Abstract: This study suggests that students of interior architecture can be led to design furniture through two different techniques. The first technique is applied by guiding them on the basis of a direct analogy and the second one, by making the students produce fairly original designs through motivating them to move their ideas beyond their familiar thinking. The study reveals that it is rather hard to break the conditioned thoughts of 34 students divided in two groups. First, the students were provided with the information on definition, history and types of furniture classified according to the periods. Next, in the first stage, students were led to design contemporary seating objects by a method of direct inspiration from an existing piece of furniture constructed in the prehistoric period. In the second stage, synectics method was applied. Derived from the Greek word synecticos, synectics means the bringing together of diverse elements. It is a creative problem-solving technique. Upon a quick decision, the lecturer leading the session added a new stage to the methodology and told the students to draw the pictures of their souls as they cannot reach a satisfying result with the previous form of the methodology applied. The authentic result of this study was obtained by the designs developed from the pictures of souls added to the synectics method. The students' interests are triggered by a sudden decision of the lecturer so that they can reflect their souls, which constitutes the essence of their entity and their ideas, on the designs they produce.

Keywords: furniture design; synectics method; pictures of souls

1 Introduction

This study investigates how to make the students of interior architecture design objects in a crowded class environment and how to reach satisfactory outcomes.

In addition, sustainable art works inspired by past and reaching present exposing the contrast between past and future have been noted as well as works showing the impact of nature on art. The opposition between past and present and the essence of creativity have been among the points affecting also the design process during the class, and the design started with the historical information on itself. The first technique, i.e. taking inspiration by seeing is a preparation for the start. And the second technique i.e. the application of the synectics method through which unrelated elements come together and conditioned ideas are made free. The application of the synectics method to design education has not been a common practice in Turkey. In this regard, the study evaluates two fundemantal techniques applied to guide the aforementioned students through the design of furniture.

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1.1 Methodology

The study was carried out on the basis of three methodologies. The first one was hermeneutics. *Hermeneutics* can be regarded as a philosophical concept which refers to understanding, explication and interpretation of a problem on a structure of meaningful relationships even over different periods of time. Interpretation means the disclosure of a text’s or statement’s meaning through the words of the interpreter. A statement can originate from a creative idea inspired by a visual stimulus. The scope of hermeneutics covers a very broad area since interpretation can be said to be the synthesis of language, history and understanding and thus, it cannot exist without “human hopes, fears and expectations” (Arslan, 2007, pp. 47-49). This means it is important to interpret the applied information and reflect this interpretation to the result. Hermeneutics, which is the interpretative methodology of the study, was improved and refined by Dilthey (1999). Being a major thinker of analytical history of philosophy, Dilthey questions the role of the historian in respect to her acts of processing information. He also carries out a criticism of methodology and develops a *critical perspective on history*. This study is based on Dilthey’s ideas. The ideas of Dilthey on hermeneutics are considered to form the basis of this study. Dilthey explains that a person perceives herself as being different from nature and argues that the person’s entity as well as all historical and sociological phenomena are tied to the *nexus of consciousness* and they reveal all the spiritual skills of a human being. Accordingly, Dilthey (1999, p. 13, pp. 86-90) defines hermeneutics as follows:

understanding is defined as the method to provide the necessary inner awareness through the external sensory signs... The art of understanding manifests itself in the interpretation (the analysis of understanding) of the written heritage of the human knowledge... The science of hermeneutics resulted from the conflict between various forms of approach and the necessity for establishing the rules during the interpretation of crucial works. Hermeneutics is the discipline aimed at interpreting written works.

The main feature of the hermeneutic method is primarily related to understanding. Dilthey’s concept of understanding has four main features: “The first is that understanding is foremost a process taking place in the common functioning of daily life. It is the source of all basic knowledge that a human being has; any other concept cannot replace understanding, its uniqueness reflects the authenticity of the respective process; understanding is an indispensable and essential part of the methodology of human studies” (Acar Vanleeene, 2012, p. 162, pp. 159-171). As for the second methodology of this study, the students were provided with the drawings of the oldest furniture in history and were asked to design a seating object adapted to the present day. It was a direct analogy, or more accurately an inspiration method. The reason why furniture was provided as a drawing was to prevent the students from being affected by the detailed information in a photograph.

