be analyzed like cave paintings for visual art story. These archetypes are the molds of characters and events forming a story as bricks of a building. Vladimir Propp describes them as "functions" in a story structure. Propp in his work 'Morphology of the Folktales' analyzed Russian anonymous fairytales to expose their common properties and determined 31 narrative functions consisting of similar plots and story sequences dialectically connected each other. According to Propp (2005), all fairytales don't contain all of these functions but the absence of some of them does not influence the syntax of the rest. The whole functions compose a flow, an arrangement and it's also tremendously balanced and prevalent (222).

For C. Gustave Jung, myths are the unconscious of societies and they can be described as 'dreams' they have seen. He described dreams as personal myths and

myths as collective dreams. According to Jung, all of the humanity is connected each other by this “collective unconscious” (Indick, 2007: 105). This is the reason why myths, fairytales and stories as social equivalents of personal dreams repeat continuously character and event archetypes which as a term means the ‘primary image’ of something. These archetypes, even if they have various appearances changing from time to time and place to place with different cultural impacts, have common, understandable and integrative primary visions for all humanity. They form universal denominators that can be identified, understood and appreciated by any man or woman without any difficulty just because they represent common life experiences that can be lived in any place in this world and any time in history (Sayılğan, 2014: 38).

These dreams formed story structures creating also fairytales in a flow of a “hero’s journey” analyzed in detail by Campbell deriving from Jung’s archetype theory and story syntaxes representing the real human life’s hard thresholds (like birth, maturation, marriage and death etc.) to be passed in personal and social levels (Campbell, 2010). Accordingly, every human being is a hero in his/her personal life challenging many obstacles preventing him/her in this universal journey called life.

So, we started from this point and invited students from different cultures to bring an anonymous fairytale originated from their own culture and ask them to share it by reading in a workshop with an open participation to design students who are also probable and voluntary illustrators of our fairytale book. This workshop has been realized in 2016, April 7th, after a seminar titled ‘The Journey of a Fairytale Hero’ presented by Özge Sayılğan, Assist. Prof. Dr. in Sakarya University Faculty of Fine Arts and consisted a theoretical ground for the next level. Then international participants read their fairytales. Some of them, who have participated with more than one fairytale, chose one to read it during the workshop.

The participants were Eva Bosáková from Czech Republic who read a fairytale titled Horymír and Šemik; Aidana Kulmanova from Kazakhstan whose two fairytales have been selected to be illustrated, ‘Asan and Usen’ and ‘Why the swallow’s tail is separated?’. Areen Aldarsawi from Jordan who has also brought two fairytales, one originated from Palestine and titled ‘Nus-sinseys’ (The Half of My Half) and the other originated from Egypt and is actually a lullaby heard by her mother from TV and sang to her during her childhood.

Areen sang this lullaby. Another participant Aristide Fongang Tchewompi from Cameroon read a fairytale titled ‘Turtle, Elephant and Hippo’, Zhansaya Bek from Kazakhstan whose two fairytales have been chosen titled ‘Makta’ (Cotton Girl) and ‘Goodness and Evil’; Azra Kadric from Bosnia and Herzegovina and her two fairytales ‘Justice and Injustice’ and ‘Luck in Unluckiness’.

Every fairytale has been discussed after reading process one by one and the first cultural interaction between different cultures began. Turkish design students and international students from various departments found an opportunity to discover their cultural similarities and also a chance to share their understandings via literature. To ease the communication between design students and international students who have shared a fairytale, workshop administrators made translations from English and French to Turkish. At the end of day, fairytales have been distributed to design students who wanted to participate in our project as illustrators.

## 2. Collaborative Production In Visualization Process

Next day, visualization process started with sketch drawings after a second workshop titled “Fairytale Book Design” realized by Emel Yurtkulu Yılmaz, Assist. Prof. and during this workshop special issues and process of a fairytale book design are described and put into practice. Papers, pencils, drawing crayons and watercolors are distributed and workshop instructor precised page sizes and the templates right after students started to precise the number and dispersion of illustrations considering fairytales’ length. One of the things that attract attention at first sight was the collaborative work tendency between students when they were taking their first decisions. At this point collaborative and project-based problem solving process started between participants. “Project-based learning is a form of situated learning (...) and it is based on the constructivist finding that students gain a deeper understanding of material when they actively construct their understand by working with and using ideas. In project-based learning, students engage in real, meaningful problems that are important to them (...)” (Krajcik, Blumenfeld, 2006: 318). Moreover some of the students demanded to work on the same fairytale as a group while the others were working alone after a brainstorming process between them. “Whatever the complexity of the brief, the initial process of initiating and generating ideas and concepts is basically the same and the most common practice is to

brainstorm and record all thoughts and notions through written and/or visual note-taking” (Male, 2007: 26). So two fairytales, ‘Nussinseys’ and ‘Goodness and Evil’ are each other illustrated by a group of two illustrators who wanted to work together and this decision took them also to bring their drawing styles similar which was another challenge for them. According to Alaca and Grobler (2016), “Besides the capacity of drawing as a direct and pluralistic language, a primer for visual literacy, it generates further benefits when practiced collaboratively (...) The increasing use of drawing in interdisciplinary



