

Full Length Research Paper

The opinions of prospective teachers on peer assessment

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This research was conducted to determine the opinions of prospective teachers on peer assessment. The study was carried out at a university in the West Black sea with forty-one prospective Turkish teachers. The prospective teachers presented a lesson on a subject they had decided on formerly, and were evaluated by their peers. The groups consisted of five members, and all the members of the class participated in peer assessment alternately. After the completion of peer assessment study, the opinions of prospective teachers were obtained by asking them to answer open-ended questions in written form. For the data obtained, content analysis was carried out. The findings of the study has indicated that peer evaluation is beneficial in providing affective and academic development, use of metacognitive strategies, and in the points of giving feedback. It has been determined that personal characteristics, personal relations, not being competent at peer assessment and the assessment forms' being overloaded with too many criteria have resulted in a couple of problems at application. Prospective teachers have made suggestions considering the role of the teacher, the features of the assessment group, the means of assessment and the assessment form and they have not welcomed the idea of using the peer assessment points as final grades. Within the frame of the findings of the study, the suggestions have been developed on how to construct peer assessment practices.

Key words: Peer assessment, student opinions, prospective Turkish teachers, education of teachers.

INTRODUCTION

New curricula have been implemented for secondary schools since 2004 in Turkey. The old curricula were the teacher centered one. Teachers were the only decision maker, information provider and the authority in the classroom, and students were the passive receiver of the information. Additionally, the old curricula had no emphasis on alternative assessment methods. Renewed curricula aim to move from a teacher-centered model to a

student-centered one, to monitor student progress through formative assessment and to move away from traditional assessment, and introduce authentic assessment. Authentic assessment is related not only to the outcome but also the process. Therefore, teachers move away from the traditional understanding of assessment and evaluation in teaching and use formative assessment means and methods. Project and

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performance assignments, product files, self and peer assessment have been used as formative assessment means and methods.

Student-centered educational approach brings on the agenda of the active participation of the student in assessment and evaluation process. Assessment and evaluation in student-centered approach is not the process of the evaluation of learning but the evaluation process for learning. Peer assessment has a significant role in increasing the level of learning (Cartney, 2010). Peer assessment is the evaluation of a peer product or performance depending on certain criteria using the means of feedback, giving points or both (Falchikov, 2007). The students, who do peer assessment, both evaluate their peer objectively and internalize their field knowledge as they give feedback within the limits of the criteria of the field. Due to this, peer assessment is seen as “a way to increase learning” (Keppell and Carless, 2006). According to Race (1998) and Zariski (1996), the benefits of peer assessment are as follows (cited in Vickerman, 2009):

1. Giving a sense of autonomy and ownership of the assessment process and improving motivation.
2. Encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning and development.
3. Treating assessment as part of learning so that mistakes are seen as opportunities rather than failures.
4. Practicing the transferable skills needed for life-long learning particularly related to evaluation skills.
5. Using external evaluation to provide a model for internal self-assessment of a student’s own learning (metacognition).
6. Encouraging deep rather than surface learning.

It has been noted that the peer assessment studies done in the field of teacher training has a significant role in training teachers in a more qualified way, improving their sufficiency in their teaching profession and in acquiring the skills of peer assessment (Al-Barakat and Al-Hassan, 2009; Bay, 2011; Biri, 2014; Koç, 2011; Vickerman, 2009; Zariski, 1996). Sluijmsmans et al. (2004) see peer assessment as the main principal in professional development. The contribution of peer assessment in learning is not limited to field knowledge and development of assessment skills. The studies done on peer assessment have indicated that it;

1. Develops the skills of criticism (Sluijmsmans, 2002; Topping, 1996; Topping et al., 2000; Weaver, 1985).
2. Develops the skill of critical thinking (Biri, 2014).
3. Improves self-confidence and motivation for lessons (Biri, 2014).
4. Improves self-evaluation (Topping, 2009).
5. Increases awareness of strengths and weaknesses (Al-Barakat and Al-Hassan, 2009; Ashenafi, 2015; Bay,

2011; Koç, 2011).

6. Is effective in developing writing skills (Vickerman, 2009).

7. Improves lifelong learning and metacognitive skills, (Zariski, 1996).

Apart from the positive sides of peer assessment, there have been negative sides that are handled with doubts. The worries considering the studies of peer assessment as a result of scanning the sources are as follows:

1. It could affect interpersonal relations and academic self-confidence negatively (Zariski, 1996).
2. The relations built upon friendship could prevent a valid evaluation (Al-Barakat and Al-Hassan, 2009; Bay, 2011; Carvalho, 2013; Cheng and Warren, 2005; Dancer, 1992; Volante and Beckett, 2011).
3. The possibility of students’ making mistakes in evaluation as they are inexperienced (Al-Barakat and Al-Hassan, 2009; Bay, 2011; Sluijmsmans, 2002).
4. Students’ finding peer assessment stressful as a result of feeling worried about being unfair and rude (Cartney, 2010; Pope, 2005).

