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## **Design-Based Self-Study; Is One's Philosophy of Education Fixed?**


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### **Abstract**

Educational philosophies pertain to teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and values about teaching and learning. They are teachers' reference points for instructional effectiveness. In this study, I examined my own case to manage a dissatisfying incongruence between my educational philosophies and instructional practices. For this purpose, I employed self-study methodology with design-based research methods and analyzed instructional instances which reflected a divergence from my dominant philosophies via thematic analysis. I realized that I applied different educational philosophies at different stages of the class. For syllabus design, I employed traditional philosophies to meet departmental expectations. However, I taught the class mostly via Progressivism and Reconstructionism for pre-service teachers' professional development. The fact that I could not reflect my educational philosophies satisfactorily created an instructional dissatisfaction; therefore, I made instructional changes throughout the class to manage it. Initially realizing pre-service teachers' traditional perceptions of teaching, I taught by Reconstructionism and Existentialism to broaden their perspective. However, pre-service teachers' class participation was low and to assess their internalization of content, I adopted Progressivism. As pre-service teachers analyzed a language teaching class, I also recognized their traditional beliefs about learning. This realization led me to examine the context of the study. For a long time, the Turkish education system reflected characteristics of Perennialism and Essentialism. It is only recently that Progressivism was adopted. In this context, Existential and Reconstructionist teaching would not be effective, and I diverted to Essentialism, Progressivism, and Reconstructionism. Therefore, I could teach for my students' learning habits, professional development, and workforce demands. On the last weeks, Existentialist and Progressivist principles were vivid in my class because I value training autonomous, well-educated, and critical thinkers. I could not teach this class as I would ideally do because of my course design as well as characteristics of the context and stakeholders, yet met course objectives.

*Keywords:* educational philosophy, self-study, design-based research, instruction, teacher trainer

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## **Tasarım Temelli Öz Araştırması: Eğitim Felsefesi Sabit midir?**

### **Öz**

Eğitim felsefesi, öğretmenlerin öğretme ve öğrenmeye dair algıları, inançları ve değerleri ile ilgilidir. Bunlar, öğretim etkinliği için öğretmenlerin referans noktalarıdır. Bu çalışmada, eğitim felsefem ve öğretim uygulamaları arasındaki rahatsız edici bir uyumsuzluğu yönetmek için kendi durumumu inceledim. Bu amaçla, tasarım temelli araştırma yöntemleriyle öz araştırma metodolojisini kullandım ve baskın felsefelerimi yansıtmayan öğretim durumlarını tematik analiz yoluyla inceledim. Bulgularım, dersin farklı aşamalarında farklı eğitim felsefeleri uyguladığımı ortaya koydu. Bölüm beklentilerini karşılamaya yönelik hazırlanan öğretim programı geleneksel felsefeleri yansıtırken, öğretim uygulamaları öğretmen adaylarının mesleki gelişimlerini desteklemek için İlerlemecilik ve Yeniden Yapılandırıcılıktan etkilenmiştir. Eğitim felsefelerimi tatmin edici bir şekilde yansıtamamam, öğretim açısından kişisel bir memnuniyetsizlik yarattı ve bu memnuniyetsizliğimi gidermek için ders boyunca öğretime dair değişiklikler yaptım. Başlangıçta öğretmen adaylarının geleneksel öğretim anlayışını fark ettiğimden onların bakış açılarını genişletmek amacıyla Yeniden Kurmacılık ve Varoluşçuluğu kullandım. Fakat bu dersler boyunca öğretmen adaylarının derse katılım oldukça düşüktü ve ders içeriğini kavrayışlarını değerlendirmek için İlerlemeciliği benimsedim. Öğretmen adaylarının öğretim analizini inceledikten sonra, onların öğrenmeyle ilgili geleneksel inançlarını da fark ettim. Bu farkındalık beni çalışmanın bağlamını incelemeye yöneltti. Uzun bir süre Türk eğitim sistemi Daimicilik ve Esasicilik özelliklerini yansıtmıştır. İlerlemecilik ise son zamanlarda benimsenmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Varoluşçu ve Yeniden Kurmacı öğretimin etkili olamayacağını görüp Esasicilik, İlerlemecilik ve Yeniden Kurmacılık ilkelerine yönelerek öğretim yaptım. Böylelikle öğrencilerimin öğrenme alışkanlıklarına hitap ederek, mesleki gelişimlerini iş gücü taleplerine cevap verebilecekleri şekilde destekledim. Özerk, iyi eğitilmiş ve eleştirel düşünen öğretmenlerin yetiştirilmesine değer verdiğimden son haftalarda Varoluşçu ve İlerlemeci öğretim uygulamalarına ağırlık verdim. Öğretim tasarımımanın yanında bağlam ve paydaşların özellikleri gibi dış etkenler nedeniyle bu dersi ideal olarak kabul ettiğim şekilde öğretilmedi.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* eğitim felsefesi, öz araştırması, tasarım temelli araştırma, öğretim, öğretmen eğitimcisi

## **Introduction**

Teachers' conception of philosophy pertains to human experiences that relate to education. It is embedded in a comprehensive and consistent set (Conti, 2007) of perceptions, beliefs, understanding, and values (Atai & Mazlum, 2012) about teaching and learning (Taylor & Tisdell, 2000). That is, an understanding of the purpose of education, roles of the teacher and students, the conceptualization of (individual) differences or positionality, and the primary lens in analyzing human needs (Taylor & Tisdell, 2000) can relate to philosophies of education. Accordingly, teachers' educational philosophies might not only guide their actions (Ryan, 2007 as cited in Atai & Mazlum, 2012) but also constitute a moral and social compass (Petress, 2003 as cited in Atai & Mazlum, 2012) for their profession.