Figure 1. Book cover designed by Emel Yurtkulu Yılmaz



Figure 2. Examples of different styles applied in a same fairytale book

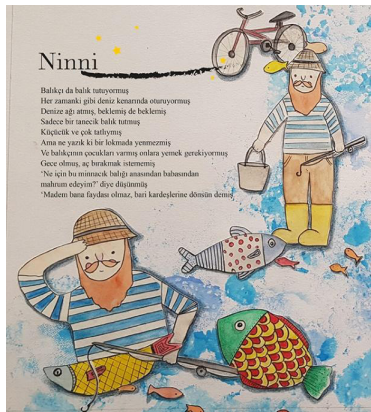


Figure 3. A cut-out illustration technique applied by Büşra Yılmaz

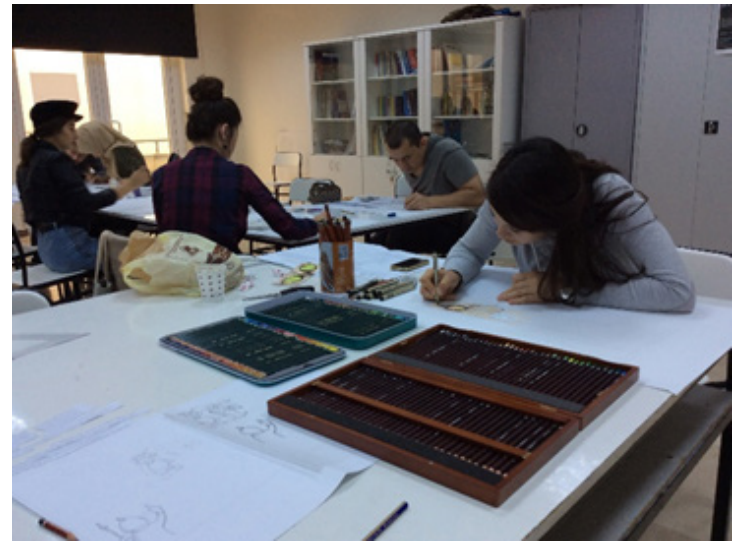


Figure 4. A view from design studio

platforms as an interactive process may be connected to its capacity to directly engage and transmit information that is at times hard to attain” (237). The next three weeks, students continued to draw illustrations in an outlined studio process and they could also take their work home to complete pages. But approximately for a month they could stay together and made comparisons and exchange of ideas which was an extremely productive and volunteer work process without any pressure or worry for final notes in spite of the fact that they were just in the middle of their school project midterms.

Most participants are oriented to make researches about the culture where the fairytale they will illustrate is coming from. The visual contexts and first sketches are generated after these researches. Thus, students tried to combine their illustrative perspective with another culture’s visual expression. For example, Halil Eren and Segah Tok who illustrated a Kazakh fairytale (Goodness and Evil) researched Kazakh rural architecture and local motives used in carpet and weaving arts before starting to draw. Another example is the Palestinian fairytale (Nussinseys), which has hard aspects in story to be described visually is drawn by Kürşat Çetiner and Serpil Gülyüz by using a graphic novel aesthetic because of the illustrators’ personal design background in this specific area (Figure 2).

During design process, participants commented and criticised the other works, they exchanged ideas, influenced and sometimes helped each other to complete the book design in time. “A project-based classroom allows students to investigate questions, propose hypothesis and explanations, discuss their ideas, challenge the ideas of others, and try out new ideas. Research has demonstrated that students in project-based learning

classroom get higher scores than students in traditional classrooms (Marx et al., 2004; Rivet & Krajcik, 2004; William & Linn, 2003)" (Krajcik, Blumenfeld, 2006: 318). The project-based learning method has been realized in an interactive and self-directed group work to reach the precise goal.

