

Design Creativity as the way of dealing with students' stress in the context of the global pandemic challenge

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ABSTRACT

In this publication we concentrate our attention on finding the ways to deal with students' stress during the COVID-2019 pandemic period and implement them into the constant practice. In the design practice we can consider stress not only as a negative, but also as a positive experience. We present our own experience that unites technologies in design education, design methods and some aspects of the art therapy. We examine students' diploma projects simultaneously as the product of design and the process of design that have anti-stress effect and are the way for student to harmonize with their inner world in variable environment. We consider different ways of art visualization as the mechanism of self-actualization, decrease in anxiety and dealing with depressive conditions. The work outlines the strategy of using design creativity as the way of overcoming and preventing the effects of stress factors during studying in the context of global pandemic challenges.

Keywords: Anti-Stress Processes, Anti-Stress Products, Design Creativity, Design Thinking, Technologies in Design Education.

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the COVID-2019 and long quarantine suddenly changed the life of students all over the world, especially in Ukraine. For students at universities the mental health care needs have become especially important for in the last few years, and it is necessary to find ways to mitigate or eliminate stress factors during studying.

It is a particularly pressing issue for students that study art, especially designers who are very impressionable. We realize that students who are currently studying design can have both positive and negative experience during home studying. On one hand, such a situation is difficult and it has obviously become the source of psychological stress for creative personalities. During the quarantine the signs of students' stress state (e.g. increasing anxiety, non-ability to concentrate on something, too frequent mistakes, fatigue, increased irritability) become very noticeable for teachers who constantly talk with students online. That is why teachers are searching for the ways to help them overcome the difficulties in emotional control, avoid stress and stabilize mental health without any harm to the studying

process. A person's favourite creative practice is probably the most effective natural way of dealing with stressful situations.

On the other hand, we can perceive studying at home as a positive thing. Many design students dream of being freelancers or already work as ones, or just work when they have inspiration. The pandemic became such a period when they can try it. Therefore, we can consider the stress state for designers as the push to discover new sides of their personality, to improve self-understanding and conduct creative experiments. Obviously, design creativity that helps people to express their own thoughts freely by visual means can improve their ability to cope with accidents in conditions of emergencies such as pandemic (Cascini et al., 2020).

Ukrainian institutions of higher education have worked out the method to work with design students that helps to make them more interested in studying and improve the effectiveness of educational process. Therefore, we would like to contribute to the international studies in the field of design and offer theoretical and practical methods that will help students from different countries to study changeable conditions and variable environment.

In the research, we set a task to focus attention on the three main points:

Firstly, we form the studying model that aims to use the means of design in order to eliminate students' stress. We discuss the design methods that motivate students to study and create new ideas and products.

Secondly, we form the strategies of self-organization for creative young people that are still finding themselves in life and trying different new directions in the realization of their own abilities.

Thirdly, independent creation and systematic everyday use of design products that we are analyzing will help to get rid of stress. Simultaneously, the work on their creation we consider as a process that has therapeutic effect. Therefore, the study aims to prove that art has a therapeutic effect. Besides, this research allows to correct the set of the intended means of stress prevention during the studying in the post pandemic period.

1. METHODS AND MATERIALS OF THE RESEARCH

For conducting the research, we have chosen an important period in students' life, that is, the period when they were working on their theses during the quarantine time in March – June 2020. The interdisciplinarity is one of the main characteristics of this research. At its core lies the designed model of the harmonization of the education process in the pandemic conditions (Figure 1). This model is a holistic system that is created by the integration of technologies in design education, design and art therapeutic methods, which is aimed at the elimination and prevention of stress states among students. Their harmonic coordination will allow to demonstrate different ways to liquidate and prevent stress states by designing products that they choose themselves, and to find visual communication tools on different levels of academic interactions. The interdisciplinary work relates to the fact that each separate sphere has important moments but they are not enough to achieve the desired goal. The design researches obtain the value from other disciplinary industries and at the same time, they create their own value that is an important topic for discussions in the academic community of designers (Rodgers et al., 2020).

