

*To my beloved family...*

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CURRICULAR CHANGE IN AN EFL  
CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF CURRICULAR CHANGE IN AN EFL  
CONTEXT

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This study provided insights about the process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context by identifying the problems in an existing curriculum and needs of the students, setting goals based on those needs and problems, selecting an appropriate teaching tool, training the administrators and teachers on that tool and preparing students for the new teaching tool to be implemented into the curriculum, and piloting and evaluating the new tool. In addition, it explored teachers' and students' attitudes towards a new learning tool in a university EFL program and investigated the administrators', teachers' and students' attitudes towards

implementing that teaching tool into the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages (AKU SFL).

This study was conducted at AKU SFL, with the participation of 12 teachers (three of whom are also administrators) and one class of 25 students together with their teacher. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, learner diaries, classroom observation and journals.

The findings of this study revealed that teachers, students, and administrators had positive attitudes towards the chosen teaching tool and its implementation in the curriculum at AKU SFL. In addition, all sets of participants indicated some potential constraints of using the new tool and proposed a variety of recommendations for possible improvements. Moreover, this study underlined some major aspects of a process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context. The importance of teacher training, preparing students for the new tool, and taking administrators, teachers, and students' opinions into consideration in all of the steps of a curricular change was revealed. This study also provides a model for a curricular change process in similar institutions.

Key Words: Curricular change, curriculum, project work, teacher training, teaching tool, learning tool.

## ÖZET

### YABANCI DİL OLARAK İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİNDE MÜFREDAT DEĞİŞİMİ ÜZERİNE BİR İNCELEME ÇALIŞMASI

Gülin Sezgin

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü

Tez yöneticisi: Dr. Julie Mathews-Aydınlı

Temmuz 2007

Bu çalışma, mevcut müfredattaki sorunlar ve öğrencilerin ihtiyaçları belirlenerek, bu sorunlar ve ihtiyaçlara yönelik amaçlar konularak, uygun bir öğretim metodu seçilerek, müfredata dahil edilecek olan bu yeni öğretim metodu konusunda yöneticiler, öğretmenler ve yöneticiler eğitilerek, müfredata dahil edilecek yeni öğretim aracına öğrencileri hazırlayarak, ve bu yeni metodun pilot çalışmasını takiben değerlendirme yaparak yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi bağlamında müfredat değişikliği yapmanın süreci hakkında detaylı bilgiler ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca bu çalışmada yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitimi veren bir üniversitedeki öğrencilerin ve öğretmenlerin yeni öğretme aracına karşı tutumlarını incelemiş, ve yöneticilerin, öğretmenlerin ve öğrencilerin o öğretme aracını Afyon Kocetepe

Üniversitesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksek Okulu'nun müfredatına dahil edilmesi konusundaki görüşlerini araştırmıştır.

Çalışma AKÜ YDYO'nda 12 öğretmen (bunların 3'ü aynı zamanda yöneticilik yapmaktadır) ve 25 öğrenci ve öğretmenlerinden oluşan bir sınıfın katılımı ile gerçekleşmiştir. Verinin toplanmasında anketler, mülakatlar, öğrenci günlükleri, öğretmen ve gözlemci günlüğü ve sınıf gözlemleri kullanılmıştır.

Çalışmanın bulgularından, öğretmen, öğrenci ve yöneticilerin seçilen yeni öğretim aracına ve bu öğretim aracının AKÜ YDYO'nun müfredatına dahil edilmesine karşı olumlu tutumları olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Ayrıca, bütün katılımcılar yeni öğretim aracının bazı potansiyel sınırlamalarını belirtmiş ve bunların giderilmesi için çeşitli önerilerde bulunmuşlardır. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışma yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimi bağlamında müfredat değişikliği sürecinin bazı genel özelliklerini vurgulamıştır. Öğretmen eğitimi, öğrencileri yeni öğretme aracına yönelik hazırlama, müfredat değişikliğinin her aşamasında yöneticilerin, öğretmen ve öğrencilerin görüşlerini dikkate almanın önemi ortaya konmuştur. Bu çalışma ayrıca benzer kurumlardaki müfredat değişikliği sürecine model teşkil edebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: müfredat değişikliği, müfredat, proje çalışması, öğretmen eğitimi, öğretme aracı, öğrenme aracı.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ÖZET .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xv
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Background of the Study .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	4
Purpose of the Study .....	6
Significance of the Study .....	6
Conclusion.....	7
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	8
Introduction .....	8
What is Curriculum? .....	8
What is Curricular Change? .....	10
The Process of Innovation.....	12
Identifying the problems in the curriculum.....	13
Identifying the needs of students .....	14
Specifying the goals and objectives.....	15
Selecting the appropriate content, methodology and materials.....	16
Teacher training .....	18

Student training.....	19
Teaching .....	19
Evaluating.....	19
The Roles of Students, Administrators and Teachers in the Process of a Curricular Change.....	21
Roles of students.....	21
Roles of administrators.....	22
Roles of teachers .....	23
The Learner Centered Curriculum and Communicative Teaching Tools.....	25
Conclusion.....	26
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	27
Introduction .....	27
The Setting and Participants.....	28
Instruments .....	31
Questionnaires .....	31
Interviews .....	32
Learner diaries .....	34
Journals.....	35
Observations .....	36
Data Collection Procedures .....	36
Identifying the problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of the students .....	38
Setting the goals.....	38
Selection of the new teaching tool.....	38

Teacher training .....	39
Attitudes towards the new teaching tool and curricular change .....	40
Planning sessions with the participant teacher .....	40
Preparing students for the new tool.....	40
Piloting the new teaching tool .....	41
Evaluation.....	41
Data Analysis.....	42
Conclusion.....	43
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS .....	44
Overview of the Study .....	44
Data Analysis Procedures.....	45
Results.....	47
Problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of students.....	47
Setting goals.....	59
Selecting the new teaching tool .....	61
Teacher training (January 26, 2007) .....	71
Attitudes towards the new tool and its implementation in the curriculum.....	75
Preparing students for the new tool (February 23, 2007).....	84
Piloting the new tool (February 23, 2007 - March 02, 2007).....	86
Evaluation.....	89
Conclusion.....	100
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION .....	101
Overview of the Study .....	101
Findings and Discussion.....	102

Research question 1: What are teachers' and students' attitudes towards the new learning tool which is intended to be implemented into the curriculum? .....	102
Research question 2: What are the administrators', teachers' and students' attitudes towards implementing the new learning tool into the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages? .....	112
Research question 3: What insights does this study reveal about the process of implementing curricular change in general? .....	114
Pedagogical Implications .....	117
Limitations.....	117
Suggestions for Further Studies.....	118
Conclusion.....	119
REFERENCES .....	120
APPENDIX A: ÖĞRENCİYLE YAPILAN MÜLAKAT ÖRNEĞİ .....	125
APPENDIX B: SAMPLE STUDENT ORAL INTERVIEW .....	126
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS .....	127
APPENDIX D: SAMPLE LESSON PLAN OF THE PROJECT WORK TASK (THE FIRST DAY) .....	129
APPENDIX E: INVITATION POSTER .....	133
APPENDIX F: SAMPLE OF THE JOURNAL KEPT BY THE PARTICIPANT TEACHER .....	134
APPENDIX G: SAMPLE OF A LEARNER DIARY.....	135
APPENDIX H: PHOTOS FROM THE PILOTING .....	136
APPENDIX I: SAMPLE FINAL OUTCOME (REPORT) .....	137
APPENDIX J: SAMPLE FINAL OUTCOME (POWER POINT SLIDES).....	138

APPENDIX K: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS .....	139
APPENDIX L: ÖĞRENCİLERE UYGULANAN ANKET.....	141
APPENDIX M: SAMPLE OF THE JOURNAL KEPT BY THE RESEARCHER	143

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The Needs of Students at AKU SFL and Suggested Teaching Tools.....	58
Table 2: Some Goals of Prep Classes at AKU SFL. ....	60
Table 3: Most Commonly Cited Benefits Attributed to Project Work in Second and Foreign Language Settings.....	69
Table 4: Teachers' Opinions about Project Work.....	75
Table 5: Teachers' Opinions about Learning English through Project Work.....	76
Table 6: Teachers' Opinions about Implementing Project Work into the Curriculum .....	84
Table 7: Students' Opinions about Project Work.....	90
Table 8: Students' Opinions about Learning English through Project Work .....	94
Table 9: Students' Opinions about Participating in Project Work Tasks Again.....	97



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Framework of course development processes (Graves, 2000, p. 3).....	13
Figure 2: Cause and effect relationship between goals and objectives (Graves, 2000, p. 77). .....	16
Figure 3: Brown's systematic approach to designing and maintaining language curriculum (Brown, 1995, p.20). .....	20
Figure 4: Research Design .....	37

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), innovation is important to keep a curriculum up to date and effective; however, introducing new ideas and implementing a change is not as simple as it seems. As making changes in curricula may be risky and full of difficulties, research studies and pilot studies should be conducted before implementing a new learning tool in any program's curriculum.

This case study explores one school's experience in implementing a curricular change. This research explored the attitudes of administrators, teachers and students towards both the new learning tool itself and its implementation in the curriculum of a university level EFL program. The findings of this study reveal insights about the process of implementing curricular change in general, and specifically about whether the selected new learning tool should be conducted in English language programs of preparation classes at AKU SFL and similar institutions.

### Background of the Study

The term 'curriculum' is a difficult one to explain for researchers in the field of education as it is a large and complex concept, with many different definitions. One perspective is that of Nunan (1988a) who states that curriculum is related to "curriculum planning, that is at decision making, in relation to identifying learners' needs and purposes; establishing goals and objectives; selecting and grading content; organizing appropriate learning arrangements and learner groupings; selecting, adapting, and developing appropriate materials, learning tasks, and assessment tools and evaluation tools" (p.4). Since each institution's goals and learners' profiles are

different, the curriculum of each institution also differs. However, even the most appropriate school curriculum may become inefficient if it is not updated. Therefore, innovations in curriculum are both inevitable and necessary.

What is in the curriculum differs at different institutions, and some learning tools may work well in some contexts but not in others. If a tool or approach does not work well, it means that there are some problems and there might be a need to introduce new learning tools and make innovations in the curriculum. Curricular change is a complex process which includes various elements as mentioned above. Successful implementation can be achieved only if precise steps are delineated right from the beginning of the process. According to Brown (1995), a curriculum development process consists of six phases: Conducting a needs analysis, setting goals and objectives, designing tests, developing materials, teaching, and doing program evaluation. Some guidelines which can be helpful in a curriculum development process were suggested by Ornstein and Hunkins (1998): Teachers, parents, administrators and sometimes students should take part in the innovation process; a sense of mission and purpose should be established before the meetings of the curriculum design committee; priorities, needs, and school goals and objectives should be taken into consideration; alternative curriculum designs should be considered; the teachers should gain insight into the new or modified design; and administrators' roles should not be underestimated as their support and approval are essential.

Of these steps, the idea that teachers play an important role in the process has been particularly well supported in the literature. Several studies have shown that teacher participation in the curriculum development process is needed for a

successful curricular change (Al-Daami & Stanley, 1998; Kelly, West & Dee, 2001; Kirk & Macdonald, 2001; Olson, 2002). In order to help teachers be familiar with the new teaching tools or materials and use them efficiently, a teacher training process should also be included in the process of curriculum development (Carlgren, 1999; Riquarts & Hansen, 1998; Shkedi, 1998; Subaşı, 2002). Moreover, teachers' perceptions towards the intended curriculum innovation should be taken into consideration. If teachers' beliefs in designing the new curriculum are not taken into account, it is unlikely that the desired expectations from the new curriculum can be met (Cheung & Wong, 2002; Cotton, 2006; Assunção Flores, 2005; Hennesy, Ruthven & Brindley, 2005; Van Veen & Slegers, 2006). Research has also suggested that 'hearing' the students' 'voice' about curriculum making will lead to greater chances of a successful curricular change (Brooker & Macdonald, 1999).

Curriculum change is not an easy task and many research studies have shown how some problems may occur during or after the implementation process (Jorgenson, 2006; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Subaşı, 2002). For example, in Turkey, curricular change is sometimes made without adequate consideration of the necessary steps, resulting in unsuccessful change. The reasons for this failure might be as follows: The new learning tool may not be appropriate for the level of students, or the tool's presumed appropriateness may be theory based and not based on practical application if it has not been piloted beforehand. In addition, the new teaching tool may not meet the needs, interests or preferences of students. Moreover, teachers may be confused or not know how to conduct the new tool if they are not trained or there is an inadequate cooperation among them during the curricular

change process. Last, the learning tool may not be used efficiently if it is not approved by the administrators.

One focus of curricular change has been to make the curriculum more learner-centered and communicative. In order to achieve this, some alternative learning tools such as portfolios, presentations, role-plays, projects, oral interviews and discussions can be implemented into a curriculum. Even the most popular teaching tools or approaches that seem very appropriate and useful for one program, however, can be ineffective if incorporated into the curriculum in an improper manner. Descriptions of the “proper” manner of incorporating change tend to remain theoretical, rather than based on first-hand experience. By exploring one institution’s experience in detail, this study will reveal insights into the process of curricular innovation in a university level EFL program.

#### Statement of the Problem

There have been studies concerning innovations in curricula, which show that despite a possible need, actually implementing change is a complex process, which if poorly managed, may fail to bring about the desired results (Waters & Vilches, 2001; Savignon, 2002). Although there are some evaluative studies on teachers’ and students’ attitudes about how existing teaching tools work in their institutions (Gökçen, 2005; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Subaşı, 2002), all of which reveal inconsistencies and problems in implementation, there are no studies looking at the process of incorporating a new learning tool effectively into a curriculum. By following certain steps, this study will provide insights into the steps that should be taken in making successful curricular changes.

At Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages (AKU SFL), learner-centered and communicative approaches are not currently used. Because of the strict curriculum, teachers cannot implement different techniques and teaching tools in their regular classes. In informal discussions among the teachers, most of them state that they do not know about different types of teaching tools to make use of in their lessons and they are not satisfied with the students' success in the learning process. In addition, students complain that they are not motivated or confident during the regular class hours and the topics are not interesting for them. Most of the students are relatively passive in class. Therefore, there is a need to move to a more learner-centered system where the students can more actively use English and as a result, develop their language and research skills in a better way. To learn what type of tool or approach could and should be implemented to improve this situation, administrators', teachers', and students' attitudes had to be taken into consideration and the students needed to be allowed to experience the new tool. Thus, in this study, first, the problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of the students were identified. Then, the goals were set and an appropriate teaching tool was selected. After that, the teachers and administrators were trained and the attitudes of teachers and administrators towards the new tool and whether it would be beneficial to implement it in the curriculum were assessed. Then the learners were trained and the new tool was piloted in a classroom. Last, the new tool was evaluated and attitudes of learners and the participant teacher towards the new tool were identified.

### Purpose of the Study

This study will address the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' and students' attitudes towards the new learning tool chosen to be implemented into the curriculum?
2. What are the administrators', teachers' and students' attitudes towards implementing the new learning tool into the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages?
3. What insights does this study reveal about the process of implementing curricular change in general?

### Significance of the Study

By exploring the experience of one program's efforts to implement a new learning tool into its curriculum, this study adds to the growing body of literature on curricular change. Moreover, this study provides a model for other programs by preparing a base for designing curricular change concerning the implementation of a new learning tool.

This paper is the first research study directed towards understanding the attitudes of administrators, instructors, and students towards implementing a new teaching tool at AKU SFL. At the local level, the results of this study will contribute to revisions in the curriculum by revealing the benefits of a particular new tool on students' language and research skills. With the help of this study, administrators', teachers' and the course designers' consciousness will be raised and they will become more knowledgeable about the selected tool, more aware of its potential use,

and better able to decide on further steps to be taken to implement it into the curriculum to support English language learning and teaching.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, the background of the study, statements of the problem, significance of the study, and research questions have been discussed. The second chapter reviews the literature on the curricular change process. In the third chapter, the research methodology, including the setting and participants, instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures of the study, is described. The data collected from qualitative and quantitative data are analyzed in the fourth chapter. Finally, in the fifth chapter research findings are summarized in accordance with the research questions, and discussion of findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and implications for further research are presented.



## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

The aim of this study is to assess teachers' and students' attitudes towards a new learning tool which is intended to be implemented in a university EFL program and explore the administrators', teachers' and students' attitudes towards implementing that tool into the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages (AKU SFL). It also provides insights about the process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context by identifying the problems in an existing curriculum and needs of the students, setting goals based on those needs and problems, selecting an appropriate teaching tool, training the administrators, teachers and students on the new teaching tool to be implemented into the curriculum, piloting and evaluating it. This chapter presents background information about the steps of curricular change.

### What is Curriculum?

In the field of education, the term "curriculum" describes a large and complex concept that has been defined in numerous ways (Henson, 1995; Nunan, 1988a; Nunan 1989; Oliva, 1997; Pratt, 1980). According to Oliva (1997), theorists state the definition of curriculum in terms of three different concepts. The first one is purposes or goals of curriculum, or what it does or should do. Another concept upon which definitions of curriculum tend to focus is contexts, namely, the settings within which it takes shape. Lastly, some theorists equate curriculum with instructional strategy.

Curriculum is also considered as *a field of study* consisting of its own basis and fields of knowledge, as well as its own research, theory, principles and authorities. In addition, curriculum can be viewed in terms of *subject matter* such as geography, history, science or English, or *content*, namely how information is structured and adapted (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1988). However, the fact that curriculum has been defined in a number of different ways helps us view it from different aspects. Instead of writing one definition which lacks some aspects of curriculum, various interpretations of curriculum can be used to make the definition of curriculum clear. In his book 'Developing the Curriculum', Oliva (1997) presents a set of interpretations of curriculum; which may be of help in understanding exactly what curriculum is:

- Curriculum is that which is taught at school.
- Curriculum is a set of subjects.
- Curriculum is content.
- Curriculum is a program of studies.
- Curriculum is a set of materials.
- Curriculum is a sequence of courses.
- Curriculum is a set of performance objectives.
- Curriculum is a course of study.
- Curriculum is everything that goes on within the school, including extra-class activities, guidance, and interpersonal relationships.
- Curriculum is that which is taught both inside and outside of school directed by the school.
- Curriculum is everything that is planned by school personnel.
- Curriculum is a series of experiences undergone by learners in school.
- Curriculum is that which an individual learner experiences as a result of schooling. (p.4)

Oliva (1997) compiled different definitions of curriculum and presented a list of different aspects of it, all of which are relevant to this study to some extent. The most significant one for this study can be "Curriculum is everything that goes on

within the school, including extra-class activities, guidance, and interpersonal relationships” as in this definition, not only the experiences that go on within the school, but also those that happen outside of the classroom are emphasized.

### What is Curricular Change?

It can be helpful to define some terms such as curriculum development, curriculum planning, curriculum improvement, and curriculum evaluation before explaining curricular change. All of these terms have been defined many times, but Oliva’s definitions clarify the slight differences among them:

*Curriculum development* is the more comprehensive term; it includes planning, implementation and evaluation. Since curriculum development implies change and betterment, *curriculum improvement* is often used synonymously with curriculum development, though in some cases improvement is viewed as the result of development. *Curriculum planning* is the preliminary phase of curriculum development when curriculum workers make decisions and take actions to establish the plan that teachers and students will carry out. ...*Curriculum implementation* is translating plans into action. ...Those intermediate and final phases of development in which results are assessed and successes of both the learners and the programs are determined are *curriculum evaluation*. On occasion, *curriculum revision* is used to refer to the process of making changes in an existing curriculum or to the changes themselves and is substituted for *curriculum development* or *improvement* (Oliva, 1997, p. 23-24).

In this study, the terms curricular change and curricular innovation are used synonymously in other words, both are used to describe the process of implementing a teaching tool that is perceived as new by the teachers, administrators and students to improve a specific educational setting.

Markee (1997) proposes a theoretical framework for understanding innovation: Who adopts what, where, when, why and how? He defines the ‘what’ of curricular change well by breaking down the definition into its constituent parts each of which implies the different aspects of curricular innovation: “(1) curricular

innovation (2) is a managed (3) process of development (4) whose principal products are teaching (and/or testing) materials, methodological skills, and pedagogical values (5) that are perceived as new by potential adopters” (p.47). According to Markee (1997) ‘where’ an innovation is implemented is both a socio-cultural and a geographical issue. The ‘when’ of curriculum refers to the fact that it happens relatively quickly in some institutions, whereas others need more time. He notes that as a general rule, an innovation always takes more time than anticipated. He also suggests five models of change for ‘how’ to adopt an innovation: The social interaction model; center-periphery model; research, development and diffusion model; problem solving model and linkage model. The differences between them are based on the processes followed in a curricular change process. In this study, the problem solving model will be used. In this model, the ultimate users of a change are those who recognize the need for change and teachers work as change agents. Therefore, this model is not a top-down process, rather, it becomes a bottom-up phenomenon.

Markee (1997) also proposes nine principles of curricular change. The first one indicates that curricular change is a complex issue because an appropriate combination of professional, academic and administrative change is needed. Second, the main role of change agents is to effect desired changes. Third, for a successful curricular innovation, good communication among adopters is crucial. Fourth, strategic management of curricular innovation is required for successful implementation of changes. Fifth, innovation is unpredictable and messy. Sixth, to effect change takes a longer time than it is expected to. Seventh, there is a large probability that change agents’ suggestions might be misunderstood. Eighth, it is

important for implementers to have a stake in the innovations they are expected to implement. Last, for change agents, he advises working through opinion leaders, who can influence their peers.

According to Richards (2001), when an innovation in curriculum is considered, a situation analysis should be done. The factors which should be taken into consideration in such a situation analysis are as follows: Whether the innovation is more advantageous than the existing one, to what extent it is compatible with the existing beliefs, attitudes, organization and practices, whether the innovation is complicated and difficult to understand, whether it has been used and tested in other institutions before, and whether the features and benefits of innovation have been clearly communicated to the teachers and the institution.

#### The Process of Innovation

The process of curricular change has certain steps to be followed: Needs and situation analysis; developing goals and objectives; selecting an appropriate syllabus, course structure, teaching methods and materials, and evaluation of these processes (Richards, 2001). An ideal curriculum development process is argued to follow these or similar steps. However, in real-world situations, the program may already be ongoing. Therefore, curriculum development is never finished (Brown, 1995). Hence, a curriculum development process can start from any step of the following framework as all the elements of curriculum are interrelated (Graves, 2000):

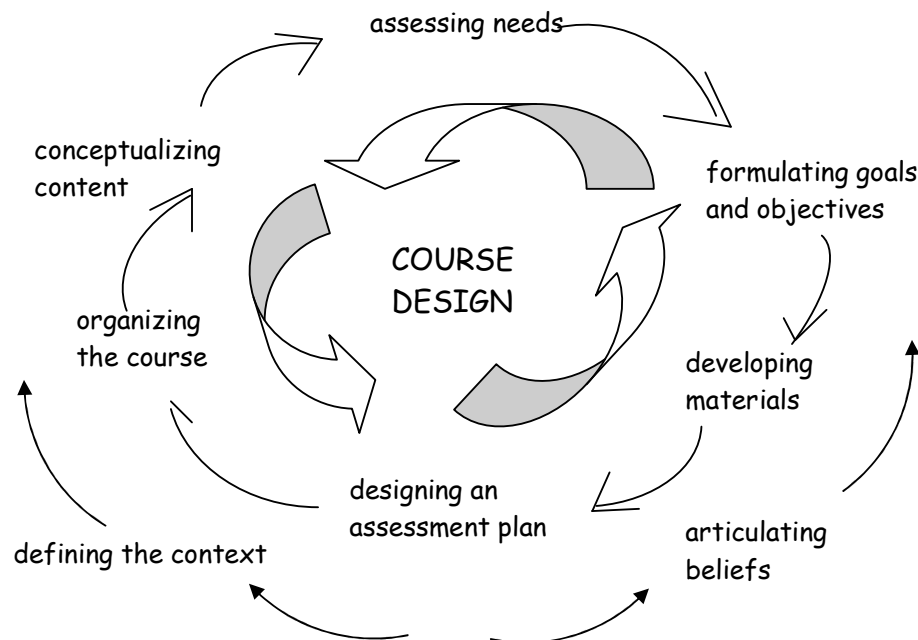


Figure 1: Framework of course development processes (Graves, 2000, p. 3)

### *Identifying the problems in the curriculum*

A problem-solving model of change starts with identifying a problem, followed by consulting with potential adopters to spot potential solutions, modifying the proposed solutions, organizing for the development of whatever supporting resources are necessary (e.g. teacher training), implementing the solutions on a trial basis, and evaluating the solutions when enough experience has been gained and modifying the solutions (Markee, 1997, p.175-176). The problems can be identified through interviews with students and/or teachers, questionnaires, checklists, student evaluation forms, learner diaries, and meetings. A combination of processes in both the problem-solving model and in Richard's model as explained above will be used in this study. In this study, first, problems in the existing curriculum will be identified followed by a needs assessment.

### *Identifying the needs of students*

According to many researchers, the starting point for curriculum development is needs analysis (Nunan, 1988b; Pratt, 1997; Richards, 2001). Brown (1995) defines needs analysis as “the activities involved in gathering information that will meet the learning needs of a particular group of students” (p. 35). Richards (1984, p. 5) suggests three purposes of needs analysis: it provides a means of obtaining wider input into the content, design and implementation of a language program; it can be used in developing goals, objectives and content; and it can provide data for reviewing and evaluating an existing program.

In order to find out the general profile of the learners, various types of biographical data, including the students’ proficiency level, age, educational background, previous language courses, nationality, marital status, the length of time spent in the target culture, and previous, current and intended occupation are collected. Information about their preferred length and intensity of a course, the preferred learning arrangement, preferred methodology, learning styles and general purpose in coming to class can also be collected (Nunan, 1988b).

Brown (1995) suggests three basic steps in conducting a needs analysis: Making decisions, gathering information, and using the information. In the first step, decisions about who will be involved in the needs analysis, what types of information should be gathered, and which points of view should be taken are made. In the second step, different types of questions to be asked (problems, priorities, abilities, attitudes, and solutions), and types of instruments to be used (i.e. exiting information, tests, observations, interviews, meetings, questionnaires, discourse analysis, text analysis) should be considered and the most appropriate ones can be

chosen and used to collect data. In the last step, according to Richards (2001), the results of needs analysis can be used as the basis for setting goals and objectives, in developing tests and other assessments, while selecting appropriate teaching methods, as a basis for syllabus development, and as part of a program report.

One source of opinion is students, as they often have valuable insights into curriculum. The other primary source of data is teachers, as they can monitor the different reactions of learners to different instructional contents and they have knowledge of the educational needs of students (Pratt, 1997). Program administrators also have an important role in a needs assessment as they are one group of people who will eventually be required to act upon the analysis (Brown, 1995, p. 37).

