



Turkish Studies

International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic
Volume 12/28, p. 503-515

DOI Number: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.12465>
ISSN: 1308-2140, ANKARA-TURKEY

Article Info/Makale Bilgisi

✍ **Referees/Hakemler:** Yrd. Doç. Dr. İsa Yücel İŞGÖR –
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Şükran CALP

This article was checked by iThenticate.

RESEARCH INTO THE VETERAN TEACHERS' VIEWS OVER THE EFFECTS OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS (CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY)

*Fethi KAYALAR**

ABSTRACT

Self-directed Learning, from the beginning of learning process, includes choosing the appropriate learning strategy, learning in accordance with its goal, controlling and regulating the way to reach the goal, realizing its purpose and evaluating the results. The aim of this study is to determine and evaluate the views of veteran teachers serving in Primary Schools and Secondary Schools in some countries over the effects of Self-Directed Learning environments on students' academic achievements in their school lives. We asked two open ended questions to the participant teachers to obtain the data: "What are the benefits of Self-Directed Classroom for your students?", and "What do you do to implement Self-Directed Learning in your classroom?" We used a qualitative research method to evaluate and compare the views of veteran teachers in terms of students' academic achievements in school environment. The research was carried out with the participation of ten veteran teachers working in various Primary Schools and Secondary Schools in some countries over the world. The views of veteran teachers obtained through face-to-face interviews, e-mails and comments to Teachers Blog of Edutopia suggest that their approaches to Self-Directed Learning environments promote the students' interest in learning, thus contributing to their academic achievement, self-regulation skills, self-efficacy, self-esteem, motivation and collaborative learning in classroom environment.

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Introduction

It is important to examine the factors that affect students' achievement and academic performance in terms of the way in which it

* Ass. Prof. Dr. Erzincan University, Faculty of Education, El-mek: fethikayalar@hotmail.com

is considered as a sign of quality of an educational system and leads to changes in educational policy. In recent years, the focus of studies on academic achievement has created a self-regulation concept or self-directed concept in which students play an active role in their learning process. This can be created through a positive and perfect interaction in the class. The presence of a positive and perfect interaction in the class can be mentioned if the classroom environment allows students to express themselves and discuss with their teachers, and if there is a dialogue between students to enrich and deepen learning. The teacher should be able to prepare the conditions of an environment in which every student in the class can easily express himself. This process is possible with establishing an effective self-directed learning environment.

Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning (SDL) is defined as the planning and management of learning by individuals to achieve their personal, social, and vocational development by recognizing specific learning needs and fulfilling them through suitable techniques, resources, and learning opportunities. Self-directed learning refers to the students being motivated, the curiosity and desire to learn, and carrying out the necessary work without any external pressures. The guiding role of the teacher has increased the importance of self-directed learning.

Self-Directed Classroom

Self-directed classroom strategies free up the teacher's time through involving the student in the more time intensive step of monitoring his or her behaviour. Also, these strategies have the benefits such as providing immediate feedback for the students, encouraging student responsibility and self-control, empowering the students, and teaching valuable life skills.

Self-directed classroom strategies include encouraging curiosity, using responsibility, giving students a voice, fostering peer support, considering natural consequences, creating confidence, modelling how to learn, avoiding imposing limitations, and using real-life examples of perseverance. In order to apply self-directed classroom strategies, the teacher should teach students how to set manageable goals and believe in their abilities.

Problem Statement and Purpose

We aimed at studying on Self-directed Learning and Self-directed Classroom to determine the similar and different views of classroom teachers teaching in primary schools and secondary schools in various countries, and to evaluate the feasibility of Self-directed Classroom strategy in the classes and courses. In relevant to the purpose of the study we asked the classroom teachers "What are the benefits of Self-Directed Classroom for your students?", and "What do you do to implement Self-Directed Learning in your classroom?"