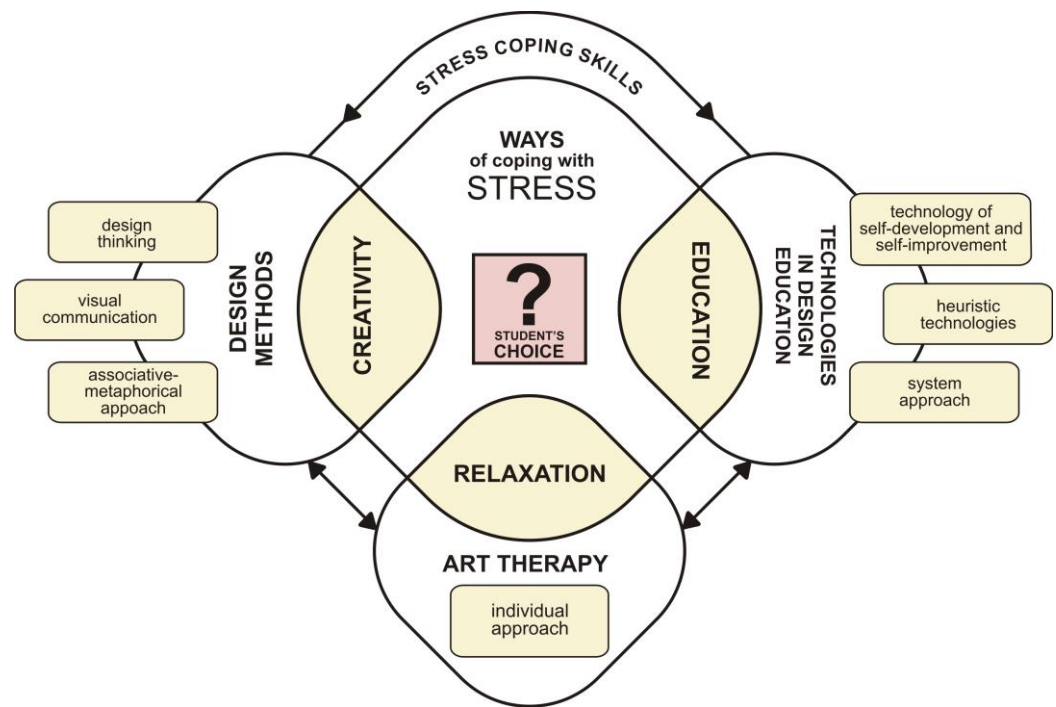


Figure 1. The model of the harmonization of the educational process in the pandemic conditions.

The main part of the presented model is design education technology that involves heuristic technology and technology of self-development and self-improvement. We rethink their role in overcoming stress by design students and create the alternative understanding of the educational process. Now its goal is not the process of transfer of knowledge, skills and abilities, but the formation of the creative personality that is able to think creatively, improve themselves and has a systematic approach to problem-solving. The aim was to adapt the educational process to the pandemic challenges, so we formed the methodology that will help to create the product of design, which can be used to reduce stress and at the same time, it involves a student in the process of self-analysis. The methodology has the following stages:

- The emotional self-rating: the analysis of factors that cause the stress state; drafting a list of stress factors and discussing it with the teacher; clarification of what exactly interferes with productive work, blocks the creativity, destroys relationships with the environment and prevents one from succeeding.
- Analysing dreams and formulating the desirable areas of activity at home during the studying; rethinking creative desires and rating the possibilities and their efficiency in quarantine conditions.
- Formation of the concept of overcoming the stress factors: justification of the selected concept; the image development considering one's own desires; analysis of prototypes that have similar functions. Students have the ability to conduct a self-analysis and find out if the chosen methods are suitable for the idea realization and how effective they are for them personally in their struggle with stress.
- Realization of the design idea: choosing design tools and materials for the realization of the creative idea (manual graphics, DIY, digital visualization, etc.).

- Self-reflecting and testing the design product: approbation of the product and analysis of the feelings; discussing it with the teacher and presenting the results of the testing during the online thesis defence.

Creative design methods based on the students' self-choice of the ways for idea realization form are the second important part of the presented model. Their examples can be manual graphics and colourings that are natural ways of dealing with stress (Duong et al., 2018). In this methodology the main accent is on the students' favourite hobbies and their interests.

