

Aesthetic Inquiry in Visual Arts Education of 6th Graders Within the Framework of Maxine Greene's Aesthetic View on Education: An Action Research¹

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ABSTRACT

This study is an aesthetic inquiry, as part of a middle school visual arts class, from the standpoint of Maxine Greene's aesthetic perspective in education. By adopting Maxine Greene's perspective, affective learning comes to the fore along with cognitive learning, and accentuates multiple realities through the imagination through the research experiences of the artist, in the process of aesthetic inquiry. In this context, a research was carried out within the scope of visual arts education course for an improvement in students' interpretation from multiple perspectives with the understanding of aesthetic inquiry. In their processes of aesthetic inquiry, students' were to examine works of art and it was tried to reveal the different realities of these works depending on their imagination. The purpose of this study is to reveal the improvement in students' interpretation processes from different perspectives through aesthetic inquiry in visual arts course. The study uses action research design, one of the qualitative research designs. It covers a 14-week course at a public middle school. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data and the research findings were presented. According to the findings, it was determined that the students reflected that which they discerned in the course processes, the connections they established regarding their knowledge, emotions and experiences, the differences forming in their ideas and the development they saw in themselves from their personal perspectives. Students showed empathy by seeing different ideas together during the course process and provided new interpretations from multiple perspectives. Under the guidance of the teacher, the students developed self-confidence in the process, expressed themselves by asking questions about what they were curious about and explaining the reasons for their ideas, and made artistic applications. Thus, through aesthetic inquiries, it was possible to reveal the interpretations of students in which they reflect themselves from multiple perspectives, diversify their ideas and develop a clear perspective on what they can do.

Keywords: Aesthetic inquiry, Maxine Greene, Inquiry based education Visual arts education.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, arts in education has a significant role in ensuring comprehension on the basis of inquiry. Aesthetic inquiry, generally associated with science courses, is defined as research that motivates the student to reach a high level of thinking and create personal meaning in educational experiences (Sessions, 2008). It could be contended that the general definition is valid for both science and art because according to Dewey, it does not matter whether the aesthetic quality is science- or art-centered as long as it is in some way inquiry-based (Heid, Estabrook, & Nostrant, 2009). In other words, art or science-based research can be provided through aesthetic inquiries. However, to analyze today's world, art education enables affective processes to be strengthened, as well as cognition processes, where there is global change. As an integral part of cognitive skills, such as listening, thinking, problem solving, matching functions and making decisions, creativity, imagination, and observation also shape perception

and thinking (Clapp and Edwards, 2013). With this aspect, art education makes evaluations from different perspectives possible in order to raise awareness about the changing world.

There are different definitions of aesthetic inquiry. Pavlou (2013) discusses the definition of aesthetic inquiry in three different ways, although they do not differ much: It is a special standpoint from which to conduct research in education;

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How to cite this article: Güvenç K B, Toprak M, (2022).

Aesthetic Inquiry in Visual Arts Education of 6th Graders Within the Framework of Maxine Greene's Aesthetic View on Education: An Action Research. Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction, Vol. 12, No. 3, 2022, 20-31

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None.

DOI: 10.47750/pegogog.12.03.03

Received : 01.11.2021

Accepted : 17.03.2022

Published: 01.07.2022

¹ This study is derived from the doctoral thesis study added to the YÖK thesis system in 2019. This study was supported by Anadolu University Scientific Research Projects Commission with Project Number 1605E192.

it is the exploration of extended questions about art; it is an adaptation of the special ways and methods to research works of art, based on Maxine Greene's idea (LCI). This study utilizes Greene's perspective in the aesthetic inquiry process.

The purpose of the study is to reveal the students' interpretations from different standpoints through aesthetic inquiry, as part of a visual arts course. The purpose of this study is to reveal the improvement in students' interpretation processes from different perspectives through aesthetic inquiry in visual arts course.

With regard to the main purpose of the research, answers are sought to questions on how students reflect their personal perspectives in their aesthetic inquiry experiences, how they achieve understanding from multiple perspectives, and how open they are to their own learning.

Theoretical Framework

According to Greene (2007), aesthetic inquiry is provided by questions arising from the performances-works believed to be works of art and the meanings of aesthetic experience are investigated. Medina (2009) describes the process of aesthetic experience as the resolution of the artist's perspective with imagination and personal stories. Thus, through aesthetic experiences, the artist's perspective and the possibilities of meaning in the students' perspectives can be revealed. Aesthetic experience plays an important role in this context. Greene (2001) emphasizes that in the art styles encountered, people's past lives may be revealed, so remarkable discoveries may be shared. Different points of personal perspectives can be reached in the process of aesthetic experience. According to Greene (2016, p. 32), "just exhibiting works of art is not enough to cause aesthetic experiences. The ability to pay attention to what is wanted to be noticed in a poem, a musical work, a play; it requires expending energy and consciously participating in the work". In this context, artists, with their artworks, provide individuals with a step to see the different possibilities of their imagination and aesthetic experiences. Thus, it can activate the individual in today's world to see the existence of different possibilities and increase awareness. In the present day, when the human experience has lost its passion for existence, Greene (2007) assesses the aesthetics to be a research turning individuals through thinking and imagination into active beings for the possibility that something might exist in another way.

Greene was influenced by existentialism, phenomenology, critical theory and postmodernism and the concepts set forth by Dewey, Arendt and Schutz while developing her understanding of aesthetic education (Goldman, 2010). Influenced by Sartre, Greene took up the responsibility of aesthetics in order to raise awareness of the society with his perspective on the social and cultural effects of art (Goldman, 2010). Because art has an effective power to communicate.

