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Design of an undergraduate course on Storigami for child development

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Abstract

This paper is a part of a larger study that discusses and explains the design, implementation and evaluation process of a 14 week face-to-face elective course on Storigami for the child development departments. In this study, the design process of the course is explained as the first phase of the project. The creation of the course is based on a student-centred approach to promote conceptual understanding of the undergraduate students (Hansen, E. J. 2011). *Idea-based learning: A course design process to promote conceptual understanding*. Routledge.). The planning and the content of the course are constructed upon the needs of the 21st century higher education and professional life. An integrated course design process and model (Fink, L. D. (2013). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses*. John Wiley & Sons.) was employed. There are three phases to this course design process, namely: initial design phase, intermediate design and final design phase. At the end of the study, a course and syllabus designed in line with this model involving course structure, course content, weekly readings, tasks, assignments and assessment for a 14 week semester.

KEYWORDS

child development, higher education, Storigami, syllabus design

INTRODUCTION

Typically, perhaps surprisingly, design is an invisible, consumable experience except of course when it is difficult to use, or when it does vastly improve the user experience (Burckhardt, 2017). As noted, when student needs and expectations have an effect on how well they perform, taking a student-centred design (SCD) approach is advisable (Altay, 2014). Performance is related to student learning, competency and satisfaction in course design. When a SCD guarantees results that go beyond the utilitarian one, students' engagement is induced by having them impose their own cognitive models on the learning experience and attribute meanings to it. This theory presents three points: the embodied experience expresses one's reality; there is internal validity of world constructions; design is a sociocultural experience (Burgess-Limerick & Burgess-Limerick, 1998; Kim & Hwang, 2017; Krippendorff, 2004).

Students are motivated to develop problem-solving skills and learn through the encounter when teaching and course design are grounded in the individual student's needs (Altay, 2014; Wilson, 2004). Pieces like hands-on learning and role-playing make real-world applications of skills feasible (Altay, 2014; Rippin et al., 2002). Students create learning opportunities and reconstruct knowledge from the ground up in a learning environment that uses student-centred learning (SCL) (Hannafin et al., 2013). By definition, the term implies that students become more independent and take responsibility for their own educations, often setting personal learning goals and seeking tools and resources for building upon prior knowledge and experience (Bransford et al., 2000; Brush & Saye, 2000; Hannafin et al., 2013; see also Goodwin, 2024, on different types of SCL and their traits). It is suggested that SCL is a nuanced learning process that requires substantial motivational, cognitive and social support, the belief that begins to function autonomously and learn on their own lacking substantial support representing a popular but poorly supported assumption (Hannafin et al., 2013). Learner-centred approaches focus on supporting the unique individuality of varying backgrounds, perspectives, needs and interests (McCombs & Whisler, 1997). As diverse needs and capabilities are foundational to good practice in undergraduate education, a range of pedagogical approaches are utilised (Wilson, 2004).

The majority of large introductory courses in the undergraduate curriculum are held in the typical lecture format. This way of delivering information has its drawbacks for both teaching/learning; while it may deliver very large amounts of course material efficiently to many learners simultaneously, it is often geared towards causing learners to engage in 'surface,' or very passive forms of learning (Bransford et al., 2000) and may not be helping learners become more motivated, confident or enthusiastic (Weimer, 2002). Therefore, students who are predominantly exposed to traditional lecture methods may not be equipped with the necessary practical skills to prepare them for successful career outcomes (National Research Council [NRC], 2007; Wright & Boggs, 2002).

One of the more commonly repeated messages in the literature about making improvements in the above areas is the need for student-centred instructional methods such as inquiry and active learning styles. As defined by Allen and Tanner (2005), active learning is 'actively searching for new information, organising that information in a meaningful manner and then being able to explain that information to someone else.' Active-learning methods further include opportunities for interaction with both peers and instructors through cycles of active participation and receiving feedback, allowing students to practice applying new knowledge to real-world situations that were learned in class. Active-learning methods shift the focus of teaching to students' needs and enable the students to develop the metacognitive skills necessary to engage in critical and independent thought (Bransford et al., 2000).

