

EDUCATING THE PEOPLE AS A DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHER AND CAMERA OPERATOR VIA OPEN EDUCATION SYSTEM STUDIES FROM TURKEY:

Anadolu University Open Education Faculty Case

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ABSTRACT

Today, Photography and visual arts are very important in our modern life. Especially for the mass communication, the visual images and visual arts have very big importance. In modern societies, people must have knowledge about the visual things, such as photographs, cartoons, drawings, typography, etc. Briefly, the people need education on visual literacy.

In today's world, most of the people in the world have a digital camera for photography or video image. But it is not possible to give people, visual literacy education in classic school system. But the camera users need a teaching medium for using their cameras effectively. So they are trying to use internet opportunities, some internet websites and pages as an information source. But as the well known problem, not all the websites give the correct learning or know-how on internet. There are a lot of mistakes and false information. Because of the reasons given above, Anadolu University Open Education Faculty is starting a new education system to educate people as a digital photographer and camera person in 2009. This program has very importance as a case study. The language of photography and digital technology is in English. Of course, not all the camera users understand English language. So, owing to this program, most of the camera users and especially people who is working as an operator in studios will learn a lot of things on photography, digital technology and camera systems. On the other hand, these people will learn about composition, visual image's history etc. Because of these reasons, this program is very important especially for developing countries. This paper will try to discuss this subject.

Keywords: Distance education; open education; educational technology; education; Turkey; e-learning; Anadolu University.

INTRODUCTION

Today, photography and visual arts are very important in our modern life. Especially for the mass communication, the visual images and visual arts carry very importance. In modern societies, people are expected to have knowledge about the visual concerns, such as photographs, cartoons, drawings, typography, etc. As a result, education on visual literacy becomes a necessity in modern life. In our day, a lot of the people in the world have a digital camera for taking photographs or video images. But these camera users still need an education medium to use their cameras effectively. So they use internet facilities, like some internet websites as an information source. But as a well known problem in "goggle and learn," all informative sites, know how instructions and forum advices are not prepared properly and contain a lot of inadequate, false information and sometimes heart breaking mistakes.

Taking the many different circumstances and needs of these huge populations of vocational photographers into account, it is not reasonable to give people visual literacy education in a classic school setting. Taking all these into the consideration; Anadolu University Open Education Faculty has planned a new education system to train people as a photographer and cameraperson and the associate degree program is starting in 2009.

One of the prominent technological developments, distance education, is eliminating Border of the physical distance among learners and instructors who are far from each other. (<http://tojde.anadolu.edu.tr/tojde32/index.htm>)

PHOTOGRAPHY EDUCATION IN TURKEY

There are a lot of institutions and organizations which are giving formal photography education in Turkey. Some of them are official and governmental organisations and some of them are nongovernmental organisations such as associations, photography clubs and private organizations.

Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Marmara University, Yıldız Teknik University, Kocaeli University, Dokuz Eylül University, Akdeniz Canakkale 18 Mart and Van Yüzüncü Yıl Universities have undergraduate degree photography departments. And all these universities are established by the government. On the other hand there are a lot of departmens for giving photography education and camera operation education at the universities founded by some private organizations and associations in Turkey. Some of them are, Bilgi University, Bahcesehir University. Halic University, Maltepe University and Okan University.

Art education with its theoretical and practical system, reveals students' communication skills and creativity, so it improves students. The courses that are common and obligatory are implemented in combination with particular courses related with the department or program. For example, besides general courses like basic art education, art theory, visual communication, history of art, sociology of art, philosophy of art, modern art criticism and interpretation, photography and studio photography courses are given in all the faculties. The courses that require specializing like documentary photography, experimental photography, fashion photography, advertisement and promotion photography, media photography, portrait photography, esthetic photography, photography theory, art criticism and interpretation, project diploma, thesis project are conducted in a four year education program.

<http://www.fotoritim.com/yazi/akademik-bakis--universitelerimizin-fotograf-bolumlerine-giris-sinavlari-ve-egitim-programlari>

Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Faculty of Fine Arts has the first Photography Department in Turkey. On its web site, Photography Department is defined as;

"It was established in 1978 under the structure of Mimar Sinan University in order to able to perform the function of photograph for art and society. The photograph department is structured on three complementary basic concepts such as knowledge, creativity and technological process. Its pre-graduate and post graduate education programs aim to develop the students completely with regard to art and profession according to the scientific methods that include trial, inspection and realization processes."