Methods and Research Design

We used a qualitative research method to determine and evaluate classroom teachers' views and intention in Self-directed Learning and Self-directed Classroom. We chose to get the necessary data through

Turkish Studies

face-to-face interviews and written expressions by e-mails and blogs, as this kind of methodological approach enables researchers to interpret and make judgement about immeasurable data. The study was based on the views of Primary School teachers in various countries. For this reason we relied on case study design for the purpose of our enquiry.

Participants

The participants in our study were ten veteran classroom teachers working in some Primary and Secondary Schools in Erzincan City, Turkey and in some countries such as Germany, France, Philippines, Nigeria, Canada and Brazil. We preferred to get the data from veteran teachers, as they are experienced and aware of almost all teaching strategies in classroom environment. In our study, the youngest participant is male, with ten years of teaching experience, while the eldest is female, with twenty-nine years of teaching experience. We obtained the data from 10 Primary and Secondary School teachers who admitted to be involved in the interview for the research.

Research Instrument

In the study, the tools with structured interview form for the participants through e-mail and blog, and semi structured interview form for the participants through face-to-face interview was used to obtain necessary data from Primary and Secondary School teachers. We asked two open ended questions to the participants. The questions were produced in accordance with the basic standards and features of Self-directed Learning strategy and the approach of Self-directed Classroom.

Findings

The oral-reply expressions and statements given by Primary and Secondary School teachers working in Erzincan city to the questions in the semi-structured interview form were typed and arranged, the e-mails from the teachers in the other countries were turned into text, and the comments to the Edutopia Blog page were summarized and extracted into pure data.

From the statements of the participant teacher, the socially challenged student can be difficult to engage and may be identified as unmotivated. For this reason, the teachers should help these students motivate themselves so that they can establish good relationship, achieve goals and get academic success in the classroom. Effective and efficient in their profession, the veteran teachers are supposed to implement certain strategies to help students motivate themselves in classroom environment. As proper behaviours for motivation, the teachers are expected to show enthusiasm, establish a good relationship with students and show the students they care about them.

From the statements of another participant teacher, we can argue that the courses designed using technologies in the classroom are undoubtedly the courses in which the best learning are provided for the students. The technology in education is even more important in young age groups, which allows us to see the fact that class teachers integrate with technology, an undeniable reality. The contributions of computers and digital technologies to visualization further increase the importance

Turkish Studies

of visual elements in education. Some students are known to learn more easily through visual representations. Even learners who learn more easily through verbal communication need visual support to learn some concepts. Through visual elements, the learners keep their attention alive, likewise; the visual elements attract the attention of learners, provide emotional reactions, embody the concepts, combine the concepts that are difficult to understand, facilitate the retrieval of information through forms, shapes and graphs.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Individuals must have some critical cognitive, emotional and psychomotor traits in order to be able to provide self-directed learnings. For the teachers to acquire self-directed learning skills is a necessary process. Therefore, getting ready for self-directed learning and developing cognitive thinking strategies depend on the educational experiences of the teachers in their first years in teaching profession. The novice teachers who are in their first years of teaching should have the skills to implement self-directed learning in classroom environment so that the students get academic achievements. Teachers should be aware of how they can apply instructional styles to improve their students' learning levels. For this reason, teachers should adopt appropriate roles in their teaching styles, show appropriate attitudes and behaviours to the styles, and be able to sustain the practices that will increase student success in a constant teaching effort. The pre-service teachers and novice teachers' acquisition of planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation skills in their first years will help them become more independent teachers as well as being a model for their students in this regard. In this sense, the training process should be structured with activities that will increase the readiness of self-directed learners and acquire self-directed learning skills.