The methodology of idea creation for design development is based on the activation of design thinking that relates to the associative-metaphorical approach. Finding images that can overcome the problem, which causes stress, allows students to create associations with similar situations in their consciousness. The selected associations make the search for other information easier and increase the capacity for solving creative tasks in the technique of collage (Skliarenko, 2020).

We apply the design thinking in combination with the methods of art therapy that are directed on eliminating the stress factors. It leads to rethinking the teacher's role in the process of student's work. The students' independent choice of their own ways for the visualization of their idea is the symbol of the personality-oriented approach during the self-isolation period. We consider personality-oriented and creative methods as very powerful ones and those that have influenced the atmosphere of studying and development greatly (Wolstenholme et al., 2017). The creation of the design products with anti-stress features proves that personality-oriented methods can increase the effectiveness of the creative methods, which are used in designing, and direct them towards the stabilization of the psychological state of a person.

The integration of the methods of design education, designing and art therapy is based on the system approach which allows to analyze the students' studying activity at home as the integral system that is developing, has got its own structure and rules of functioning.

2. RESULTS OF USING THE AUTHOR'S METHODOLOGY

The result of the implementation of the described model was graduate theses that were written during the quarantine period. Each diploma project is the combination of a design research and a practical realization of the idea. Their synthesis is interdisciplinary in its nature. For the analysis, we chose the following design projects that were successfully presented in June 2020:

- Anti-stress colouring book "Your lucky day!" (Tatiana Demchuk).
- The collection of poems "Talking about familiar things with strangers" (Victoria Telechuk).
- Photobook "Fashion21" (Daria Fox).
- Motivational book "Student's life in phraseology" (Tatiana Zavydovych).

We think that these projects that were based on the proposed methodology allow to explore which methods of dealing with stress were chosen by students and what their choice depends on.

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The first stage was rating their emotions and realizing the reasons that prevent them from starting their thesis and getting positive emotions. The analysis of student's problems allowed us to find the necessary creative solution and at the same time to solve several related problems. First of all, students used art for therapeutic purposes. However, they also used it as a research method (Fraser & al Sayah, 2011). Such a symbiosis allowed to achieve useful results in the pandemic conditions.

The crazy rhythm of students' life recently made them choose projects that they can do quickly without wasting too much time and energy. In this regard, the pandemic brought significant adjustments. It gave them the opportunity to listen to their own creative dreams that they wanted to realize for a long time. As a result, at the second stage students analyzed their own desires, which helped them to find self-cognition through the art.

As the result of the two previous stages, it was possible to form the concept of creating the anti-stress product that gives us positive emotions. Self-analysis of stress effects caused students to choose the exact way of relaxation that they needed in life in order to feel happy, calm and enthusiastic.

The next stage of idea realization is when students choose appropriate ways and design methods, which is characterized by high level of interest and desire to be creative. Thanks to creating the product of design for themselves, students are able to concentrate on solutions, not problems. Therefore, problems that prevented them from learning receded into background and gave space for creativity.

The reflections were provided during the online thesis defence. It allowed to discuss positive and negative aspects of the chosen methodology. The detailed results of students' works reveal their individuality and express the spontaneous choice of ideas and ways of dealing with stress states.

2.1. Your lucky day: anti-stress colouring book made by Tatiana Demchuk

Student Tatiana Demchuk realized her childhood dream and created her own colouring book. She subconsciously chose colouring as an art therapy method, which is an important part of meditation and dealing with stress (Mantzios & Giannou, 2018). The analysis of the problems and their rating, which were made by the student according to the proposed method, revealed that there is a definite link between students' health and their daily routine as well as their ability to stick to it. The work is based on the medical information about processes that happen on the cellular level and the connection between the hormonal and physical activity of the organism (Vashe zdorovia, n.d.). The association between this information and daily routine schedule lies at the basis of the concept of the anti-stress book "Your lucky day!". This colouring book helps to stabilize person's emotional state during the whole day. It consists of 10 paper pockets, which contain thematic colourings (Figure 2). Each pocket is associated with a certain time of the day.