<http://www.msqsu.edu.tr/msu/pages/468.aspx>

There are majors in both state and private universities in the field of photography and camera operation. One of the private institutions is Plato Vocational School. In the explanation of the school website, it is stated that there is need for this major because of the inadequacy of talented staff in the professional atmosphere, and it is said in the website:

"Photography and camera operation associate degree program aims to graduate designers who will work in the field of photography and camera and who are aware of new technology and up to date improvements. Besides theoretical information, lesson plans are formed according to emphasis on practice to make students acquire practical skills. Occupation that we say necessary nowadays is photography. There is large need for cameraman who is well-educated in the area of television, cinema and film production and for staff that improves himself/herself with the theoretical and practical courses in the field of media."

Important Institutes on Photograph Education Around The World

Becoming easier of production of photograph makes this important communication device to become widespread. Today, photograph attracts more attention than in the past. And, this makes photograph education to become widespread all over the world. Nowadays, more people produce photograph and the producer wants to have more knowledge to generate more qualified and eligible photographs. Availability of the photograph in each field makes people to attain important economic income regardless of the professionalism. Many people are working in the process of production and consumption of photograph. Seeking profound and competent worker is increasing day by day.

Photographer groups in national and international websites and websites for sharing photographs can be accepted as the most important indicator of this. Many young people who share their thoughts try to have information about where and how to learn photograph. Departments that have education in the field of photography and visual image in the most important universities in the world graduate alumni everyday. However, because of lots of demands, there are majors like photography, camera operation, visual communication design in new universities and institutions. So, institutions which have education in those fields increase more everyday. The most important centre of the United States for photograph education is RIT (Rochester Institute of Technology) which was founded in Rochester, New York. This institution graduates many alumni, and educates photographers in different fields of photography. School is introduced like this in the website of the university. "For over 100 years the School of Photographic Arts and Sciences has been dedicated to the creative and professional enrichment of our students, preparing them for distinguished careers as leaders in their field of photographic endeavor." <http://cias.rit.edu>

"Famu (Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts in Prague), one of the most effective photograph education institutions of the Europe, states that photograph is important visual language in modern communication systems, and in the introduction part it says: "In this program, photography is understood as an inseparable part of the modern communication systems which use visual language in a creative way. Photography is viewed not only from traditional perspectives (theory, technique, history and esthetics of the field) but also from the point of view of socio-scientific research as well as investigated in the various forms of photography's application in contemporary society. The program is designed in such a way to prepare independent creative individuals, for 3 years (6 semesters) in the Bachelor Program, and for another 2 years (4 semesters) in the Master Program.

<http://www.famu.cz/eng/departments/photography-department/about-1/general-information-about-department-of-photography/>

It is possible to give examples to the institutions like RIT and FAMU . Those are the institutions which have formal education on campus. However, there are institutions which have distant education in the field of photography. The most distinctive of those is NYIP (New York Institute of Photography) Institution has been giving photograph education since 1910. Institution that we can describe as the most known institution about distant education of photograph describe its service like this:

"Whether you want to become a professional photographer or simply enhance your basic skills, New York Institute of Photography, the world's largest photography school can help you. Instruction by respected real-life photographers combined with our online magazine and featured tips provide an unparalleled level of support to guide you through the amazing landscape of traditional or digital photography."
(<http://www.nyip.com>)

The New York Institute of Photography is the world's oldest and largest photography school. NYI has grown to become the premier provider of distance photography training, educating more than 20,000 students in the US and more than 50 countries abroad at any given time. (<http://www.nyip.com/about/>)

DISTANCE EDUCATION

One of the biggest problems caused by the ever growing population is education. In many countries distance education is a necessary solution to supply education to the growing population. When the capacities of standard schools do not meet the needs, the new modern model to provide efficient education by using communicational technologies is distance education www.aof.anadolu.edu.tr/kitap/IOLTP/1266/unite04.pdf. Whether you are in a formal educational setting or in a corporate training environment, the distance education industry is in a constant flux. Technologies will change, but the fundamental principals of effective instruction will remain the same. (Dooley E.K., 2005)

In traditional education system, education is based upon teacher. In the classical system lessons are performed by the guidance of teacher and the materials are prepared for his purpose. The distance education is student centered. In this system all the content and form of educational material are designed to make students to learn by themselves. That system is based on three Fundamentals;

- Books which help learning by oneself.
- Materials to help books like radio television, video band, computer programs
- An academic counseling system which would ensure students and lecturers meet in needed cases. (www.aof.anadolu.edu.tr/kitap/IOLTP/1266/unite04.pdf)

In modern days technological resources are develop with a high speed. All these developments in technology provide considerable assistance to distance education. Besides the conventional media like course books, radio, TV we have mentioned above internet scopes should be taken into consideration. E-learning carries a special importance in distance learning and adds a lot to efficiency of the system.