The original name of the third method is synectics. Synectics, which is derived from the Greek word “synecticos”, means *syntax*. It denotes fitting together diverse elements. Being a creative problem-solving technique, synectics should be applied in nine steps in order that it could be totally effective. In the study of Wilson, Greer and Johnson, (2016), participants are introduced a problem by a leader as an excursion. The leader conducts an excursion of the group. The participants attempt to find out a solution to a problem through a series of steps. The synectic method tends to move gradually the participants’ ideas away from the common ones so that they can be transformed into different perspectives. The method aims to provide the students to come up with new ideas independent of conditioned thinking. The steps are explained in the methodology in Section 3.2. New ideas bring in new solutions. This procedure consciously stimulates creative thinking. The authors explain that for a better understanding of the method’s role, *Synectics Flow Chart* should be devised by an experienced leader who applies the process. The order of the flow chart is in relation to the thinking procedures of the participants approximating to their personality traits. More importantly, participants are led to move away from themselves step by step and all of a sudden, they seek an answer with an identity other than themselves. The methodology in Wilson, Greer and Johnson’s (2016) study has thirteen steps. In the development of the method, at the eleventh step, the leader poses questions which evoke creative thinking thorough analogies. This is a sort of forcing the participants to be fit. This step is for simplifying and testing the selection of examples. The nine-step method in general has been applied in this study. All the steps will be presented in the case study.

It can be said that the application of the synectics method is not seen very often in Turkey. Recently, a (sort) of brainstorming session has been held by using the synectics method. Four analogy charts including eighty-one examples of analogy have been obtained. According to the determined functions of the session, these examples of analogy have been inspired by nature, human body, solutions to problems and imaginary examples (Börekçi & Derviş, 2018). As for the methodology of this study, two distinct applications of the synectics method have been carried out in two separate classes with seventeen inexperienced students in each.
2 Seating Area Furniture and Using Imagination for its Design

Since the oldest ages of history, individuals need to sit down. This need has developed in direct proportion to human skeletal structure. Although seat height, seat depth and back height differ between the smallest and largest human dimensions, the standard measurements can provide seating area furniture suitable for use by a large number of people. The evolution of seating area furniture has witnessed an unprecedented pace of transformation from the second half of the twentieth century to the present.

In "The Poetics of Space" Bachelard’s (2017, p. 37, p. 87, p. 172) poetical definitions are as follows: “I am the space where I am”, “An imaginary room rises up around our bodies, which think that they are well hidden when we take refuge in a corner. Already, the shadows are walls, a piece of furniture constitutes a barrier, hangings are a roof”. In this regard, furniture can be conceived as a fence and many more things. Grassi (1979, pp. 184-185) indicates that the concept of fantasy (phantasie) constitutes the basis of imagination and imagination shapes a non-existent as existent.

Aristotle’s quote: “The soul never thinks without a picture” explains the relationship between an image and soul (Grassi, 1979, pp. 184-185). Byars (1997, p. 7) states: “Chairs are objects with a soul [...] not only [...] because they nurture us with their form and comfort but also because they possess an inner, well-conceived technology.” In fact will this profound perspective be sufficient to obtain the students’ pictures of souls? Do the students have a fertile imagination to support their souls? With a long-time experience on the teaching of design, will the lecturer who guides the practice be able to transform the pictures of the students’s souls into objects? The answers to these questions will determine the results of this study. In this context, the symbolic depictions of the concept of spirit in the sense of vitality as the essence of entity are of significance. The word spirit means breath, break, wind, breeze, fragrance. In western languages the term holy spirit is pictured as a dove flying through flames. For Hindus, the spirit is the wild stallion. The animated film “Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron” produced by DreamWorks Studio in Canada can be considered as one of the most lively representations of the concept of spirit.