In the context of the relationship between existentialism and phenomenology of Greene's approach, he studied Sartre and Merleau Ponty effects and especially on the transcendence of consciousness (Currence, 2008). At the point of reaching the transcendence of consciousness, Greene presents the aesthetic research that allows to look from different perspectives with imagination. Greene stated that Merleau-Ponty defines perception as comprehending things or structuring them by looking at them from a different perspective, emphasizing the superiority of perception. With this point of view, he reflected that by emphasizing the multi-layered inexhaustible feature of the work of art, it contributes to the ability to comprehend, and also provides consciousness to reveal the meanings given by people, imagination and new possibilities (Greene, 2007). Greene produced her own concepts under the influence of these theorists. She first developed the concepts of "open spaces" and "becoming wide-awake" which were the basis for aesthetic education theory, and then the "importance of imagination," which she included in these concepts as a third (Currence, 2008). Greene focused on ensuring that people consciously focus on life and their needs in the context of total vigilance. Also, influenced by Merleau-Ponty, she developed his view of "social imagination" (Goldman, 2010). In this context, it can be said that dealing with the different dimensions of society, multiple perspectives and establishing dialogue are related. In addition, the influence of post-structuralist and postmodernist approaches in education is also important in Greene's perspective. According to Greene (2005), the view of achieving "truth" from an objective perspective and after familiar hierarchies began to be abandoned, coming down the divisions between objects and subjects, consciousness and the appearance of things enabled more paths to make inquiries. Reproduction of the meaning is ensured by inquiries made depending on the point where the subject stands with slickness of the meaning in postmodernism and aesthetic reception. According to the understanding of deconstruction, meaning is "never clear and sufficient, not immanent in the text, not identical with itself; always postponed and set back" (Minor, 2021, p. 252). Thus, the meaning created by the individual at that moment related to the work of art and the meaning created by the next experience will not be the same. At the same time, the fact that the meaning created by one individual and the meaning created by another individual is in a state of interaction with each other, the meaning is always open to change. Greene (2005) also stated that, different thoughts are provided through dialogues with an understanding suggested by Derrida, in which a concept is assessed by another concept, thus, an inquiry beyond the standards, in terms of science and art, is possible. According to Greene (2014), dialogue offers more than an exchange of ideas or discussions; it includes empathy, which enables opening up to each other. In this respect, multiple meanings and thus learning from

each other can be achieved by developing a dialogue in a common area with the meaning provided by each individual in the learning environment. Greene (2005), who defines the sought types of learning as active, reflective and interpretive, reflects that learning is fundamentally dialogic because of its unidimensionality and resistance to single point of view: for learning; he expresses the use of multi-sensory models with mutual conversations by connecting students with the present and the past.

Inquiry-based learning processes that activate the student are utilized to structure meaning in educational areas. Greene (2005) emphasizes that meaning in art, as in other fields, emerges most effectively in an environment where learning, change and discoveries are shared. According to Greene (2001), for the people to create meaning on what they have acquired during their own lives, the stimulation with the combination of body, mind and emotion must be provided by active learning. In the Lincoln Center Institute, where Greene's philosophical perspective is applied, the process that artists use while working, is followed. In this approach, meaning is provided by the development of the senses, influence processes and to a large extent, following capacities along with cognition (Holzer, 2007). In Greene's aesthetic inquiry perspective, different from inquiry in sciences in terms of inquiry-based learning and at the same time different from some aesthetic education theorists, affective processes and imagination come to the fore.

Problem Statement

Research on art and aesthetic education continues. According to Aykut (2012, p.170), *"An 'aesthetic' that is limited only to aesthetic courses cannot be accommodated within an art education"*. In this context, the idea of benefiting from aesthetic experiences provided towards visuals with design features and works of art in the basic structure of art education according to different perspectives is seen as valuable. Discipline-based art education (DBAE), postulated by Eisner on the basis of aesthetic experience, is used in Turkey in visual arts education under the name, "Multi-Field Art Education." In the visual arts curriculum, DBAE continues to be transformed in terms of its deficient aspects with the inclusion of museum education and cultural studies, in addition to the four fields DBAE includes (Ozsoy, Alakus, 2017). With three learning areas in the program (2018) including; visual communication and shaping, aesthetics and art criticism and cultural heritage, it can be said that it is aimed to provide education with an interdisciplinary approach. In this context, with some criticism and research results, it can be said that the concept of "Comprehensive Art Education" is accepted instead of "Discipline-Oriented Art Education" (Kırıçoğlu, 2015, p.36). In today's world, where functional and communicative objects structure identities, studies are carried out to include visual culture teaching and social foundations within the scope of

visual art education. Thus, the effectiveness of the subjects in the focus of social and cultural criticism in teaching increases and the reconstructive view is included in the practice. (Kırıçoğlu, 2015, p.36). Today, individuals achieving a critical view and awareness for inquiries in current life has become important for social transformation. It can be said that there are different perspectives on benefiting from the opportunities offered by aesthetic education for social transformation. In this context, among the aesthetic education approaches, an approach in which affective features are also adopted instead of predominantly cognitive-focused approaches of inquiry-based learning processes is considered important.