Educational philosophies might be abstract concepts; however, '[t]hese abstract concepts are operationalized in the classroom by one's teaching' (Conti, 2007, p. 21). While revealing content to students, teachers' behaviors and actions are key indicators (Atai & Mazlum, 2012) of educational philosophies although they may not always articulate them, well (Taylor & Tisdell, 2000). Taylor and Tisdell (2000) argued that teachers' defining their educational philosophy is important not only to reveal their beliefs about teaching and learning but also to critically examine instruction. That is, when teachers systematically reflect on their educational philosophies, they can analyze (Conti, 2007) the discrepancies between assumptions and realities (Taylor & Tisdell, 2000) which in return, can inform and improve their instruction.

Scott et al. (1994) emphasized that teachers' reflection is crucial for their instructional practices and Schon (1983 as cited in Scott et al, 1994) made a 'distinction between knowing-in-action and reflection-in-action' (p. 2). Knowing-in-action pertains to tacit recognition of theories, judgment, and skillful performance in the classroom whereas reflection-in-action is 'a more critical function of questioning the assumptional structure of knowing-in-action' (p. 3). Adapting Schon's idea of reflective practitioner, Russell (2018) also highlighted the importance of critical reflection. To him, it is an extension of critical thinking and 'a reasoning process to make meaning of an experience' (Russell, 2018, p.6). As teacher educators, critical reflection

asks us to think about our practice and ideas and then it challenges us to step-back and examine our thinking by asking probing questions. It asks us not only delve into the past and look at the present but importantly it asks us to speculate about the future and act (p.6).

## **Problem and Purpose of the Research**

As a teacher educator, I always felt confident with knowing-in-action; however, I sometimes felt dissatisfied and incapacitated with the things that I was supposed to do in the classroom as a teacher educator. At that time of the study, I taught a methodology class to pre-service teachers and thought that my students did not have enough opportunities and space to critically become their best versions. They merely aimed to consume and repeat authorities' voices verbatim to manage institutional requirements and I felt

that my instruction might not be effective to help my students develop personal voices and philosophies. That is because when I incorporated critical questions and reflection moments into my instruction, they kept reserved. Also, I never heard any challenging comments regarding my teaching even when their participation was low. Simultaneously, my instruction did not offer me new perspectives but somehow suppressed my voice. I was supposed to teach the fundamentals and implement mainstream instruction that might not reflect my philosophies but serve for the departmental norms.

Due to my philosophical orientations and research interests, it was difficult for me to differentiate whether it was me creating such a gloomy scenario or there was something else that led to my dissatisfaction. Therefore, I took initiatives to reflect on my educational philosophies and examine how well I practiced them during my classes. I also examined the factors that impacted my instructional decisions and practices to manage my instructional dissatisfaction. In this study, I will specifically examine the following questions:

- (a) To what extent can I enact my dominant philosophies of education?
- (b) What are the possible reasons for the incongruence between my philosophies of education and instructional practices?
- (c) How do I manage my instructional dissatisfaction?

### **Literature Review**

For teachers' reflective practices, educational philosophies (Perennialism, Essentialism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism, and Existentialism) can set frameworks. In the following, the basic principles of each philosophy that relate to purposes of education, components of curriculum, focus of instruction, as well as roles of students and teachers will be reviewed. An understanding of educational philosophies may set a ground for mitigating instructional dissatisfaction that this study was designed for.

#### ***Major Educational Philosophies***

Perennialism and Essentialism might be the oldest philosophies. Perennialism focuses on students' understanding of Western great ideas for problem-solving (Cohen, 1999). Everlasting ideas and enduring truths are crucial (Cohen, 1999); therefore, studying great past works of literature, philosophy, history, and science, cultivation of intellect (Cohen, 1999), developing reasoning, and information processing is the focus of teaching (Deryakulu & Atal-Köysüren, 2018; Scott et al., 1994). As education functions 'as a sorting mechanism' (Sadler & Zittleman, 2008, p. 207), intellectually gifted individuals are trained for leadership positions and the rest is provided with vocational training (Sadler & Zittleman, 2008). For this task, the teacher decides on the knowledge and helps students gain expertise in different discipline (Scott et al., 1994).

Essentialism, another traditional philosophy, is relatively more libertarian compared to Perennialism. Instead of limiting educational opportunities to gifted individuals, it focuses on teachers' transmission of common core knowledge to students in a systematic and disciplined way to develop intellectual and moral goods (Cohen, 1999; Taylor & Tisdell, 2000). The curricula are composed of

essential knowledge and skills that can be obtained from both historical and contemporary works (Apps, 1973) as well as academic rigor (Cohen, 1999). Unlike Perennialists, Essentialists accept that the core curriculum may change since schools aim to prepare students for real life. That is, education should be practical and help students develop literacy and rational powers via inquiry and experiential learning (Taylor & Tisdell, 2000). To Scott et al. (1994), teachers' role is to distinguish what is essential and not. Imposing an authoritarian character to teachers as in Perennialism, Essentialists focus on transmitting the culture via subject-matters of the physical world (Apps, 1973; Cohen, 1999).

Advancements in industry and science during the last centuries impacted education and contemporary philosophies that help individuals meet the demands of the new area emerged. One of them is Progressivism and its main purpose is to liberate learners to improve society by analyzing and reconstructing past and current experiences (Scott et al., 1994). Education focuses on the child as a whole rather than the content or the teacher (Cohen, 1999). Children's first-hand experiences, experimentation, questioning and thinking, as well as problem-solving skills are crucial for making meaning (Cohen, 1999). Therefore, teachers' providing students with the opportunities to manifest such skills is also important. That is why, teachers make decisions with students and have the curriculum shaped by students' interests and questions. In such classrooms, teachers use scientific methods and books are tools supporting learning (Cohen, 1999).