Key words: Self-directed Learning, Self-directed Classroom, Veteran Teacher, Classroom Management, Academic Achievement

ÖZ-YÖNELİMLİ ÖĞRENME ORTAMININ ÖĞRENCİLERİN AKADEMİK BAŞARILARINA ETKİLERİ ÜZERİNE DENEYİMLİ ÖĞRETMENLERİN GÖRÜŞLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ (KÜLTÜRLERARASI BİR ÇALIŞMA)

ÖZET

Öğrenme sürecinin başlangıcından itibaren, Öz-yönelimli Öğrenme, uygun öğrenme stratejisini seçmeyi, hedefine uygun olarak öğrenmeyi, hedefe ulaşmanın yolunu denetlemeyi ve düzenlemeyi, amacını gerçekleştirmeyi ve sonuçları değerlendirmeyi içermektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, bazı ülkelerde İlköğretim ve Ortaöğretim Okullarında görev yapmakta olan deneyimli öğretmenlerin Öz-yönelimli Öğrenme ortamlarının öğrencilerin okul hayatındaki başarılarına etkisi konusundaki görüşlerini belirlemek ve değerlendirmektir. Verileri elde etmek için katılımcı öğretmenlere iki açık uçlu soru sorulmuştur: "Öz-yönelimli sınıfların öğrencilerinize faydaları nelerdir?, ve " Sınıfınızda Öz-

Turkish Studies

International Periodical for the Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic
Volume 12/28

yönelimli Öğrenmeyi uygulamak için neler yapıyorsunuz?". Okul ortamında öğrencilerin akademik başarıları açısından deneyimli öğretmenlerin görüşlerini değerlendirmek ve karşılaştırmak için çalışmamızda nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma, dünyanın çeşitli ülkelerinde çeşitli İlkokullarda ve Ortaokullarda çalışan on deneyimli öğretmenin katılımıyla yürütülmüştür. Yüz yüze görüşmeler, yazar tarafından oluşturulan Edutopia Öğretmenler Bloguna gelen yanıtlar ve e-postalar yoluyla deneyimli öğretmenlerden elde edilen görüşler, Öz-yönelimli Öğrenme yaklaşımlarının öğrencilerin öğrenmeye olan ilgisini artırdığını ve böylece sınıf ortamında öz-düzenleyici becerileri, öz-yeterlik, benlik saygısı, motivasyon ve işbirlikli öğrenme becerilerini de artırarak akademik başarılarına katkıda bulunduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öz-yönelimli öğrenme, Öz-yönelimli sınıf, Deneyimli öğretmen, Sınıf yönetimi, Akademik başarı

1. INTRODUCTION

It is important to examine the factors that affect students' achievement and academic performance in terms of the way in which it is considered as a sign of quality of an educational system and leads to changes in educational policy. In recent years, the focus of studies on academic achievement has created a self-regulation concept or self-directed concept in which students play an active role in their learning process. This can be created through a positive and perfect interaction in the class. The presence of a positive and perfect interaction in the class can be mentioned if the classroom environment allows students to express themselves and discuss with their teachers, and if there is a dialogue between students to enrich and deepen learning. The teacher should be able to prepare the conditions of an environment in which every student in the class can easily express himself. This process is possible with establishing an effective self-directed learning environment. For self-directed learning, the learner needs to determine his or her learning needs, goals and strategies, to monitor the learning process, to make decisions about how to evaluate his or her success, to manage and sustain motivation, and to learn responsibility. In order for learners to perform these processes, they need the help and guidance of the teacher. In the teaching environment, the teacher should help learners to be aware of their own thoughts, to behave strategically and to direct their motivation to the right goals. Certainly, teachers need to have these skills in order to contribute to their students' self-directed learning.

1.1. Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed learning (SDL) is defined as the planning and management of learning by individuals to achieve their personal, social, and vocational development by recognizing specific learning needs and fulfilling them through suitable techniques, resources, and learning opportunities. Self-directed learning refers to the students being motivated, the curiosity and desire to learn, and carrying out the necessary work without any external pressures. The guiding role of the teacher has increased the importance of self-directed learning.

SDL is argued to be any increase in knowledge, skill, accomplishment, or personal development that an individual selects and brings about by his or her own efforts using any method in any circumstances at any time (Gibbons, 2002)

The fact that students are self-directed individuals requires their natural curiosity be stimulated. The benefits of being curious and inquisitive should be explained very well to the students

that the learning is a lifelong human activity. They can be given simple and small tasks that they can do in everyday life. Activities are held to keep their exploration feelings and creativity alive. With their efforts being rewarded, from time to time they are given provocative questions of their curiosity.