The DBAE approach is focused on inquiry and critical thinking, with a greater emphasis on cognitive processes in learning (Ozsoy, Mamur, 2019). Within the approaches to aesthetic education, different theorists address the cognitive and affective characteristics of learning processes in different ways. According to Bose (2008), unlike some practitioners such as Eisner and Gardner, Dewey and Greene do not believe in a purely cognitive approach in aesthetic education. Greene emphasizes that art provides the intuited meaning that words cannot provide by giving the person the opportunity to feel and sense information (Comeaux, 2013). At this point, through inquiry, imagination enables alternative realities to be found from multiple perspectives. In Greene's point of view, it is important to trigger the imagination to reach sensation and it is possible to raise awareness with aesthetic experiences. Greene (2014), who was concerned about students being insensitive about what happens at school, for themselves and their future, emphasized that art activates the imagination, makes students look through alternatives, and increases their awareness of what it is to be in the world. According to Greene (2001, p.170); the process should "allow people to unleash their imaginations, to consider alternative ways of living in a world with others". Sessions (2008) states that Greene's understanding of unleashing the imagination takes Eisner's work one step further. Accordingly, it can be said that Greene's understanding can enable a person who is open to interpretations -with aesthetic experiences based on imagination- beyond the work of art to establish connections with his own life experiences.

In addition, Greene's approach, addressing art and imagination as an integral part of education in social transformation, was emphasized as having a unique perspective compared to the approaches of other theorists. In this respect, Greene's point of view offers a perspective on visual arts education to ensure social transformation.

In visual arts education, it is predicted that multiple meanings can be provided with the sensitivity and imagination provided by the affective processes, instead of the single truth understanding. With this aspect, Greene's point of view is a guide to leaving an open door in the interpretation of

students with a contemporary education in parallel with the transformation of today's understanding of education with a tendency towards interpretative paradigm. In this context, a step towards social transformation will be provided with the awareness that students have developed by establishing relationships with their current life experiences through inquiries in the focus of works of art. There are many studies that include inquiry-based contemporary art education plans, practices and literature by using works of art from Greene's perspective (Currence, 2008; Pavlou, 2013; Denaway, 2013; Powell and Serrie, 2013; Moon, et al., 2013; Williams, 2017; Brun, 2016; Spector, Lake & Kress, 2017; Gulla, 2018; Turkoz, 2018). Currence, (2008) highlights the importance of Greene's work in the field of education for 21st century education.

In this context, a research was carried out within the scope of visual arts education course for an improvement in students' interpretation from multiple perspectives with the understanding of aesthetic inquiry. So, Greene's perspective was used as a guide to improve students' inquiry and comprehension processes in real life, as part of the visual arts.

METHOD

The study was produced from a thesis. The study was structured using an action research design, which is one of the qualitative research methods. According to Johnson (2015, p.44), an action research "is often employed to reveal how something works. The goal is to solve the problem, evaluate or even find new ideas and understand how it works". In this research, the action cycle was continued and the problems that emerged were improved by evaluating the theory and practices in line with the purpose and taking into account the opinions of the validity committee.

Environment

The study was carried out in a public middle school. Permission was obtained for the research from the Ministry of Education and approval was given by the Ethics Committee prior to the research. The first lesson of the study was held at the Museum of Contemporary Arts and the other lessons at the visual arts workshop in the school. The environment was arranged in line with the requirements of the lesson and the needs of the students.

Research Group

For the research group, the school of a teacher was chosen—who had volunteered to have the study carried out in her workshop—which was located in the city center. The teacher was interviewed to gather information about how they conducted the classes. In addition, a three-week observation was made about the class processes. It was seen that the classes were conducted with a focus on teaching artistic application techniques and were not conducted with a focus on works of art.

Recommendations on class levels at which research can be conducted were gathered by interviewing teachers and experts in the field with experience of the classes. The opinions and observations revealed that the participatory approaches of sixth grade students came to the fore and worked with this group. Student volunteering was used as the basis for selecting the research group. During the research process, the researcher (teacher) took an active role in the planning and implementation of the courses. The class teacher also contributed with their view as an observer.

The ten focus students who were selected during observations comprised five females and five males. Throughout the study, the students were given code names to maintain anonymity. In determining the focus students, maximum diversity sampling was used in accordance with the idea of Yıldırım and Simsek (2011, p.109) "to find out what kind of associations or similarities (differences in the same extent) exists among the various situations." In the study, diversity was achieved by considering the participation of students in different aspects of the courses.

Validity and Reliability

The study included a three-week observation and a fourteen-week implementation period (19.09.2016-17.01.2017) for the purpose of long-term interaction. In this process, various data collection tools were used to collect data. Since it is important in action research, data diversification is achieved by the verification and correction of the findings by different people at various times (Johnson, 2015). For this purpose, data diversification was achieved by using two different visual arts education specialists. Highlights in the macro analysis of the collected data were shared with the five-person validity panel.

To present reasonable data to the reader, the results obtained must be continuously validated with the collected data (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2011). Accordingly, an effort was made to present consistent and meaningful text, by comparing the results with the quotations of the findings and data. Macro analyzes of the collected data and student art practices were shared with the validity committee of five people in each action cycle. In the analysis of the data, coding was performed in the process by working with two different visual arts education experts and similar and repetitive situations were discussed under the themes.

Data Collection Tools

For data collection, it was decided to use video recordings, researcher and student diaries, semi-structured interviews and worksheets and students' practical work. The students were informed as to why the video recording was being made. A total of three interviews were conducted with each student, although with three of them only one interview was possible. In addition, a meeting was also held with the teacher, who was the

observer in the study. In addition, an interview was held with the class teacher who observed the course processes carried out by the researcher. The students were able to include written and visual reflections in the worksheets and practical work.