The processes of drawing and colouring involved in the creation of manual graphics are very important, as we can perceive them as relaxation. Cyclic visual images that are based on associations with the "the life of nature" during the day have therapeutic effect. The synthesis of textual and graphical information as well as emotional and semantic contexts (Urquhart & Wodehouse, 2021) strengthen the motivational effect. The book is a

combination of the colouring pages each of which is associated with a certain time of the day and recommendations on what should be done at that particular time according to our biorhythms. It turns out to be a good way to motivate yourself and deal with stress. The diploma project made by Tatiana proves that taking care of our own health is the best motivator every day.



Figure 2. Tatiana Demchuk, The anti-stress colouring book “Your lucky day!”: (a) pages and (b) the general appearance.

2.2. The platform for communication: the collection of poems

“Talking about familiar things with strangers” made by Victoria Telechuk

An important reason for stress among student during the pandemic is the absence of face-to-face communication with their friends and like-minded people. Victoria Telechuk has found the solution to this problem and made the collection of poems “Talking about familiar things with strangers”. We can consider this work as the platform for communication among creative young people who tenderly speak about their feelings by using poetry. The image of train, which is filled with strangers who have a common purpose, wittily reveals the core of the problem. The author of each poem is a passenger that has their own place in life, thoughts and their visual embodiment. That is why for some poems Victoria has chosen manual graphics to express tenderness, while for others she used collage to combine things. The alternation of the technique of collage and the method of adding objects to a photographic image allowed her to express the feelings of each person and deepen the perception of visual images (Figure 3).

The online discussion of the concept behind the collection of poems has transformed into co-creativity. The co-design in a broad sense allowed to combine the creative potential of a designer and people who are not engaged in design but work together on creating the product of design (Sanders & Stappers, 2008). Victoria combined her designing and researching skills in her work. It allowed to develop interesting products of co-creation (Sanders & Stappers, 2008) and to use individual approach for each author (Wolstenholme et al., 2017). As a result, the combination of visual images and poems gives emotional satisfaction not only to the author but also to other people.

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Figure 3. Victoria Telechuk, The collection of poems “Talking about familiar things with strangers”: (a) the cover and (b, c, d) the pages.

2.3. To capture the moment of life: the photo book “Fashion 21” made by Daria Fox

The desire to see the beauty in nature and other people and to capture them in the memory forever makes us take the camera and record the happy moments of our lives. However, things that people see around also contribute to their stress. For the student Daria Fox there is a correlation between the state of a person’s health and polluted environment in a pandemic period. Photo art has become her own way of dealing with stress, as it is a powerful way of visual communication.

In her diploma project, Daria rethinks the photos of the streets covered with litter, which she associates with people’s souls and bodies that are affected by the virus. She compares a person’s soul to ecology or the environment. This photo book shows the abstract forms of clothes that make people look like litter (Figure 4). The student perceives the photos of litter as the symbol of people’s desire to be clean. Unlike the previous work, where dealing with stress happens through communication and combination of verbal and visual components, the photo book is filled with the desire to get to know people and yourself with the help of visual art. The symbiosis of the photo art and the technique of collage has meditative effect on the reader.

Created collages act as the means of visual communication and prove that visual incentives are more effective than textual ones (Zhu, 2020; Kolosnichenko et al., 2021). It is important that for modern student the verbal component is no longer essential for transferring the image essence. There are no textual elements. The reason for this is information overload and stress caused by the constant interaction with the huge amount of information during the day. Therefore, in this particular case, the photo book without text is a way to relax visually.

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Figure 4. Daria Fox, The photo book “Fashion 21”: (a) the general appearance of the book and (b-d) the pages.

2.4. The motivational visual communication: the book “Students’ life in phraseology” made by Tatiana Zavydovych

The problem of motivation has become particularly important during the pandemic. The motivation is one of the most important factors, which, if we use it correctly, can solve many problems (ten Brummelhuis, 2011). Student Tatiana Zavydovych has dedicated her diploma project to this issue. She has designed a series of motivational pictures, the main character of which is “The Cool Pepper”, a student living his life (Figure 5). Their main purpose was to create understandable and effective images based on Ukrainian proverbs that are familiar to all students from childhood. Tatiana considers a motivational image as an object of art based on the process of creating visual metaphors. As a result, the process of working on a diploma project turns into a game, so, it has entertaining and relaxing effect. The student perceives motivation as entertainment that contributes to the relaxation and at the same time motivates to act.