![Figure 1. Left: Description of holy spirit; middle: The wild stallion of Hindus; right: Animated film: Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron.](image)

From an epistemological perspective, the subject matter of this study can be tackled on the basis of a subject who knows and an object which is known. Hence, it can be said that the framework of the case study is epistemological and it affects the study indirectly, as the application of the methodology aims to stimulate the soul which is the essence of entity. In fact, this study prioritizes the subject and shows an idealistic dimension. Operating with the essence of entity, the pictures of souls are attached to a known method. In terms of epistemological perspectives focusing on the object level, these pictures of souls reveal that something which does not exist as an entity can be transformed into a factual entity. The invisible associations of ideas have also similar quality.

2.1. A Brief Look at the History of Seating Area Furniture

The history of furniture dates back to prehistoric times and the furniture of Egyptian pharaohs illustrate significant examples in the history of furniture. No matter how primitive it was, since the early periods of humanity, furniture has existed as humans need to sit. Egyptian furniture produced for the Pharaoh’s family and his surroundings constitutes the best examples of prehistoric times. The students were provided with general knowledge about furniture covering the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution.

Boyla (2012, pp. 113-143) studies the history of furniture under the four following parts: prehistoric times, palace styles, industrialisation, and information age. The fundamental feature of human skeletal structure and the need for sitting resulted in the production of seating area furniture during the prehistoric periods.
Miller (2005, pp. 8-11) starts the history of furniture from the data about the seated positions of goddess statues. After that, the following distinctions are made: MÖ 4000-MS.1600 Ancient Furniture; 1600-1700 17th Century; 1700-1760 Early 18th Century; 1760-1800 Late 18th Century; 1800-1840 Early 19th Century; 1840-1900 Mid 19th Century; 1880-1920 Arts and Crafts; 1880-1915 Art Nouveau; 1919-1940 Art Deco; 1925-1945 Modernism; 1945-1970 Mid Century Modern; 1970 Postmodern and contemporary. The students were provided with the necessary information about the history of furniture. Egyptian Pharaoh furniture was regarded and tackled as the oldest and significant example.

**Egyptian Pharaoh Furniture**

The most typical example from the prehistoric period was Egyptian Pharaoh furniture. The photos and drawings of this furniture were shown as examples (Figure 2). It can be said that Tutankhamun’s furniture of very high artistic value has had a fundamental effect on today’s furniture construction. The legs of the chair with frame construction were shaped like animal claws to symbolise power. The folding chair fulfilled various functions with its technical construction supporting the buttocks. For the first assignment the students were inspired directly from Tutankhamun’s furniture shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 2. The drawings of Egyptian Pharaoh Tutankhamun’s (BC 1341-1323) seating furniture (Crochet, 1999; p. 13)**

### 2.2. Contemporary Seating Furniture

According to Miller’s (2005, pp. 8-11) study, the period of contemporary furniture operated in the 1970s and onwards, yet the students were informed about furniture history beginning from the mid 19th century, with the history of Thonet Furniture.

“The United States and much of Europe experienced new prosperity and optimism, which fuelled the growth in consumerism and youth culture” (Miller, 2005, p. 450). In the 1970s designers in Italy either belonged to a group or they were socio-critical or revolutionary. Andrea Branzi founded Archizoom group in 1966 and described themselves as avant-garde. Branzi stated that they discussed methods of international modernity and started to realize the possibility of using many different tools of expression even apart from kitsch, which involved extraordinary mediums of expression (Cologne, 1994, pp. 88-89). In his study titled “Programming After Program: Archizoom’s No-Stop City”, Varnelis (2006, pp. 82-91) compares No-Stop City with Hilberseimer’s “Hochhausstadt”. “Hochhausstadt still acknowledged the critical importance of urban space and the street, whereas No-Stop City rejected it”. Hochhausstadt’s representations focused on the exterior while “No-Stop City” rejected the critical significance of urban space and depicted the cities as interior images (Varnelis, 2006, pp. 82-91). In respect of this, “Quaderna” furniture was used intensively.