#### *Specifying the goals and objectives*

The information gathered in a needs analysis should be transformed into utilizable statements which describe the aims of the program, that is goals and objectives (Brown, 1995). In order to explain goals and objectives, Graves (2000) uses the analogy of a journey, which is “the destination is the goal; the journey is the course. The objectives are the different points you pass through on the journey to the destination” (p.75). With this analogy, it is clear that without goals and objectives, the teachers might become confused and get lost during the journey, and at the end there is a risk of not arriving at the right destination. So this analogy shows how important setting goals and objectives is.

According to Brown (1995), goals are the general statements of program’s purposes and they should not be seen as permanent. A curriculum is often developed on the basis of goals and objectives. As the goals indicate what the learners should be able to do when they leave the program, they provide a starting point for writing



more specific statements about the ways of learning the program will address that is objectives. Objectives are defined as “specific statements that describe the particular knowledge, behaviors, and/or skills that the learner will be expected to know or perform at the end of a course of a program” (p.71). Once the objectives are achieved, the goal will also be reached as a goal is broken down into smaller units with objectives (Graves, 2000):

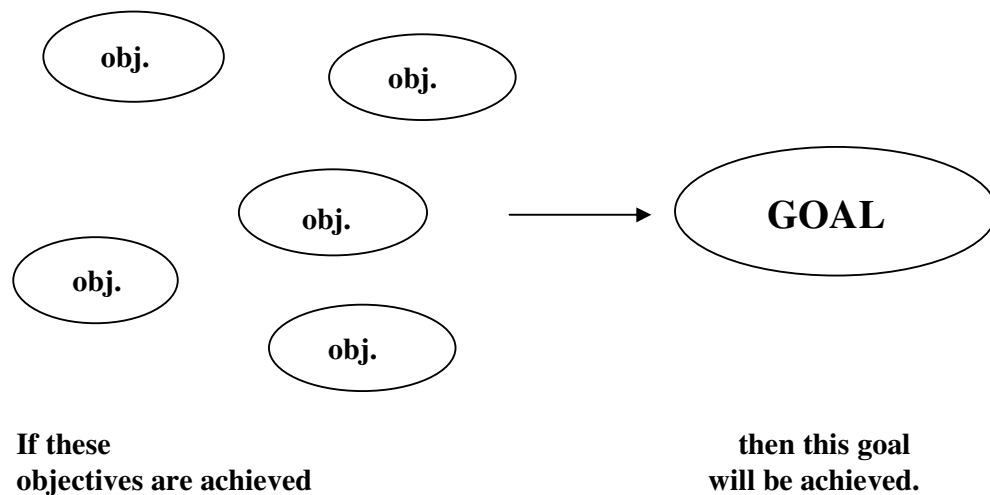


Figure 2: Cause and effect relationship between goals and objectives (Graves, 2000, p. 77).

Once the goals and objectives have been set, appropriate methodologies and teaching tools can be selected.

*Selecting the appropriate content, methodology and materials*

The area of curriculum which requires least prescription from the curriculum designer is the selection of instructional strategies. A wide variety of alternatives should be considered in the selection of instructional strategies. When deciding among those alternatives, students and teachers have important roles (Pratt, 1980).

The identification of learners for whom the curriculum is intended helps designers to select appropriate instructional content and methods. One of the factors which affects the design or effectiveness of curriculum is background variables, which include students' intellectual, emotional, and social development; educational progress, motivation, and attitude; background and aptitude in the subject; special interests and talents; anxiety level, personality and preferred learning style; age and health status; aspirations, career plans, and probabilities; parental expectations, home and family conditions; and nature of the community and the peer culture. If the students believe that the subject is useful and interesting for them, they will be ready to receive the instruction efficiently (Pratt, 1980 p. 270).

The teacher is also an important factor in the selection of appropriate strategies. The curriculum developer and the teacher should work in collaboration during the selection process. The new strategy should not be something which is imposed on the teacher. Although the initiative rests with the curriculum developer in many steps of curriculum design, the teachers should be the key decision makers in selecting instructional strategies as they are the ones who interact with students (Pratt, 1980).

As mentioned before, the process of content selection necessitates consultation and negotiation with students in order to identify the communicative needs of learners. This process starts with examining the learner data about the reasons for their attending the course, which can be translated into goals later. Next, the tasks and skills that can help students reach their language goals are selected. These can often be generalized across goals, courses and modules. In the third step, decisions about topic, settings, and interlocutors are made in order to contextualize

the tasks. The next step includes the decisions on linguistic elements such as the notions, structures, and lexis which students need to learn. Last, a sample number of specific objectives which are related to learner goals are produced. After completing this final task in the procedure, the contents can be sequenced (Nunan, 1988b).

### *Teacher training*

The fact that teacher training has an important role has been emphasized in the relevant literature. For example, Nunan (1988b) sees curriculum development largely as a matter of appropriate staff development. In addition, Linne (1999) analyzed tradition and change in a social institution, the education of elementary school teachers in Sweden in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, and she identified two significant periods of change in this period of time. Both of these periods of transformation corresponded with far-reaching alterations in the context of teacher training.

Without teacher training, problems may occur during the implementation of innovation. One of the obstacles that must now be overcome in many school systems is the confusion and disappointment which may result from the attempts of inadequately equipped teachers who plan and implement new curricula. Teachers who want to implement curricular changes should gain expertise in the subject: what to teach, the pedagogy (how to teach it), and design (how to adopt the curriculum) (Pratt, 1980).

A final reason why teacher training is a crucial need in the process of curricular change is that teachers are more eager to engage themselves in using an innovation if they have clearly understood what it is, consider it to be feasible, think that it applies to a real need, and believe that the advantages of the innovation

outweigh the costs of innovating in terms of time, energy and commitment (Markee, 1997).

### *Student training*

When a new strategy or approach is implemented into a curriculum, it is not only new for teachers but also new for students. Therefore, the students should be informed about the potential benefits they might gain from it. Students benefit more if the approach is explained to them. They will also feel that they have a stake in the success of the course if they are shown that their objective needs and subjective wants will be met through this innovation (Markee, 1997).

### *Teaching*

After the problems and needs of the students are identified, goals and objectives are written, appropriate teaching tools are selected, and the teachers and students are trained on those tools, they can be implemented in the classroom. All these elements of curriculum should serve teachers for doing their duty, teaching, in a better way. The term 'teaching' in a curriculum development process is used to indicate putting the curriculum into action at the classroom level, namely the delivery of instruction (Brown, 1995).

### *Evaluating*

Evaluation is defined as "the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of a curriculum and assess its effectiveness within the context of the particular institutions involved" (Brown, 1995, p. 218). The main reason for evaluating a curriculum is to find out the efficacy of the planning procedures employed, and also to assess whether the content and

objectives are appropriate. To do this, the evaluator needs to consider which elements of the curriculum (i.e. initial planning procedures, program goals and objectives, the selection and grading of content, materials and learning activities, teacher performance, assessment processes, and learner achievement) should be evaluated. The evaluator also needs to consider who should conduct the evaluation, the appropriate time that the evaluation will take place, and by what means it will be conducted. The place of evaluation in a curriculum development process and how it is related to the other elements of curriculum is illustrated in Figure 3 below:

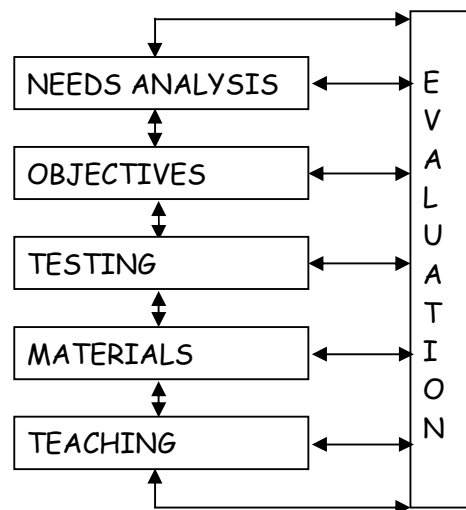


Figure 3: Brown's systematic approach to designing and maintaining language curriculum (Brown, 1995, p.20).

In fact, as in most cases needs analysis, setting goals and objectives, and delivery of instruction are happening at the same time, “the process of curriculum development is never finished” therefore, “the ongoing program evaluation ... is the glue that connects and holds all the elements [of the curriculum] together. In the absence of evaluation, the elements lack cohesion; if left in isolation, any one element may become pointless” (see Figure 3)(Brown, 1995, p. 217).

Different sources of opinions can be included in the evaluation process. At the local level, the participants of the evaluation process are generally only the teachers and students. Evaluation takes the form of informal monitoring by the teacher in cooperation with students. In order to ask the right questions to the right people in the evaluation process, there are a number of techniques or tools such as standardized tests of various sorts, questionnaires, observation schedules for classroom interaction, interview schedules, and learner diaries. Finally, evaluation should not be considered something which only takes place summatively, at the end of instruction. It should be happening throughout the course by informal monitoring (Nunan, 1988b). In brief, evaluation is the heart of the language curriculum design as it includes, connects, and gives meaning to all the other elements (Brown, 1995). In addition, program evaluation helps to decide about the future of the program, whether the program will maintain, should be expanded, needs to be revised or should be abandoned (Pratt, 1980).

## The Roles of Students, Administrators and Teachers in the Process of a Curricular Change

### *Roles of students*

One of the key groups of participants in a curriculum development process is students as their background and characteristics have a deep impact on the implementation of the curriculum (Hertzog, 1997). Therefore, before starting this process, it is necessary to gather as much data as possible about learners (Richards, 2001) and define and describe the learners for whom the curriculum is intended (Pratt, 1980). Learners' past language experiences, their degree of motivation to

learn English, their expectations for the program, their preferred types of learning approaches, their expectations for the roles of teachers, learners and materials and their beliefs on language teaching are some of the relevant learner factors in curriculum development projects (Richards, 2001).

In addition, learners' perceptions towards the curriculum are as important as all these factors in a curriculum development process. In their study, Brooker and MacDonald (1999, p. 84) claim that students' voices are mostly silent in curriculum making although the reason for the existence of curriculum is supposed to serve the interests and preferences of learners. They suggest that student representatives should participate in curriculum-making committees and it should be made sure that students' voices are considered in the meetings. They also suggest that in order to use the diversity of student reaction to a curriculum to update curriculum design, the perspectives of students, together with elements of their biographies, can be included in the evaluation reports as individual case studies. Consequently, by involving learners in ongoing curriculum development, students will perceive the course as more relevant, learn their own preferences, strengths and weaknesses, be more aware of what it is to be a learner, develop skills in 'learning how to learn' and be able to negotiate the curriculum better in the future (Nunan, 1988b).

#### *Roles of administrators*

Administrators also have an important role in a curricular change process (Hertzog, 1997; Markee, 1997; Pratt, 1980) because administrative and managerial support is needed in order for a localized curriculum model to operate effectively (Nunan, 1988b) and because major innovations usually require approval from a level above that of initiator e.g. a superintendent, a school board, state or provincial

department of education. It is recognized that there are at least five powerful reasons why administrators may be likely to oppose many changes. First, they aim to keep the state of the system steady and avoid troubles that can be caused by the change. Second, because of their high position in the hierarchy, they are more visible and vulnerable so they are not willing to approve any changes whose effects are uncertain. Third, they have to look at curricular decision making with finances in mind as innovations tend to cost money. Fourth, because of the feeling of professional pride, they may think that the administration would have itself thought of the innovation first if it were worthwhile. And fifth, they have to think of the two risks that they may face if the new curriculum has specific measurable outcomes: If it fails, the failure cannot be hidden, and if it succeeds there may be a demand for the same kind of accountability to be applied to other programs. Although administrators have all these concerns in their minds, their anxieties can be reduced by the change agents in a number of ways. The change agents should try to understand the decision-makers, approach them early, observe and use the proper communication channels, allow them to take credit for the innovation, use appropriate language, and use appropriate arguments (Pratt, 1980).

#### *Roles of teachers*

The central role of the teacher as a curriculum developer has been recognized in recent years (Nunan, 1988b). For example, in their study, Saez and Carretero (1998) observed that there is a shift in the role of teachers, which modifies the earlier image of a civil servant and emphasizes their role as designers of their curricula by reflecting the learning of their students and collaborating with their colleagues. The teacher is one of the curriculum workers who engages in curriculum planning in



varying degrees, on different occasions, generally under the leadership of a supervisor, and all teachers are involved in curriculum planning at the classroom level (Oliva, 1997).

Before implementing something new into a curriculum, it is important to analyze the profile of the teachers at that institution. For instance, some teachers can compensate for poor quality resources and materials they have to work with, whereas others may not be able to use the materials and resources effectively no matter how well they are designed. Some of the teacher factors which should be considered in the situation analysis are their backgrounds, language proficiency, teaching experience, skill and expertise, training and qualifications, morale and motivation, teaching styles, beliefs and principles, teaching loads and openness to change (Richards, 2001).

Teachers have many roles in the classroom, which can be helpful during the curricular change process. Some of them are: needs analyst, provider of student input, motivator, organizer and controller of student behavior, demonstrator of accurate language production, materials developer, monitor of students' learning, and counselor and friend (Brown, 1995). In addition, they have an important role in the selection of appropriate content, method, strategies or the teaching tools. Although the initiative rests with the curriculum developer, the most important decision-maker is the teacher in the selection of proper instructional strategies. After the selection process, teachers should be given enough time to become familiar with the innovation before integrating it in their classes. Administrators and designers should be aware of the fact that the expected results might be different from those intended, as it is being experienced for the first time. Teachers should therefore be ready for

their administrators' criticism and relieve the decision makers if they panic and want to abandon the program after the implementation (Pratt, 1980). Another important role of the teacher arises in the evaluation process as their feedback is of great value (Olson, 2002).