In addition to these points, another argument on peer assessment is to what extent peer assessment is as reliable as teacher evaluation. However, there are studies which show that peer assessment is as reliable as teachers’ evaluation (Bay, 2011; Boud, 1995; Freeman, 1995; Falchikov and Goldfinch, 2000; Liu et al., 2002; Pope, 2005; Şahin, 2008; Topping, 1998; Uysal, 2008). Bulman (1998) states that carefully arranged, applied and observed peer assessment is as good as the ones carried out by teachers. To reach the benefits above and not to meet unwanted situations, forming the evaluation criteria with the students by discussing the points (Al-Barakat and Al-Hassan, 2009) and making preliminary studies to provide a reassuring environment before practices (Spiller, 2012) are necessary. Researches indicate that the criteria which are determined and well-understood by students provide high agreement between peers and teachers (Ashenafi, 2015). Educating students on peer assessment increases the quality of peer feedback and the study carried out (Min, 2006; Topping et al., 2000). To avoid errors that could be caused by friendship while giving points, the assessors could be kept secret, more than one student could take part in the evaluation process and using peer, self and teacher evaluation together are suggested (Ashenafi, 2015; Sluijmsmans et al., 1998; Topping et al., 2000). For the efficiency of peer feedback, a teacher is guiding students in every stage of peer assessment, especially on the first couple of days comparing teacher and peer assessment for the quality of peer feedback, if there is a remarkable difference between the assessment of different students, enabling students to discuss the points of assessment

and reach a conclusion and also the assessment of the teacher's evaluation of peer assessment and providing students with feedback are of great importance (Topping, 2009).

The objective of the study

According to Sluijsmans and Prins (2006) peer assessment is a powerful didactical method for teaching skills which is important for the teaching domain for at least four reasons. First, teachers have to work together, learn from each other and become a member of a learning organization. Second, peer assessment fosters reflection and the development of reflection skills. Reflection skills are necessary for making reliable judgments about peers' work. Third, student teachers will become assessors in their own classroom and, therefore, they will have to design assessments as prospective teachers of children in schools. It is therefore advisable to teach student teachers how to make critical judgments about the performance of their peers, and, later on, about performances of children. The last reason for the importance of peer assessment in teacher education is that after students have left higher education, they are likely to rely heavily on the judgment of their peers to estimate how effective their performances in the school are (Sluijsmans and Prins, 2006). Additionally, the new program which was first applied in 2004 requires using the alternative evaluation tools. Prospective teachers' gaining the skills of peer assessment and using these in the future are possible through learning by doing. The opinions of prospective teachers on peer assessment could be the guidance for the studies that will be carried out in faculties of education. Due to this, the objective of this study is to determine the opinions of prospective teachers on peer assessment. The problem sentence of this study is determined as "What are the opinions of prospective teachers on peer assessment?" The topic is dealt with within the frame of the following problems:

1. What are the opinions of prospective teachers on the benefits of peer assessment?
2. What are the opinions of prospective teachers on the problems of peer assessment?
3. What are the suggestions of prospective teachers on the development of peer assessment practice?
4. What are the opinions of prospective teachers on using the peers' grades as final marks?

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative method conducted aimed to explore the students' opinions of the process in greater depth. Qualitative research provides more profound information than quantitative research methods about psychological measurements and social events.

Qualitative research is necessary for finding answers to questions which are difficult to express with traditional research methods (Büyükoztürk et al., 2010).

Participants

The study was conducted at a university in the western Black Sea in 2016. 41 third grade students in Turkish Education Department taking the lesson Special Teaching Methods II participated in the study. They all have same educational background. The gender ratio was 64% female and 36% male.

Practice

There had been preparations for two weeks to let students gain confidence for assessment, and to be assessed for evaluation in accordance with the given criteria and to enable them to rely on each other's assessment. During the stage of preparation for peer assessment;

1. The students were informed about the objective of the study and the process of peer assessment.
2. The form to be used was introduced to the students using a projector. The assessment criteria on the form were discussed.
3. A volunteer student was asked to make a presentation and a sample teacher assessment was done.
4. A new presentation given by the volunteer student was assessed by the peers and the teacher in accordance with the given criteria.
5. It was decided together with the students that no points that would be given to peers for assessment would be used as semester grades just to avoid the effect of friendship relations.