Figure 5. Tatiana Zavydovych, The motivational book “Students’ life in phraseology”: (a) the general appearance of the book and (b) the pages.

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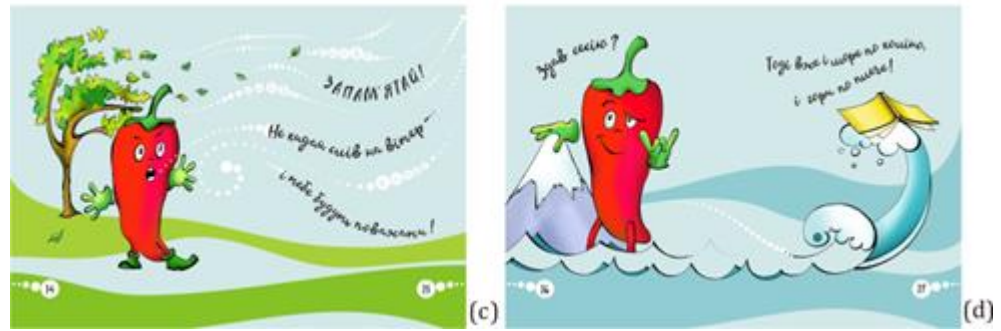


Figure 6. Tatiana Zavydovych, The motivational book “Students’ life in phraseology”: (c, d) the pages.

3. DISCUSSION

The experience of being isolated from the society makes us rethink the educational process, the teacher’s role in it and the students’ attitude to studying. We consider each design work as the way for students to immerse themselves into the interdisciplinary practice that is the tight connection of the psycho-physiological, cultural, social, artistic, aesthetic, entertaining and relaxational aspects. We rethink the ways to organize educational process for designers that is related to the formation of special academic interactions on micro-, meso- and macro levels. It allows to adapt the proposed model of the harmonization of educational process to any stress situations we face today and rethink our ability to manage stress in the process of studying (Figure 6).