#### The Learner Centered Curriculum and Communicative Teaching Tools

Although learner centered curriculum and traditional curriculum development processes contain similar elements, which are planning, implementation and evaluation, there are major differences in the natures of these two curriculum development processes. The key difference between them is that the former includes collaboration between teachers and learners as students are incorporated in the decision-making process (Nunan, 1988b). In the traditional curriculum development process, key decisions about aims, materials and methodology are made before the teacher and students meet (Taba, 1962).

The process of developing a learner centered curriculum consists of three main steps. First, students' opinions and needs should be taken into consideration. As it is impossible to teach everything in the classroom because of time constraints, class time must be used as effectively as possible. Data collection about learners in order to specify their needs and preferences, as well as factual information such as their ages, educational background and proficiency levels is the first step in the learner-centered curriculum development process. Second, course content and objectives should be shaped and refined in cooperation with students during the early stages of the learning process. They should not be predetermined as the appropriate time to obtain the most valuable data about learners is after relationships between teacher and learners have been established. Third, after the students are provided

with learning experiences, learners should be encouraged to reflect upon their learning experiences. This process does not have to be complex; it might suffice to ask whether they liked an activity or not. Last, the course evaluation process in a learner-centered curriculum takes the form of an informal monitoring of teachers and learners during the learning process, unlike in the traditional curriculum models where evaluation is identified with testing and is carried out at the end of the learning process (Nunan, 1988b).

As the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) provided impetus for learner-centered language teaching, the learner centered curriculum should also apply to the principles of CLT, some of which are: Using a language in order to communicate helps students to learn that language, the aim of the class activities should be authentic and meaningful communication, one of the most important aspects of communication is fluency, communication consists of integrated language skills, and the learning process involves creative construction and trial and error (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). A variety of communicative teaching tools which can be implemented in a learner centered curriculum such as drama, games, role-plays, simulations, discussions, debates, portfolios, or presentations have been prepared to support these principles of CLT.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, literature on the steps of curricular change has been reviewed. Basic concepts and key points that are important for the implementation of this study together with the related research have also been underlined. The next chapter will present the methodology of this study, which is conducted to reveal insights about a curricular change process.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to provide insights about the process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context by identifying the problems of the existing curriculum and the needs of the students, setting goals, selecting an appropriate teaching tool, training teachers on and preparing students for a new teaching tool to be implemented into the curriculum, piloting the new tool, and evaluating it by investigating students', teachers' and administrators' attitudes towards that tool. In the study, the answers to the following research questions were investigated and reported:

1. What are teachers' and students' attitudes towards the new learning tool which is intended to be implemented into the curriculum?
2. What are the administrators', teachers' and students' attitudes towards implementing the new learning tool into the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign languages?
3. What insights does this study reveal about the process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context?

This chapter outlines the methodology selected for this study and explains the rationale for selecting such methodology. The sections below describe the participants and the setting, the instruments, the data collection procedures, and finally data analysis.

### The Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages (AKU SFL), which is responsible for teaching English to incoming undergraduate students. AKU SFL is a newly founded institution and it has only been two years since they have started teaching English preparatory classes. The preparatory classes refer to the intensive English courses given to the students who have been accepted into a department at the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences at AKU based on the National University Exam, but have not been able to pass the AKU English Proficiency Exam given at the beginning of the academic year. Students who study at the Department of Business Administration (English) will study their courses in 100% English when they go to their departments. On the other hand, students who study at the departments of Business Administration (Turkish), Economics, International Trade, and Public Finance will be exposed to 30% English when they study their content lessons. In 2006-2007, there were 427 students studying English in 16 preparatory classes, 25 of which were students who had failed to pass the AKU English Proficiency Exam for a second time and were repeating the preparatory class. There were five administrators at AKU SFL, but four of them were also teaching preparatory classes. In addition to these four administrators, there were ten instructors who were teaching preparatory classes in the 2006-2007 academic year. Among these fourteen teachers, nine of them were between 23 and 30 years old and the other five were between 30 and 47 years old. Thus, it can be said that most of the teachers were quite young. Again among these fourteen teachers, eight of them had 0-5 years of experience, two of them had 6-10 years of experience and four of them had 10-30 years of experience.

English language teaching at the preparatory classes was practiced at two different levels in the 2006-2007 academic year: A and B. There were 277 A level students and 50 B Level students. A level students start the academic year at the beginner level whereas B level students are assumed to start the academic year at the pre-intermediate level. The students of these A and B level classes are both supposed to reach the upper-intermediate level by the end of the academic year.

There are two English courses given to students in preparatory classes: The Main Course, and the Skills lessons. Both lessons are conducted by making use of chosen books. In the Main Course lessons, the Pathfinder series was used. In the Skills lessons, the books *Get Ready to Write*, *Northstar Introductory Listening & Speaking*, *Northstar Introductory Reading & Writing* and *Northstar Basic Reading & Writing* were used. The curriculum did not include any alternative learning tools such as portfolios, response journals or project work. Presentations were supposed to have been implemented for the first time in the curriculum of the 2006-2007 academic year, but were not used.

The participants of this study were 12 teachers, three of whom were also administrators and one of whom was the participant teacher, 25 students, and the researcher. In order to keep students', administrators' and teachers' identities confidential, they were given new names. The first group of participants in this study was two administrators, two teachers, and two students, who voluntarily participated in the interviews which were conducted to identify the problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of the students. The second group of the participants was the 12 instructors at AKU SFL. After attending a workshop about the new teaching tool to be implemented in the curriculum (project work), they were all given

questionnaires. Three of the instructors were also administrators. Then, two teachers and two administrators were interviewed individually. The administrators were asked to answer the questions from an administrator's point of view during the interviews.

One volunteer teacher, who was 30 years old, held a BA in ELT and had 2 years experience in teaching, participated in the process of piloting the the new teaching tool during his regular class hours. This volunteer participant teacher, apart from the other teachers, had a crucial role in this study, because he was the one who really experienced the process of piloting. Therefore, his attitudes towards the new tool and whether to implement it in the curriculum carried great importance for the results of the study. Participation of a volunteer teacher is necessary as piloting requires negotiation and collaboration between the researcher and the participant teacher.

Another group of participants was the 25 students who took part in the piloting of the new teaching tool. After the participant teacher agreed to take part in the study, one of the classes he was already teaching was chosen randomly. One intact group of pre-intermediate level students participated in the study. As this study was not intended to explore anything concerning the level of students, the level of the class was selected at random as well. Four volunteer students kept diaries during the process of piloting and four volunteer students were interviewed at the end of the piloting process. One of the students who kept learner diaries was also participated in the interview. Questionnaires were also distributed to all the students to assess their feelings and opinions about the new tool.

I, as an instigator of this possible curricular change, was also a participant of the study and kept a journal during the whole process. As I had been working in

AKU SFL for 2 years, I had insights about the efforts for curriculum development in a newly founded institution, which did not bring about the desired results. Based on my observations over the last two years, I tried to implement procedures and steps that I felt were lacking during the previous curricular change process. These steps were identifying the problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of the students, setting the goals, selecting the new teaching tool, teacher training, preparing the students for the new tool, piloting the new tool, and evaluating it before making changes in the curriculum. As an instructor in this institution, I will have the opportunity to make use of the results of this study during the curriculum development processes in upcoming years.

### Instruments

The instruments used to gather data for this study were questionnaires, interviews, learner diaries kept by volunteer students, journals kept by the participant teacher and the researcher, and observations.

### *Questionnaires*

Two sets of questionnaires were used in this study in order to find quantitative answers for the first and second research questions. The questionnaires were adapted from Ghaith (2001). The first set of questionnaires (see Appendix C), which were distributed to the teachers after the teacher training session, determined their attitudes towards the new teaching tool and whether they would like to use it in the following years, in other words, whether they would like to see it implemented in the curriculum or not. The questionnaires were only distributed to the 12 teachers who attended the teacher training session. Out of 12 teachers, three of whom were also



administrators, 11 of them turned in their questionnaires. The questions were not translated into Turkish, as the language level of the questions was not above that of the teachers.

The second set of questionnaires (see Appendices K and L) was distributed to the participant students at the end of the piloting process to determine their attitudes towards the new language learning tool and whether they would like to experience it again in their language learning process. The questions were translated into Turkish because the level of the students was below the level of English used in the original questionnaire. There were both open-ended and closed-ended questions in the questionnaires. Questionnaires were not piloted with students because data gathered from students who had not experienced the new tool before would not be reliable. Similarly, distributing the questionnaires to the students who attended the piloting would not have been a good idea as they would then have had to answer the same questions twice. For general questions of content and clarity, the questionnaires were piloted and examined by other MA TEFL students.

### *Interviews*

Even though interviews are difficult to administer in a limited time frame and for larger groups, they provide more detailed information than questionnaires (Richards, 2001). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used in this study in order to provide relatively rich and different qualitative data and get at deeper meanings and understandings than the questionnaires.

While administering interviews in order to identify the problems and needs of students in a curricular change process, it is recommended to use a *triangular approach*, which is gathering information from two or more sources, as using only

one source of information might be incomplete (Richards, 2001). For that reason, in this interview process, data were collected from three different sources, namely administrators, teachers and students. The data collected from the first set of interviews (See Appendix A) helped to determine the problems in the existing curriculum and identify the needs of the students. Having written the goals based on those needs of the students and having considered the benefits of project work, a new teaching tool was proposed by the researcher to the teachers. Then, an informal interview was held with three administrators and nine teachers to decide about the new teaching tool.

The second set of interviews was conducted with three volunteer teachers and two administrators after the teacher training session, in order to learn their ideas and feelings about the new teaching tool and about the appropriateness of implementing it in the curriculum. Planning sessions via meetings, phone calls, and the internet were also conducted with the participant teacher to plan the piloting process.

After a week-long pilot of the new tool, four volunteer students were interviewed in order to collect data about their opinions and feelings about the new language learning tool and whether they would like to experience it again in their preparatory classes. First, as a warm-up, students were asked some biographical questions about their ages, hometowns, departments and so on. Then, their general attitudes towards English as a foreign language and the lessons which were being conducted at AKU SFL were asked. After that, their opinions about the usefulness of the new tool and the piloting process were asked. Last, they were asked about whether they would like to see it as one part of the curriculum.

The last interview was conducted with the participant teacher at the end of the piloting in order to learn his feelings and opinions about the process. The language used in the interviews, English or Turkish, was decided on according to the preferences of the interviewees. All interviews were conducted in Turkish and tape-recorded. For reporting purposes these interviews were later transcribed by the researcher.

### *Learner diaries*

Journals kept by the students are very useful data collection instruments in a curricular change process as they are compatible with student centered instruction, and less complex to understand and use. Through the journals, negotiation is enhanced in the ESL courses. Moreover, they enable students to ask questions, comment on class content and evaluate tasks. They also provide feedback about how the tasks were conducted. In addition, they help teachers to communicate with students who cannot ask any questions in the class. Furthermore, they allow teachers to see the problems when they occur so that the teachers can find appropriate solutions either for individual students or for the whole class (Markee, 1997).

In order to make the results of the questionnaires more meaningful, learner diaries were also incorporated in this study and contributed to answering the first research question. The researcher asked volunteer students to keep diaries in which they wrote their ideas and feelings from the first day to the last day of piloting. The students were allowed to keep their diaries either in Turkish or in English. Two students kept them in Turkish, one of them kept it in English, and one student started to keep it in English, but after a few days she wrote in Turkish. The researcher explained to the volunteer students how to keep the diaries and what to write in them.

They were asked to write what they did that day, how they did it, and how they felt. The diaries were collected and read regularly by the researcher. These diaries were a very useful data collection instrument for this study as they helped to collect qualitative data to see whether and how the feelings and opinions of students changed during the piloting process. In addition, because the new tool required students to work outside the classroom, learner diaries provided valuable data about the full process, which cannot be observed during the regular class hours by the teacher. Moreover, they enabled the researcher to learn the ideas of introverted students.

### *Journals*

Two journals were kept in this study. The first one was kept by the participant teacher. He was asked to write his feelings and opinions about the piloting process and problems, if any, that he encountered during the piloting process and his recommendations for avoiding and resolving these problems. With this journal, valuable data were gathered, as the teacher experienced the real process.

The researcher also kept a journal throughout the study in order to collect qualitative data about her own ideas on the process of trying to implement change in a curriculum. In the journal, the researcher drew conclusions on the feelings and ideas of teachers and students expressed during informal discussions or observed during the piloting sessions.

### *Observations*

All the lessons in which the new learning tool was conducted was attended by the researcher to make sure the teacher followed the lesson plan as agreed upon and to get a feeling for the classroom atmosphere. A total of seven hours of lessons and the final presentation were observed. The lessons were neither video-taped, nor audio-taped. During the observations, the researcher took notes in her journal. The observations paved the way for revising the lesson plans according to the real classroom situation.