During peer assessment stage;

1. Students were asked to lecture for 10 to 15 min.
2. The form entitled as The Evaluation Form of the Lesson Observation Application which is prepared by Council of Higher Education for the lessons School Experience II and Teaching Practice was used as the peer assessment form. There are 38 evaluation criteria on the form. The students assessed their peers' lecture according to this form and gave verbal feedback.
3. Assessors were chosen randomly. Five students took part in the assessment group. All members of the class did assessment alternately.
4. Teacher feedback was given about the peer assessment.

The course Special Teaching Methods II is a four-hour-lesson in a week. In each lesson, two students and respectively, eight students a week made presentations. Practice took six weeks. After completing the peer assessment studies, the opinions of prospective teachers on peer assessment were received in written form by asking open-ended questions.

Data collection instrument

An interview form with open-ended questions was used as a data collection instrument. Field sources on peer assessment were scanned and to provide the validity of the scope of the open-ended questions formed by the researcher, they were presented to an expert to ensure their validity. The questions were examined by an expert on assessment and evaluation and an expert on Turkish education were formed according to the suggestions made. The interview form consists of four questions.

Table 1. Prospective teachers' opinions on the benefits of peer assessment practice.

Themes	Codes	f
Affective development	Being open to criticism	10
	Developing self-confidence	18
	Acquisition of building the skill of empathy	7
	Developing the sense of justice	14
	Providing motivation for presentation	15
	Assuming the responsibility of assessment	16
Academic development	Providing a more attentive and careful study	15
	Development causing gain of the use of peer assessment	27
	Becoming a more effective listener	9
	Developing critical thinking skills	15
Using metacognitive strategies	Developing strategies for preparation of each stage of lecture before the lesson	8
	Thinking on how to make a lesson more effective	7
Feedback	Offering an opportunity to benefit from criticisms made for others	37
	Enabling a person to gain skills to criticize based on objective/certain criteria	29
	Taking a matter into consideration from different views	19
	Helping to identify strengths and weaknesses	17

Data analysis

The method of content analysis was used during the analysis of the data obtained from the research. Coding, theme determination, arranging and commenting on data according to themes were carried out respectively.

Findings

The first sub-problem of the research is to determine prospective teachers' opinions on the benefits of peer assessment practice. Findings of the study are given in Table 1. As seen in Table 1, peer assessment was found beneficial considering "affective development, academic development, the use of metacognitive strategies and feedback".

Affective development

Being more open to criticism; improving self-confidence; ensuring empathy building skills, improving the sense of justice and providing motivation towards making a better study has been identified as the affective benefits of peer assessment. Prospective teachers have adopted the idea that a teacher should be open to criticism. A student states personal view on this matter as follows:

"We, as being the teachers of the future, should be open to criticism and do studies like this to improve ourselves regarding these subjects."

It has been determined that the studies that have been done improve student confidence for different reasons. One reason that causes an improvement in self-confidence is teacher's taking student views into consideration:

"Making comments and evaluation, seeing that a teacher listens to a student's view carefully increases that student's self-confidence."

Another reason is a study's being criticized positively by peers: *"Constructive criticism is important as it increases our self-confidence."*

Another affective benefit of peer assessment is the skill that students gain as empathizing with others:

"Being criticized by our peers is very exciting. I understand how excited my friends feel during a presentation. Because of this I listened to my friends' presentations carefully and focused on the positive points and need to be improved."

It has been identified that peer assessment is important in improving the sense of justice:

"We tried to be fair without considering the personal relations. This will help a lot when we become teachers. There could be students we like and the ones we do not, but we must be fair to all."

Providing motivation to make a presentation of the peer assessment is another affective benefit identified in the research.

"I have been a student in this department for three years and I have not developed myself as much as I have done this year and as coming to the blackboard was my fear in the former two years, now it has become a kind of pleasure. One reason for this positive development is the criticism of my friends."

The points and the feedback that peers give enabled them to feel a sense of assessment responsibility. And this has been noted as one of the affective benefits of peer assessment.

"Evaluating my friend's performance was just like taking the place of my teacher, and this really is a serious responsibility."

Academic development

Its providing a more attentive and careful study to be done, making

a person gain the skill of using peer assessment methods, making a person become a more effective listener and causing him to develop critical thinking skills are the benefits of peer assessment within the frame of academic development theme. The basic reasons why peer assessment does a more attentive and careful study is that students try not to feel embarrassed against their peers, not to lose points and the criteria of evaluation's being a good guide for a good study.