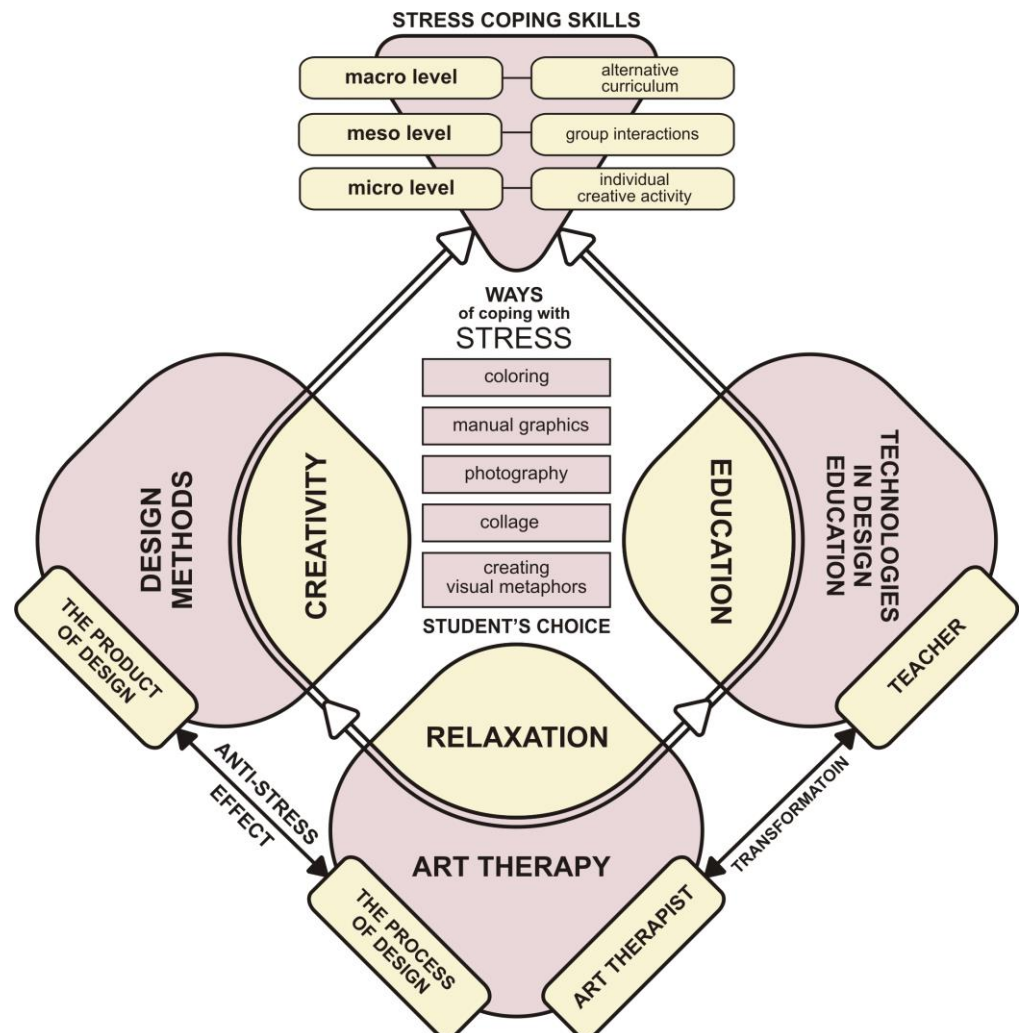


Figure 7. The adaptation of the harmonization model of educational process to the stressful situations.

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3.1. Rethinking stress in the context of the transformation of educational technologies in design

After conducting the research, we have found out that for designers a reasonable level of stress can become a starting point for creative solution making. Students used to have lack of time for creativity in normal studying conditions while in order to cope with stress one needs to do what they like most. Presented model will help students to avoid stressful situations and achieve the relaxation effect during the studying. The transformation of the educational process, which is related to the creation of the three levels of academic interactions, plays a major role in this situation (Figure 6). Micro-, meso- and macro levels give both students and teachers the possibility to choose the most effective way of interaction, that is, in the context of studying, creativity and choosing the ways to deal with stress.

Design practice on the micro level concentrates on the anti-stress effect received from the individual creativity with the help of a teacher. Certainly, the teacher is the first one who can eliminate stress factors. The pandemic period with its limitations and new requirements allows to rethink the teacher's role. In this case, the teacher should be considered as an art therapist that does not play the role of an expert (Tobin, 2001), but gives a student the opportunity to interpret their own work and induces to take responsibility for how they perceive the world. Teachers as art therapists can considerably reduce stress factors just by watching the work process and directing the process of cognition. This system approach allows to build a new "teacher – student" communicative process, in which a teacher makes a student see the drawbacks of their work by themselves and search for the ways to overcome them. This is the teacher who activates student's self-development process. According to our study, students' ability to analyze their stress state and their desires shows that students more often prefer various anti-stress methods to complete the task. Students independently choose the art-therapeutic techniques that include creating and colouring the pictures based on motivational strategy (Figure 2).

In addition, distance learning fundamentally changed not only the teacher's role, but also the students' behaviour. In this context, we focus on students practising their visual communicative skills during group interactions that happen on the meso level. Students practise the techniques for improving the level of communication with peers, which are mostly aimed at the resumption of communication (Figure 3), finding their place in the world and the purpose of life by means of design (Figure 4). This way they subconsciously search for the ways to deal with negative emotions and the unpleasant effects caused by them. The studied products of design are directed towards receiving positive emotions and are important for reducing emotional distress (Yoon et al., 2021).

Today we have a unique opportunity to create something that we really want to, something that we have dreamt about doing for a long time. For example, we can create a colouring book for ourselves or a new catalogue with our thoughts and ideas, which were hidden before. As the interest to the thesis topic is essential in the educational process, it should always be student's choice without any coercions from the teacher's or someone else's side. Their choice must be conscious and based on the analysis of their own emotions, needs and opportunities. It is important not only during the social isolation, but it is also a wise response to the post-pandemic period challenges. Therefore, the new practice of design education on the macro level is aimed at the creation of the alternative educational program

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for designers, which has art-therapeutic effect and helps to express positive emotions by means of art and design.