### 3. An Achieved Goal: A Book Of Many Cultures With Many Illustrative Perspectives

When designing process is once completed we had totally twelve fairytales voluntarily worked and interpreted in the end. Nine illustration works are chosen between them to be published online with a cover and inner cover designed by Emel Yurtkulu Yılmaz (Figure 1), the design workshop instructor. The chosen fairytales and illustrations are, 'Horymír and Šemik' (Czech Republic) illustrated by Büşra Küçükoğlu; 'Asan and Usen' (Kazakhstan) illustrated by Kübra Timur; 'Why the swallow's tail is separated?' (Kazakhstan) illustrated by Kübra Yıldırım; 'Nussinseys' (The Half of My Half, Palestine) illustrated by Kürşat Çetiner and Sarpil Güteryüz; Egyptian lullaby narrating a little fish's story illustrated by Büşra Yılmaz; 'Turtle, Elephant and Hippo' (Cameroon) which is an African fable illustrated by Kübra Yeter; 'Makta' (Cotton Girl, Kazakhstan) illustrated by Gamze Okatar; 'Goodness and Evil' (Kazakhstan) illustrated by Halil Eren and Segah Tok; an also 'Justice and Injustice' (Bosnia and Herzegovina ) illustrated by Özkan Başol. 'Luck in Luckiness' (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and 'King Matjaž and Queen Alenka' (Slovenia) couldn't be completed on time. Another Kazakh fairytale proposed by Zhansaya Bek and which illustrations have been completed by a group of two students haven't been chosen for the book and a fairytale from Bosnia and Herzegovina, entitled 'Young Man and the Dove' is not chosen to be illustrated by any design student.

In the end we could bring together many fairytales from different cultures illustrated in various illustrative perspectives. As a result of dialogue, interaction and cultural sharing process the book represents the cultural and visual multitude, diversity and synergy in illustrative styles and stylizations.

Collaborative designing process was realized in a studio where each design student and group of designers had their own space and materials but they could also have the possibility to contact directly the other works and designer/groups (Figure 4). In this particular atmosphere, the fairytale book has been constructed as an architectural project day after day in which each

room was designed with a different style.

Comparisons and interpretation breaks were not only the times to rest hands but served also as mortar to keep the construction's bricks together. For Shea and Guzzo, the success of a group effectiveness is determined by three levels: (1) task interdependence (how closely group members work together), (2) outcome interdependence (whether, and how, group performance is rewarded) and (3) potency (members' belief that the group can be effective) (Shea and Guzzo, 1987; Kvan, 2000: 410). These levels carried easily the project to the next phase by sustaining the communicative medium also within digital and social media. Thus some design students shared regularly their work's progress and a web blog was created voluntarily to publish all workshop videos and photographs<sup>11</sup>.

The Project's context, content and collaborative construction functioned as layers in a picture. Only our goal to provide contribution of international students to design process and workshop could be achieved by digital media. The interaction between them and fine arts faculty has been maintained especially with our social media sharing. The book titled 'Tell Your Fairytale' is designed also only for digital publishing and reached our readers from an online book and magazine publishing website in pdf format.

### Conclusion

As a collaborative and interactive illustration project "Tell your fairytale, Let it become a book" aimed to provide an intercultural interaction among Sakarya University students by using the fairytales' common archetypes and the visual language which comes before the oral language for human beings. The participants found an opportunity to share their cultural products and also could meet various cultures to identify the similarities between them via fairytales. Throughout history, oral and visual cultures developed and supported each other as communicative agents in socializing in time and space. The word and the image became two layers to carry human culture and memory to next generations. This is why every culture produced archetypes and images and they are also readable by any other culture. A storybook with images is for us a powerful communicative medium between foreign people who can sometimes react with prejudice. In the end we think we could reach our goal to provide this kind of intercultural interaction to make young students interrogate prejudices created between cultures and so they could find a chance to determine similarities between them.

This project provided us to make an understanding of art and design education in fine arts faculty programmes using project-based learning process to transform our students in interactive agents in design process. In an intercultural and productive medium and with a realist and predicted goal, students became volunteer participants and worked as professionals in contrast to their situation in traditional classrooms. We found that project-based learning model made them active subjects of design production when they could have the ability to precise their own problems to be resolved. So they could ask their own questions and challenge the difficulties they have chosen. Another founding is that collaborative thinking and producing increased their subjectivity. They had to find common solutions to bring closer their drawing styles, their using of time and discuss in detail the flow of their work while they were confronting the differences and the success of other works and work flows. There were no instructors and final notes, but they were awarded for having an illustrated page in a published e-book. Project-based learning in a collaborative / intercultural design medium transformed students into designers.

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