"Because peer assessment was going to be done and because we were going to lose points for the missing parts, we were more attentive and careful about our study." "Evaluation criteria were a good guidance for a good study."

The study has been found useful by prospective teachers in terms of gaining the ability to use the peer assessment method. Prospective teachers have expressed that when they start their professional career, they will be able to apply and use this evaluation method:

"We have done that kind of study for the first time. We already had ideas on this subject and we saw how we could do this during practices. When I become a teacher, I can do peer assessment with my students."

Another benefit that was determined related to the academic development was peer assessment's enabling a person to become a more effective listener.

"You learn to listen more carefully not to be unfair if you are an assessor."

The next benefit of peer assessment in terms of academic development is its role in developing critical thinking skill.

"While we are evaluating the sufficiency level of our peers, our critical thinking skills improve."

Using metacognitive strategies

Developing strategies before presenting a lesson and thinking to teach a lesson in a more effective way are the benefits stated within the frame of using metacognitive strategies theme.

"To get positive criticisms, I continually asked myself how I can present a good lesson." "I did research to prepare interesting activities." "I presented the lesson that I had prepared to my family."

Feedback

Offering an opportunity to benefit from criticisms made for others, gaining skills to criticize based on objective/certain criteria, taking a matter into consideration from different views, helping to identify strengths and weaknesses are identified as the benefits of peer assessment related to the theme of feedback. Some examples on this theme are given.

"In peer assessment I learned both how they are going to evaluate me and I tried to complete the missing sides of my friends within myself."

"In peer assessment we develop doing positive criticism in each evaluation and we reinforce it as well. This will contribute to the objective and impartial criticism in our profession as teachers."

"It is important to reach different points of view and have different

opinions."

"It enables one to see the right and the wrong in the studies that one makes. Peer views could be of great importance as a result of this."

The second sub-problem of the study regards the expressions of prospective Turkish teachers on the practice of peer assessment. Prospective teachers have mentioned that this kind of study is very useful to them. As a result of this, some of the prospective teachers have not mentioned a problem. Although, the others have mentioned some problems, they have stated the expression, *"Problems that were a matter of concern are no more a problem at the end of the practice."* The opinions of prospective teachers considering the problems of peer assessment practice are seen in Table 2. As seen in Table 2, prospective teachers have the opinion that peer assessment practice causes problems considering the issues of "personal characteristics, interpersonal relationships, authority and evaluation form".

Personal characteristics

Problems that appear personally were identified as taking criticisms personally, not being open to criticism, the assessed experiencing anxiety, and the assessors failing to follow the study seriously.

"The difficulty coming in the first place during peer assessment is not expressing our views where necessary just because we do not know the person well as we thought they could take the matter personally."

"He criticized me in a negative way, he's going to pay for that, peers thinking like this are not few as not everybody is open to criticism."

"If the assessed is shy, this causes anxiety and so the shy one is prone to making more mistakes as s/he thinks not only the teacher but also the peers are going to criticize her or him perhaps negatively."

"Some assessors think that they won't be taken seriously, so they do not take their task seriously."

Interpersonal relationships

The problems determined related to interpersonal relations are peers' having the anxiety to hurt a friend, avoiding to do evaluation for personal reasons, failing to act in a just way to the ones they like or dislike. The opinions regarding the topic are as follows:

"While doing peer assessment, when I have to evaluate a close friend there is the difficulty of ignoring her/his weaknesses or not expressing these weaknesses not to hurt her/him."

"Due to some personal problems students may not want to evaluate each other."

"A peer could make a positive comment about a friend he likes while making negative comments about the one who dislike. In this situation peers may give high or low marks according to their level and kind of friendship."

Perfection

The problems regarding the theme of perfectness are peers not being as knowledgeable and conscious as their teachers, having difficulty in evaluating a presentation while observing, moving away from effective listening as a result of distraction, and mercilessness of peer criticism. Examples of opinions seen related to the topic are given as follows:

"We had difficulty in evaluation as we do not have our teachers'

Table 2. The opinions of prospective teachers on the problems of peer assessment practice.

Themes	Codes	f
Personal characteristics	taking criticisms personally	8
	Not being open to criticism	4
	Causing anxiety in the assessed student	6
	Assessors' failing to follow the study seriously	4
Interpersonal relationships	the evaluating students having the feeling of hurting friends	6
	Avoiding doing assessment for personal reasons	7
	Not acting objectively to the those one likes or dislikes	29
Perfection	Peers not being as knowledgeable and qualified as teachers	4
	Having difficulty in observing a peer while trying to evaluate the presentation	4
	Getting away from effective listening due to distraction	3
	Merciless criticism of peers	2
Evaluation form	A very detailed evaluation form	6

knowledge and experience yet."