1.2 Self-Directed Classroom

Self-directed learning is closely related to adult education and lifelong learning, which suggests that self-directed learning skills can be used in all areas of life. Individuals can determine in which occupational fields they are deficient through their self-governance skills, can constantly learn to make up for their deficiencies, and improve their performance by improving themselves (Şahin, 2010). This suggests that teachers also need to have self-directed learning skills. It is argued that there is a significant relationship between teachers' self-directed learning skills and their teaching performance (Roberts and Henson ,2000). For successful classroom management, the teachers should apply teaching strategy in accordance with self-directed learning, and create a self-directed classroom to allow their students to have effective and efficient learning.

Self-directed classroom strategies free up the teacher's time through involving the student in the more time intensive step of monitoring his or her behaviour. Also, these strategies have the benefits such as providing immediate feedback for the students, encouraging student responsibility and self-control, empowering the students, and teaching valuable life skills.

Self-directed classroom strategies include encouraging curiosity, using responsibility, giving students a voice, fostering peer support, considering natural consequences, creating confidence, modelling how to learn, avoiding imposing limitations, and using real-life examples of perseverance. In order to apply self-directed classroom strategies, the teacher should teach students how to set manageable goals and believe in their abilities. For the students to be successful in school environment, veteran teachers generally accept their messing, give long term home-works as well as short term ones, identify obstacles and negative beliefs. Self-directed learning has a lot of common points with student-directed learning. As shown in table 1, in student directed learning the students are taught to set their own goals, to make plans and to initiate action. The teacher negotiates students with self-directed activities.

Table 1: *The difference between Teacher-directed Learning (TDL) and Student directed Learning (SDL)*

In teacher-directed learning (TDL)	In student-directed learning (SDL)
The teacher; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decides the course goals and the content to be studied • presents course content to students in lessons • sets exercises and assignments for study • monitors completion and assesses accuracy of student work • tests and grades student performance 	The teacher; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaches students to set their own goals and eventually choose what they will study • teaches students the skills and processes involved in setting goals, making plans, and initiating action • negotiates student proposals for learning and acting • guides students through self-directed challenge activities • reviews students' assessment of their work

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In literature, considered as the pioneer of self-directed learning, Knowles (1975) defined self-directed learning as being able to attempt to learn, identifying the learning needs with or without

others' help, determining the sources for learning, choosing and implementing the right learning strategy for the knowledge and evaluating the learning outcomes.

Skager (1984), one of the first authors who studied self-direction in learning, suggested that the skills and competencies of self-direction in learning should be developed in early ages, and different learning environments and educational structures of formal and informal character should also be provided for learners. The home provides an informal learning environment, whereas the school provides more formal one, encourages self-direction in learners, and has an impact on the learning skills.

Gibbons (2002) defines Self-directed learning as any progress in knowledge, skill, achievement, or personal development that an individual selects and brings about by his or her own efforts using any method in any circumstances at any time.

Rowe (2004) argued that teachers' professional competencies and performances is an important factor in improving their readiness levels for self-directed learning. Roberts and Henson (2000) found that teachers had a significant relationship between self-directed learning skills and teaching performance, the time spent developing concepts of course in classroom and risk taking rates.

Tekkol and Demirel (2016) pointed out in their study that self-directed learning and classroom is a concept used especially in adult education and among the reasons, it includes learning outside the school as well as the learning of the individuals in accordance with their own goals.

According to Savin-Baden and Major (2004), self-directed learners are self-motivated individuals who set clear goals, follow a plan, follow their duties and force their normal boundaries to reach high standards.

Gibbons (2002) claims in his book that once the teachers have begun to move from Teacher-Directed Learning to Self-Directed Learning, they are likely to undertake as many new skills as their students will. In this strategy, teachers can encourage students to think independently about course issues, to study with course materials by themselves, to plan their own approaches to achieving the learning goal, or to design their own learning plans.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

3.1 Problem Statement and Purpose

We aimed at studying on Self-directed Learning and Self-directed Classroom to determine the similar and different views of classroom teachers teaching in primary schools and secondary schools in various countries, and to evaluate the feasibility of Self-directed Classroom strategy in the classes and courses. In relevant to the purpose of the study we asked the classroom teachers "What are the benefits of Self-Directed Classroom for your students?", and "What do you do to implement Self-Directed Learning in your classroom?"