3.2. The anti-stress products and processes from the point of view of design creativity

All the design products described in the research prove that means of art that have relaxation functions and help to decrease the level of stress are relevant for the students, who are studying in the field of design. Presented products of design cover five design techniques that have the anti-stress effect. They are colouring, manual graphics, photography, collage and creation of visual metaphors. Therefore, we can talk about the anti-stress products (the product that is an instrument and a way of relaxation) and anti-stress processes (the process of activity during which the feeling of relaxation and satisfaction is created). That is why each student's work is considered to be the product of design and the process of overcoming stress at the same time.

In the process of creating anti-stress products and processes, there are three vital components such as the change of colour, shape and content. Only their close interaction gives a powerful relaxation effect.

The change of colour takes place when we change the colour of separate elements for example when we create a colouring book. In this case colour creates appropriate emotional background, has an aesthetic impact and the relaxation effect. In recent years researches dedicated to the colouring books as a tool for dealing with anxiety and inattentiveness among university student are becoming more relevant (Carsley & Heath, 2020; Duong et al., 2018). Dresler & Perera (2019) identified the conscious colouring as devoting time for the self-awareness practice and self-care to promote physical, emotional and social well-being. Therefore, colouring books can be considered a useful instrument in the educational process that can help a person to reach deeper self-understanding.

The creation of work concept is an important stage for raising awareness of the ways of dealing with stress state. For example, student Tatiana Demchuk creates patterns that form interesting compositions of the fractal nature that are similar to mandalas. According to the studies, colouring a mandala is a more effective tool for decreasing anxiety than colouring a blank sheet of paper (Duong et al., 2018). The student subconsciously creates the product of emotional design (Ho & Siu, 2012) with the positive title "Your lucky day!" It focuses on the harmonious integration of body, mind and soul and emotional interaction between a person and their natural environment that counteracts the tendency to splitting and fragmentation (Garai, 1984). We should also pay attention to that fact that colouring as a meditative activity in our free time helps us to plan our day efficiently. It also improves our mood and helps us to express positive emotions (Potash et al., 2020). Those who enjoy colouring describe this hobby as a calming way to relax and go back to when they were children (Blackburn & Chamley, 2016).

The change of shape in the compositions relates to the use of the collage techniques and is based on the associative thinking. Making interesting images by combining different forms and colours allows not only to reveal their meaning but helps to enjoy the process of creation. Visual communication created by means of photography and collage in Daria Fox's work becomes selective and at the same time more informative as it is measured by the

duration of the contemplation and the variety of associations. The creative process helps to awaken the ability to contemplate art and gives the means to do so, which should be used in the educational process (Salom, 2013). Such an approach is useful for not only eliminating stress, but also for reaching a deeper level of self-actualization (Manheim, 1998) and renewing teaching and creative practices (Zimmerman, 2009). We consider images that connect art and science as the examples of the meaningful integration through the use of collage that reveals psychological processes.

If the change of form allows to divide an image into pieces and to make it fragmentary, the change of content allows to consider a phenomenon or an object as the integrity. It is necessary to percept the problem differently and see its other side to motivate students. The vivid examples of the content transformation are creative projects made by Victoria Telechuk and Tatiana Zavydovych. For example, the collection of poems by Victoria Telechuk has become an example of co-creation technique (Wolstenholme et al., 2017) that encourages us to use new creative methods and look at the problems from a different angle. The desire to solve the problem of communicating with peers has turned out to be a useful experience of social media sites used as a way to collect data and create a platform for communication among strangers. This joint effort to create illustrations and poems has produced a positive effect, which is the result of talented people speaking and using different means of art (manual digital graphics and collage) to express stress. We should note that in this case art has created many points of view on love and induced different people to express their feelings. This statement is confirmed by the results of a similar study, which was conducted for undergraduate nursing students (Rieger et al., 2020).