### Data Collection Procedures

The purpose and research design of this study were explained to the instructors of AKU SFL to get their approval. In order to fulfill the aims of the research, the following steps of curricular change were applied as the research design of this study:

Research design of this study is illustrated in figure 4:

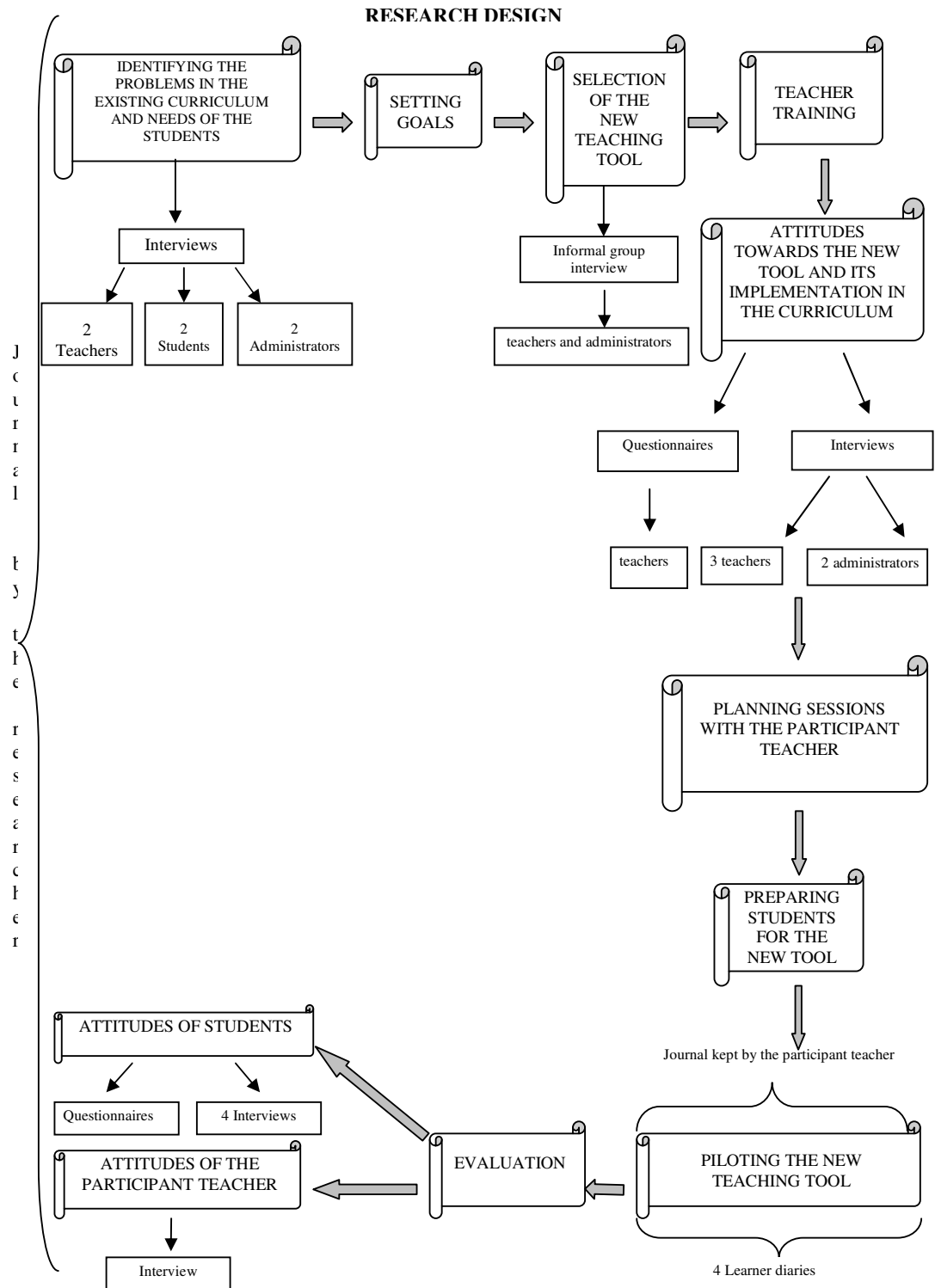


Figure 4: Research Design

### *Identifying the problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of the students*

In order to find out the attitudes of students, administrators and teachers towards the way lessons were conducted and the existing implementation of curriculum, five interviews were conducted in early January. First an interview was conducted with two administrators. The other interviews were conducted with two teachers and two students individually. All of them were very enthusiastic to participate as they also wanted to solve the problems stemming from the curriculum, which they thought should be solved as soon as possible. Valuable data were gathered about the needs and expectations of students, whether the lessons could meet students' expectations and needs, the ways lessons were conducted, problems about the curriculum and alternative solutions for these problems. Identifying the needs and expectations of students and problems about curriculum is the first step in starting to think of a curricular change process.

### *Setting the goals*

There were not any written goals at AKU SFL. Therefore, after the needs of the students were identified, goals were written by the researcher. Stern's framework (1992) was used while writing the goals as it has transfer goals, which makes it different from other frameworks. After the goals were written, they were approved by the administrators of AKU SFL.

### *Selection of the new teaching tool*

According to the relevant literature, when the goals are written, an appropriate teaching tool can be selected. By taking the suggestions of the teachers, the students and the administrators' suggestions, needs of students, and the goals into

consideration, I proposed a new teaching tool to teachers. As Pratt (1980) suggests, new strategies should not be something with a limited range of conventional techniques or something which is imposed on the teacher by the curriculum developer. Conversely, it should be flexible enough for the teacher to apply creatively to generate new and more effective approaches. Therefore, an informal group interview with nine teachers and three administrators was conducted to take their opinions into consideration to select an appropriate teaching tool for our students. During this interview, they discussed and agreed that the teaching tool that I proposed could be a useful teaching tool for the students in preparatory classes. However, most of them stated that they wanted to conduct that tool in their classes but did not know how to do it. After this informal interview the need for a teacher training session on the new tool arose.

#### *Teacher training*

“If teachers are to be the principal agents of curriculum development, they need to develop a range of skills which go beyond classroom management and instruction. Curriculum development will, therefore, be largely a matter of appropriate staff development” (Nunan, 1988b, p.171). In order to raise teachers’ and administrators’ awareness towards the new teaching tool, a teacher training workshop was conducted by the researcher. Nine teachers and three administrators (who are also teachers) attended the workshop, which lasted approximately three hours.



*Attitudes towards the new teaching tool and curricular change*

Questionnaires were distributed after the workshop to gather data on teachers' perceptions about that teaching tool and whether it seemed appropriate to implement it in the curriculum or not. In addition, interviews were held with two administrators and three volunteer teachers individually to learn whether they were open to curricular change in general and implementing the new tool in the curriculum.

*Planning sessions with the participant teacher*

Before the piloting, planning sessions were held with the participant teacher to negotiate how the piloting would be done. These sessions were conducted via e-mails, messenger, phone calls and face to face.

*Preparing students for the new tool*

As students did not have any idea about the new teaching tool, a session which took approximately half an hour was conducted before the piloting started. It was presented by the participant teacher. In the presentation, the new tool was introduced to students, what they were expected to do during the piloting process was explained and how they could benefit from the new teaching tool in their foreign language learning process was made clear so that they could believe in what they were doing and be motivated.

### *Piloting the new teaching tool*

As the piloting of the new teaching tool was conducted in the regular class hours and there was a heavy load in the existing syllabus, the time allotted for the piloting was limited to one week. Before starting the piloting, the lesson plans of the piloting sessions were prepared by the researcher by taking the participant teacher's opinions into consideration. The participant teacher started piloting after he informed the students about the new learning tool.

### *Evaluation*

In the evaluation part, data were gathered from the students, the participant teacher and the researcher. Learner diaries were kept by four volunteer students in order to learn about their feelings and opinions during the process. In addition, data were gathered about attitudes of the students who were involved in the study through four individual interviews after the piloting. One of the interviewees was also one of the diary-keepers. Moreover, the students were given questionnaires at the end of the task to learn how useful they found the new learning tool and whether they would like to do it regularly during their process of language learning. An interview was held with the participant teacher on his feelings and opinions about using the new tool at the end of the piloting. For the same purpose, he was asked to keep a journal during the piloting process. A journal about the reflections of the researcher was kept throughout the whole curricular change process.

### Data Analysis

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were used. There were four sets of data used in the data analysis procedures: Questionnaires, interviews, learner diaries and journals. The data in this study were analyzed following the steps of the research design.

Data collected from the two sets of questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively with descriptive statistics using SPSS. Other sets of data gathered through interviews, learner diaries and journals were analyzed qualitatively. The open-ended section of the questionnaires where the students and the teachers wrote their opinions were read and categorized according to their topics and translated into English.

The audio-taped interviews were transcribed and were translated into English. Then, they were grouped according to their topics.

The learner diaries kept by the volunteer students were also examined. They were read and specific parts were highlighted with different color pens in order to categorize them according to their topics. The ones written in Turkish were translated into English. Samples of learner diaries are available in appendix G.

The last step was to examine the journals kept by the participant teacher and the researcher. Their contents were categorized in terms of two topics. The first one was about the process of piloting the new tool and the second one was about the process of curricular change. Samples of these journals can be found in appendices F and M.

Finally, the information gathered from qualitative and quantitative data sets were related to each other in order to make the whole picture more comprehensible.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, general information about the purpose of the study was provided and the research questions were restated. Information about the setting, the participants, instruments used, research procedure and the methods of data analysis were detailed. The results of the data analysis will be presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

### Overview of the Study

This study was conducted to investigate the administrators', teachers' and students' attitudes towards implementing a new learning tool into the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages (AKU SFL) and to explore teachers' and students' attitudes in general towards that tool in a university EFL program. It also provided insights about the process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context by identifying the problems in an existing curriculum and needs of the students, setting goals based on those needs and problems, selecting an appropriate teaching tool, training the administrators, teachers and students on the new teaching tool to be implemented into the curriculum, piloting and evaluating it.

The participants of this study were 12 teachers (three of whom were also administrators) and one class of 25 students together with their teacher. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, learner diaries, classroom observation and journals. Questionnaires were given to 12 teachers after the teacher training session (11 were returned) and 25 students after piloting the new tool. In this study, a total of 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, students and the participant teacher. Four volunteer students kept learner diaries during the piloting process. The participant teacher also kept a journal in this process. In addition, the researcher kept a journal throughout the process of curricular change. Qualitative data were analyzed by synthesizing and grouping them and quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS.

This chapter is devoted to presenting the data and analyzing the results. This chapter is divided into two sections: (a) a brief description of the data analysis procedures, and (b) the presentation of the results.

#### Data Analysis Procedures

The data in this study were analyzed following the eight steps of the research design as was illustrated in chapter 3 (page 37):

*1. Identifying the problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of*

*students:* The semi-structured interviews with two students, two teachers and two administrators were analyzed qualitatively. The results were categorized according to current problems in the curriculum, and needs of the students.

*2. Setting goals:* After the identified needs of students were analyzed, some goals were set by the researcher. These were then approved by the administrators through informal interviews. Information in the journal of the researcher was also analyzed in this step.

*3. Selecting the new teaching tool:* Various teaching tools were considered and it was seen that the goals of project work and the goals set in the previous step matched. In this step, the opinions of nine teachers and three administrators were asked through an informal group interview. Data in the journal kept by the researcher were again analyzed.

*4. Teacher training:* Three teachers' and two administrators' attitudes about training teachers before implementing a curricular change were

explored through interviews which were conducted after the training session, and the data were analyzed qualitatively.

*5. Attitudes towards the new tool and its implementation in the curriculum:* In this step, the data from questionnaires given to the teachers were analyzed quantitatively, and data from interviews with three teachers and two administrators were analyzed qualitatively.

*6. Preparing students for the new tool:* Data about this session gathered through classroom observation, and the journal kept by the researcher, were analyzed qualitatively.

*7. Piloting the new tool:* Data were collected in the process of piloting the project work task through the learner diaries kept by four volunteer students, a journal kept by the participant teacher, classroom observation and the journal kept by the researcher. They were read and specific parts were highlighted with different color pens in order to categorize them according to topics.

*8. Evaluation:* For the evaluation of the teaching tool, the data gathered through questionnaires distributed to 25 students were analyzed statistically. Then, the data collected through interviews with four students and the participant teacher were analyzed. The data gathered through the four learner diaries and two journals were also used in this step. They were analyzed and grouped according to different topics.

## Results

### *Problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of students*

In order to identify the problems in the existing curriculum of preparatory classes at AKU SFL, four individual interviews with two students and two teachers, and a group interview with two administrators were conducted. At this stage, the results were categorized in two groups: (a) the problems in the existing curriculum, and (b) the needs of the students.

#### *The problems in the existing curriculum*

After the data collected through interviews were analyzed, problems within the current curriculum were identified. The problems can be categorized as those concerning the teaching approach, the materials, the lack of goals and objectives, and previous negative experiences with curricular change:

#### *Problems concerning the teaching approach*

When the teachers and administrators were asked about the lessons, most criticized that the lessons were mostly teacher-centered. However, they were all aware of this problem and they try to do their best to make lessons more learner-centered:

Administrator 1: We are trying to do our best! We are trying to make it more student-centered but we don't know to what extent we can achieve it.

Teacher 2: We want the lessons to be more student-centered. I, for example, want to do it. However, we cannot expect something from our students if we don't model it. ...It is also really hard to make the students speak or make the lessons student-centered. ...For student-centered learning, the students should be more aware about language learning; I mean they will have more chances when they really want to learn and then they can take advantage of them [the student-centered activities] appropriately. However, we cannot conduct lessons as student-centered at the moment.



It is clear that these two and the other teachers know that the lessons are mostly teacher-centered, and they, and the rest, are trying to solve this problem individually in their lessons as much as they can. It is obvious that they are not pleased with the current situation and are enthusiastic to improve it as they believe that student-centered activities are beneficial for students:

Teacher 1: As determined at the beginning of the term, only the books are used. We haven't used any extra materials so far. When I teach, I am trying to relate it to the students' lives as much as I can.

Teacher 2: They (student-centered activities) add to the students' proficiency. What I think about this issue is whenever I try to do something myself, I realize that I learn more. So in fact, I believe that they can learn more when the lessons are student-centered and when they make an effort themselves.

In addition, the students are aware of the fact that they learn more when they make an effort themselves, as can be seen in the following excerpt:

Student 2: How can a lesson in which the teacher talks and students listen be fruitful? If you study and work yourself, it will be more beneficial for you. You should make an effort. For example, you should look unknown words up in the dictionary and you should use them in sentences in related contexts, then you can easily retain them and you learn more. How much can you improve if only the teacher talks and you listen?