Recent systematic reviews and meta-analyses support the efficacy of active and student-centred pedagogies in higher education. Flipped classroom studies show that such active, student-centred approaches can enhance participation and satisfaction relative to traditional

instruction (Kuş, 2025). Systematic reviews of active and team-based learning also find evidence of improved educational quality and learning performance compared to teacher-centred models (Xie et al., 2025). Additionally, technology-enhanced active learning strategies (e.g., interactive tasks fostering cognitive engagement) have been found to support learning outcomes in higher education contexts (Sailer et al., 2024).

In this study, we take our motive from the idea that 21st-century child development programmes should employ active and student-centred learning pedagogy due to the applied nature of these undergraduate programmes, aligning with the above literature. We reasoned that by integrating student-centred pedagogy and active learning into our course's instructional design, we would raise undergraduate teacher education students' performance while simultaneously enhancing their attitudes towards both their future profession and the course we are designing (Weimer, 2002).

The course we design to be implemented in undergraduate child development programmes is mainly a suggestion due to its nature that combines origami and storytelling as an instructional technique for child education. This new technique is called Storigami. The word 'Storigami' was first used by Mastin (2007) to refer to the art of telling stories with origami, which is claimed to have many educational advantages, such as enhancing memory, improving fine motor coordination, stimulating creativity and facilitating multisensory learning (Mastin, 2007). This technique offers numerous educational benefits, including fostering fine motor and listening skills, strengthening linguistic and visualisation abilities and exploring spatial relationships.

As a result of these advantages for child development, it is believed that introducing this technique to future child development professionals as an alternate technique in their future careers will add to their expertise. For this specific purpose, this paper presents an undergraduate course design incorporating this recent technique called Storigami.

DESIGN PROCESS

When designing a course, we collect data and make informed decisions about how the course will be taught and assessed. Both activities are essential for increasing the likelihood that students will achieve meaningful and lasting learning outcomes. To this end, the instructional design process must be approached systematically, with each stage completed before moving on to the next, as later decisions build directly on earlier ones.

As illustrated in Figure 1, Integrated Course Design (Fink, 2013) is grounded in the alignment of three core components: learning goals, teaching and learning activities and feedback and assessment. These components are interdependent and must be deliberately connected to ensure instructional coherence. The design process begins with the development of clearly articulated learning goals (initial design phase), which define what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course. These goals then inform the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities (intermediate design phase) that actively engage students in achieving the intended outcomes. Finally, feedback and assessment strategies are designed (final design phase) to measure student learning and provide opportunities for reflection and improvement.

By visually representing the alignment among these elements, Figure 1 highlights the central principle of Integrated Course Design: that effective instruction emerges from the intentional integration of goals, activities and assessment, rather than from treating them as isolated components. This structured and interconnected approach supports deeper learning and ensures that instructional decisions are pedagogically sound and student-centred.

The course in this study was designed using an approach that interrelates disciplinary, pedagogical and student-centred approaches. Data which is necessary to design the course