A student in distance education would not follow the conventional lectures in the conventional media we have mentioned. Students would attain books online, watch tv programs online and would test themselves by online exams. All these resources show that the distance education would be efficient educational system in modern world. Today distance education is used in most developed countries like Germany, United States, and England. The first country to use distance education is Great Britain.

According to Ataç, Open education, in a general sense, is means of offering education opportunities to a large number of people who cannot otherwise continue their education. Open education provides equal education opportunities to those who cannot receive traditional education for a number of reasons among which are those who did not have a chance to complete their education and are over the age for formal education, those who are working full-time, those who are serving in the military, those who have physical disabilities, and those who are imprisoned. In addition, housewives, those who want a second degree, and those living abroad are among those who prefer open education systems to traditional higher education institutions. (Ataç, 2005)

Distance Education in Turkey

Distance education, is strategically important method for mass education in Turkey. At the beginning of 20th century, Turkey was a developing poor country. But this country was in need of a well-qualified and educated community for sustainable development. In the middle of the century, distance education was the best way for mass education.

Distance education is not new in Turkey. It has been started by private educational institutions (namely FONON and Limasollu Naci for teaching English) as a public service, governmental authorities in early 1950's. In 1951, MEB (Ministry of National Education) established the Center for Educative Films to produce educational films to reach rural people in villages. Later, in addition to film production, this center is transformed into a center of production and communication preparing radio and television programs as educational aids.

First correspondence course was started, within higher education, by the Institute of Banking and Commerce, in the year 1954, Law Faculty of Ankara University (Karayalçin, 1957). In 1970, MEB started educational programs by correspondence. Then, a higher education program (briefly YAYKUR) started in 1975 by the Ministry of National Education, which was cancelled in early years of 1980's, when Higher Education Institute (YOK) was established (Geray, 1978).

Turkey as well as other countries took the initiative to create a distance education system with support of its government and The Turkish Council of Higher Education. In recent years, large investments were established to bring advanced technologies into the existing distance education programs (Gursoy, 2005).

In Turkey distance education is performed in high school and collage degrees. But the most systematical and important part is performed by Anadolu University. The unit established for distance education is Open Education Faculty. Faculty is on duty since 1982 and has one million and a hundred students and one million graduates. Distance Education Faculty of Anadolu University is composed of 35 departments and besides Turkey, gives education for Turkish citizens living in six European countries.

Distance education in Turkey, is available to everybody who receives the minimum score in university entrance exams. SSPC statistics shows that in the 2002-2003 academic years, nearly half of the students registered to 4-year distance education program were 200 years old and under, who, we can easily assume, were recent high school graduates. (Gursoy, 2005) This statistics shows that, the young population in Turkey also pays attention to this system. Some researchers argues that, Anadolu University is one of the world's largest and least known mega-universities. According to their research about distance education, they concluded that Anadolu University has successfully provided distance education for Turkish people in Turkey, across Europe and in Northern Cyprus since the early 1980s.

Today, distance education is still cheapest way of higher education. According to Demiray, student fees are less for distance education courses. Students spend approximately 1,500,000 Turkish Lira (or \$300 USD) per year for traditional universities but only a maximum of 500,000 Turkish Lira,(or \$100.USD) for OEF studies. According to the 1991 figures, if OEF students were to attend traditional universities, there would have to be an additional 25 universities with 41,950 more academicians to teach them, and 67,400 more administrators than there are now. This would cost the Turkish government and additional \$860,000,000 USD.
http://www.ugurdemiray.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=60

The size, diversity and distribution of the student body and associated technological, logistical, legal and political issues present enormous challenges to the Open Education System. Anadolu is now improving its educational products and services through e-transformation and by employing new instructional models in its undergraduate, graduate and e-certificate programmes. However, there are still many issues to consider; how to prepare the learners for self-managed, collaborative, technology-based learning; how to train faculty in the new technologies, methodologies and research practices; how to persuade politicians and administrators to write legislation and bills that will support open education; and how to improve the technological infrastructure and services. Senior and middle management and the recently established Strategic Planning Task Force are committed to find ways of resolving these issues.
http://www.educationdev.net/educationdev/Docs/Turkey_education_2.PDF

Recently, several universities including Middle East Technical, Istanbul Bilgi, and Bilkent have initiated online certificated programs. Similarly; Sakarya, Karadeniz Teknik and Firat Universities and so on are offering online courses.

Sakarya University believes that the most secure way of reaching the level of modern civilization is education. So, it seeks to increase the quality of education in the light of new technology and to give faster and higher quality education to bigger crowds. As a consequence of searching higher quality and more efficient ways of education, <http://www.ido.sakarya.edu.tr/Admin/PageViewer.aspx?name=uzaktanogretim> it is accepted transition to distant education.