When all the transcriptions are considered, it can be seen that despite administrators' and teachers' desire to make lessons more student centered and the students' desire to be exposed to more student centered activities, the lessons in the prep classes at AKU SFL are mostly conducted in a teacher-centered way. Moreover, the main reason for this is that the only teaching tool they use is the book. At this point, problems about the materials arise.

*Problems about the materials*

The first set of interviews revealed that there are certain problems about the materials used in prep classes: (a) poor selection process of the books, (b) the content of the books, (c) the lack of alternative teaching tools, (d) obligation of using a single teaching tool in all of the classes.

The first problem about the materials stems from the poor selection process of the books that are used in prep classes:

Administrator 1: ... there are some shortcomings in the program of the Skills lesson, ... because we couldn't find a very good, appropriate book for this lesson. We didn't like the first book when we started to use it. We couldn't find a nice series of books which would meet our needs.

Teacher 1: It is clear that the selection of books is very important. ... The situation in the Skills lessons has been very bad right from the beginning of the first term and it was because of the book. We started the first term with a book called *Get Ready to Write* which requires students to write sentences in the simple present tense before they learned verb to be.

As the above quoted transcripts display, the teachers and administrators are aware of the problem of selecting suitable books for their context. It is also clear that the set of books which are currently used in the Skills lessons are not well liked by the teachers and have not proven effective so far.

Another shortcoming about the books is their content. The topics in the book which is used in the Skills lesson are not interesting for students, as can be seen in the following lines:

Administrator 2: The lessons may be more student-centered in the Main Course lessons. However, in the Skills lessons, they become more teacher-centered because of the topics in the book. Sometimes the students don't have any idea about those topics.... As a matter of fact, it is completely about whether they appeal to students' interests or not. ... the topics are somehow different in Northstar, students need our guidance and support.

Student 2: In the book, there are some topics which we don't have any idea about. The teacher wants us to speak about it but how can we speak? There are subjects which have nothing to do with us, for example, things I don't know anything about even in Turkish.

The primary problem in the Skills lesson appears to be that the books chosen are not appropriate for the students and the topics in them do not appeal to their interests.

Another important problem about the existing curriculum related to materials reported by the interviewees is the lack of different teaching tools other than the book:

Administrator 2: The curriculum depends completely on the book...

Teacher 1: We don't have anything other than the book and the CD.

Teacher 2: The lessons are heavily dependent on the book. I don't know whether it is right or wrong; it is a question mark. It might be good to some extent as there is a unity among the classes. They are dependent on the book as I said. ...I guess it restricts everything. The teacher knows everything s/he will do in the class. I can say that it makes teachers lazy as everything is already predetermined, so you don't need to be creative. Therefore, depending on the book is not so good. Or when you want to include something different, then you cannot keep up with the program.

Student 1: ...The lessons are mostly conducted with the book. We don't usually use anything other than the book.

Student 2: It is so boring in terms of the content of the syllabus, very boring for us. Always the same things. Only the book. We don't have any other alternatives, actually. So we have to follow it, but it is very boring.

The excerpts above taken from the interviews demonstrate that the only teaching tool which is used in the preparatory classes at AKU SFL is the book. Both the teachers and the administrators are aware of this problem and the students are complaining about it as the lessons become monotonous and boring for them.

Their opinions and experiences also reveal, however, that they are all enthusiastic about using a different teaching/learning tool:

Administrator 2: We can enrich the lessons with some audio and visual materials.

Teacher 1: Some time ago, the students were supposed to write a postcard. The following week was Bayram. A colleague of mine and I thought that the students could send us postcards for the Bayram and I received 12 postcards. It was great! I mean, rather than making them bring blank sheets to the class and write a postcard script, we made it more authentic.

Teacher 2: I would like to use different teaching tools, however I am concerned whether the conditions are appropriate for that.

Student 1: ... For example, I said to my teacher that if we want to improve our speaking skill, we can specify a topic altogether as a class, we can discuss about it and everybody can participate. There might also be opposing ideas so that we can improve our speaking skill. ...For example, we watched a movie. We watched it in Mustafa teacher's lesson. It was very beneficial for us. He gave the subtitles and we looked up the words in the subtitles in the dictionary. So before watching the movie, we studied and we learned 200-250 words. It was sensible. We watched it with subtitles and we understood the film.

Student 2: ...We watched a movie in English and studied the words we didn't know in the movie. We did something creative in terms of learning new words. We learned 150-200 words. It was great!

As can clearly be seen from these excerpts, not only the teachers and administrators but also the students are very enthusiastic about using different teaching tools in the lessons to make the classes more colorful, enjoyable, interesting and fruitful. During the interviews, the teachers also suggested using some different tools:

Administrator 1: Rather than the activities which are conducted in the classroom, it might be better if we could do things outside of the class, like watching movies. These clubs should be permanent, not spontaneously decided. I wish that activities like a cinema club, a speaking club or a reading club could be conducted on certain days of the week.

Administrator 2: Maybe we can use drama more often...

Teacher 1: As I believe it is much better if I use the methods I learned, I try to use drama as much as I can.

Teacher 2: We can try new activities in which students will make an effort themselves and then present it in front of the class or in a group.

Student 1: For example, I thought that we would make some projects in the prep class, however we haven't done any so far. Projects are very beneficial in terms of vocabulary and speaking. If the topic is also interesting, I will enjoy making a project.

Student 2: ...For example, we can speak and discuss some interesting topics such as technology or some up-to-date topics. I don't know, we can prepare something without using only the book. Fun and learning can go together.

The above excerpts show that the administrators, teachers and students are open to using different teaching tools and they have some opinions in their minds. Their suggestions include doing some activities outside the classroom, drama, projects and discussions. However, in order to include these tools in the program, there are some other issues which should be considered. For example, since teaching tools need to be used in all of the classes according to the unity principle, the materials which will be used should be prepared by a certain group of teachers. New materials require time and people to prepare them, both of which are problems at AKU SFL.

One further problem about the materials hinted at earlier by Teacher 2 is that the administrators feel strongly that there should be a unity among all the teachers and among all the classes in order to be fair towards the students. Obeying this principle hinders using various types of teaching tools in the classrooms as it requires significant work for a teacher to find or prepare a different teaching tool and then share it with all the other teachers. Because the administrators strongly believe in this

principle, the teachers cannot use different teaching tools although they want to use them in their classes:

Administrator 2: Of course we can include some different teaching tools in our lessons but they should be conducted in all of the classes and in order to do that we should have an extra program or take an action before that.

Administrator 1: We should state it in the program. ...We should conduct them altogether...We know that the more we keep in touch with our colleagues, the better; but we don't have time for that. ...Whenever I conduct a different activity, which also worked well in the classroom; I tell my colleagues to do it, too. We share it but sometimes there is a lack of cooperation among the teachers who have to work in two different buildings. Therefore, I have to share it with the teachers here in this building.

Teacher 2: I believe that new tools are very beneficial but we have such problems. ...In all the prep classes, the same teaching tools should be used. So when I want to conduct such an activity, it will be something out of the ordinary and there won't be a unity among the classes.

The fact that any new material needs to be used in all of the classes means that it must first be stated in the curriculum:

Administrator 1: During the whole summer holiday, the syllabus of the following year should be prepared very well and also should be explained to the teachers as a seminar and during the academic year and there should be teacher training sessions.

Administrator 2: I can see these facts clearly. Last year there were ten classes and we were all here in this building. We could see each other and we were in touch with each other. Whenever one of us conducted a nice activity in his/her class, all the others conducted it, too. Therefore, there was a unity. Now I see that there might be some unexpected things happening at any time. For example, as the number of our students increased, the number of the classrooms in this building was not enough. Hence, some lessons are now conducted in another building. Such things should not affect us and in order to achieve it, I believe that a very well planned curriculum should be prepared. If you remember, last year when we saw any deficiencies in the book, we used to distribute the copies of the material which we thought could be beneficial to the teachers and we would conduct it altogether. However, we cannot do it now. When we do it in the classes in this building, the students in the other building will not experience that

activity. Also, if the teachers in the other building use a different material, the students in this building will lack it. In conclusion, a very detailed and very well planned curriculum should be prepared.

The last excerpt in particular pinpoints the key reason behind many of the problems. In the 2006-2007 academic year, the students were separated into two different buildings and there was a resulting lack of communication among the teachers. In order not to violate the principle of unity, they were told to avoid using different tools in their classes, and to use only the book. If alternative materials are to be used, it will require preparing a very detailed curriculum including in it all the materials and teaching tools so that all the students can be exposed to the same tools. It is also clear from the transcripts that after writing a very well planned curriculum, the teachers should be informed about it and teacher training sessions should be conducted.

*The lack of goals and objectives*

As AKU SFL is a newly founded institution, there are not any written goals and objectives. However, the teachers and administrators have some expectations from students in their minds:

Teacher 2: ... in the Skills lesson, I would expect my students to speak more and to increase their proficiency level. ... In this case, even if we don't have any written goals for the Skills lesson, we cannot achieve the goals that I have in my mind for this lesson.

Data collected from teachers and administrators show that there is a proficiency level that they want students to achieve at the end of the academic year. Therefore, they all have some expectations from students. However, there are not any determined program purposes and aims. The lack of goals and objectives leads teachers to use only the course book and the aim of teachers becomes completing the book by a certain time.

*Past experience with curricular change*

With all this awareness of the problems and good will, past attempts to improve things have still been problematic. At the beginning of the 2006-2007 academic year, “presentations” as a class activity were introduced into the written curriculum, but ended up not actually being used during the term. When I asked the reasons for this, it seemed there were three main explanations: Lack of time and preparation, lack of teacher training, and insufficient student proficiency levels:

Administrator 2: We don’t have time even when we want to prepare some materials, and presentations require even more time and preparation. ... We wanted to use them, however we couldn’t.

Teacher 2: We [teachers] are not prepared for using presentations. Everything should be determined beforehand, students should be informed beforehand, because you cannot ask students to do something one day and expect them to finish it the next day or the next week. If we consider the profile of students here, some of them may need more time. If everything is determined at the beginning of the term and we can let students know, then the students will prepare themselves. However, this is our problem now. The topics were not determined, we didn’t know when to conduct it. Therefore, I think we need to experience it and we need some more time for that.

Both interviewees note the need for more preparation before trying to implement a new activity like presentations. As part of that preparation, clearly teacher training is needed:

Administrator 1: I think it is our mistake. ... We don’t know how to conduct it. ... I, for example, don’t feel that I am competent enough to do that. ... A group can prepare the plans and explain them to us. ... but we don’t have any preparation for that.

Administrator 2: If we have to plan something, we need to have background information, first. We cannot simply apply it whenever we find a new idea super.

Yet another suggested explanation for the failure to use presentations is the students’ low proficiency level:



Teacher 1: We wanted to conduct presentations, however we saw that the proficiency level of students was not high enough to prepare a project or make a presentation. Therefore, we couldn't conduct them in our classes but they were in our program.

This bad experience is one of the reasons for conducting this study, showing what should be done during the implementation of a new teaching tool in the curriculum of a university EFL context in Turkey. The identification of the reasons for the failure of the conduct of a new tool may provide insights about the curricular change process. For example, in the case of using presentations, the lack of preparation, the lack of teacher training and the fact that the teachers believed that the proficiency level of students was not high enough to use the new tool were the main reasons for the failure.

Having identified the problems in the existing curriculum, it was time to investigate the needs of the students.

#### *The needs of the students*

Even though a needs analysis has never been conducted at AKU SFL before, seven priority needs of the students were revealed in the first set of interviews conducted with administrators, students and teachers.

The primary need revealed was that for instruction in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) needs.

Administrator 1: Last year's students sometimes visit us. A few times they said they wished that they had learned some of the words that they need in their lessons now and had studied some topics related to their branches in their departments.

Teacher 2: Last year's students have difficulty in ESP. ...We don't teach what they need in their departments. They can't learn it here. ...but it is good here for those who want to learn general English.

Student 2: ...ESP is not taught here, general English is taught so it won't be beneficial for us next year. ...I would like to study ESP. My

friends who were here last year say that general English is not beneficial for them now.

In addition to ESP, the need for research skills can be revealed from the interviews. For example, some teachers give assignments in which students are supposed to do research on the internet, but not all the students are able to do it:

Administrator 1: We sometimes give internet research assignments but not everybody can do it...It is up to the profile of the classes, the characteristics of the students, their interests and cultural backgrounds. For example, there are students who never read newspapers, or even there are students who do not watch TV.

Another need which was revealed is that for speaking skills, as highlighted in the following lines:

Student 1: When I am supposed to speak, I think if I don't know the words, I cannot speak. It is nonsense to ask the teacher what that word means in English while speaking. ...When he [the teacher] wants us to speak, we can't.

Student 2: My expectations from the prep class... We have background from our previous English courses, everybody has, in terms of grammar and we can comprehend when somebody speaks. However, we have a difficulty in speaking fluently. We want to improve our speaking. We want to speak English like we speak Turkish in our daily lives, without having difficulty.

Both the teachers and students believe that the book which is currently being used is not sufficient in terms of vocabulary learning, thus there is a need to implement some new texts or teaching tools which can improve students' vocabulary:

Teacher 1: I sense that the passages [in the book] are inefficient in terms of vocabulary teaching.

Student 1: I wanted to study at prep class in order to improve my speaking and vocabulary but our book does not include many new words.

Moreover, the needs for listening skill and for more practice of English were also revealed during the interviews. One of the teachers thought that more listening activities should be used in the classroom and the other teacher believed that the students should practice the subjects they learned more.