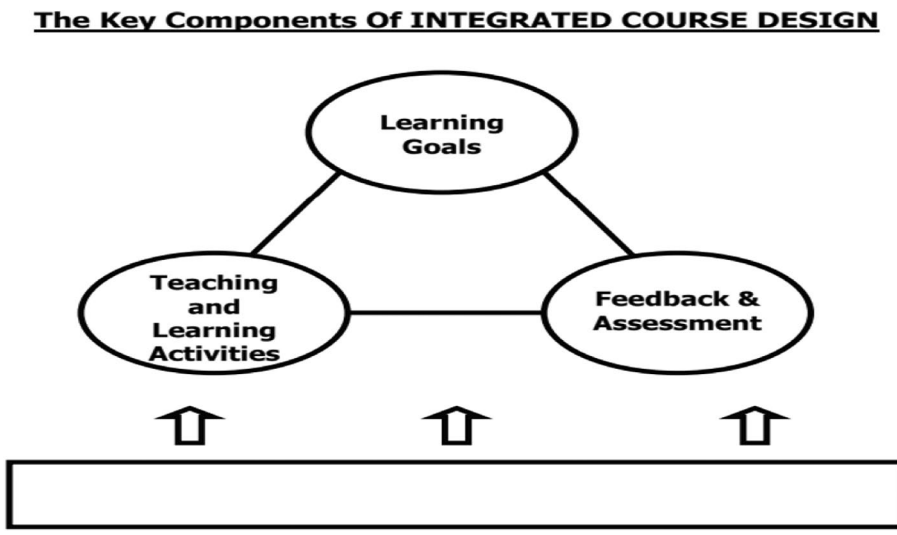

FIGURE 1 Integrated course design (adopted from Fink, 2013).

was gathered following three stages based on the suggestion by Hoefle et al. (2020). First, we outlined an analysis that involved gathering data and viewpoints from stakeholders (instructors, students, head of the departments) as well as looking over course syllabi for comparable courses being offered at other universities. In the second section, we go over the exercises and process we used to develop the course's vision and learning objectives. The section on implementation outlines our strategy for course coordination, student preparation, active learning and enhancement of students' skills. The section on implementation outlines our strategy for course coordination, student preparation, active learning and enhancement of students' skills.

We started by looking at the websites of some universities with child development departments for the optional courses that they were offering. This would give us access to other people's experiences and give us an idea of what kind of optional courses are usually offered in other child development departments. Second, we gathered data from a few of our interested parties. We did not scan any required courses during this scan; instead, we only looked at the elective courses. We identified distinctive features of the theory-applied courses that were included in the syllabi's sections on course delivery, learning objectives, content and description. The identified distinctive features showed that out of 86 elective courses offered by 7 different child development departments, only 6 of them were in the form of theory-applied. The others were either theoretical or applied. This showed us the need in the field for integration of both theory and practice.

In order to elicit the idea of the stakeholders, a short course description of Storygami as an elective course was prepared and shared with the 10 instructors, 65 undergraduate students and 55 graduates in the child development department, and their queries about the course were answered by the researchers. They were then interviewed regarding the worthwhile nature of the course for the programme. The key results of data gathered from the stakeholders are as follows:

- 85% of the instructors agreed with the idea that it is a valuable course for the child development students because of the following reasons: a new technique, good for child development, relevant to the field, adds to instructors' professional development.
- 70% of the undergraduate students shared their positive opinions regarding being offered such a course. The reasons they mentioned are learning a new technique, improving their

teaching skills, helping improve child development and learning the theory and practice together about a specific technique.
- 85% of the graduates of the programme also agreed that this would be a great course for the child development departments, especially because of the need for additional techniques to improve children's development after graduation.

After finishing the compilation of all this data, we have focused on creating a course design. We employed an integrated course design process and model (see Figure 1) (Fink, 2013). There are three phases to this course design process, which are further subdivided into a total of 12 steps (see Table 1).

The initial design phase has been prepared in accordance with the data gathered from the stakeholders, scanning of websites of other similar departments for elective courses and their syllabi. Additionally, the curriculum suggested by Turkiye Higher Education Council (HEC) has been examined. The mission of this programme has been declared as follows: to train highly equipped and qualified child developers who will ensure the development of normal, special needs, sick, in need of protection and at-risk children in the 0–18 age group in our country; developing tools to assess development; to provide consultancy, publication and research services to individuals, institutions and organisations related to the field (in line with their needs); to develop and produce projects using contemporary approaches regarding children, families, educators and society and to implement and disseminate these projects for the best benefit of children and families in all segments of society. In line with this declaration, universities prepare their compulsory and optional courses. The main purpose of each course within the curriculum is to meet the general outcome of the programmes.

Structure of the course

According to the regulations of HEC and the senate decisions of the universities, the optional courses in undergraduate programmes are taught as applied, theoretical or

TABLE 1 Twelve steps of integrated course design (Fink, 2013, p. 67).