One of the other universities that start to implement distant education is Karadeniz Technical University. It explains its mission like this, establishing necessary technical standards for the courses and programs as a means of distant education based on communication and information technologies for KTU students and community, providing tools and improving associated background and atmosphere, engaging in activities based on communication information technologies as a part of distant education , providing distant education for the programs that are needed, arranging seminars and education programs for students and instructors to be aware of the studies that are in Turkey and in the world, leading to the courses which are prepared for giving distant education by KTU instructors, and offering technique and background
<http://www.fatih.ktu.edu.tr/bolumler/boteb/KTUUZem2/default.php?s=misyon> support to the instructors.

ANADOLU UNIVERSITY OPEN EDUCATION FACULTY AND EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

Anadolu University Open Education Faculty uses the most modern communicational and educational techniques for distance education. During the educational process, the faculty uses internet, teleconference, interactive educational scopes besides books, TV and academic advisory (Academic counseling system).

Printed Materials (Books)

Since 1982, in the Anadolu University Distance Education System, textbooks—the core instructional medium—have been developed through a well-designed and precise process in a way that helps students to work on their own. Teams that design and develop textbooks at Anadolu University are composed of experienced content experts, editors, instructional designers, TV editors, art directors, language experts, and measurement and evaluation experts.

(www.anadolu.edu.tr/en/aos/aos_tanitim/ogrenim_ortamlari.aspx)

TV Program Productions

A team of experts in educational technology and technical staff with the help of technologically advanced equipment play an important role in the production of radio and TV programs which supplement the textbooks. Nowadays, approximately 5200 TV programs have been produced for the distance education programs. For the TV programs 508 academicians have been assigned. TV programs are broadcast 24 weeks per year, 37 hours per week, a total of 888 hours per year. Each program is broadcast at least twice a year.

Academic counseling system

The academic counseling service is one of the most important elements of the distance education system in Anadolu University. In this system, distance students have chances to collaborate with other students and professors face-to-face to learn more deeply. The main purpose of this service is to meet professors and students from all over Turkey, and to promote interaction with a view to ensure more effective learning. 861 academic personnel in 74 different centers provide academic counseling services for 10 courses in evenings and weekends. This system contributes to students' social life, facilitates communication between students.

Anadolu University uses its live broadcasting as a counseling method. In this system, TV broadcasting is made lively. Students can participate to broadcast by calling and they ask questions. Faculty that take part in live broadcasting answer the questions simultaneously.

Implementation of Open Education Faculty

In Anadolu University, in the system of distant education, e-learning method is implemented. Students of distant education from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and from Open-education Faculty take advantage of this system. Different techniques of teaching are designed for each course in this system. Students who have different learning styles can choose the course which is prepared by the best technique for themselves. In the system of e-learning, there are several applications such as;

- e-book,
- e-TV,
- e-exercise,
- e-examination,
- e-advising,
- e-audiobooks and
- e-support.

e-books consist of special books which are prepared according to the needs of distant education. Students have access to the books that they need from the internet.

e-TV application provides students to download programs from the internet and watch them.

e-Exam system provides trials exams for students before the examination. Students can measure what they know by taking those exams.

e-Consultancy and e-support programs provides atmosphere to students to ask questions about the courses and get answers to their questions both related with the courses and extracurricular

Blind students and students who want to learn things by listening can benefit from e-Audiobook system. Students can download courses in the mp3 format to their computers, and so they have the opportunity to study whenever they want.

METHODOLOGY of THE STUDY

Literature research is used in this study as a method. Successful research is based on knowledge, thinking and searching which are the resources of research. For this reason, literature research is important step in the process of research practice. Literature research is theoretical and conceptual summary, analysis and interpretation. It is related to main title and resource. As the number of study and knowledge increase, the importance of literature research rises. Making original research includes many similar phases.

If research is well done, the data is gathered and analysis and interpretation are made, they are synthesized with the results as they are useful to the researchers. The main purpose of investigation in the research magazines is to inform professionals who are not experts, but will use the information <http://www.genbilim.com/content/view/1381/39/> in the coming studies about the history and foundations of the topic.

In this research, possibilities of photograph education in Turkey and in the worldwide are researched and institutions which give photograph education in Turkey are examined generally. And, in the worldwide, one institution that is known well in the United States and in the Europe is examined.