Data Analysis

In the study, the analyses were conducted during the implementation process and when the research was completed. Thematic analysis was conducted during the research. Thematic analysis is a method used to identify, analyze, and report similar patterns or themes within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The data were collected under themes by encoding them in terms of their similar characteristics. During the analysis process, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis steps were followed: data were examined in detail, initial codes were created, and themes were searched, reviewed and identified. By relating the data in the findings with the theme, similar situations were reported by interpreting how they changed and diversified in similar processes (Glesne, 2013).

Action Process

In the research, the lessons were conducted by establishing activity-teaching connections through four works of art (see figure 1-2-3-4). The selected works were appropriate to the age level of the students, and about which they were able to talk and make daily-life inquiries. The activities were planned

under three themes; the first activity is "Our Observations", the second is "Symbols" and the third is; the activity of "Meaning Making" (See Table 1). The lessons continued to be shaped in line with the perception of the students in the process. The points that the students were curious about emerged by creating their own questions. Thus, one or two experimental lesson processes were designed and implemented in line with the points that attracted the students' attention. As the lesson duration was 40 minutes per week, the activities were spread over two or three weeks, depending on the students' situation.

While examining the first work of art, the students' need for the teacher was observed, due to the students' insistence on reaching the truth, through the teacher, and their concerns about making the painting beautiful when doing their practical work. During the process and with the comprehension the students gained from their experience, they moved away from their efforts to reach the truth through the teacher and their concerns about making it beautiful. On the other hand, at the end of the first activity the observer teacher stated that some students were timid about taking the floor and the validity committee emphasized that the students had problems both in speaking with and listening to others. As it was thought that these situations formed an obstacle to establishing a dialogue, a "microphone event" called "Respect for the right to speak" was held, in which the students were encouraged to discuss the right to speak. The students' listening skills and participation in the discussions improved as a result. At the end of the second activity, as superficiality and deficiencies were observed in reflecting the students' perspectives, more questions were asked and ideas were opened up to make statements and present their reasons while expressing their own ideas. The researcher who tried to minimize the effect of the lack of time in the process by planning the lesson meticulously, guided students in the efficient use of time.

FINDINGS

The results of the study were presented as research questions under the headings, "reflecting personal perspective,"

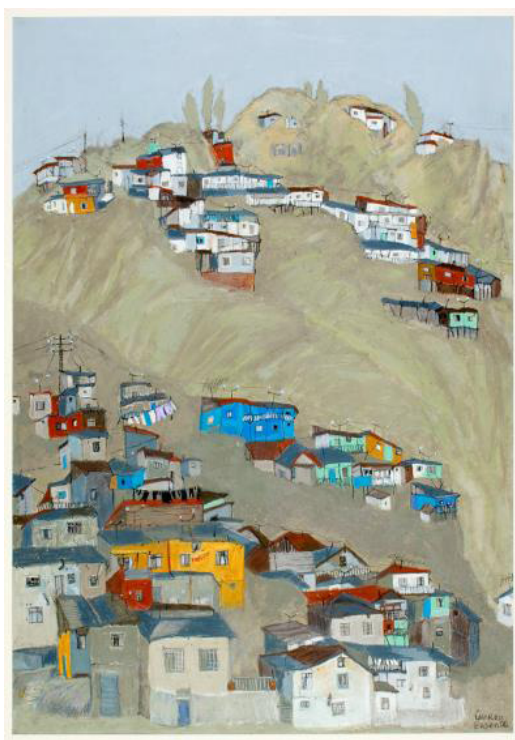


Fig. 1: Imren Ersen, "Shanty Houses," 70x100 cm, KUPB, 2006 (<https://1>)

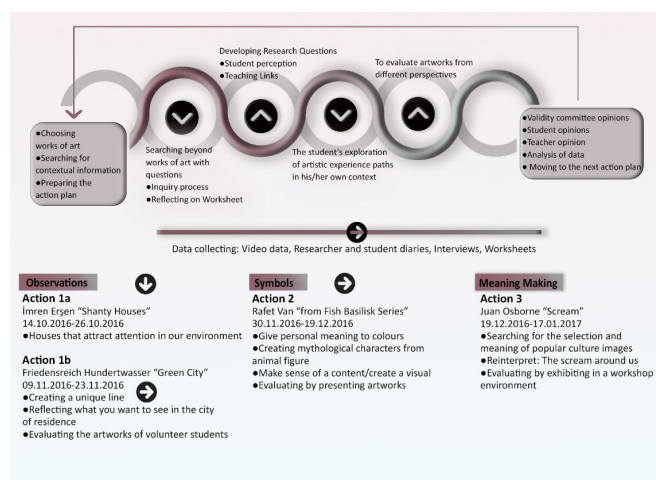


Fig. 2: Friedensreich Hundertwasser, "Green Town," KT., 1978 (<http://2>).



Fig.3: Rafet Van, "from Fish Basilisk Series," M.M.O.C, 70x90 cm, 2008, (accessed from artist source)

Table 1. Action Process



"comprehension from multiple perspectives" and "student's openness to learning experience."