While industrialization and technology keep advancing and help a small group with their capitals, some groups have been marginalized. As a reaction to their being oppressed for various reasons, Reconstructionism emerged. Reconstructionism focuses on reconstructing education to create a better social order and worldwide democracy via social reforms (Cohen, 1999; Scott et al., 1994). Reconstructionists believe that there is no absolute truth or value; however, they exist as the products of collaborative thinking. Therefore, the collective mind is the end and means of education (Mosier, 1951) and students can learn best via communication of multiple perspectives (Deryakulu & Atal-Köysüren, 2018), inquiry, dialogue, critical consciousness, and community-based learning (Cohen, 1999). Students' dealing with controversial issues and taking social actions on real problems leads to learning which Mosier (1951) calls social self-realization.

Following the World War II, a part of humanity started to search for a genuine meaning while technology, science, and industrialization led to destruction. While Reconstructionism aims for the advancement of social groups and democracy, Existentialism focuses on individuals and their essence which is chosen or designed by themselves. In relation, education is to help individuals achieve self-fulfillment or self-actualization via individual choices, free will, and responsibility (Apps, 1973). For existentialists, learners' emotions, cognitions, and actions are important; therefore, teachers' role is to help students understand themselves and promote freedom, autonomy, as well as the responsibility of choice (Deryakulu & Atal-Köysüren, 2018; Yılmaz et al., 2011). For this task, self-directed learning, discovery, and experiential learning can be implemented (Fries, 2012). Moreover, cooperation, group tasks, and communication is valued for growth (Zinn, 2004). The focus of the curriculum is the subjects of personal

choice (Cohen, 1999), broadening learners' life experiences as well as perspective via these choices (Yılmaz et al., 2011).

Recognizing such a set of philosophies in practice is important for practicality and effectiveness of instruction. Also, understanding the nature of teacher education pedagogy is important as the specific context will enable or limit the operationalization of these philosophies.

### ***Teacher Education Pedagogy***

Teacher education pedagogy is a 'co-produced enterprise' of an assemblage (Hordvik et al., 2020, p.2). It is composed of (a) teacher educators' knowledge, experiences, and beliefs, (b) pre-service teachers' knowledge, experiences, and investments, (c) the physical space including materials and equipment, (d) the discourse reflecting teacher educators' and pre-service teachers' expectations, and (e) traditions of the university, program, and courses (Hordvik et al., 2020). That is, teaching and learning is co-produced through relations and interactions of these elements in the classroom; however, they may also bear dilemmas which may produce unmanageable and influential changes in teaching.

Teacher educators face dilemmas whose nature is complex and competing (Donnell, 2010). They may experience tension between for example, covering or uncovering curriculum, waiting for students' critical thinking and participation versus delivering them critical ideas, helping students reconstruct previous experiences into new understandings while simultaneously helping them value previous experiences, advocating for pre-service teachers' professional development and evaluating their competencies (Donnell, 2010), taking a position as an expert or being a discussion leader, and covering the fundamental readings in the course or studying student-teachers' practices (Bullough, 2008).

To Donnell (2010), teachers' dilemmas may be a dynamic practice and promising research area. This is because such research can contribute to the development and expertise of teacher educators (Donnell, 2010). Such studies might be carried out in various methodologies including self-study (Bullough Jr., 2008; Donnell, 2010; Hordvik et al., 2020) .

### ***Conceptual Framework of Self-Study***

Self-study focuses on self and improvement. To Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998), self-study pertains to studying one's self, actions, ideas, and *not-self*. Dinkelman (2003) stated that self-study is an 'intentional and systematic inquiry into one's own practice' (p. 8). Also, Tidwell, Heston, and Fitzgerald (2009) stated that the role of the researcher in self-study and the role of the educator are intertwined and inseparable. Through the inquiry, a teacher examines the self, roles, actions, and beliefs within the teaching environment; therefore, they can make changes for improvement (Chiu-Ching & Chan, 2009).

Build on reflective practices, action research, and practitioner research (Loughran, 2005), self-study speaks of 'experiencing oneself as a living contradiction' and aims to improve self and/or not-self while resonating with others (Whitehead 1993 as cited in Loughran, 2005, p.6). Self-study researchers aim to

enhance the congruence of their realities by making their beliefs, intentions, and actions explicit and by looking for discrepancies among these. While it is a challenge to become self-conscious, it is an important element of developing as an educator (Berry & Russell, 2013).

Reflective teaching and self-study are conceptually and practically tied (Dinkelman, 2003); such studies are self-initiated and focused (Hordvik et al., 2020), aim to understand and improve ones' practices of teacher-education, and demonstrate the interaction with students' experiences and teacher educators' practice (Russell, 2018). To Berry (2004), teacher educators can embark on self-study to investigate the inconsistencies between practices and philosophies or a particular aspect of practice for more meaningful alternatives.

### ***Self-Study Research on Teacher-Education***

Available self-studies on teacher- education examined various components of education. There is research on the effects of particular practices (e.g. Garbett & Ovens, 2012; Goodell, 2006) or models of critical reflection (e.g. Bullock, 2009; Bullough Jr., 2008; Donnell, 2010; Goodell, 2006; Kitchen, 2020). Also, some examined professional identities and practices (e.g. Allen et al., 2016; McDonough, 2017; McDonough & Brandenburg, 2012) while a few focused on human, material, and non-tangible elements that influence teacher-education practices (e.g. Hordvik et al., 2020). However, there is a lack of research that examines one's philosophies of education and reports a reconstructed system of educational philosophies for practice.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

This research models a self-study methodology employing design-based research methods. While I engaged in self-examination of my instruction, I implemented design-based research (DBR). Therefore, I could maximize the effectiveness of my instruction and minimize my instructional dissatisfaction.