In distance education part of the research, implementation of distance education in Turkey, and the structure of Open Education Faculty in Anadolu University are examined and the information that is attained through the research and literature research is discussed in the conclusion part.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND CAMERA OPERATION PROGRAM

Today in communication area, need to qualified human resources is growing. Most of the people working in the area are the practioners who have learned their job while working and so do not have much theoretical information. The rapid development in digital technology has changed the working circumstances. New technology compromised an important amount of theoretical and technical information. But most of the people who compose the human resource of the area do not have this information. It is not possible to educate these people in standard settings.

Since, no institution has physical facilities to accommodate such a big population. Also attending regular lessons in standard settings is not acceptable for these people which most of them have to go to work everyday. On the other hand, time and space are not a problem for distance learning system.

Distance learning is one of the most rapidly growing aspects of education and training in the world today. The potential impact of distance learning on all education delivery system, from the primary to the tertiary level, has been greatly accentuated through new developments in information and communication technologies, which increasingly free learners from the constraints of time and space (Demiray, 1993). An institutional education by an educational establishment on this area seems mandatory. This can only be done by an experienced and sufficiently resourced establishment.

As a result, Anadolu University distance education units have developed new programs as an associate degree. The new department which is established to bring up photographers and camera operator is one of these.

Anadolu University Open Education Faculty explains its purpose to set up as educating people who are equipped with technical information and knows numerical technologies and their purposes. Communication process is highly important process nowadays. And, one of the most important components of this process is images, in other words photographs. Technology of photography improves highly quickly because its consumption is very quick. It is assumed that photography is very important in terms of economy. Market which consists of photograph and visual images is shaped by digital technology. Digital technology and its advantages improve incredibly quick. Efforts of technicians who work in the field of production of visual images are sometimes inadequate, and trainees' adaptation to the sector takes long time. So, people who work in the field of visual communication should have background that they can understand new technology and follow the progress. This kind of background and education is attained only by academic education. Learning new techniques and information can easier if a person knows causation. This is the result of academic education.

Photography and Camera operators program is suitable for especially the people who think photography as work field and who still work in this field. Generally, it is not possible for people who work especially in the field of production of images to attend formal education programs. They need to work all day long and they need to produce. Photography and Camera education program which is implemented by Distant education is highly suitable especially for the people who work in this field. Technicians and operators who produce in the operating hours can improve themselves outside of the work hours by using course tools which are produced for distant education, and they can set up academic and theoretical substructure for their field.

The department which is planned to give an Associate degree would have an educational period of two years. The first year comprises of common collage lessons and introduction to technical issues. Second year is totally comprises the technical lectures. For the present first year, the number of students registered fort the department is nearly one thousand. The number is expected to be growing in the following years.

CONCLUSION

This program has very big importance as a case study. The language of photography and digital technology are in English. But most of the camera users do not know English. So, owing to this program which will be given in Turkish, most of the camera users and especially people who is working as an operator in studios would learn a lot on photography, digital technology and camera systems and technique terminology. On the other hand, these people will learn about composition, visual image's history etc. as well.

The first year common collage lessons and introduction to technical issues are, History of Civilizations, Introduction to Sociology, Communication, Visual Aesthetics, Basic Photography, History of Photography and Motion Pictures, Basic Information Technologies, Foreign Language (English, German, French)

The second year lessons are, Introduction to Digital Photography, Digital Image Processing Techniques, Introduction to Camera Techniques, Film and Video Production, Fields of Photography and Camera, Turkish Language, Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution. As a result, these kinds of programs are very important especially for improvement of visual culture and visual literacy in developing countries.

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Huseyin ERYILMAZ was born in 1964 in Eskisehir. In 1984, he took a step to the Professional life. In the same year, he was rewarded as a "journalist of the year" in the field of photography. In 1985, he started journalism education in the Faculty of Communication Sciences in Anadolu University and graduated at 1990. He has been in Sipa Press in Paris which is accepted as the important centre of photojournalism, so he was acknowledged about international news agency environment in 1990. He worked in Turkic-speaking people documentary that was in Central Asia countries as photographer. He prepared exhibition which was called "Once upon a time in Central Asia" with Ergun Cagatay and he made organizations for exhibition in Uzbekistan/Tashkent and Kazakhstan/Almaty.

He completed his Ph.D. with his thesis "News Photography and Manipulation." He took photographs for Eskisehir in the 75th year of Republic. He prepared documentary called "Cumalikizik: A Foundation Village from the Ottoman Period" for the governorship of Bursa. He took introducing photographs of the city for the governorships of Kütahya. He opened three different solo photo exhibitions, and one of them was in Nairobi in Kenya. Giving photography courses in the Faculty of Fine Arts and in the Faculty of Communication Sciences of Anadolu University, Eryilmaz is still working on documentary photography projects.

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