

FEMALE ACADEMICS WORKING IN THE FIELD OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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Dear readers,

We continue to invite female academics working at the universities in our country in the field of distance education. We publish their opinions about "women's education and distance education" and their contributions to the field of distance education in women's point of view. The guest of this issue is one of the faculty members in Anadolu University Open Education Faculty: Assistant Prof. Dr. Serap OZTURK.

My Education and Journey in Distance Education

I completed my undergraduate education at Ankara Academy of Economic and Commercial Sciences, Social Politics program in the Department of Management Sciences. The profession I dreamed of during my school years was trade unionism. In order to reach this dream, I worked in a trade union magazine at the departments of publishing, archiving and accounting for two years during my studies. In those years, the unions were very strong and had a say in the country administration. It was a male sovereign territory and the number of female trade unionists was too small. Following the change of management in the union, the closure of the unions after the September 12, 1980, military coup was the end of my dream. I was an unemployed college graduate. The school I finished gave me the chance to become a banker, an accountant, a financial advisor, a finance and tax officer, and it was not difficult to get such a job at that time. You could get a job when you take a test and pass it. But I was unemployed because I could not work at the job I wanted. A memory about my unemployed time of my life is a debate that I made with an officer who wanted to write "housewife" in the job section in our marriage certificate while I was getting married. I insisted him on writing 'unemployed' in the job section. The officer then said " I will write student" in my certificate. I've been a student for 35 years. I worked in the insurance department of a bank for about 11 months. Then, I started to do my MA at the Department of Cinema and Television, at Anadolu University, Social Sciences Institute. I had not met with distance education, yet. What is more interesting is that I do not think I wanted to be acquainted with it in those days because the prejudice that "distance education is for the unsuccessful ones" which is still valid for many people today was also the one I had back in those days, not explicitly though.



With a successful result of an exam in 1985, I started to work as an assistant radio programmer in the Radio and Television Education Center where radio and television programs of Anadolu University Open Education Faculty were produced as teaching materials. In an interview to get the job; "I do not think this line of work is suitable for women," said the male academicians who were examining us. This process was a separate training process for me in addition to my graduate study. We have been through a rigorous training process with the contributions of the former employees of the department and producers of TRT Ankara Radio. Meanwhile, I finished my master's thesis in the supervision of Prof. Dr. Korkmaz Alemdar. My master's thesis was about television programs about women. Naturally, this was the first study in the area because in those years, there were only TRT 1 and TRT 2 television channels in Turkey. Televisions had just started their daytime broadcasts in those years. TV programs for women were also indispensable for daytime broadcasts. The purpose of these programs was to educate women on different topics and to protect traditional cultures. The result of the research is that these TV programs were for especially young women and they taught culture, traditions, family, and how to treat the husband. It was also revealed in a new study I did in 2015 that there was not much change in the television programs for women.

We came to 1990s when we were asked to work on the production of television programs as well as on radio programs. I finished my doctoral thesis titled as "Television Reporting and Applications in Turkey: An Investigation of the Public Television and private TV Evening News Bulletins" which I started at Marmara University Institute of Social Sciences in the Department of Radio and Television under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ünsal Oskay in 1996.

In 1997, I started to work as an assistant professor at Anadolu University Open Education Faculty. In Afyon Kocatepe University Afyon Vocational School, we did some research on the young people's radio listening habits and produced sample radio training programs together with the students in the course. I am currently teaching television programs production at Anadolu University Faculty of Communication Sciences.

From 1985 to 2014, I worked as a director and assistant director in the filming of many television programs within the courses of the Open Education Faculty. I worked as a manager in the Radio and Television Training Center between 2008 and 2010. The meetings I attended during this time showed how effective and how important the distance learning opportunities are to people's lives, when people, especially women, who couldn't continue their education due to many obstacles, explain their achievements (such as freedom, work, self-reliance, success) they get. In this way, I could better see how important the field I am studying in.



Between 2005-2011, I worked in the general broadcasting management team of Anadolu University local television TVA, which broadcasts in Eskişehir province. In this period, the annual publication plan was prepared with the understanding of "lifelong education" and a series of television programs that benefited from scientists and scientific data to create awareness of culture, art, health and the environment were produced and broadcasted.

With an agreement with TRT, TRT Okul (TRT school), an educational channel, was founded and began broadcasting in Turkey for the first time in 2011. Anadolu University decided to produce TV programs

for the 12-hour section of the 24-hour broadcast on this channel. These programs were free-of-charge cultural and artistic programs and television programs had to be carried out based on the courses of the Open Education Faculty. Being responsible for the programs to be made based on the courses of the Open Education Faculty, I organized a series of meetings with the authors and editors of the books after the review of the textbooks. The topics of these meetings were making television programs from distance education course materials, visualization in distance education and the importance of image. At the end of this process; we could decide what kind of TV programs are suitable for the courses. Types of television training programs are instructional, informational and motivational programs. The production of training programs started with taking the contents of the courses into account. The main objectives are; to offer different perspectives on the subject of the lesson, to direct them to research and to improve their sense of belonging.

Distance education is possible with a self-learning process that is created by the self and the learning materials presented. For this reason, it is expected that the prepared materials will help learners in this regard. Distance education has been strengthened and become widespread by means of developing technology and diversification of media. While initially only printed resources were used, later one-way communication tools and then increasingly interactive tools were used. Tools to be used have become cheaper and widespread. In addition to undergraduate, graduate degree or associate degree programs; courses, seminars and certificate programs are given for the diversified educational needs of people.

I worked for about 30 years in a team that prepares audiovisual educational materials and organizes production. At the same time; I continue my studies on topics such as television channels for education, visualization, Internet for women and use of television for lifelong learning, what distance education means for the individuals and its possibilities and limitations.



Future Plans

I think that television programs are not effective enough and are not used correctly in educational programs. It is necessary to put forward the power of expression, which is understood from the view, not the presentation of the event or the appearance of the expert who describes the subject. Although television seems to lose its importance gradually; I am a person who believes that it is useful for educational purposes because of the possibilities it has, even if it is not a direct educational tool. It exists in almost every house, and broadcasts made via antennas are not charged, and it is not necessary to be literate to use this vehicle.

According to the results of income and living conditions research, in 2016, the rate of access to mass media was 98.8%. In 2016, the employment rate of those who are 15 and over is 46.3% in Turkey, this rate is just 28% for women. According to the data of the same year, the proportion of those who are 25 or over and completed at least one education level within the total population is 88,8%, this rate is 82,8% for women and illiterate women rate is 8,5%. This situation requires the effective use of these mass media tools in the education of unemployed women with low literacy rates. This use may be for structured or unstructured education. It is possible to use television / image / video in both teaching formats. The only thing that needs to be done here is the content and its design in the media. My dream is to complete the national and international dimensions of the study that we did on the beliefs of people working in the field of distance education at Anadolu University and to work in a distance education



project for women especially in a team that does the organization of content creation for instructional media.

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