Collins et al. (2004) stated DBR aims to optimize the design in practice. Bringing a design focus and assessment of critical elements together (Dede, 2005), DBR helps test a version of a design or intervention in practice and then, revise it based on experiences and feedback until 'all the bugs are worked out' (Collins et al., 2004, p.18; Zheng, 2015). The intervention can be a type of instructional approach, assessment, and learning activity in a particular learning environment (Zheng, 2015) which evolves by multiple iterations for better outcomes (Zheng, 2015, p.400).

As Barab and Squire (2004) highlighted, DBR is a series of approaches that explains and impacts 'learning and teaching in naturalistic settings' (p.2). It focuses on complex social interactions where stakeholders share ideas and maybe distract each other, involves multiple variables such as the outcomes and system variables, involves flexible design revision, and examines different aspects of the design (Barab & Squire, 2004).

In this study, my instruction was enacted, tested, evaluated, and revised, systematically. Thus, the design -my instruction- was not an independent fixed entity but a dynamic function of various stakeholders' interplay and a response to the evidence within teaching process. Moreover, it met the characteristics of self-study (Aubusson et al., 2010) as in the following. The need for self-evaluation and instructional modification was *self-initiated*, *oriented to improvement*, and *self-focused*. Also, it was *interactive* and *validated*; I collaborated with pre-service teachers while explication of the specific context and evidence arising from assignments and observations was presented.

The study, however, may impose limitations. As a teacher educator, I was not separate from my study. That is, what I researched was my instructional decisions and actions and how I analyzed my actions reflected my understanding of teaching. They constituted two sides of a coin.

### ***Research Context***

This study took place at a state university in the western Turkey. There were 15 junior students who took the methodology class that I taught at the department of American Culture and Literature department. The class had a motive to teach English as a foreign language at different levels after they graduated. However, the department did not offer any classes on teaching and learning foreign languages. For this reason, the curriculum coordinator of the department decided to offer an elective course. Therefore, students' content and pedagogical knowledge could be improved, and I was asked to deliver that course.

That class was an introduction to learning and teaching foreign languages, specifically English. I designed the class to harmonize theory and practice; there were some fundamental readings on the syllabus to discuss and opportunities for pre-service teachers to observe English language teaching (ELT) and learning (ELL) instances, write reflection papers, design a lesson plan, develop scenarios, and examine materials.

On the first week of the semester, I asked the class to write a reflection paper on teaching and learning foreign languages to understand their initial orientations and beliefs. On the fifth week, they observed an ELT reading class and analyzed it for the roles of teachers and students, the content, as well as instructional and assessment practices. On the sixth week, we discussed the nature of Turkish education system and particularly regarding instructional elements. On the 10<sup>th</sup> week, I invited pre-service students to an ELT class. Then, they were asked to analyze the class using the previous criteria of instructional elements. Finally, on the 13<sup>th</sup> week, they were given an opportunity to reflect their understanding of ELT and submit a lesson plan.

While the previous tasks were set on the calendar, students in this class were required to do weekly readings, develop critical questions, and discuss the theory in class. For discussions, they could draw on anecdotes from their past experiences or ideals. They also studied different ELT materials regarding theories in pairs or groups and they were allowed to bring personal readings on ELT to class, if they did any. However, students in this class could not engage in rich discussions or do practical reflections about teaching



or learning foreign languages. They mostly referred to the definitions and the key terms in their readings. They got accustomed to echoing authority's voices instead of developing their personal ones. My questions aimed to explore their thinking and help them expand their perspectives; however, they kept their silence when they were not sure enough or did not do their readings.

### ***Researcher-as-self***

On the very first day of each class, I declare my philosophies of education and discuss what they mean with my students. I mostly emphasize autonomy, responsibility, freedom of choice, and critical thinking as the pillars of learning. I also emphasize care for others, respect, and continuous professional development for teaching. I position myself as a co-learner; therefore, I can show how teaching and learning interact and my students know that I am open to change, if need be.

### ***Data Sources and Analysis***

I analyzed my instructional decisions and practices, periodically regarding the notions of educational philosophies and for this, I employed thematic analysis. The themes and categories identified as in the following: (a) the nature of instructional dissatisfaction, (b) reasons and motives for instructional engagement, and (c) educational philosophies. The data coming from critical instances included my syllabus design, 3 reflection papers submitted by pre-service teachers on the 1<sup>st</sup> week (understandings of teaching and learning), 5<sup>th</sup> week (1<sup>st</sup> ELT class observation) and 10<sup>th</sup> week (2<sup>nd</sup> ELT class observation) of the class, lesson plans delivered on the 13<sup>th</sup> week, and personal instructional notes prepared for each class. Table 1 presents the themes and categories that developed findings.

I aimed to establish trustworthiness of this study by choosing the appropriate research methods, describing my instructional dissatisfaction accurately, combining multiple data sources, analyzing the data at different intervals and checking the consistency of patterns, and providing thick description of my findings (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008; Erlandson et al., 1993; Leung, 2015). Therefore, findings can enrich our understanding of the meaning (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008) regarding educational philosophies and instruction.

## **Findings**

### ***Divergence from Dominant Educational Philosophies***

Existentialism is the main philosophy that directs my instructional actions. As seen in Table 1, I could not typically enact it. I mostly taught by the principles of Progressivism and Reconstructionism while I designed the syllabus under the influence of Perennialism and Essentialism.

### ***Factors Initiating Incongruence between My Instruction and Philosophies of Education***

I realized that at different instances of the class, I felt dissatisfied with my instructional decisions or practices because they did not reflect my educational philosophies. Different factors including expectations of

authorities, pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching and habits of learning, and characteristics of the Turkish education system forced me to teach differently than I would ideally do. These factors and their influences are presented in the following.