"Assessors have to observe a lot of features. Paying attention to the criteria was quite compelling while observing a presentation."

"I lost my concentration sometimes, after a while when I recognized this I began to observe again."

"Our teacher forgives and ignores minor mistakes while assessing. This is more supportive and encouraging than our friends, while peers trying to be objective could be merciless."

Evaluation form

It has been seen that a very detailed form makes peer assessment difficult:

"When there are too many points on the evaluation form, it is difficult to both observe the speaker and evaluate her/him according to the criteria given on the form."

The third sub-problem of this study is to identify prospective teachers' suggestions on developing the practice of peer assessment. The findings of the study are given in Table 3. Prospective teachers have presented a number of suggestions considering the role of the teacher, evaluation group, evaluation method and evaluation form for the development of peer assessment practices.

The role of the teacher

In the role of the teacher theme, the suggestions that are a teacher's demanding the reasons for evaluation and feedback, not allowing close and troubled friends to evaluate a peer, and rewarding the students who evaluate a peer much like a teacher are stated.

"A teacher's demanding the reasons of an evaluation and feedback may work for an impartial evaluation."

"A teacher must observe the relations within a class closely and should not let close friends and the ones with mutual problems evaluate."

"While we are evaluating, you are evaluating as well. You may reward a student whose evaluation is close to yours. In this way, we can evaluate a peer more carefully."

Evaluation group

About the evaluation group, choosing peers from a group of volunteers, choosing the assessors by ballot, not knowing who is going to evaluate, having a high number of assessors, having equal number of peers from each sex in the evaluating group and participation of the whole class are given as suggestions. Examples of student opinions regarding the topic are as follows:

"Assessors should be the volunteers, but not always the same students should do peer assessment."

"If possible, the students whom we believe to be objective should be chosen by ballot and they should always fill in the peer assessment form."

"If assessor's name is kept secret, assessors would act in a more comfortable way. There would be less embarrassment."

"The number of students who evaluate should be high so that the risk of biased criticism would be lower."

"The same number of students from either sex should evaluate as girls give higher points to girls and boys give higher points to boys. There would be a balance in points if the same number of either sex."

"All class members should participate in evaluation, then there won't be unfair evaluation stemming from close friendships."

"Close friends and the troubled one should not be a part of the evaluation process, to me the most problematic side of peer assessment is not treating that kind of peers in a realistic way."

Evaluation method

The suggestions made regarding evaluation method are giving feedback on paper avoiding verbal feedback, taking the peer who is going to be evaluated out of the classroom, after verbal feedback about the student waiting outside calling her/him back and giving the result of the evaluation and teacher's expressing the result and

Table 3. Suggestions of prospective teachers on the development of the application of peer assessment.

Theme	Codes	f
Role of the teacher	The teacher should ask for the reason for evaluation and feedback	11
	Not let close and or troubled friends evaluate each other	14
	Reward those who evaluate a peer very much like a teacher.	9
Evaluation group	Volunteer students should evaluate.	5
	Assessors should be chosen by classmates' ballot.	6
	Assessors should not be known.	4
	Assessor's number should be high	2
	Assessor's number should be in equal in both sexes	3
	All class should participate in evaluation	6
	Close friends and troubled ones should not participate in evaluation	22
Evaluation method	Evaluation should be done only on paper, not verbal.	6
	The peer to be evaluated should be asked to leave the classroom, after verbal evaluation should be called back to class and the result should be expressed by the teacher.	4
	Giving only one peer assessment paper to a group	3
Evaluation form	The evaluation form should involve a limited number of criteria	8

giving just one evaluation to the whole evaluating group. Examples of prospective teachers' opinions are given below:

"To me peer assessment should not be made open, when there is face to face evaluation, both sides are uneasy and more mistakes are made."

"While evaluating a peer, the peer should be sent outside. Then there is a more comfortable atmosphere for her/his peers to evaluate."

"I can suggest filling in an evaluation form as a group. In this way we can evaluate while discussing our common views. And also there will be no biased evaluation then."

Evaluation form

Having a limited number of criteria on the evaluation form

is suggested to be able to do a more careful peer evaluation.

"The criteria on the evaluation form could be decreased. In this way we can do evaluation in a more careful way."