3.2. Methods and Research Design

We used a qualitative research method to determine and evaluate classroom teachers' views and intention in Self-directed Learning and Self-directed Classroom. The most commonly used data collection methods in qualitative research are interview and observation, so it hardly appears to be possible to work with a large sample group in terms of time and cost. Also, the large sample size will cause difficulties in the analysis of large-scale data obtained through observation and interview. For this reason, in qualitative research it is tried to obtain a holistic picture which will represent all

possible diversity, richness, difference and irregularity as far as possible, without concern for generalization.

We chose to get the necessary data through face-to-face interviews and written expressions by e-mails and blogs, as this kind of methodological approach enables researchers to interpret and make judgement about immeasurable data. The study was based on the views of Primary School teachers in various countries. For this reason we relied on case study design for the purpose of our enquiry.

3.3. Participants

The participants in our study were ten veteran classroom teachers working in some Primary and Secondary Schools in Erzincan City, Turkey and in some countries such as Germany, France, Philippines, Nigeria, Canada and Brazil. We preferred to get the data from veteran teachers, as they are experienced and aware of almost all teaching strategies in classroom environment. In our study, the youngest participant is male, with ten years of teaching experience, while the eldest is female, with twenty-nine years of teaching experience. We obtained the data from 10 Primary and Secondary School teachers who admitted to be involved in the interview for the research. The participants were asked whether they were contented to answer to the questions, and then we did the interview with them and asked the questions through e-mail. The names of the teachers are coded with letters and numbers.

Table 1: *Statistical data as to Gender, Age, School and Years of Experience*

GENDER		AGE		SCHOOL		EXPERIENCE	
Male	4	31-35 years	3	Primary school	5	10 -20 years	6
Female	6	36-40 years	4	Secondary school	5	21 years and over	4
		Over 40 years	3				
TOTAL	10	TOTAL	10	TOTAL	10	TOTAL	10

3.4. Research Instrument

In the study, the tools with structured interview form for the participants through e-mail and blog, and semi structured interview form for the participants through face-to-face interview was used to obtain necessary data from Primary and Secondary School teachers. We asked two open ended questions to the participants. The questions were produced in accordance with the basic standards and features of Self-directed Learning strategy and the approach of Self-directed Classroom. The questions of the interview were formed by the final judgements of three experts at the departments of Educational Sciences and Classroom Teaching in the Faculty of Education, Erzincan University.

3.5. Data analysis

The data processed in the study were obtained through one by one and face to face interviews with the participants in Erzincan city, by e-mail corresponding with some teachers from various countries, and the Comment Box of Edutopia Blogs Page. The replies and comments to the interview questions were abstracted and made into pure data. The data were then transferred and digitalized into computer in order to form digital data.

4. FINDINGS

The oral-reply expressions and statements given by Primary and Secondary School teachers working in Erzincan city to the questions in the semi-structured interview form were typed and arranged, the e-mails from the teachers in the other countries were turned into text, and the comments

to the Edutopia Blog page were summarized and extracted into pure data. The final statements are given below.

The questions asked to the teachers are “What are the benefits of Self-Directed Classroom for your students?”, and “What do you do to implement Self-Directed Learning in your classroom?” The sample reply-statements for the questions are given as followings.

(J.J; Female; Primary School Teacher for 15 years): “...*With Self-directed learning strategy that I have been applying in my classrooms for years, I have managed to promote my students' self-confidence, initiative as well as perseverance and life satisfaction in natural way. Most of my students who are not self-motivated might not find this kind of learning appealing; so I do my best to make them self-motivated in learning environment, and try to tailor my class to their learning capacities. I often consult the students' parents to promote their interest in learning process efficiently*”

It is understood that when the characteristics of self-directed students are examined, they have the characteristics of managing their own learning environments, keeping their motivations high, setting targets for their own learning and organizing their cognition, motivations and behaviours in line with these goals.