It can be said that this prosperity development of the 1960s shaped the 1970s and 1980s to some extent as the colourful laminate furniture of Memphs Group seemed to continue this new prosperity and optimism experience. With Memphis, cultural explanatory power of design and its semiotic surplus value were also attributed to design as it was already done so, to literature, theater, cinema and visual arts. “Design is no longer just to optimize the benefit processes but it is a matter of different cultural decisions in relation to different social conditions and still missing today” (Albus & Fischer, 1995, p. 15). In 1981 Memphs group came together and held their exhibition. The fresh, optimistic and crazy objects they put on display were welcomed with a hysterical enthusiasm by an avant-garde group of people. On the other hand, “Today, Memphs is still considered to be a joke by many design critics... Functionality, International Modernism took farewell of design... Ettore Sottsass, the pioneer of Memphis left the movement he
backed after a while. He said that he loved the copies as they ruined and revived him to a certain extent” (Cologne, 1994, pp. 108-109).

3 Furniture Design Course at the Department of Interior Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Design at Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University

The methodology in the practice consisted of two stages. In the first stage, a number of presentations were given on the history of furniture beginning from Egyptian furniture in the prehistoric times up to the Industrial Revolution. The object was to convey an impression of the image of the oldest examples of furniture to the students’ minds. Some information on the constructive structure of that furniture and the extent of inspiration was also provided.

3.1 The First Practice During the Furniture Design Course

The students were inspired from two pieces of oldest Egyptian furniture. A contemporary approach in relation to a direct analogy or inspiration was applied during the design process. The results of the first practice fall under three groups in terms of hermeneutic viewpoint (Table 1).

1. Inspiration primarily drawn from the back,
2. Inspiration drawn from the back, foot, leg, etc.,
3. Other inspirations.

**Table 1. The students’ projects, from the first practice, inspired directly from the drawings of the Pharaoh Tutankhamon’s throne chair: Inspiration primarily drawn from the back**

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3.1.1 Furniture Design - Evaluation of the Inspiration Drawn Primarily from the Back

A splat, the central back support inspired primarily from the back parts of Tutankhamon’s furniture can be observed in those designs. More contemporary traits can be observed in the feet of these pieces of furniture. Inspired by Tutankhamon’s furniture going as far back as 3360 years ago, the students’ pieces of furniture displayed very improved designs affecting the contemporary life. It can be said that this has had a positive impact on the students who will begin their design career (Table 2).

**Table 2. The students’ projects, from the first practice, inspired directly from the drawings of the Pharaoh Tutankhamon’s throne chair: Inspiration primarily drawn from the back, foot, leg, etc.**

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3.1.2 Furniture Design - Evaluation of the Inspiration Primarily Drawn from the Back, Foot, Leg, etc.
The projects of furniture (Table 3) are quite different from the rest of the class in terms of inspiration drawn from the back, foot, leg, and so forth. To illustrate, two students preferred to use bars touching the ground. Six students preferred to interpret diagonal lines in the legs. Two chairs have legs connecting to the arms. Three other students fortified the legs. The last picture shows a simplified design of chair feet inspired from wild animal claws. Overall, similarities in the middle axe were especially noted in terms of inspiration drawn from the chair back.

Table 3. The students’ projects inspired directly from the furniture of Tutankhamun: The other inspirations

3.1.3 Furniture Design - Evaluation of the Other Inspirations
The students’ projects in this group demonstrate the students’ desire to be more independent. The leader of the project could not insist on students, she could not dictate to the students what to do or not. Yet, she could guide them through design principles. The designs in this group receded further from Tutankhamon’s furniture. In fact, the students were not demanded to design furniture similar to it.