Reflecting Personal Perspectives

Through their knowledge and perceptions, the students revealed their personal reflections that emerged from their experiences in all the lessons. The students accentuated the "concrete images" and "formal features" that attracted their attention in the works of art and their own practical work, by reflecting on what they noticed during the lessons. When she encountered the painting, "Shanty Houses," Oyku reflected on a building, its color and shape, saying: "I was intrigued by the massive, yellow building" (V.R.1). Emircan, on the other hand, reflected on the point he first noticed, saying: "Words are everywhere" when he saw Osborne's "Scream" (W.4). The students emphasized "imagination" and "research" as the point that attracted their attention in the implementation of the lessons. Mert reflected that the immensity of imagination allows everyone to reflect their own idea, saying "Now, not

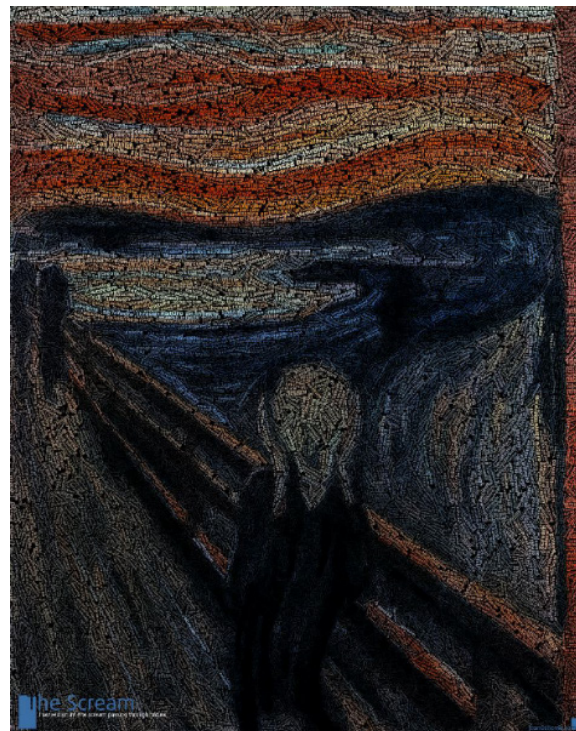


Figure 4. Juan Osborne, "Scream," DR., 2010, (<http:3>)

everybody has to do the same about just one topic within such a framework. We can do what we want. And we symbolize what comes into our minds. As much as the limits of our imagination..."(S.I.2). Iraz emphasized the research process by saying "what I did seemed to me more like science, as if I were investigating something, not a visual lesson" (S.I.2).

The students reflect their personal perspectives through the relationships they establish in their practical work, through the works of art. The students establish relationships with the books they read and the movies they watch. The majority of the class establish a relationship with the book they have read in the Turkish Language course through the art of "Shanty Houses". Gulay, who likened the place in the book to the place in the picture, established a relationship, when she says: "There is also such a poor village in the book Momo I read and an orphan little girl is settling in that village" (W.1). The students also reflect their culture, belief and daily life. Iraz made an association with an element in his own culture, when she says: "The biggest circle, like a flower, on the upper part of the painting, resembles the symbols on our rugs" (V.R.2) when she examines the "Fish Basilisk" work. On the other hand, Bora's depiction of the mosque, which he reflects on in his practical work on the "Shanty Houses" painting, shows the relationship he establishes with his belief (See Figure 5). During the lesson that explored the picture, "Fish Basilisk," Ahmet reflects on through daily life experience stereotypical knowledge of the emotions symbolized by colors when he says: "For example; black as Ebru said symbolizes sadness. For example, people

on Facebook make a black screen to show their sadness when something bad happens" (V.R.2).

The students also reflect on the changes in their ideas, in terms of seeing different options and changing their perspective, beyond the stereotyped perspectives in the course of the lessons. Saying that imagination can be mirrored in life, Gulay reflects on her perspective towards different options in life, after seeing the imagination that Hundertwasser mirrors in his life, when she is saying: *"I discovered different paintings. I never looked this way before... I thought the things I was thinking would not happen. I mean, I thought those things would not happen in a normal life. But I saw it could happen"* (O.G.1.). Mert reflects on his changing perspective of drawing with written words, when he says: *"I or my friends in the class, had no idea about making a painting by writing. Because we have been told since primary school that there should be no writings on the painting. That's why, I thought there would be no writings on the painting. However, the writings on that painting taught me it was wrong. I mean, it was the exact opposite"* (S.I.3). Similarly, Gulay reflects on her idea, when she says: *"For example, I was thinking that a work of art would always remain the same. But the differentiation of that painting with the use of those writings changed my idea a lot"* (S.I.3).

The students also reflect on aspects that they think have evolved in them during the course. Ahmet emphasizes that he is thinking differently from the previous lessons when he says: *"I was doing what I thought before. Now I have started to think more deeply"* (S.D.1). Similarly, Iraz emphasizes his own development, saying: *"... I realized that visual (art) works were not only about flat drawings and learnt to make a painting by thinking about something and filling it with different figures"* (S.D.3). Gulay, on the other hand, emphasizes the development that comes through imagination when she says: *"Our imagination has developed enormously, we have expanded our field of thought"* (S.I.3). Mert emphasized the development of idea creation when he says: *"I think the lessons broaden people's perspectives and enable us to produce new ideas"* (S.D.3). Bora, on the other hand, emphasizes the dialogue, when he says: *"We do it by chatting with friends. We strengthen our social ties"* (S.I.1) and revealed the direction that he considered to have developed. Iraz, on the other hand, reflects on the development in terms of sensitivity, from his perspective, when he says: *"the activities made us clean and ensured that we would take care of our environment"* (S.I.3).