Initial Design Phase: Build Strong Primary Components
Step 1. Identify important situational factors
Step 2. Identify important learning goals
Step 3. Formulate appropriate feedback and assessment procedures
Step 4. Select effective teaching/learning activities
Step 5. Make sure the primary components are integrated
Intermediate Design Phase: Assemble the Components into a Coherent Whole
Step 6. Create a thematic structure for the course
Step 7. Select or create an instructional strategy
Step 8. Integrate the course structure and the instructional strategy to create an overall scheme of learning activities
Final Design Phase: Finish Important Remaining Tasks
Step 9. Develop the grading system
Step 10. Debug possible problems
Step 11. Write the course syllabus
Step 12. Plan an evaluation of the course and of your teaching

both applied and theoretical for 3 h a week. When the semester duration for universities in Turkiye is taken into account, the course was planned for 14 weeks. Owing to the features and the content of the course, the course was designed to include both theoretical and applied hours. Since it requires a good command of origami and storytelling as significant skills, 2 h were assigned to application whilst the theoretical component was programmed as 1 h in a week. In this sense, 28 h of application and 14 h of theory were planned for the course in a semester. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) score of the course was calculated according to the components in the following table (Tables 2 and 3).

Aim of the course

The aim of the course is to give information about the definition and theoretical framework of the story, creative writing, storytelling methods and their contributions to child development, to emphasise the definition of origami, its types, material properties and their benefits in terms of child development, to inform about the basic folding in origami and the importance of creating figures, to inform about the importance of Storigami and to carry out exemplary applications by emphasising its benefits in terms of child development.

TABLE 2 ECTS calculation for the course.

Activities	Number	Duration (hour)	Total work load
Course duration (x14)	14	3	42
Laboratory	-	-	
Application	14	2	28
Specific practical training	14	1	14
Field activities	-	-	
Study hours out of class (preliminary work, reinforcement etc.)	12	1	12
Presentation / Seminar preparation	-	-	
Project	1	6	6
Homework assignment	6	6	36
Midterms (study duration)	-	-	
Final exam (Study duration)	1	3	3
Total workload			141 / 30 ECTS 4.7/5

TABLE 3 Assessment and grading of the course.

Course activities	Number	Percentage
Attendance	14	10
Application	4	40
Project	1	20
Final exam	1	30
Total		100%

Learning outcomes

The course that we design as an optional course will add to the mission and general programme outcomes with the course outcomes (see Appendix A) that are identified as follows:

- Being able to explain the definition of the story and the theoretical framework.
- Being able to explain the definition, scope, principles and stages of creative writing.
- Being able to explain the contributions of storytelling methods to child development.
- Being able to explain the definition of origami, its types, material properties and its benefits for child development.
- Being able to explain the place of origami in learning and teaching.
- Being able to explain the use and benefits of origami in special education.
- Being able to explain basic concepts and figure creation in origami.
- Being able to explain the definition of Storigami and its contributions to child development.
- Being able to apply the Storigami method by performing sample applications.

According to the framework of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), this course has outlined its learning outcomes based on clear definitions of competencies. The learnings expected at the end of this course are, therefore, measurable in terms of the student's knowledge and ability while competencies include the integrated experience of applying this knowledge and ability as well as the attitudes associated with it. In the case of applied child development programmes, articulating the competencies that you will expect students to have allows for further pedagogical coherence within the design of the course and aligns with the EHEA recommendations.

Expected competences

By successfully completing the course, students are expected to acquire the following competences:

- Pedagogical Design Competence: Ability to design age-appropriate, student-centred learning activities by integrating storytelling and origami techniques into early childhood and child development contexts.
- Applied Creative Teaching Competence: Capacity to apply creative and multisensory instructional strategies to support children's cognitive, motor and socio-emotional development.
- Problem-Solving and Adaptation Competence: Ability to adapt instructional materials and activities to diverse learner needs, developmental levels and classroom contexts.
- Communication and Storytelling Competence: Skill in using narrative-based approaches to foster engagement, language development and meaning-making in educational settings.
- Reflective Practice Competence: Ability to critically reflect on one's own instructional practices and evaluate the effectiveness of innovative teaching techniques.
- Professional and Ethical Awareness Competence: Awareness of the professional responsibilities of child development practitioners, including ethical considerations, inclusivity and learner well-being.