3.1.4 Analysis and Interpretation of the First Practice in the Furniture Design Course
Although it was their first design, the students could quickly deduce how to apply the strategy of drawing direct inspiration and analogy between their ideas and the samples they were provided with. One third of students wanted to develop their own ideas. The other students were primarily affected by the seat backs. In a more determined development, ten students drew inspiration without copying and with different perspectives. They also sought forms representing power. From a hermeneutics point of view, this study analyzes and evaluates the students’ design acts on an existing piece of seating area furniture. It also explores how these design acts differ from their own initial ideas and the past form of furniture.

3.2 The Second Practice in the Furniture Design Course
The synectics method was implemented among others by G. Prince and B. Gordon based on their work at the Arthur D. Little Invention Design Group. They devised this method in the 1950s observing many sessions in the group to solve customer problems. Their objective was to eliminate the unpredictability of achieving creative solutions. The term synectics is derived from Greek word parts and suggests the bringing together of diverse elements. According to Lukat’s (1975) explanation the process has nine steps and one session lasts about two hours with 5 to 7 participants:
The problem is introduced and defined, e.g. the existing umbrellas fail to cover their functions satisfyingly.

Spontaneous reaction: The participants express the first ideas that come to their minds. The umbrella may look like a hat, have an inflation system, etc.

The problem is redefined according to the solution captured from the spontaneous reaction: an umbrella not carried by hand with a new opening system.

Direct analogy: Analogies from daily life according to the new definition of problem, e.g. furry skin like duck feathers, mushroom, greasy-feathered cover.

Personal analogy: If the participants were one of the analogies, what would their emotions be, e.g. if they were a mushroom head, would they be cold, stoned, broken apart, breakable, bright, etc?

Symbolic analogy: The participants are asked to draw symbolic analogies between the contrasts of a few emotions from the personal analogy stage, e.g. stoned, breakable; sturdy breakability.

Direct analogy: The most relevant for estrangement from the symbolic analogy, e.g. sturdy breakability: satellites, Christmas tree, glass balls.

Analysis of direct analogy: The most relevant direct analogy is analysed, e.g. satellites: surrounding the Earth, having connection to the Earth, broadcasting, etc.

Spontaneous solution suggestion and its reflection: The relationship of the last analogy and analysis with the main problem is set up, e.g. a cap umbrella put on the head with a central rotation system like a satellite; when it starts raining the cap will rotate and the rain will be driven away.

Besides, similar to the process schematized in Figure 3, Tassoul’s (2006, pp. 63-68) study explains how analogies permit to move away from the subject in the middle of the process. It also illustrates how a force fit has to be made because of the on-going process and how new solution possibilities are obtained.

![Figure 3. Synectics process (Tassoul, 2006, pp. 63-68)](image)

Tassoul (2006, p. 63-68) (as confrontative technique) elucidates: “Analogies allow for moving away from the original problem statement and making a forced fit to develop solutions on the basis of these analogies. The synectics procedure is also based on the process of preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Synectics is a method which can be applied to many diverse situations. However, concrete manifestations of the flexible thinking may not always occur.”

Accordingly, Adorno (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2014, pp. 46-49) says that while thinking we are doing something, “Even the most rarefied form of mental activity contains an element of the practical.” Conversely, Horkheimer (Adorno & Horkheimer, 2014, pp. 46-49) argues that a theory can only be considered a true theory if it serves practice. He also states that ideas which are confirmed differ from ideas which are not confirmed. That kind of thinking has to relate to real life and look at the work in that perspective. The controversial ideas of Adorno and Horkheimer suggest that even the most abstract concept of imagination can be developed through the synectics method.

### 3.2.1. The Application and Evaluation of the Synectics Method

The students were asked to do research on contemporary furniture one week before the application of the method in order that their visual memory could improve. The students were divided into two separate groups during the furniture design course. Each group was composed of 17 students. The synectics process was carried out in nine phases. The application process for each group is as follows:
1. **Problem as defined:** The pieces of contemporary furniture have grown to resemble more each other. They do not reflect new perspectives.