*Expectations of Authorities.* Authorities' expectations impacted my instructional decisions and thereby, practices. Initially, I had a meeting with the curriculum coordinator (CC). At the time, the CC declared departmental expectations and I was told that their students should be prepared to meet workforce demands. Therefore, I designed the syllabus to meet departmental expectations, directly and workforce demands, indirectly. Adopting Perennialism and Essentialism, I designed a class that covered fundamental readings in the field and aimed to enhance teacher capabilities identified in national educational policies.

*Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of Teaching and Habits of Learning.* Pre-service teachers' perceptions of teaching and habits of learning impacted my instructional practices. I gathered those via reflection papers that pre-service teachers submitted at different intervals. Initially, pre-service teachers held traditional philosophies and in time, some of the adopted Progressivist understanding.

The analysis of the first reflection paper submitted on the 1<sup>st</sup> week made me realize that almost all pre-service teachers held traditional (Perennialists or Essentialist) understandings of learning and teaching. They stated that teaching pertains to sharing knowledge, *transferring information*, and *instructing someone to do something* in a foreign language, professionally (N=10). In relation, learning was defined as acquiring new knowledge or skills *in academic settings from experts*. Regarding ELT, pre-service teachers highlighted speaking, listening, and grammar as core elements taught by *native-like knowledgeable* English teachers.

Perennialists or Essentialist understandings of learning and teaching were vivid on the second reflection papers. For the second reflection paper, pre-service teachers were asked to reflect upon my ELT reading class and specifically analyze the roles of teacher and students, materials, instructional techniques, and assessment procedures. Almost all papers (N=13) were written as a summary of my reading class with references to the theories or concepts covered in the class. However, they did not reflect on that class, critically. They simply stated what I should have done or not without any rationale.

During my classes, I frequently use teacher-questioning, facilitate discussions, and initiate students' self-questioning as a reflection of my educational philosophies. However, such practices were problems for some pre-service teachers. They believed 'when the teacher uses *'maybe, probably, let's think about it'* (B.), it feels uncertain and effects 'her reliability of teaching' (H.). Even S. thought that facilitating discussions would distract students and I may dominate them to think. In relation, students' questions were considered to 'interrupted the flow of the class' (H.). For this, I 'should have made a lesson plan before coming to the lesson, so it can go smoothly without questions' (Z.) and 'without any interruption as planned beforehand' (B.).

Some of my instructional decisions were also considered as taboos. For example, I sometimes talked in Turkish to assist ELLs. Nine of pre-service teachers were concerned about it and 'instead of

Turkish, I should have used body language or synonyms and antonyms' (S.). When I used native language, ELLs 'may not learn English' (E.). Moreover, I did not always use the course book assigned by the institution. I usually noted down the key concepts and had my students manage their own learning experiences; that is, they could use mobile phones to do searches in class and choose their materials to study. When they finish their studies, we got together and shared what we learnt. Although all pre-service teachers stated that the material was 'unauthentic, uninteresting, and boring', B. thought having students choose their materials to read was 'a waste of time because they have their books with them, all the time'. Moreover, S. and E. were concerned that I spent most of my time discussing the topic. I should have studied the book but 'not speaking... this part of the class aims to teach vocabulary' (S.).

The third reflection paper was submitted after pre-service teachers' on-site observation of my ELT reading class. The analysis helped me realize that some of pre-service teachers adopted Progressivism. However, some could not release traditional philosophies possibly because of their positions. When G. stated that 'language education in schools, especially in public schools, unfortunately, *has to* follow a certain route and institutional plan', their acceptance of the power dynamics became clear. In relation, while most pre-service teachers criticized instructional materials for their insufficiency, I 'should not have skipped some parts of the book and cover all sections because students will be responsible for all the book in the exam' (E.).

Finally, the very low return rate of the last assignment (lesson plans) convinced me that pre-service teachers were not ready to give upon their learning habits. At the end of the semester, I let them know that they were free to submit a lesson plan for any skills and/or topics that they would take to job interviews in the future. Only 4 of them returned a lesson plan and 3 of them were replications of the example lesson plan that we studied in class. One pre-service teacher prepared an authentic lesson plan and discussed her actions, there. The rest reported that they *were not obliged* to submit one, and they did not. Although I created an opportunity for pre-service teachers' responsible actions, they positioned me as the authority and did not take autonomous actions for their professional development.

*Philosophies of Education in Turkey.* Following the analysis of 2<sup>nd</sup> reflection papers, I decided to explore the Turkish context regarding the philosophies of education. This is because dominant educational philosophies probably affected our perceptions and habits of teaching and learning. Therefore, I studied available literature describing the context and research studies that focus on educational philosophies.

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic, traditional educational philosophies whose aim is to transfer essential knowledge and skills through a standardized curriculum dominated classrooms (Aksu et al., 2010). Deryakulu and Atal-Köysüren (2018) recently stated that 'the official and sustainable philosophy of Turkish education is still ambiguous' (p.39) and different educational philosophies operate at different levels. They reported that Progressivism is recognized at the theoretical and policy level; however, instructional practices in mainstream classrooms are influenced by Essentialism and Perennialism. A

national study done by Aksu et al. (2010) similarly highlighted that traditional educational philosophies will continue to exist in future classrooms. They found that 18,226 pre-service teachers tend to possess traditional educational beliefs (Aksu et al., 2010) although Constructivism is officially transparent in the national curriculum. In a recent report, Şimşek and Kartal (2019) also argued that legal grounds for educational policies and activities were directed by Essentialism, Perennialism, and Progressivism. They analyzed the articles that relate to education in the Constitution of Turkish Republic, basic law of Turkish education, and fundamental principles of Turkish education and found that traditional or positivist understandings might dictate educational initiatives.