In the intermediate design phase, we focused on teaching strategies, activities and tasks to incorporate in the course design. The instructional strategies were identified to meet the requirements of the theory–practice integration of the course. Therefore, direct instruction,

presentation, technology-supported teaching and question-answer were listed as teaching techniques for the theory. On the other hand, interactive learning and applied learning/teaching were identified as instructional techniques for the practice sessions.

In the same phase, thematic structure was also decided to include the following themes and concepts: *Story (Definition and Theoretical Framework), Creative Writing with Definition, Scope, Principles and Stages, Storytelling in Terms of Its Methods and Contributions to Child Development, Origami (Definition, Types, Material Properties and Developmental Contributions), Origami in Learning and Teaching, Origami and Special Education, Basic Folds and Figure Creation in Origami, Storigami in Terms of Its Definition and Contribution to Child Development, Origami and Story Brotherhood (Storigami and Sample Applications)*.

In the final phase of the course design process, some additional components such as grading and evaluation system of the course were integrated. The percentages of each evaluation method and its addition to the weighting of the course are depicted in the following table.

Attendance was counted as a component in the weighting owing to the practice integration of the course. Students being active in the course and attending regularly is of utmost importance to learn the origami as a paper folding skill and rules of storytelling. Moreover, task application by students is also listed among the assessment criteria because they need to learn how to apply and present Storigami prior to their career. As another criterion, students are asked to prepare a project in which they apply the whole process of Storigami.

Finally, we propose a list of materials to support the students throughout the course. While deciding on the materials, the tasks, course content, course structure and the students' knowledge base were taken into consideration. As a result, a list of readings was suggested in the syllabus of the newly designed course (see Appendix A).

CONCLUSION

We outlined the steps we took to design a course to introduce child development undergraduate students to a course focusing on a new technique called ‘Storigami’ in this article. An integrated approach to course design was used to draw a structured frame. This included explaining how Storigami related to and interacted with all other courses in the child development programme. We included learning objectives, outcomes and assessment taking into account the relevance to the profession.

An approach that integrates disciplinary, pedagogical and student-centred approaches was used in the design of the course in this study. Based on Hoeffle et al.'s recommendation, the data required to design the course was collected in three stages (2020).

Following the completion data compilation, our attention has been directed towards developing a course design. The integrated course design process and model that we used consists of three phases that are further broken down into a total of 12 steps.

As we moved through the design process, we tried to meet the needs and suggestions of the stakeholders especially the undergraduate level students of child development departments at universities. The issues we focused can be listed as follows: (a) theory–practice integrated course, (b) a new and effective technique for child development students, professionals and children between 0 and 18 years old, (c) integration of old (origami and storytelling) techniques to create a new one (Storigami) as a teaching technique that adds to skills of child development stakeholders, (d) learning by doing.

As a result of this process, a 14 week course for undergraduate child development programmes at universities was designed with the learning outcomes, objectives, assessment criteria, reading list and tasks.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No financial interest or benefit has arisen from the direct applications of the research.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Ethical approval was not required for this study because its aim was to design a course.