The number four sub- problem of the study aims at determining prospective teachers' opinions on using peer assessment points as students' final grades. The findings of the research are seen on Table 4. As seen in Table 4, prospective Turkish teachers are reluctant to using peer assessment points as final grades. Thirty two prospective teachers who participate in the research do not accept the idea of using peer assessment points as final grades, and nine of the participants believe a part of the peer assessment points could be added to the final grades. None of them expressed views to support the use of peer assessment points as final grades.

"Peer feedback is necessary both to see the missing parts and to increase students' self-confidence. However, a teacher should not give a final grade according to peer assessment points."

"A teacher should consider peer assessment seriously, but not evaluate just by taking the point given at the end of it. A certain percent for peer assessment could be allocated at the beginning and this allocated percent could be added to the final grade."

RESULTS

This study aims to determine the opinions of prospective teachers on peer assessment. The finding of the research indicates that peer assessment is beneficial when providing affective

Table 4. The opinions of prospective teachers on using peer assessment points as final grades.

Should peer assessment points be used as final grades?	f
Teachers should not give points according to peer assessment.	32
Teachers should take into account the peer assessment to a certain extent.	9

and academic development, using metacognitive strategies and giving feedback. The benefits determined within the frame of affective development theme are being more open to criticism, developing self-confidence, causing one to gain the skill of empathizing with others, developing the sense of justice, providing motivation to do a better study and teachers' assuming the responsibility of evaluating. In the theme of academic development, the opinions considering the positive effect of peer assessment is stated by underlying the effect of peer assessment on the quality of the study that has been carried out, enabling one to gain evaluation skills and developing effective listening skill.

The prospective Turkish teachers have stated that they develop strategies to get prepared for each stage of a lesson before teaching and they also added that they consider what to do to make a lesson more effective in the eyes of students.

The highly emphasized characteristic of peer assessment in this research is related to giving feedback. The feedback given offers an opportunity to benefit from other criticisms aiming at others, enabling one to gain the evaluation skill based on certain criteria, helps to recognize strengths and weaknesses and these are seen as the benefits of peer assessment. When the opinions of prospective Turkish teachers are examined about the problems of the process of peer assessment, they have mentioned that personal features, interpersonal relationships, not being the authority in evaluating and the evaluation form's involving too many criteria cause problems. Depending on these reasons it has been determined that prospective teachers do not see peer assessment points as valid. In the theme personal features, taking criticism personally, not being open to criticism, the evaluated student's being prone to anxiety, and the evaluating ones' failing to follow the study seriously are identified as the elements causing problems. In the theme interpersonal relationships, the evaluating peer's having the feeling of hurting a friend, avoiding to do peer assessment due to personal relationships, not acting to the one likes or dislikes objectively are problems identified. In the authority theme peers not being as knowledgeable and conscious as teachers, having difficulty at evaluation while watching a presentation, getting away from effective listening due to distraction, and harsh criticism of peers have been noted as problems. In the evaluation form theme, there have been problems experienced as the form is very much

detailed.

DISCUSSION

Benefits of peer evaluation

This study indicates that peer evaluation improves prospective teachers in different ways. One advantage of peer evaluation is the emotional development of prospective teachers. It has been observed that peer evaluation is effective in training righteous teachers who are open to criticism, self-confident and capable of empathizing with others. This finding of the study coincides with the studies that have been made in the same field (Biri, 2014; Koç, 2011; Uysal, 2008). Another advantage of peer evaluation is its providing academic development. Peer assessment is seen as a way to increase learning (Keppell and Carless, 2006) and as a means of learning (Al-Barakat and Al-Hassan, 2009). There have been a lot of studies in literature indicating the effect of peer assessment on the increase in the quality of the task that has been carried out. The studies which state that peer assessment motivates students during presentation to do their best (Uysal, 2008), increases the sufficiency of teachers (Biri, 2014; Koç, 2011); is effective in developing writing skills (Vickerman, 2009) indicate that peer assessment can be used as a means of education.

One other advantage of peer evaluation is its supporting prospective teachers' metacognitive awareness. It is observed that prospective teachers make inner speech for an effective lesson and develop strategies to test the sufficiency of their knowledge. An individual's knowing what to do in a situation that he/she encountered is assessed as case-based information within the frame of metacognitive knowledge. In case-based information, an individual knows how to do something, whether he/she can do this or not, and what to do in what type of situation is a matter of concern (Schunk, 2012). This finding of the research indicates that peer assessment is beneficial considering the use of metacognitive strategies. In other studies of the literature, it has been observed that peer assessment has contribution to metacognitive development (Zariski, 1996). Lots of knowledge is taught in colleges of educations. Peer evaluation enables prospective teachers to recognize how they are going to use this

knowledge in practice. The criteria used during evaluation and the feedback given at the end of evaluation are remarkable elements of peer assessment study (Koç, 2011). These elements improve prospective teachers' evaluation skills. The benefit that prospective teachers emphasize most is related to gaining evaluation skill. These findings of the research are in accordance with the other studies mentioned, that is, peer assessment has an important role in gaining the skill of evaluation (Bay, 2011; Biri, 2014; Koç, 2011; Vickerman, 2009; Zariski, 1996).