Research on the philosophies of education also bears a traditional and positivist understanding. Such studies are usually descriptive and identified (a) pre- or in-service teachers (e.g. Altinkurt, Yılmaz, & Oğuz, 2012; Bicer, 2013; Bingol & Kinay, 2018; Doğanay & Sarı, 2003; Ekiz, 2005, 2007) and teacher educators' (e.g. Sacli Uzunoğlu, 2016) philosophical orientations regarding some demographics such as gender, teaching experience, or majors. Or else, research found out (b) the relation of teachers' educational philosophies and various variables such as learning styles (e.g. Duman, 2008), teaching-learning conceptions (e.g. Bas, 2015), epistemological beliefs (e.g. Terzi & Uyangör, 2017), or use of educational technologies (e.g. Duman & Ulubey, 2008).

**Table 1.**

*Data sources, analysis, and DBR procedures*

<i>Time</i>	<i>Instances of Dissatisfaction</i>	<i>Motives &amp; Reasons for Instruction</i>	<i>Instructional Actions</i>	<i>Phil. of Ed.</i>	<i>Instructional Change (DBR steps)</i>
<i>A semester before the class</i>	Syllabus  <i>* Felt limited to reflect my understanding of teaching and learning</i>	- Expectations of the curriculum coordinator (CC), - Workforce demands, - Understandings of expertise in ELT.	- Searched for similar ELT classes, - Developed a syllabus, - Confirmed with colleagues and the CC.	Perennialism Essentialism	- Integrate instructional practices for Existentialism.
<i>1<sup>st</sup> week</i>	Pre-service teachers' initial reflection papers  <i>* Recognized pre-service teachers' traditional understanding of language learning and teaching</i>	- Desire to implement a best tailored-instructional design to support pre-service teachers' professional development, - Desire to initiate pre-service teachers' critical thinking on ELT, - Desire to help pre-service teacher to gain ownership of their learning to create their own professional voice.	- Shared their understanding of education, - Had them reflect on and discuss their understanding and experiences of ELT or ELL, - Initiated discussions about ' <i>other possible perspectives and practices</i> ' - Had them explain their reasoning.	Reconstructionism Existentialism	- Implemented techniques including Socratic questioning, discussion through flipped-classroom, critical thinking about previous learning and teaching experiences, discussion on pre-service teachers' critical questions submitted before class, integrating pre-service teachers' needs and interests into classes, opportunities to discuss pre-service teachers' personal readings on ELT or ELL, opportunities for pre-service teachers' self-assessment of learning.
<i>5<sup>th</sup> week</i>	Pre-service teachers' 1st ELT class observation reflection papers  <i>* Recognized pre-service teachers' resistance to change their understandings of teaching and learning</i>	- Desire to improve their pedagogical knowledge.	- Had pre-service teachers observe one of my ELT class, - Recorded ELT reading sessions since such a practice was not planned and did not have a space on the syllabus, -Had pre-service teachers analyze the ELT class.	Progressivism	-Studied literature and research on educational philosophies in Turkey.

6 <sup>th</sup> week	<p>The Context</p> <p><i>* Recognized dominant traditional philosophies in Turkey</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desire to understand the extant dynamic in the context,</li> <li>- Desire to identify potential reasons for pre-service teachers' philosophies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Literature and research review of educational philosophies in Turkey.</li> </ul>	Essentialism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adjusted instruction for pre-service teachers' habits of learning,</li> <li>- Taught core knowledge explicitly via traditional lectures,</li> <li>- Provided pre-service teachers key terms to initiate discussions,</li> <li>- Provided ELT examples and scenarios to have pre-service teachers discuss,</li> <li>- Had pre-service teachers provide examples of ELT instances, problems, materials, and strategies, if any.</li> </ul>
10 <sup>th</sup> week	<p>Pre-service teachers' 2<sup>nd</sup> ELT class observation reflection paper</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desire to initiate pre-service teachers' critical thinking on ELT,</li> <li>- Desire to change their echoing authority's voice verbatim,</li> <li>- Desire to improve their pedagogical knowledge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Invited pre-service teachers to my class for an on-site ELT reading class observation.</li> </ul>	Reconstructionism Progressivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Taught core knowledge explicitly,</li> <li>- Had pre-service teachers reflect on their initial understandings of teaching and learning,</li> <li>- Had pre-service teachers discuss various ELT videos regarding the components of instruction,</li> <li>- Had pre-service teachers discuss my ELT reading class practices,</li> <li>- Had pre-service teachers reflect on previous learning experiences regarding teachers' and students' roles,</li> <li>- Had pre-service teachers create scenarios for divergent thinking.</li> </ul>
13 <sup>th</sup> week	<p>Pre-service teachers' lesson plans</p> <p><i>*Few pre-service teachers took initiatives to plan ELT lessons and most copied both the format and strategies in the example one.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Desire to have pre-service teachers use content to create authentic lesson plans,</li> <li>- Desire to support their ownership of teaching and learning responsibility,</li> <li>- Desire to give them the freedom to reflect their understanding of the class.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gave pre-service teachers freedom to submit (or not) a plan of what, how, why, and when to teach any English language skills or topics.</li> </ul>	Progressivism Existentialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Made changes on the syllabus for future,</li> <li>- Took instructional notes for best practices,</li> <li>- Added extra materials for class discussions,</li> <li>- Added artifacts for each week to exemplify the content,</li> <li>- Gave space for pre-service teachers' needs such as ELT class observations,</li> <li>- Added space for pre-service teachers' micro teaching of their interest.</li> </ul>

### **Management of Instructional Dissatisfaction**

During the methodology class at different instances, I made instructional changes reflecting different philosophies to resolve my instructional dissatisfaction and support pre-service teachers' professional development as seen in Figure 1. For this purpose, I utilized personal instructional notes, observed pre-service teachers' participation, analyzed feedback delivered on pre-service teachers' reflection papers, and identified contextual dynamics and implemented DBR. Those changes were presented in Table 1 as DBR steps.