<i>Students' Needs</i>	<i>Suggestions</i>
ESP	New Teaching Tools with Student Centered Activities
Speaking Skill	• Discussions
Listening Skill	• Project Work
Vocabulary	• Drama
More practice of English	
Texts with interesting topics	
Research Skills	
Learning & Fun	

Table 1: The Needs of Students at AKU SFL and Suggested Teaching Tools.

To summarize, (see Table 1) according to the students, teachers and administrators, the students' primary need is ESP, as students face difficulties when they are eventually exposed to their content lessons in English. In addition, it is clear that the students need to improve their research skills, which includes collecting data, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Obviously, the needs for ESP and research skills indicate that they need to improve their academic skills, such as writing reports, making presentations, preparing posters, and participating in discussions. In terms of English language skills, the interviewees stressed both speaking and listening skills. The students do not find the current lessons efficient in improving their speaking skills and the teachers see the need for more listening activities in the program of the preparatory classes. The students also want to learn more new words and they believe that the currently used books are not satisfactory for that. The teachers believe that the more the students practice, the more they learn, but because

of the strict syllabus and time constraints, they feel unable to do activities which will help the students practice their English. Therefore, there is a need to include some activities through which students can practice what they have learned. The interviews also suggest that the topics in the books are not interesting for students. Thus, more interesting topics should be included in the program. Related to this, as the students report finding the lessons as a whole boring and monotonous, there is a need to find ways of helping them learn English in a more enjoyable manner. Clearly, they need learning and fun together. Finally, certain student centered teaching tools were suggested in order to meet all these needs. These included discussions, project work and drama.

According to the literature on curriculum development, once the students' needs are identified, the goals should be set.

### *Setting goals*

In the process of defining some goals of AKU SFL, my main sources were the results of the first set of interviews, which show the needs of the students. In addition to these needs, I took advantage of having worked in AKU SFL for two years and my experiences with the prep class students. I then drew on Stern's framework (1992) in order to formulate some basic goals (see Table 2).

<i>Categories of Goals</i>	<i>Need</i>	<i>Goals</i>
Proficiency	ESP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to use their content knowledge about their disciplines in speaking and writing</li> <li>• Students will be able to expand their receptive and productive vocabulary about their disciplines</li> <li>• Students will be able to express the main idea of reading passages about their disciplines</li> </ul>
	Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to speak in English in front of an audience</li> <li>• Students will be able to participate in transactional</li> </ul>

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		conversations in English
	Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to listen to and comprehend their classmates</li> </ul>
	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to understand new words while reading and listening</li> <li>• Students will be able to use new words while writing and speaking</li> </ul>
	Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to research on the internet</li> </ul>
Cognitive	ESP Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will learn content words about their disciplines</li> <li>• Students will be able to understand the elements of and what constitutes “good speaking”</li> </ul>
	Listening Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will learn listening strategies</li> <li>• Students will understand the strategies for learning the meanings of new words</li> </ul>
	Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will understand the appropriateness of using computers for research purposes</li> </ul>
Affective	ESP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will develop confidence in expressing their knowledge about their disciplines</li> </ul>
	Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will develop confidence in speaking in front of an audience</li> </ul>
	Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will develop a positive attitude towards listening to their classmates</li> </ul>
	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will develop a positive attitude towards learning new words</li> </ul>
	Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will develop confidence in doing research on the internet</li> </ul>
Transfer	ESP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will gain an understanding of how they can continue to improve their content knowledge about their disciplines</li> </ul>
	Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to give speeches in conferences or academic settings</li> </ul>
	Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will gain an understanding of how they can continue to improve their listening skills</li> </ul>
	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will gain an understanding of how they can continue to improve their vocabulary</li> </ul>
	Research Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be able to do research on the internet about any topic.</li> </ul>

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Table 2: Some Goals of Prep Classes at AKU SFL.

The goals were first categorized as proficiency, cognitive, affective and transfer goals according to Stern’s framework (1992). The reason I chose Stern’s

framework in the process of setting goals is that it is the only framework which includes transfer goals, which, if achieved, means that learners will be able to transfer what they have learned during the classtime task to future contexts; in other words, to continue learning. Proficiency goals include what students will be able to do by using the target language. Cognitive goals indicate explicit knowledge, information and conceptual learning about the target language, and affective goals consist of achieving positive attitudes toward the target language and language learning. Next, I took the specified needs into consideration and wrote goals for all categories that met as many needs as I could. After that, I defined the goals, keeping in mind the students' profiles, teachers' expectations from students, and the courses given. Although these goals cannot indicate all the goals of the AKU SFL prep class program, they can be said to be representative of the most prominent goals as deduced from the identified needs. After the goals were defined, they were discussed in informal interviews and approved by the administrators of AKU SFL.

#### *Selecting the new teaching tool*

After the goals were set and approved by the administrators, the process of selecting a new teaching tool started. As teachers, students and administrators suggested discussions, project work and drama as the most appropriate teaching tools, only those three tools were considered. The reason why I did not choose discussions is that they are somewhat limited in scope, whereas project work includes discussions as well as other communicative activities. The reason why I did not prefer drama is that I knew that what my colleagues meant by "drama" was not actually what was meant in the literature. In referring to drama activities, my colleagues were generally referring to a kind of role-play activity. Therefore, among

these three suggested teaching tools, project work seemed to be the most appropriate. To determine whether this was so, first the literature about the process, benefits, characteristics and goals of project work was analyzed and then compared with the goals that have been set and the results of the first set of interviews. In the following sections, the chosen teaching tool, project work, will be described.

### *Project work*

The purpose of project work is to bridge what students learn in the class and what they in fact require, as most of the language learning takes place in the classroom and does not extend to practice (Fried-Booth, 1986). Project work can be used in pre-service and in-service teacher training, teaching general English, ESP (English for specific purposes), EAP (English for academic purposes), and EOP (English for occupational purposes) (Stoller, 1997) as well as ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) (Habulembe, 2007).

### *Goals and characteristics of project work*

Fried-Booth (1986) introduces the goals of project work on the basis of integrating the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. In fact, integration of these four language skills is not the only purpose of project work. In her study, Beckett (1999 as cited in Beckett & Slater, 2005) found out that teachers reported having various goals for implementing projects in their ESL classrooms, such as to challenge students' creativity; to foster independence; to enhance cooperative learning skills; to build decision-making, critical thinking, and learning skills; and to facilitate the language socialization of ESL students into local academic and social cultures.

In her article, Stoller (1997) introduces some characteristics of project work by compiling a number of definitions of different researchers. First, project work enhances content learning rather than a specific language target. In addition, as students can work alone, in small groups and as a class, it enhances cooperation among students. Third, although project work is student-centered, the teacher has an important role as a guide. Moreover, with project work, all four skills can be integrated through real-life tasks and making use of varied sources. Furthermore, the final outcome (e.g. oral presentation, a report or a bulletin board display) gives the project a real purpose which makes it both process and product oriented and helps learners to focus on accuracy and fluency at different project work stages. Last, project work is motivating, stimulating, empowering and challenging; builds student confidence, self-esteem, and autonomy; and improves learners' language skills and cognitive abilities.

*How is project work conducted?*

Where the project is conducted, how long a project can take and the grouping of students in project work tasks can change in different contexts. Project work can be conducted totally in the classroom or it may extend outside the classroom; it may last a short time, a few weeks or months, and it can be conducted with students as a whole class, in a group or individually (Stoller, 1997). According to Fried-Booth (1986) and Schuler (2000), there are three steps in the process of conducting project work. The first step is classroom planning. During this phase, students decide and discuss about their topics with the help of their teacher. In the second step, which is carrying out the project, students gather data about their topic by conducting interviews, surveying, experimenting and using books, the internet and



encyclopedias. The last step, the culmination of the project, involves discussions and feedback sessions after the students present their end outcome orally or in written form.

Stoller (1997) introduces a more specific model describing both the process of project work and roles of the teacher and learners. In the first step, students and instructor agree on a theme for a project. In the second step, the students and instructor determine the final outcome (e.g. brochure, class newspaper / wall newspaper, bulletin board display, graphic display, a guidebook, a handbook, an information packet, letter, maquette, multimedia presentation, oral presentation, poster, research paper, scrapbook, simulation, survey report, theatrical performance, video or film, website, written report, and so on). In the third step, the students and instructor structure the project. Fourth, the instructor prepares the students for the language demands of information gathering. In the fifth step, the students gather information. Sixth, the instructor prepares the students for the language demands of compiling and analyzing the data. Seventh, the students compile and analyze information. Eighth, the instructor prepares the students for the language demands of presentation of the final product. Next, the students present the final product, and in the last step, the students evaluate the project.

Alan and Stoller (2005) conducted a research study in which students were expected to prepare projects in which they evaluated the effectiveness of a local tramcar system. The participants were intermediate and high-intermediate EFL students at a state university in Turkey. In this case study, the ten steps described above were followed during the project-based learning process. First, the instructor raised students' awareness and asked their opinions about the local tramcar system

through group discussions, provided them useful vocabulary by using grids and helped them to develop a sense of ownership of the project. Then the instructor recommended students to report their work (1) in a letter to the local government, (2) at an open public forum with invited guests, and (3) on a bulletin board at the university. Students, together with the instructor, decided what to include in their bulletin board display and who to invite for the letter, public forum, and bulletin board display. Then, students structured the projects, considering certain questions, deciding on their primary roles and responsibilities, and sequencing the project tasks with the deadline for the final outcome in mind. Then, the instructor taught students how to conduct interviews, introduced writing conventions related to formal letter writing by means of model letters, and trained students on how to make use of the Web and library to gather information. While students were conducting interviews, writing letters and conducting Web and library searches, the instructor monitored their progress, helped them find necessary equipment, and gave them feedback on their language use. Then, the instructor trained students on how to compile, evaluate and synthesize the relevant information that they had gathered. After that, students organized and synthesized data by discussing the value of their data, leaving off what seemed inappropriate, and organizing and evaluating data that seemed particularly valuable. The instructor trained the students for the language, skill and content demands that they would need for their final written displays and oral presentations with a simulation of the open forum and discussions of the bulletin board. Then, the students displayed the bulletin board and participated in the open forum. The instructor gave feedback on the students' use of language, content, strategy and skills. For this stage, the authors also suggest videotaping students' presentations so

that students may reflect on and evaluate their work. With this case study, Alan and Stoller (2005) showed the details of one project which was designed for an EFL setting and implemented successfully.

It is important that the project work be in the appropriate format in a given context and there are many factors which affect that. Some of the factors that affect successful use of project work are managing time constraints, the importance of ongoing evaluation, participation of group members, selecting relevant topics (Kagnarith, Theara & Klein 2007), access to authentic materials, receptiveness of learners, the possibilities for learner training, administrative flexibility on institutional timetabling (Hedge, 1993), curricular objectives, course expectations, students' proficiency levels and students' interests (Stoller, 1997), teacher guidance, teacher feedback, student engagement, and elaborated tasks with some degree of challenge (Alan & Stoller, 2005).

One other factor for successful implementation of project work is the roles of teacher. The teacher has an important role in the smooth implementation of project work as a teaching tool. Although some researchers suggest that the teacher acts as a facilitator, a guide or consultant (Fried-Booth, 1986; Gaer, 1998; Green, 1998; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995), Wrigley (1998) claims that the teacher has a critical role, which is more than a guide and a facilitator. According to her, the teacher should know the interests of the learners and help groups of students to move in the direction that they want to go with her leadership skills. Although it is claimed that project work is more effective when the teacher loosens up his/her control (Fried-Booth, 1986; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995), the right balance between teacher guidance and learner autonomy should be found, as excessive teacher control or absence of

teacher feedback or guidance may both cause undesired results (Alan & Stoller, 2005).

#### *Benefits of project work*

A number of benefits of project work have been revealed in recent research studies. They can be grouped in terms of research and academic literacy skills, social skills, learning skills and language skills.

Project work's benefits in developing students' research and academic literacy skills have been shown in research studies (Gaer, 1998; Hedge, 1993). With project work, students can be asked to gather information through various data collection techniques, such as interviews, surveys, and library and web searches (Alan & Stoller, 2005). According to Beckett (2005) project work includes a series of tasks which enhance students' academic literacy skills through researching, analyzing and synthesizing data, presenting their final outcome by comparing, contrasting and justifying alternatives.

It has also been revealed that project work enhances social skills. It encourages collaboration (Habulembe, 2007; Hedge, 1993; Stoller, 1997) and helps students develop a sense of community (Gaer, 1998). Additionally, it serves as a powerful tool to prepare students for the world of work as it helps them develop the self-esteem, motivation, group interaction skills and knowledge necessary in the job search process (Green, 1998; Wrigley, 1998). Green (1998) also found out that as students realized that they had common hardships and concerns, they developed new friendships and enjoyed working together to solve new problems.

In addition, project work has been shown to improve students' independent learning skills (Habulembe, 2007). For example, it increases learner autonomy (Alan

& Stoller, 2005; Eyring, 1997; Gökçen, 2005; Hedge, 1993; Kayser, 2002; Malcom & Rindfleisch, 2003; Stoller, 1997), learners' metacognitive awareness, critical thinking and decision making abilities (Alan & Stoller, 2005), learners' interpretation and self-regulation skills (Kagnarith, Theara & Klein 2007), learners' imagination and creativity (Hedge, 1993; Kayser, 2002), learners' physical and motor skills [writing and diagramming] (Habulembe, 2007), and learners' enthusiasm and motivation (Alan & Stoller, 2005; Gökçen, 2005; Kayser, 2002; Lee, 2002; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995; Tessema, 2005; Wrigley, 1998), all of which are important factors in learning. Project work has also been argued to make classes exciting, challenging and meaningful; builds on previous work; incorporates self-evaluation, peer-evaluation and teacher-evaluation; and leads to clear outcomes (Moss & Van Duzer, 1998). Students gain a sense of achievement because project work is both process- and product-based and potentially a success-oriented teaching and confidence building activity (Lee, 2002). Finally, project work promotes learners' language skills as it applies to learners' needs and integrates all four skills (Alan & Stoller, 2005; Fried-Booth, 1986; Kagnarith, Theara & Klein 2007; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995). Furthermore, it improves students' vocabulary (Kemaloğlu, 2006) as well as their content knowledge (Beckett, 2005; Gaer, 1998; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Stoller, 1997).