2. **Spontaneous ideas:** 17 students’ spontaneous reactions led to ideas in each group. These ideas were picked and summarised as follows. First group: the new furniture should be interesting in terms of developing technology; second group: it should be comfortable and suitable for moving. The second group’s result was picked.

3. **Problem as redefined:** Considering that a human being is a living creature, the furniture should be comfortable and suitable for moving regarding the person’s movements and ideas.

4. **Finding direct analogies:** Among the first group’s analogies (water, stone, pole, kangaroo, earth, cloud, butterfly, cat, wind, air, tree, branch, wave, flower, mushroom, fire), the concepts wind, wave and fire were selected. Among the second group’s analogies (earth, moon, fire, season, wind, sun, volcano, cricket, gazelle, leaf, cherry tree, bushes, caterpillar, water, sea), the concepts free, quick-tempered and fragile were selected.

5. **Personal Analogies:** When the members were analogies, the first group selected the concepts of flying-migrating, cold-wasteful, free, tired-annoyed, and bold; the second group selected the concepts of active-fluent, transparent, greening, fading and eternal-calm.

6. **Symbolic analogies:** The first group selected the concepts slackness-stagnant, like a caterpillar, introvert, like open arms, ugly, and like still water; thesecond group selected the concepts trapped, becoming a lake, like a waterfall, and standing upright.

7. **Direct analogies:** The first group selected the concepts free-prisoner, lively-breathless, and hasty-calm; the second group selected the concepts runaway-stagnant, like a cloud-glaciers, and strong-numb.

8. **Analysis of direct analogies:** The first group selected the following analyses: live life lively, without extremes, frank, passionate about what they have, mutable and indecisive. The second group selected the following analyses: run away-disappear, be cold and non-reacting, be fluid like rain, release your spirit, and being without expectation.

9. **Spontaneous proposal of solution and its reflection:** The first group selected the concepts tidy, minimalist, simple, mobile, connected, entertaining, and like a blowing wind; the second group selected the concepts being like a pilates ball, a seating area piece flexing from the feet, like heavy rain, like sitting on water, and sitting on a wall without expectation.

In the direct analogy phase, the students gave, for the most part, examples from nature. Personal analogies were made according to this. In the symbolic analogy phase, they used the contrasts belonging to their own ideas; here there were some inconsistencies. In the seventh phase they could not get rid of what they had felt; their emotions continued. The groups were crowded, which prevented positive development. In the eighth phase, both groups produced analysis sentences which seemed to be reflections of life philosophy. In the ninth phase, they thought about how to build their own designs, so instead of one problem, each student defined their own problem. Besides, it was noted that many students were under the influence of seating area furniture which they designed previously. Below are sketches of seating area furniture by students through Synectics Method.

Table 4 shows the figures emerging from the students’ ideas activated by the synectics method. Some of these figures would have been improved, but the leader decided to make an addition to the synectics method as she was worried about the authenticity of the designs to be developed by most of them. The leader implemented a ninth phase. The students had touched so much on spiritual topics that the leader of the project made a direct association and told the students: “Now, draw the pictures of your souls!”

This topic was surprising for all the students; how would they draw such an abstract subject? Some dashed off and scratched; some drew geometrical shapes in a great discipline. Some tried to draw by rolling and rotating fluent shapes; some produced circles and some of them thought so much that they scrawled. The main role of the leader began then. This role was to interpret all these figures, to deduce something from these figures by defining the students’ souls and to raise awareness among the students about what they wanted to design.