From the statements of the participant teacher, the socially challenged student can be difficult to engage and may be identified as unmotivated. For this reason, the teachers should help these students motivate themselves so that they can establish good relationship, achieve goals and get academic success in the classroom (Kayalar, 2016-a). Effective and efficient in their profession, the veteran teachers are supposed to implement certain strategies to help students motivate themselves in classroom environment. As proper behaviours for motivation, the teachers are expected to show enthusiasm, establish a good relationship with students and show the students they care about them.

(S. P., Female, English Teacher at Secondary School for 21 years): “..... *auditory and visual learning is inevitably crucial for language learning. Audiobooks, recorded lectures or presentations, or any other recording of audio information are very important for self-directed auditory learning. I use them in my classes as the students find themselves ready for learning language through this teaching equipment. Some students in my classroom can learn better with audiobooks, while the others achieve language learning target through presentations. The language classroom equipped with visual and auditory technological devices such as iPads, MP4 players, and mobile devices suitable for the pleasures of the students motivate them much more than other things. The classroom self-directed to their needs, interests and learning styles would be a better place for their academic success*”

From these statements, we can argue that the courses designed using technology in the classroom are undoubtedly the courses in which the best learning are provided for the students. The technology in education is even more important in young age groups, which allows us to see the fact that class teachers integrate with technology, an undeniable reality.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation plays a key role in learner achievement in all levels of education of the students. In this regard, teachers are in a very important position to provide the students with the motivation they need and to encourage them. It should not be forgotten that since each student is motivated in different ways, providing new things for them will not be so easy. On the other hand, it is a task that requires a lot of time and energy for the teacher to teach students to be enthusiastic about habituating, hard-working, and competing to learn new things. To access to this target, the technology should be effectively integrated to classroom environment. The most important

factor of effective integration of technology is the teachers' skill and ability to shape educational technology activities to fulfil students' needs (Kayalar, 2016-b).

(A. T., Male, Science Teacher at Secondary School for 20 years): “...*My course requires audio-visual learning style. Almost all my students find the class interesting and amusing if I tail the lesson with projection device, computer, DVD player or large charts on the wall. I allow them to use their mobile devices such as, smartphone, laptop, notebook and iPad. I try to enrich my courses with visiting museums, zoos, and arboretums, having nature trips to forest, farms. These activities promote motivating my students thus having academic achievement...*”

Taking into consideration the opinion expressed by the participant teacher, it is understood that the teaching styles that teachers prefer in their courses and classes differ according to learning environments and subjects. Decisions made by teachers in the process of learning and teaching reveal both their beliefs about their own capacity and their judgments about how best to organize appropriate learning environments. Teachers should be aware of how they can apply instructional styles to improve their students' learning levels. For this reason, teachers should adopt appropriate roles in their teaching styles, show appropriate attitudes and behaviours to the styles, and be able to sustain the practices that will increase student success in a constant teaching effort. Teachers' teaching style preferences may also depend on self-management learning outcomes. The teachers should benefit from the self-management learning process. For this reason, it is important to establish the relationship between teachers' readiness levels of self-management learning and teaching style preferences (Güler Arı, T., 2016). This is very important to create well-balanced self-directed classrooms.

(T. A., Male, Teacher of Social Sciences for 15 years): “... *Learners of Social Sciences should be good at visual learning, as all the materials for social sciences that I have used in my classes are designed in accordance with visual learning skills. I observe my students learn best by reading and looking at graphic materials. So I try to make the students read books, articles, blogs, graphs, charts. I effort to turn the classroom environment into self-directed classroom so that my students can benefit at maximum level. Moreover, they can learn what they need at anywhere, as it is quite easy to access online materials or printed materials everywhere. My classrooms are equipped with computers and my school has implemented update educational technology, thus the students can read online on the computers in the classrooms and can use their iPads and mobile devices on their desk during the course....*”