I embarked on this journey on a traditional pathway. My syllabus design reflected the notions of Perennialism and Essentialism especially regarding the focus of the class. To reflect my professional understandings of teaching and learning, I initially planned to teach via the principles of my dominant philosophy; Existentialism.

However, I realized that pre-service teachers held traditional philosophies of teaching and learning on the first week. During the next 5 weeks, I wanted pre-service teachers to gain an ownership of their learning and develop their own professional voices. For this, I leaned on Reconstructionism and Existentialism and utilized various techniques such as Socratic teaching, critical thinking, flipped classroom, metacognitive discussions, and self-directed learning. A typical class started with a discussion where pre-service teachers' critical questions that they had submitted before class and their take-aways from extra readings on ELT were focused. After this, I posted some questions on the board rather than doing explicit teaching; therefore, pre-service teachers can build their own professional repertoire. While they answered the questions, I asked them to explain their rationale and relate it to the theories, approaches, or methods. During this practice, they could also refer to previous learning experiences, design instructional practices, and bring EFL materials for examination, if at all. They could challenge my, their very own, or others' positions in an atmosphere of critical consciousness. Therefore, the roles of teacher and students could be reconstructed; a teacher is not a flawless source of authority, and students are not passivized waiting for explicit directives. Instead, they might gain an active and directive role during the classes. I also reminded them that there are no correct but smart answers; therefore, they could do self-evaluation.

In the first period, I realized pre-service teachers did almost not participate in class discussion. To check their understanding of the content, I adopted Progressivism. Because I did not plan pragmatist practices (i.e. class observation) initially, some practical problems emerged. I could not find any volunteers instructors to host pre-service teachers in their ELT classrooms. Therefore, I had to video-record and share my reading class with pre-service teachers for their second reflection paper task. Analyzing those papers, I recognized that Reconstructivist and Existentialist teaching practices were not effective to expand their understandings of teaching and learning. They held on their initial traditional perceptions. I, therefore, took an initiative to examine current dynamics in the context for their potential influences on teaching and learning habits.

I reviewed the literature and research on educational philosophies in Turkey and recognized that the system is dominated by traditional philosophies; Perennialism and Essentialism. While Progressivism might be observed through policies, the practice might still blend Essentialism for pragmatic outcomes. Its research was also positivist and studied educational philosophies as fixed entities at a time. Realizing the long history of traditional philosophies, I had to adjust my instruction and gained an authoritative role.

During the weeks from 5 to 10, I adopted an Essentialist approach and lectured the class traditionally. Each week, I wrote down the key concepts and explained them to pre-service teachers. I also implemented some principles of Progressivism and Reconstructionism to mitigate my dissatisfaction and broaden pre-service teachers' perspectives. I provided different ELT artifacts, problems, and scenarios and had pre-service teachers discuss them. They could also contribute to the discussions by presenting any examples, materials, or anecdotes as well as bringing their take-aways if they did any personal readings as I stopped this activity.

I also made some instructional changes after analyzing pre-service teachers' third reflection papers on the 10<sup>th</sup> week and I leaned on Reconstructionism and Progressivism. Analyzing the papers, I realized that most of the pre-service teachers adopted a Progressivist approach towards teaching and learning. Although they observed a similar reading class to the first one, they did not criticize the amount of questioning, use of native language, or not using the textbook. They were mostly concerned about institutional policies and specifically, exams. For the rest of the class, I continued to lecture; however, we spend more time on practicing theories. We analyzed different ELT artifacts and previous ELL experiences for the effectiveness of instructional elements including materials, roles of the teacher and students, purpose and components of language teaching, and the dynamics in the context. I asked them to improve and/or change those practices referring to the roles of the teacher or students, instructional strategies, techniques, materials, or assessment procedures.

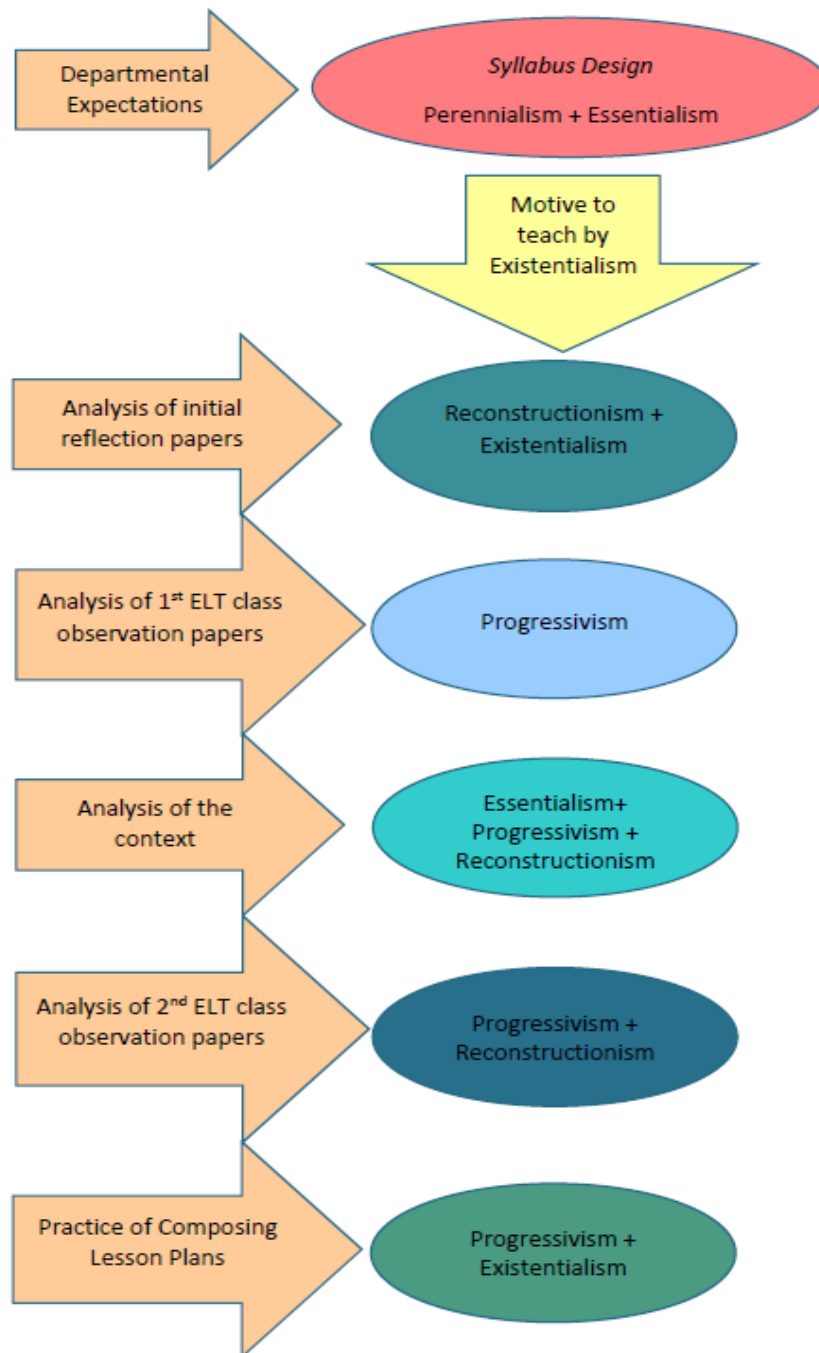
Finally, my main goal -as a teacher educator- is to boost pre-service teachers' autonomy with ELT; therefore, I adopted Existentialism besides Progressivism at the end of the semester. I offered them an opportunity to submit a lesson plan teaching any skills or topics that they could use for their job-hunting. However, they said that this assignment was not included in the grading and prefer not to do it. While only 4 pre-service teachers submitted it, of four of 1 was authentic.