**Table 4. The drawings of 34 students resulting from the application of the synectics method**

![Images of drawings](image-url)
Table 5. The furniture designs developed from the pictures of souls by 34 students. Table 5 illustrates the results of the workshop “Now draw the pictures of your souls” carried out with them as a continuation of the synectics method. The chairs of two hardworking students were shown with two pictures for each to make the table look complete.
Within the scope of this paper, it was not possible to include separately all the design processes of students. That is why the pictures of students’ souls and their results were presented (Table 5). The results of the synectics method, the pictures of souls and their results were ordered according to the class lists. Therefore, it is possible to make comparisons. In conclusion, although it is obvious that a 100% success could not be expected from a furniture design class with 34 students, the study shows that the students have comprehended what an authentic design is.

3.2.2. The Second Practice during the Furniture Design Course and its Interpretation

The students were very surprised when they were asked to draw the pictures of their souls. Visualising such an abstract concept was not easy for students, but they managed to draw them. Their pictures of souls consisted of round and flexible lines or sharp corners, very fine lines in the form of developing forms, multiple sharp and zigzag lines. Admittedly, it was easier for the leader to guide the students to transform these lines into an object. Some lines seemed to have wings in themselves. Some of them could only be progressing in bar lines or stick lines. In accordance with the definitions of heurmenetics as an interpretative methodology and Aristotle’s following statement “The soul never thinks without images”, the students learnt to acquire a relevant image for their souls. The leader of the design process directed the students in relation to the research’s methodology. She supported the students to develop the images of their souls. In doing this, she also interpreted them in an artistic point of view.

4 Findings and Results

The case study of this paper was carried out by the methodology made up of direct analogy, synectics and hermeneutics. Using analogy, i.e. indirect inspiration as a tool of methodology, made it possible to provide the students with the introduction to the subjects. The paper developed mainly on the basis of case study applications through its methodology. However, as the subject matter was also tackled in a diachronic perspective, historical and educational insights were also included.

The understanding of an interpretation or understanding analysis by individuals leads to the constitution of resources for all fundamental knowledge in the form of verbal or non-verbal acts of communication. In other words, hermeneutics can be said to be an art of understanding. This paper made use of the art of understanding to evaluate the works. Synectics, which enabled to bring irrelative elements together, was deployed in this paper as a methodological tool to reveal the creative ideas of students for producing seating area furniture. The deployment of the synectics method was carried out in nine steps. The analysis of outcomes in each step to move on to the next step did not manage to remove conditioned and familiar images and patterns in the students’ thinking system. For this reason, at that point, the students were briskly and unexpectedly asked to draw the pictures of their souls which would reflect the essence of their entity and vitality. While asking this, the leader of the project was not sure whether conditioned ideas of the students could be removed totally, yet they could alter their direction to some extent. The
concept of soul as mentioned in this study referred to the essence of vitality with its definitions in different countries as breath, break, wind, breeze, fragrance and descriptions as a dove flying through flames or even an animation character, i.e. a stallion. It is noteworthy that the students preferred describing the images and patterns of their souls through geometric linear images to comparing with a distinct form of a living entity. The leader of the project interpreted the drawings which they gradually turned into objects of seating area. The application of the synectics method resulted in four or five ideas which could be developed. However, the leader did not consider them to be adequate. Thus, the leader invented a supplementary technique of emergency aiming to reveal the students’ images of souls representing the essence of their entity. This switch in the methodology increased the students’ motivation and enabled the deployment of hermeneutical interpretations for each student’s essence of entity. Interpretations were realized in the class by thinking aloud and discussing together with the students.

The subject matter may need a comprehensive explanation and yet the study made use of the methods of analogy and synectics, which unexpectedly led to the necessity of revealing the images of souls. This unexpected moment may be considered to be a surprise of design education. The main concern or perhaps the purpose of this paper was unpretentious, which was to make the inexperienced students design seating area objects as successfully as possible. Inspired by Byars’ (1997, p. 7) following quote: “Chairs are objects with a soul”, the study was developed for a long period of time through analogy, synectics and images of soul. For this reason, the paper had an unpretentious purpose, so it included and revealed a process-oriented perspective rather than a solution-oriented one.


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