The studies on learning show that most of the learning takes place through visual materials and presentations (Demircan, 2005; Carey, 2006; Arslan and Adem, 2010; Otrar et al. 2012;) . The contributions of computers and digital technologies to visualization further increase the importance of visual elements in education. Some students are known to learn more easily through visual representations. Even learners who learn more easily through verbal communication need visual support to learn some concepts. Through visual elements, the learners keep their attention alive, likewise; the visual elements attract the attention of learners, provide emotional reactions, embody the concepts, combine the concepts that are difficult to understand, facilitate the retrieval of information through forms, shapes and graphs. Some students may be given a chance to understand certain potential points of missing items through visual elements and materials later. The roles of learning visual materials include increasing motivation by attracting attention, providing emotional reactions, concreting concepts, simplifying difficult-to-understand concepts, facilitating the understanding of knowledge through forms, saving time, providing consistent content at different times, helping meet the individual needs of the students, and being used again and again.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Self-directed learning strategy has an important place in the learning-teaching process (Wolters, 2011; Zimmerman, 2008). In its most general sense, self-directed learning is explained as an individual's own learning process. The concepts of self-directed learning, self-planning learning, self-teaching, self-learning, autonomous learning and independent study are sometimes used interchangeably. These terms, when examined in detailed, prove different from each other.

Individuals must have some critical cognitive, emotional and psychomotor traits in order to be able to provide self-directed learnings. Factors such as characteristics of the individual, attitudes towards learning, cognitive and emotional competence, level of education, personal characteristics, learning style, life satisfaction, health status, self-management, critical thinking and awareness, motivation, general self-efficacy, play an important role in acquiring learning skills. One of these features is meta-cognitive thinking. It is expected that in the age of information and technology, individuals need to be able to get the information they need as self-directed from the right sources, because learning dimensions develop and diverse and source of the information becomes different, which makes it easier for individuals to acquire knowledge but makes it harder to reach the right information. In this sense, it is considered necessary for individuals to acquire self-directed learning skills and to acquire some cognitive and affective traits with the requirements of this skill, to achieve correct knowledge. Especially, the teachers' development of self-directed learning skills in the educational process seems to be crucial both to better manage their own learning processes and to teach these skills to their students.

For the teachers to acquire self-directed learning skills is a necessary process. Therefore, getting ready for self-directed learning and developing cognitive thinking strategies depend on the educational experiences of the teachers in their first years in teaching profession. The novice teachers who are in their first years of teaching should have the skills to implement self-directed learning in classroom environment so that the students get academic achievements. In addition, having metacognitive awareness is crucial in terms of both better managing their own cognitive structures and teaching these awareness to their students. Teachers should be aware of how they can apply instructional styles to improve their students' learning levels (Şahin, 2015). For this reason, teachers should adopt appropriate roles in their teaching styles, show appropriate attitudes and behaviours to the styles, and be able to sustain the practices that will increase student success in a constant teaching effort (Şahin and Arcagök, 2010)

In order to use strategies that improve their cognitive awareness skills in the classroom, the teachers need to know and be aware of using them in the classroom. As Davis and Davis (2001) point out, learning is an ongoing process and is heavily self-directed. For this reason, the student should choose, observe and evaluate his / her subject, and the depth of knowledge. Throughout their academic career, many learners seem to give priority to "ignorance", while sorting out the problems they encounter. From this perspective, the most distinctive features of good teaching include how to learn, how to remember and how to effectively control and direct their own learning (Çakıroğlu, 2007). In this sense, the students should be guided and actively acted by the teachers in the process of training and developing the mentioned skills and strategies in life. For this, it is vital that novice teachers should have meta- cognitive awareness in the process of training and they should be provided with the consciousness of self-directed learning. Doğanay and Demir (2011) point out that it is important to give metacognitive awareness strategies to pre-service teachers in teacher education. The pre-service teachers and novice teachers' acquisition of planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation skills in their first years will help them become more independent teachers as well as being a model for their students in this regard. In this sense, the training process should be structured

with activities that will increase the readiness of self-directed learners and acquire self-directed learning skills.