Interpretation from Multiple Perspectives

The students share their interpretations from multiple perspectives, through their imagination in a synthesis of their collective and subjective perspectives and through works of art and the artists' perspectives. The students create the possibilities of meaning from different perspectives by using their imagination beyond the existing things they develop

in the dialogues about the works of art. They infer meanings from the works of art, such as "drought, poverty, residential disturbance, environmental pollution in nature" regarding social problems. The students give meanings, beyond the meanings they had created, through being influenced by each other's ideas. Mert creates the meaning of drought through the work of "Shanty Houses," stating that *"there may be a drought, the painting may be telling us about it"* (V.R.1). Gulay says: *"I think there was a river and the river dried up. The village remained in that condition"* (V.R.1). Gulay expands her idea, added poverty alongside drought and showed empathy, when she says: *"The people living there may be poor and experiencing a very difficult life. There are difficulties in a poor and arid place"* (W.1). The students reveal the possibilities of meaning from different perspectives. Gulay also considers the perspective of the artist and states, *"I think the artist may be bored with very large buildings and may have dreamed of such a place"* (V.R.1). Muge puts forward the possibility of a meaning from the artist's perspective, when she says: *"The artists may have tried to convey the differences between the abandoned houses and the still used houses"* (W.1).

In the work "Fish Basilisk," the students seek meaning beyond what they see, by evaluating the representations of societies through symbols. Ahmet creates meaning through the figures he thinks symbolize societies, by saying: *"... the upper ones are smart, a thinking society ... The lower ones may be those who act without thinking, the slaves of upper society"* (S.I.2). Mert, on the other hand, puts forward the possibility of a meaning concerning the people who govern and people who are governed with a similar thinking when he saying *"... in real life, I think fish represent naive people, snakes represent clever people, who are insidious like snakes... I think these snakes govern the naive [fishes] they catch. I think the artist made the painting as imagining such that... I think, the artist is on the same wavelength with me"* (S.I.2).

The students display a perspective beyond the meanings they create by making inferences about their own lives. Demir takes a lesson for himself from the painting, "Shanty Houses" when he says: *"We must appreciate the blessings we have"* (V.R.1). Gulay, on the other hand, displays a critical view of her own situation, through the work "Green City," when she says: *"This place looks like a city, but everywhere is green. The beauty of nature is gradually disappearing, unfortunately, people continue to destroy nature, not to think of anyone but themselves"* (W.2).

The students reveal connotations in their visual formations by synthesizing the meanings they obtain from the works of art they examined. Within the framework of "Shanty Houses," Bora finds a similarity with the painting in terms of the idea that the mosque is the "House of God" (V.R.1) through the meaning of the house but, in a sense, he moves the idea to a remote point (See Figure 5). In contrast, it can be observed that



Fig. 5: Bora's Work



Fig. 6: Muge's Work 1



Fig. 7: Muge's Work 2



Fig. 8: Ahmet's Work

Muge provides integration by revealing a different view in the same analogy with the meaning it takes from the painting. She says the meaning she created by saying: "I drew a skyscraper and an old house. ... I wanted to relate the difference between the old houses and the current houses" (S.I.1) (See Figure 7).

Muge describes her other work, saying: "I drew a sea. It's a nice clean space in a greener area. It's a somewhat more empty place, not too noisy. I dreamed of such a place, I wanted it. For example, I am disturbed by environmental pollution and people not respecting each other..." (S.I.1). It could be said that by putting forward a critical thought, Muge exhibits a similar view to the artist.

In addition, the students presents new meanings in their work, beyond stereotypes. With what he learned from the process, Ahmet adds a feature to the basilisk figure, which the artist made by attributing a new meaning. He develops a new meaning by eliminating what the wise figures had in the story he fictionalized:

"We drew a basilisk. It is something like the lower part is of a snake and the upper part is of a bird. It has beards and stuff. It's a wise snake. Then one day it gets mad and goes to a barber. When he has his beards cut at the barber, people think he is another person. He is not wise any more, so he is tired of being wise. He gets an haircut. The wise men always have beards like that" (S.I.2).

Although the students prefer similar formal paths to the artists; at the same time, they also reveal new meanings with different approaches. In their work, Iraz and Gulay's group reveal the different possibilities of Osborne's idea by transforming the writings into slogans. It can be said that the students who use words as slogans like a stimulant, which force people to think, make interpretations aimed at eliminating a social problem:

"Environmental pollution is what we see in daily life. For example, some individuals behave very disrespectfully to the environment, throwing away the packaging of the food they eat. So, we also made templates out of it like a closure ... For example, when something is not understood in a picture, it would be something like this: Everyone sees environmental pollution, but some people can say- Never mind, what if you pollute the environment, what if you don't, somebody comes and cleans it. But thanks to the templates we write there, they can create thoughts in their heads that if our environment is like this, we may also get sick. Hence those templates provides more interaction. Those slogans remain in their minds as if it were an idea.... And the idea may spread throughout Turkey" (Iraz, S.I.3).