Problems confronted in peer evaluation

Prospective teachers have expressed that they find the practice very useful. Due to this, some prospective teachers have not mentioned any problems. Although, the other ones have mentioned various problems, they have stated the situation as "problems that were a matter of concern are no more a problem at the end of the practice." It was found that interpersonal relationships were the most emphasized problem. In the research done by Carvalho (2013), it is stated that there is a negative relationship between interpersonal relations and fair evaluation. As it is often mentioned in the other studies done in the field (Al-Barakat and Al-Hassan, 2009; Bay, 2011; Carvalho, 2013; Cheng and Warren, 2005; Dancer, 1992; Volante and Beckett, 2011), interpersonal relationships might be expressed as an important problem that is confronted in peer evaluation. One of the problems that prospective teachers mention is that they do not see themselves as authority to do assessment. Peers not seeing themselves as authority is a problem emphasized in other studies as well (Al-Barakat and Al-Hassan, 2009; Bay, 2009; Sluijsmans, 2002).

However, at the end of the study, it is seen that prospective teachers' assessment skills have developed. This result indicates the necessity of peer evaluation to gain assessment competency. The problems aforementioned might be overcome by keeping the preparation period longer in peer evaluation studies. One of the problems stated in this research is related to the assessment form. This indicates the significance of determining evaluation criteria together with the students. As the presentations evaluated in this research are lectures, the "lesson observation application evaluation form" prepared by Council of Higher Education for School Experience II and Teaching Practice lessons, they are accepted as proper materials for the nature of the subject. However, because of having 38 criteria on this form, students had difficulty in watching a presentation and doing evaluation while going over the criteria at the same time. This situation makes it compulsory to reconstruct the criteria together with the students and

limiting it with certain number of acts.

Development of peer evaluation studies

The suggestions of prospective teachers for peer assessment are about the role of teachers, the characteristics of peer assessment group, the way to evaluate and evaluation form. Prospective teachers have suggested that a teacher assumes a role to provide validity. The role of the teacher in peer assessment studies is to cause the development of self-confidence in students during the teaching process and the whole process and also enable them to do valid evaluation. The teacher is expected to be a good observer at planning and during the whole process. In the "role of the teacher" theme, the suggestions of prospective teachers are teacher's demand of the reasons for evaluation and feedback and in this way provide an impartial evaluation. In addition, it was suggested that a teacher should not ask close friends and troubled ones to do peer assessment. It is believed that the reasons like peers' not having confidence in each other, doing peer assessment for the first time, being used to the teacher's active role in traditional education system are effective in the light of the suggestions put forward.

Educating peers by doing more samples of peer evaluation, revealing the accordance between the points of the teacher and students during the preliminary stage may decrease the need for teacher support. Also, there is the suggestion about students' being rewarded by the teacher due to the peer assessment resembling the teacher's. Feedback and rewarding the students with good peer assessment will motivate the assessors and it will facilitate to accept peer criticism and the points given as well. Due to this, it is thought that evaluating the assessors will have a positive effect on the process. In this research all students have done evaluation alternately. However, prospective teachers have suggested that only the volunteers do evaluation. Students who know that there will be no effect of the points they give to their peers act unwillingly during evaluation. In a research carried out by McGarr (2013), it is indicated that as a result of not adding the peer points to the general average leads to not taking the process seriously. The decision on not involving the peer assessment grades in final grades is made together with the peers at the beginning of the research. However, adding some of the evaluation points to the final grade could make a peer act more willingly during the evaluation process. Not knowing who is going to evaluate a peer stems from the anxiety of hurting a friend and the fear of revenge that could be taken on them during their evaluation process. All class members' instant anonymous evaluation of a presentation and giving feedback is possible only on the Internet. Because, the

equipment of classes was not proper for this, this method was not preferred. Besides, it is believed that face to face evaluation is more suitable for peers' real life state. Nevertheless, just to provide peer assessment validity, especially regarding the groups that are going to do peer assessment for the first time, they should be supplied with technology to do their evaluation. In this new method, after feeling confidence for the self and peers, students can be made to do face to face evaluation.