Acknowledgement

Short version of the paper was presented at IAC-TLEI 2017 Conference in Budapest. It has not been published in any journal.

REFERENCES

- Arslan, M. & Adem, E. (2010). Effective usage of audio-visual materials in teaching Turkish to foreigners. *Dil Dergisi* • Sayı: 147 • Ocak-Şubat-Mart 2010
- Carey, J. (2006). *The visual in learning and creativity: a review of the literature*, A report for Creative Partnerships. Arts Council, England, 2006
- Demircan, Ö. (2005). Demircan, Ömer (2005). *Yabancı Dil Öğretim Yöntemleri İstanbul: Der Yayınları 2005*
- Gibbons M. (2002). *Challenging Adolescent Students to Excel. The Self-Directed Learning Handbook*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc, San Fransisco
- Güler Arı, T. (2016). Study into the views of the students learning Turkish as a foreign language over collaborative learning in language courses. *Education Research Journal Vol. 6(10): 188 – 192, October 2016*
- Kayalar, F. (2016-a). Teachers' Views over the Workout Strategies for Helping Students Motivate Themselves in the Classroom. *Universal Journal of Educational Research 4(4): 868-877, 2016. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2016.040424*
- Kayalar, F. (2016-b). Cross-cultural Comparison of Teachers' Views upon Integration and Use of Technology in Classroom. *TOJET: The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – April 2016, volume 15 issue 2*
- Knowles, M. (1975). *Self-directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers*. Follett; Chicago.
- Otrar, M., Çağırğan Gülten, D. & Özkan, E. (2012). İlköğretim öğrencilerine yönelik öğrenme stilleri ölçeği geliştirilmesi (aös-i). *Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi/Journal of Research in Education and Teaching*. Mayıs, Haziran, Temmuz 2012 Cilt 1 Sayı 2
- Roberts, J. K. & Henson, R. K. (2000). *Self-efficacy teaching and knowledge instrument for science teachers (SETAK1ST): A proposal for a new efficacy instrument*. Bowling Green, KY.
- Rowe, K. J. (2004). *The importance of teaching: ensuring better schooling by building teacher capacities that maximize the quality of teaching and learning provision – implications of findings from the international and Australian evidence-based research*. Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), 8-2004.
- Savin-Baden, M. & Major, C. H. (2004). *Foundations of problem based learning*. Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd.
- Skager, R. (1985). *Organizing Schools to Encourage Self-direction in Learners*. Unesco Institute For Education, Hamburg, Pergamon Press, 1985.
- Şahin, E. (2010). İlköğretim sınıf öğretmenlerinin öğretim stili tercihlerinin, cinsiyetlerinin, mesleki kıdemlerinin, özyeterlik algılarının ve özyönetimli öğrenmeye hazırbulunuşluk düzeylerinin

-
- mesleki yeterlikleri üzerindeki etkisi. Yayınlanmamış doktora tezi. İstanbul: Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
- Şahin, E. (2015). Meslek lisesi öğretmenlerinin özyönetimli öğrenmeye hazırbulunuşluk düzeylerinin ve öğretim stili tercihlerinin incelenmesi (Bursa ili örneği). *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 15 (2), 297-316.
- Şahin Ç. & Arcagök S. (2010). Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının kamu personeli seçme sınavına (KPSS) ilişkin algıları. IX. Ulusal Sınıf Öğretmenliği Eğitimi Sempozyumu (624–629). Elazığ: Fırat Üniversitesi.
- Tekkol, İ. A. & Demirel, M. (2016). Öğretmen Adaylarının Öz-Yönetimli Öğrenme Becerilerine İlişkin Görüşlerinin İncelenmesi *Uluslararası Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Çalışmaları Dergisi* / 2016 Cilt: 6, Sayı: 12
- Wolters, C. A. (2011). Regulation of motivation: Contextual and social aspects. *Teachers College Record*, 113(2), 265–283.
- Zimmerman, B. (2008). Investigating self-regulation and motivation: Historical background, methodological developments, and future prospects. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(1), 166–183.