The students gained comprehension by having experiences about the works of art and the artists' unique path. With regard to the work "Scream," Ahmet says that "[Osborne] may have

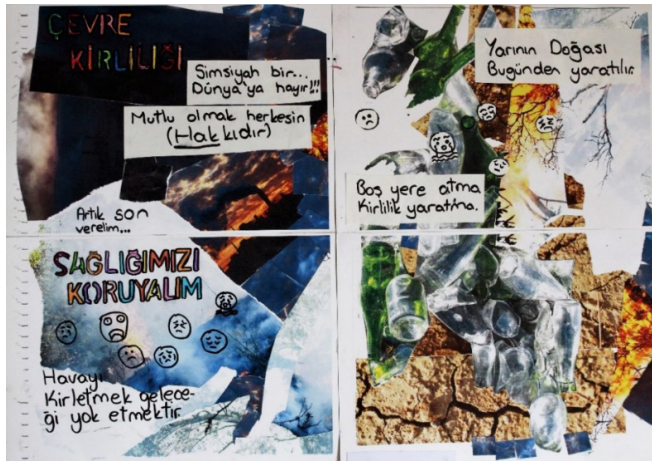


Fig. 9: The Work of Iraz and Gulay's group

commented" (V.R.3); Arda, on the other hand, expressed his idea that the artist was trying to alert people, when he says: "He wants us to open our ears and listen to the voice of nature, and he transfers the writings of the lower left corner to the painting" (W.3) The students reveal their understanding of what they have in common with the artists. Ahmet, for the first event, emphasizes the imagination when he says: "common point: we drew what we dreamed of" (S.I.1); Gulay emphasizes the similarity in terms of the extraordinary context in mythology for "Symbols Event" when she says "using extraordinary things" (G.2). Likewise, through the artist's experience, Emirhan shares the meaning he gives to his experience by saying: "We learn about the branches in art, the paints it is made of, its process... how the art progresses. Living directly in art itself. For example, we comprehend how the artist feels while creating the art. The stages of the creative process of the painting" (S.I.3).

By sharing their ideas with each other during the lesson, the students develop a dialogue and gain understanding by working together. Ahmet, with an emphasis on dialogue, explains that they create ideas together:

"We are brainstorming together on a certain subject. Different ideas are surfacing.... Then we are collecting them all. It turns out that what we think about that picture is correct... You gave us the "Scream" painting in the previous lesson. We all brainstormed about it. Then we read the writing on its back and it turned out to be correct" (S.I.3).

Similarly, It could be claimed that Iraz emphasizes the creation of a meaning with different ideas when he saying "because their thoughts and my thoughts aren't the same, our combined thoughts create a very beautiful thought" (S.D.1).

The students emphasize the different ideas of the artists and their friends and their contributions to their interpretations of the different ideas that emerge during the course. Concerning the work of "Green Town," Demir indicates that he finds the artist's perspective different, when he says, "I had never thought

about such things. I was generally drawing imaginary things... It is a different thing. I think it is beautiful. It is something I do not see often" (S.I.1). On the other hand, Mert stresses that he observes the differences in others' ideas when he says: "My friends have different ideas, they were thinking things that I could never think of" (S.I.1). Ahmet suggests that the different ideas emerging adds a fun to the lesson, when he says: "I mean, if it was always the same idea, it would be boring because everyone would say the same things. It was more fun like this" (S.I.2).

Openness of Students to the Learning Experience

Under the guidance of the teacher, the situations and assessments of the students, regarding their openness in the learning processes, were discussed in this theme. The students were observed to ask questions about what made them curious, from different perspectives and investigates in the process. Muge said "When mentioning nature's scream:... I wondered what it would be like, not the real "Scream" (S.I.3). It could be suggested that she was curious about what the scream statement of the artist represented. After finding answers to what they were curious about, the students were seen to ask other questions. Gulay expressed her curiosity about the work of "Fish Basilisk" and stated that she found an answer to her question in the process by stating "I wondered why the artist made basilisk in the form of fish ... I was able to find (the answer) in the process, I understood that the artist could adapt a story to any object, such as cat" (S.I.2). Gülay emphasized the question that she was still looking for an answer by saying "...I was wondering why two of his friends were going after him. Why are they coming from behind for example, this was a contradiction in my mind..." (S.I.3)

The students explain the reasons for their ideas through the works of art and their own work. It was observed that in the beginning some students responded superficially, however with the progression of the process, they were able to give explanations. Aslıhan explains her reasons for her own practical work when she says: "I drew a house, but such a different house...I mean, I didn't want them to always be the same houses.... Because everywhere we look, houses have roofs. chimneys. I mean, that's all. Yellow, pink, I made it different" (S.I.1). Mert, on the other hand, explains the meaning he deduced with reasons from what he saw in the artwork by saying "I think it tells us about pessimistic thinking or fear because he wrote everything, most of it, in black and it's about loneliness; he was left alone, they excluded him" (Ç.Y.4).

The students also say that they gain confidence by taking the floor during the process. Even if the students experience shyness, they are generally willing to share their ideas. Muge voices her changing perspective in self-expression in comparison with the early stages of the practice when she says: "At first I was thinking a little bit about how to do it, but that

changed as I worked more. I am now able to criticize a painting. In the beginning I did not know what to say" (S.I.3). Iraz, on the other hand, expresses his confidence in expressing himself and participating, as follows:

"I do not experience any problem, because you tell us to speak our mind. I normally hesitate, I do not raise [a] hand, but when you told us to speak on our mind, I tried to do it more in the lessons. Because I try to say whatever I see in my mind about that painting. Likewise, my friends do the same thing... I never experienced any difficulties" (S.I.3).

Certain situations emerge, in which students feel the need to get approval, worry about making their work beautiful, and need assistance in the process of creating their practical work. At the end of the first activity, Iraz shows his concern for making his practical work beautiful, but in the following lessons he displays a more flexible perspective while explaining his practical work.