After such a rough journey, I sat alone in the classroom and decided to make changes in the syllabus and instructional delivery for the future. I decided to change readings and assignments on the syllabus and my instruction should harmonize my educational philosophies and future pre-service teachers' habits. As the context was highly influenced by traditional philosophies, such a radical change both in understandings and practices might not be feasible



**Figure 1.**

*Change in Implementing Educational Philosophies throughout the Course*



### Discussion

This paper acknowledges a challenging incongruence between my educational philosophies and instruction. Experiencing myself as a contradiction, I embarked on a self-study to identify my-self and not-self (Hamilton & Pinnegar, 1998) as a teacher educator. Through experiences and reflection, I realized that

educational philosophies might not be fixed abstract entities. While they are operationalized by our teaching, instructional decisions and practices may be highly influenced by contextual dynamics and stakeholders' characteristics. My engagement in self-study taught me that it might not be practically possible and immediately effective to implement Existential teaching.

The agents and factors in the context may continuously influence one's enactments of educational philosophies. The extant context i.e., the policy and instructional history promotes Perennialism and Essentialism and pre-service teachers' philosophies, learning habits, departmental expectations, as well as workforce demands echoed such philosophies. In this context, I had to suppress my ideal understanding of teaching and learning. On the other hand, educational philosophies also constitute a moral compass (Petress 2003 as cited in Atai & Mazlum, 2012) and I could not give upon my responsibilities as a teacher-educator. It was difficult for me to deliver the class in a way that I do not believe, and it might be likewise difficult for some pre-service teachers to learn in a way that did not match their expectations and habits. Sharing the responsibility of desirability, practicality, and effectiveness of instruction with pre-service teachers (Dede, 2005), I adopted instructional principles of different philosophies which pre-service teachers felt comfortable and/or familiar with to support their professional development. As Hordvik et al. (2020) argued, the most influential external factor for my instructional modification was pre-service teachers.

Golombek (1998) stated experiential learning has its moral and affective consequences. When I experienced a low-class participation during the discussions and read pre-service teachers' instructional concerns on their reflection papers, I realized we had different philosophies and their beliefs clashed with mine. For this reason, I decided not to implement Existential teaching yet the principles of Reconstructionism and Progressivism relatively often. I think, sticking to my philosophies would be morally wrong because Existential instructional practices would, ironically, violate some pre-service teachers' learning opportunities. I might have also pushed, at least, few pre-service teachers to interact with the content differently than they would normally do. Indeed, I would violate basic principles of Existential teaching like free choice, responsibility of learning, autonomy, and self-questioning if pre-service teachers would not be ready for that. Also, this only class on ELT methodology would be a negative experience for some if they were pushed to be someone else there.

## **Conclusions**

A classroom-assemblage influence teacher education practices and it may include different elements like stakeholders, materials, and non-tangible factors (Hordvik et al., 2020). Teacher-educators may aim to improve educational experiences and outcomes and their cooperation with pre-service teachers for instructional design and delivery may be reasonable. However, teacher education programs may be dominantly under the influence of economic factors and their compliance with such unhumanitarian forces is devastating. When faculty members imply or emphasizes workforce demands, pre-service teachers might get concerned with how to compete with other graduates and how to meet their future managers'

professional requirements. Instead of taking a self-directed path for quality teaching, pre-service teachers would expect pragmatic pills or shortcuts to learning teaching or employment. With romanticism in few teacher-educators' minds, educational realities of the masses might not be changed, easily.

It may be the external context that needs a dramatic change for humanitarian realities rather than materialism. That is, teacher education programs should be the source of change and advancement rather than being highly impacted by fluctuating economy and dominating politics. Regarding main function of universities, most tend to think that they produce qualified workforce for the market. However, teacher-educators should remember their crucial role on transforming societies and developing critical thinking skills besides educating the workforce.

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All authors contributed equally to the manuscript and approved submission.

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The author/s confirm they have no conflict of interest to declare

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