The design work “Talking about familiar things with strangers” made by Victoria Telechuk reveals one more important aspect of the social interaction and influence (Schoffelen et al., 2015) that allows to solve a big number of strategic issues. The problem of interaction with people in the COVID-2019 pandemic conditions when there are many limitations (Moura et al., 2020) can be solved with the help of digitalization. An interesting feature of the quarantine period is an opportunity to make creative chain reactions in our online networks (Potash et al., 2020). Students want to communicate, so they post the process of creation on social media websites and expect feedback. It is an essential stage of the anti-stress process that influences students’ motivation. As the positive result, we achieve chain reaction, which has anti-stress effect and can be long-lasting. Cascini et al. (2020) predicts that the visual informational exchange will last in the post pandemic period as well. We can solve the problem of increasing motivation in another way, for example, with the help of metaphorical thinking. Motivational images about learning made by Tatiana Zavydovych do not require discussions online, but they focus on self-cognition. The transformation of the visual message happens by means of art and provides a passive action that correlates on a subconscious level. The motivational book as a means of visual communication is as concise as possible and is able to instantly convey the idea to the viewer through metaphor. We consider the use of metaphorical images as a systemic tool for a deep understanding of the world around us and the processes of metabolism. After all, the value of design as a creative activity is that it changes people's perceptions and, thus, has the potential to change society by changing its value system (Gero, 2020). This is good for both the educational process and students’ health.

Considering each design project as an integration of both anti-stress product and anti-stress process helps us realize that students can deal with stress by themselves, because design is a

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universal profession that gives them the ability to express their desires and aspirations freely. It produces positive emotions and contains all the necessary tools for their implementation at the same time. Each person can use the student's ideas and create their own creative tools that have anti-stress effect.

4.CONCLUSIONS

The research allows to consider the role of design creativity as not only the way to prevent stress during the COVID-2019 pandemic, but also in other stressful situations. Presented diploma projects prove that despite the big number of negative thoughts, stress can have positive effect even in the conditions of social isolation. Each work represents the possible way of eliminating stress that was chosen by each student individually according to their internal needs.

We showed the harmonization model of educational process for students of creative professions. It is based on the integration of technologies in design education, designing methods and art therapy methods. As a result, the interdisciplinary aspect is coming to the fore. The methodology of the educational process realization is based on students' own feelings and desires and is directed towards the creation of anti-stress product. We consider the process of creating the product of design as a natural way of dealing with stress, the anti-stress process. Only their integration can provide a powerful effect of relaxation. They are systemic means of visual communication between the student and the teacher on the individual, group and network levels of academic interaction.

We affirm that solving described problems by students on the micro level is connected with the individual creative activity. In this research, we describe the techniques of colouring, manual graphics, photography, collage and metaphor visualization, which are effective strategies of self-actualization for creative young people. The means of composition play an essential role in the formation of products and processes with anti-stress features. It is important to pay attention to the fact that we are not talking about the colour and shape as something static. There is an urgent need to consider them in the dynamics that we can observe as a process. Such an approach has a tangible effect of relaxation. To some extent, it brings young people back to when they were children, where there were games and many positive emotions. We are sure that described methods will help students all over the world to study effectively in changeable conditions and variable environment.

The model is also based on the transformation of the teacher's role in the process of education, which has strategic meaning. The teacher does not just give knowledge but also works as an art therapist. Their main task during the pandemic is to direct the students' activity towards design thinking in order to deal with stress factors and increase the awareness of the value of the creative process.

The research proves that students' design projects help them to solve stressful situations on meso level, where there are group interactions as well. According to the results of the study, we can note the improvement of students' level of motivation and the high level of visual communication skills thanks to the creation of groups based on art.

On the macro level, we have a systematic positive effect that is aimed at decreasing the influence of stress factors in the academic environment. That is why we can consider this study as a guide for dealing with stress states for not only students, but also working people

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in general. The conducted researches help to realize that design creativity is not only the people's ability to absorb the set of the abstract principles, but also the ability to navigate through life as harmoniously and consciously as possible. The creativity contains a potential ability for overcoming stress. The accent is on the creativity process, not on what is being created. Such an approach can become an alternative curriculum of the art education that has therapeutic effect. Students' projects show that self-cognition through design creativity is the best way to deal with stress factors. We believe that it is the most important contribution of this article.

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