"I established a connection with our lesson. For example, you tell us to free ourselves. Do not be uptight. When we paint on a canvas by over-pressing, it is ruined. But when you loosen the brush, the painting become different and more impressive. For example, if we do not use the same colors during painting; even by swiping the brush like this, more beautiful things can come out" (S.I.3).

On the other hand, students experience approval by making sense of the artist's work. At the end of the practical work, Gulay reveals her self-confidence, which is influenced by the idea of the artist, when she says: *"I learned that people can create beautiful things with their own thoughts. For example, if I were an architect, I am sure I would build very beautiful houses" (S.D.1).* Mert reveals that he does not need to undergo difficulty when comparing his situation with previous classes:

"Last year we sometimes had difficulties while drawing pictures. We generally ask for help." As I said, I think we are able to draw our paintings by ourselves this year, as it is easy, we are able to express our own thoughts. I mean we do not need any assistance. It is easier this year" (S.I.1).

The teacher (researcher) guided the students in the structuring of their knowledge, in the process. The students evaluated the teacher's approach in terms of being asked for their ideas. Aslıhan emphasized the guidance for developing an idea when she says: *"We talk a lot. You ask for our ideas. We were different last year. We drew immediately" (S.I.1).* Müge, on the other hand, says that the processes of replicating the ideas in the lessons are imparted as follows:

"The previous visual art course was boring. Now we are doing different activities with you. We are doing more fun things... It used to be straightforward, the practical work was ordinary. But with you, we are critiquing... They (acts of critiquing) were not there in the previous courses. But now, we are criticizing something, we are expressing our ideas" (S.I..3).

Mert, on the other hand, indicates his positive opinion about being given the right to speak, when he says: *"It gives us a chance to think. To speak our mind... We are not given that right in normal lessons like here. That is the part I love the most" (S.I.1).*

CONCLUSION

During the research process, the students were enabled to carry out their own searches with the lessons structured in the context of aesthetic inquiry. Greene (2007) emphasized that the work of art, with its multi-layered endless characteristics, contributes to the ability to comprehend with perception and in addition provides awareness, in revealing the meanings, imagination and new possibilities people attribute to it. In the study, it was found that the works of art and aesthetic experience enabled the students to become conscious of their perceptions, imagination and creating the possibilities of meaning and this helped students to broaden their personal perspectives with what they discerned.

Greene, advocates becoming aware with the realization of an effort towards self-discovery. The process of becoming aware includes the soul, personal reflection, intellectual possibilities and the society, and is expressed as the phenomenon of catching one's own sensation towards the close environment through one's own culture, family and beliefs (Currence, 2008). In this research, the students reflected on what they noticed during the course processes, the relationships they established through their previous knowledge and experiences, the changes in their ideas with the meanings they created, and their views on their personal development. Thus, students developed a wider perspective under the influence of their own spiritual and personal reflections, knowledge and cultures in their aesthetic inquiry processes. Similarly, Williams (2017) emphasizes that students' personal beliefs, values and experiences are analyzed with the act of revealing the hidden ones by deepening with the speeches made in his research, and thus, action is taken to create personal knowledge and beliefs as the level of consciousness increases.

According to Greene (1995), dialogue has a critical importance in the social imagination by enabling individuals to come together and in realizing the potential for collective action. Currence (2008) stated in his research that students achieve social association through aesthetic experiences with this learning method, and that cultural dialogues manage knowledge and understanding. Dialogue was achieved by overcoming the problems that the students experienced in listening to each other during the lessons, and consequently the students revealed their social imaginations with meaningful possibilities on each other's different realities.

According to Greene (1995), since the students possess the power of perception, conceptualization, interpretation and inquiry, they can obtain indirect experiences through

comparisons, from multiple perspectives, by building relationships with one another with their capacity to structure multiple realities and compare the world in which their peers live. In this study, the students develop an awareness of the ideas of others and display empathy, through aesthetic inquiry and the understanding they gain collectively. The resulting diversity of meanings enabled the students to see different ideas, and they were able to reach integrity of meaning through the influence of each other's knowledge and understanding.

Greene (2001) says that since meaning does not emerge spontaneously, it is necessary to provide stimulation with a combination of body, mind and emotion, and active learning. In the study, the students' cognitive and affective reflections in their learning processes were seen and an improvement was observed, by eliminating their lack of being active. As Greene suggests, possibilities should be presented rather than readily available knowledge for students to learn their own reality of existence through critical thinking, by asking their own questions (*as cited in* Nicholson, 2016). The teacher encouraged the students to ensure clarity and ask questions so that they can form their own understanding. After experiencing the inquiry processes and taking responsibility, the students' participation was seen to increase. Gulla (2018), who carried out applications with Greene's approach, found that it is possible for students to find and channel their own voices by developing creative works and conducting long-term researches on works of art, and thus, this skill of self-expression gives a strong feeling, and students begin to believe in themselves in a way they did not before (Gulla, 2018). Similarly, in this research the students were able to gain self-confidence in the first lesson by overcoming teacher-focused efforts to reach the truth and their tendency to see themselves as inadequate.

In conclusion, through the inquiry process used in this study the students discovered interpretation and ensured the openness of their own learning by looking at diverse perspectives through dialogue and the connections they recognized and developed. As the present study used action research, it was carried out within the limitation of specified context; hence, a suggestion could be made to improve the processes of students' comprehension from different points of view through aesthetic inquiry by conducting studies with contributions from Greene's perspective, in different visual arts classes with different teachers.

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