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APPENDIX A

Course name STORYGAMI	Theory (hours/week) 1	Application (hours/week) 2	ECTS 3
Course type	Optional		
Mode of Delivery (face to face, distance learning)	Face-to-face		
Learning and teaching strategies	Direct instruction, presentation, active learning, in-class applications, technology-supported, question-answer, interactive learning, applied learning/ teaching		
Course objective	The aim of the course is to give information about the definition and theoretical framework of the story, creative writing, storytelling methods and its contributions to child development, to emphasise the definition of origami, its types, material properties and its benefits in terms of child development, to inform about the basic folding in origami and the importance of creating figures, to inform about the importance of storigami and to carry out exemplary applications by emphasising its benefits. in terms of child development.		
Learning outcomes	Being able to explain the definition of the story and the theoretical framework. Being able to explain the definition, scope, principles and stages of creative writing. Being able to explain the contributions of storytelling methods to child development. Being able to explain the definition of origami, its types, material properties and its benefits for child development. Being able to explain the place of origami in learning and teaching. Being able to explain the use and benefits of origami in special education. Being able to explain basic concepts and figure creation in origami. Being able to explain the definition of storigami and its contributions to child development. Being able to apply the storigami method by performing sample applications.		
Course Content	Story: Definition and Theoretical Framework. Creative Writing with Definition, Scope, Principles and Stages. Storytelling in Terms of Its Methods and Contributions to Child Development. Origami: Definition, Types, Material Properties and Developmental Contributions. Origami in Learning and Teaching. Origami and Special Education. Basic Folds and Figure Creation in Origami. Storigami in Terms of Its Definition and Contribution to Child Development. Origami and Story Brotherhood: Storigami and Sample Applications.		

APPENDIX A (Continued)

Course name STORYGAMI	Theory (hours/week) 1	Application (hours/week) 2	ECTS 3
Reading Materials	Bakar, W. N. W., & Fauzi, F. Z. Y. (2019). Using Origami to Enhance Visual and Mathematical Thinking Skills among The Autistics. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counselling*, 4 (32), 72–78. Brady, K. (2008). Using paper-folding in the primary years to promote student engagement in mathematical learning. M. Goos, R. Brown, & K. Makar (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 31st Annual Conference of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia* (77–83). Currier, S. C. (2015). Unfolding a problem, *Teaching Children Mathematics, 21*(8), 476–482. Çakmak, S. (2009). *An investigation of the effect of origami-based instruction on elementary students's spatial ability in matehematic*. Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Imaroonrak, S., Phunwutikorn, P., Phattharayuttawat, S., Ngamthipwatthana, T., Sumalrot, T., & Auampradit, N. (2018). The effects of origami training on creativity and visual-motor integration in preschool children. *Journal of the Medical Association of Thailand, 101*(1), 85–89. Kavici, M. (2005). *Gelişimsel origami eğitim programı'nın okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının çok boyutlu gelişimlerine etkilerinin incelenmesi*. Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi, Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü. Köken, C. (2018). *48–60 aylık çocukların hikâye anlatım teknikleri kullanılarak hikâyeyi hatırlama becerilerinin değerlendirilmesi*. Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü. Mastin, M. (2007). Storytelling + origani = Storigami mathematics. *Teaching Children Mathematics, 14*(4), 206–212. Mathew, C. S., & Christabel, D, H. (2018). Effectiveness of origami on hospitalized anxiety among children. International Journal of Advance Research, Ideas and Innovations in Technology, 3(8), 169–173. Nishida; Y. (2019) Something old, something new, something borrowed, and something Froebel? The development of origami in early childhood education in Japan, Paedagogica Historica, 55:4, 529–547. Oğuz, A. (2016). An Instructional Method Suggestion: Conveying Stories through Origami (Storigami), *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 4*(8). Pradipta, R. F., & Dewantoro, D. A. (2019). Origami anf fine motoric ability of intellectual disability students. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change, 5*(5), 531–545. Rollo, M. (2007). *Yaratma Cesareti*. Metis Yayınları. Sze, S. (2005). *Effects of origami construction on children with disabilities*. Opinions Papers, Niagara University: Department of Education. Retrieved August 04, 2020, from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED490351. XXXXX. (2021). *Erken Çocukluk Eğitiminde Storigami: Origami ve Hikâye Kardeşliği*, Eğiten Yayınevi, Ankara. Temizkan, M. (2018). *Yaratıcı Yazma Süreci*. Pegem Yayınları.		