In the basis of the opinions given as the peer assessment of a large number of peers, and having equal number of evaluating peers from both sexes, participation of the whole class to the evaluation process, and leaving out the peers with mutual problems, there is the thought of prevention of evaluation made from interpersonal relationships and the validity of the evaluation. On the type of evaluation, prospective teachers have made suggestions of doing criticism only on paper, not verbal, letting the student leave the classroom during evaluation and calling the students back and giving the result by the teacher, and giving the whole group only one evaluation form. These suggestions are of great importance to provide secrecy of the assessors and also for the validity of the evaluation. An issue that needs good remark is that secrecy is a factor that affects evaluation (Bay, 2011), and using technology in providing secrecy decreases peer pressure (Raes et al., 2015). In addition, giving just one evaluation form to the group is a suggestion that is worth to be considered to prevent tendentiousness. Having a limited number of criteria on the evaluation form is suggested to be able to do a more careful peer evaluation. It is a significant issue to note that the criteria form should not involve a high number of criteria as this suggestion is seen in different studies (Bay, 2011). It is emphasized in the literature that it is significant to construct evaluation criteria by discussing with students (Ashenafi, 2015; Spiller, 2012; Şahin, 2008).

Student views on evaluation points being the final grade

Prospective teachers have not leaned towards the idea of using peer evaluation points as final grades. In the research that McLaughlin and Simpson (2004) made, they found out that 43% of students prefer peer assessment to teacher evaluation. McGarr (2003) also added that students do not find it difficult to evaluate a peer avoiding personal feelings; nevertheless, these students do not want peer points to be used as final grades. In his study where Uysal (2008) mentions a high correlation between peer points and teacher points, he states that students; however, do not want to be evaluated by their peers. The acceptance of peer assessment points by peers can be said to be related to seeing their peers and themselves as authority and their

acceptance of student-centered education.

Conclusion

The suggestions of prospective teachers for peer assessment were determined as well. These suggestions are about the role of teachers, the characteristics of peer assessment group, the way to evaluate and evaluation form. In the "role of the teacher" theme, the suggestions of prospective teachers are teacher's demand of the reasons for evaluation and feedback and in this way provide an impartial evaluation. In addition, it was suggested that a teacher should not ask close friends and troubled ones to do peer assessment. Also, there is the suggestion about students' being rewarded by the teacher due to the peer assessment resembling the teacher's. Prospective teachers have made certain suggestions considering the construction of the peer assessment groups. These suggestions are choosing the volunteers as the evaluating ones, choosing these by organizing ballot, not knowing the assessors, having a lot of assessors, equal number of male and female assessors, peers' full participation in evaluation and avoiding close and troubled friends' participation during the peer assessment process.

The suggestions made regarding evaluation method are giving feedback on paper avoiding verbal feedback, taking the peer who is going to be evaluated out of the classroom, after verbal feedback about the student waiting outside calling her/him back and giving the result of the evaluation and teacher's expressing the result and giving just one evaluation to the whole evaluating group. Having a limited number of criteria on the evaluation form is suggested to be able to do a more careful peer evaluation. When the opinions of the prospective teachers on using peer assessment points as final grades were examined, it was seen that 32 students rejected the idea of using these points as final grades, and 9 of them accepted adding a part of the given point to the final grade. None of them supported the use of peer assessment points as final grades.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The suggestions that have been made in the light of the research are as follows:

By carrying out a great number of sample peer assessments, students should be made to feel themselves authority and internalize the peer assessment criteria during the preliminary stage. At this stage the accordance of peer and teacher points should be disclosed and this is important for having confidence in each other's' evaluation. Adding a certain percent of

evaluation points to the final grade may enable students to participate in the study more willingly. Rewarding the students whose feedback and evaluation are successful would not only motivate the assessors but also would make it easy for the one who have been evaluated to accept the criticism and points of her/his peers. The evaluation of the assessors should be involved in the process. Giving just one assessment form to the group or providing a discussion among the group members and getting only one form is suggested as it might eliminate tendentiousness. Assessment criteria should be constructed with students in such a way that it should involve a limited number of behaviors. For the validity of the evaluation it is suggested that students who are going to do peer assessment for the first time should learn about this method through technology and get used to it and also after the internalization of the method the new one should move on to the face to face evaluation. New approaches in teaching require more use of technology in educational environment. In order to be able to do peer assessment in secrecy, at least one of the classrooms should be provided with technological equipment.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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