Eight commonly reported benefits of project work, which were revealed in various studies, were displayed clearly in a table by Stoller (2006) (see Table 3):

Table 3: Most Commonly Cited Benefits Attributed to Project Work in Second and Foreign Language Settings

Rank	Reported benefits	Publications about project-based learning															
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	Authenticity of experience and language	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	Intensity of motivation, involvement, engagement, participation, enjoyment, creativity		√	√	√	√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3	Enhanced language skills, repeated opportunities for output, modified input, and negotiated meaning; purposeful opportunities for an integrated focus on form and other aspects of language		√	√		√	√	√		√		√		√	√	√	√
4	Improved abilities to function in a group (including social, cooperative, and collaborative skills)			√		√	√	√		√	√	√	√		√		
5	Increased content knowledge	√	√	√					√		√	√					√
6	Improved confidence, sense of self, self-esteem, attitude toward learning, comfort using language, satisfaction with achievement		√	√			√				√		√	√	√		
7	Increased autonomy, independence, self-initiation, and willingness to take responsibility for own learning			√				√	√	√	√			√			
8	Improved abilities to make decisions, be analytical, think critically, solve problems	√					√	√	√								√

Key-A:Allen (2004); B: Carter&Thomas (1986); C: Coleman (1992); D: Ferragatti&Canminati(1984); E: Fried-Booth(1982); F: Gardner (1995); G: Gu(2004); I: Ho(2003); J: Lee(2002); K: Legutke (1985); M: Levine (2004); N: Padget (1994); O: Sheppard&Stoller(1995); P: Stoller (1997).

When the main characteristics and goals of project work in the literature were compared with what teachers, students and administrators had expressed in the interviews, a clear match was seen. First of all, project work is a student-centered activity in which students make an effort themselves and with their partners. As project work is not teacher-centered, it is not like lessons in which only the teacher talks and students listen and could therefore be expected to help to eliminate the students' boredom. Indeed, the literature reports that project work is enjoyable and motivating. In addition, as project work focuses on content learning, it ought to be very beneficial for their learning ESP, which is one of their major needs. Project work has also been shown to improve students' academic and literacy skills including research skills, and should therefore meet this need as well. Moreover, project work builds on students' previous work so that they can use what they have learned before. Therefore, this characteristic of project work can meet the need of more practice of English. Furthermore, in the process of a project work task, the students will participate in group discussions and make presentations as a final outcome. Therefore, the students will improve their speaking and listening skills, so that the goals about speaking and listening can be achieved. Last, the students might be able to transfer what they have learned in the process of a project work task after they graduate, and might be able to use both the content (if the topics of projects are related to their branches) they have learned and skills (i.e. critical thinking, independent learning, cooperative learning, language skills) they have developed during the process of project work task, both in their departments and when they start working.

When all these characteristics and goals of project work were compared with the students' profile and teachers' and administrators' opinions, it became evident that project work was an appropriate teaching tool for the students at AKU SFL. The idea was then proposed to the teachers. The teachers were both enthusiastic and worried about using it. In the informal group interview, the teachers and administrators approved that using project work at prep classes could be a good idea, however they wanted to learn more about project work.

*Teacher training (January 26, 2007)*

As stated before, the administrators and teachers liked the idea of using project work in their classes but they did not know much about project work or about how it is conducted. After their bad experience with being unprepared to use presentations in their classes, it was obvious that the teachers would need teacher training before conducting a project work task in their classes. Therefore, I prepared a teacher training workshop, with the following outline:

1. The purpose of the teacher training
2. Steps of a curricular change
3. What is project work?
4. Goals of project work
5. Teachers' roles in project work
6. The process of project work
7. A sample
8. Preparing a project work task plan for our students
9. Issues for a successful implementation of project work
10. Benefits of project work



## 11. Question-answer session

Three administrators, who are also teachers, and nine teachers out of a total 11 teachers participated in the workshop. First, the purpose of this study and the process of curricular change were briefly explained. As part of this, the fact that a teacher training session was one of the steps of a curricular change process was stated. The actual workshop started with theoretical information about project work, explaining what project work is, what its goals are, what teachers' and students' roles are and how project work is conducted in a class. After that, to clarify the steps of project work implementation, a successful lesson plan from Alan and Stoller's study (2005), *Maximizing the Benefits of Project Work in Foreign Language Classrooms*, was shown. Teachers were then asked to work in groups of four, think of a project appropriate for the students at AKU SFL, and prepare project work plans. During this activity, all the teachers were very enthusiastic and eager to prepare the best project. First, they chose a project topic by considering the profile of their students, and planned warm-up activities to attract students' attention to and raise their awareness of the topic. Next, they decided on the key words which were necessary for the project topic they had chosen and planned how to provide students with the useful vocabulary. They decided on the most appropriate final outcomes for their projects by taking the course expectations and students' needs into consideration, determined how to structure the project, and what kind of responsibilities could be given to students. Then, they decided what kind of information gathering techniques (e.g. interviews, surveys, library, internet research) would be needed for the project, how to teach them and how to teach compiling and analyzing the data the students gathered. After that, they thought about the language needs of the students for the

final outcome and how to teach them. Lastly, they thought about how to give feedback both during the process and after the presentation of the final outcome. Then each group presented their project work plans to the other teachers. After each presentation, the teachers evaluated each project, discussed their positive and negative points and made suggestions to make them better. This workshop helped teachers experience how to plan a project-based learning task. Then, the factors for a successful implementation of project work and the benefits of project work were elicited from the teachers, and their answers were compared with what the recent literature says. During and after the presentation, the teachers asked any questions that came to their minds. The training session took approximately three hours.

After the workshop, interviews with three teachers and two administrators unanimously revealed the importance and success of the teacher training:

Administrator 1: I didn't know anything about it [project work]. It was years ago when I last learned something like this, but now I really have something in my mind about project work. Before this workshop, I thought that it was like discussions and I didn't have anything specific in my mind about it. We were scared to use it in our classes. ...If you hadn't presented it, we wouldn't know what the topics could be.

Administrator 3: The teacher training workshop that you conducted was very good. We were always thinking of using it in our classes and we saw how it is conducted with the concrete samples from Eskişehir [Anadolu University] in your presentation. Sometimes a person cannot infer something concrete or apply it without seeing other samples.

Teacher 2: I didn't know much about project work. ...I learned a lot in this presentation. I didn't know this much theoretical information about it. You emphasized and explained them very well. The sample you gave was excellent. I think we cannot comprehend something like this very well without samples. Without it, it would be so abstract. The fact that you made it concrete and made us think about it was very beneficial. ... Now we are prepared about how to conduct it and the issues that should be considered. I think it is very important because if we said 'Let's implement it in the curriculum!', we wouldn't conduct it successfully. Practicing it in your presentation was very helpful.

Teacher 1: It made a contribution. We studied what is project work in methodology courses when we were students, however, they were not as comprehensive and extensive as you presented so it was very nice. It was visual and we had a chance to practice it. It certainly contributed a lot.

Teacher 3: It was very beneficial. We had something in our minds. You explained them in an academic and theoretic way, too. It was fruitful. You also gave us a chance to practice it. It was certainly useful.

As the above excerpts display, project work was not a new idea to the administrators and teachers, but they had been reluctant to use it as they did not know exactly how to do it. Most important perhaps, providing a good sample implementation process of the new teaching tool helped them to comprehend it better as they were able to see something concrete. Moreover, providing them an activity through which they could experience how to plan, how to conduct and what to consider during the implementation was very beneficial for them. After this presentation, they felt more self-confident and more comfortable with the idea of using project work.

The workshop participants also recognized how teacher training has an important role in curricular change:

Administrator 3: There isn't a professional curriculum development office in our institution. Therefore, it will be very nice if there are some training sessions like this.

Administrator 1: There was a lack of teacher training [about project work] in our institution; we learned it thanks to you. We wanted to add it in the curriculum, however we didn't know how to start it and what to do. This year might be a starting point.

Teacher 1: Teacher trainings are really necessary in a curricular change process. You know, we have a limited number of things to do in our classes and I like it very much when we intend to do something different. I think they will be beneficial.

Teacher 2: If we are trained before implementing this kind of tools in the curriculum, we can understand and adopt it more so that we can adapt to it better. Then it will easily be implemented in the curriculum. These teacher training workshops are wonderful. I sense that I learn a lot.

The above excerpts show that both the teachers and administrators support the idea that curricular change requires teacher training. These transcriptions also show that both the teachers and administrators are enthusiastic to participate in teacher training sessions to learn more about new methods, techniques or teaching tools.

*Attitudes towards the new tool and its implementation in the curriculum*

Data about attitudes of teachers and administrators towards the new tool and its implementation in the curriculum were gathered through both questionnaires and interviews. In the questionnaires, teachers were asked to rate their opinions on a scale on which there were numbers from one to five. Out of 12 teachers, 11 of them returned their questionnaires. In terms of the participants' ideas about project work itself, data from the post-workshop questionnaire are given in Tables 4 and 5.

<i>Items</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>		<i>4</i>		<i>5</i>		<i>Items</i>
<i>PW is...</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>PW is...</i>
useless	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	90.9	10	9.1	useful
frustrating	0	0	0	0	4	36.4	5	45.5	2	18.2	not frustrating
not fun	0	0	0	0	3	27.3	4	36.4	4	36.4	fun
boring	0	0	0	0	1	9.1	3	27.3	7	63.6	interesting
worthless	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	18.2	9	81.8	worthwhile
confusing	0	0	0	0	2	18.2	7	63.6	2	18.2	clear

Note. PW= Project Work , F= Frequency, %= Percentage

Table 4: Teachers' Opinions about Project Work

<i>Item</i>	<i>Nothing</i>		<i>Just a little</i>		<i>Moderate</i>		<i>Quite a bit</i>		<i>A great deal</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
How much do you think your students will learn English through PW?	0	0	0	0	2	18.2	7	63.6	2	18.2

Note. PW= Project Work, F= Frequency, %= Percentage

Table 5: Teachers' Opinions about Learning English through Project Work

As is obvious from Table 4, most of the teachers' opinions are positive about project work. Nearly all the teachers agree that project work is a useful, worthwhile, interesting and clear teaching tool. Although they don't find it very frustrating, they may have some doubts about this as 36.4% of them were neutral about the second item. The reason why a considerable number of teachers were neutral about that item might be because they have not experienced it in their classes, therefore they could be uncertain about whether the students will be frustrated during its implementation or not. Most of them also think that project work is fun, although again, a substantial percentage (27.3%) of them stayed neutral. As can be seen from Tables 4 and 5, all the teachers believe that project work will be a helpful teaching tool for students' learning. Unsurprisingly therefore, nearly all teachers have positive reactions towards implementing project work in the curriculum.

When the questions asking their general impressions about project work as a new teaching tool and whether it could be useful especially for our students were asked to the teachers and administrators, they all had positive perceptions about it:

Administrator 3: As we thought that it is very positive, we approved and accepted it at once.

Teacher 1: It is very positive. It should have been applied before and it is a big deficiency for us that we didn't conduct it before.

Teacher 3: I think it is an important teaching tool and it should be included in our program.

Although basically they had positive attitudes towards project work, they also had some specific comments not only on the particular benefits and but also on some possible constraints of project work.

*Benefits of project work*

Benefits of project work deduced from data gathered through interviews and the questionnaire were categorized in four groups: (a) skills it will contribute to, (b) affective benefits, (c) benefits about students' transfer ability, and (d) other positive sides of project work.

*Skills that it will improve*

One goal of project work, which is to improve students' language skills, which might be beneficial for our students was revealed during the interviews, as the following transcription mirrors:

Teacher 1: When they make presentations orally, they will improve their speaking skill and when they write a report, they will improve their writing ability.

Teachers felt that an additional benefit of project work which applies to our students, is that it could improve students' academic and research skills as well as their language skills:

Teacher 2: It also requires making research a lot. Therefore, it will be beneficial for our students in various ways.

Administrator 1: They will use the technology, they will watch and listen to presentations for the first time. At least, they will learn how to make presentations.

*Affective benefits*

Several of the interviewees indicated that the students at prep classes will be enthusiastic to participate in a project work task:

Administrator 1: It can be useful for some of our students. They can be very excited about it.

Teacher 1: I strongly believe that our students will take it seriously when we want them to make a project.

Teacher 2: There are students who would want to do it willingly. In terms of their enthusiasm, I think it is really applicable in our institution.

In addition, teachers and administrators felt that project work could enhance cooperation among students and between students and the teacher:

Administrator 1: The most important of all, it will be very beneficial in terms of student-student cooperation, student-teacher cooperation and student-people outside and public in Afyon cooperation.

Teacher 3: Both teachers and students join the learning process altogether.

Moreover, the fact that project work increases socialization through cooperative learning was also emphasized by the interviewees:

Administrator 1: The students will be enthusiastic as they will work together for the first time and they will become close friends. They will also learn the importance of getting on well with each other and cooperative learning. Therefore, it will empower teacher-student and student-student cooperation.

Teacher 1: As project work requires cooperative learning, it will help our students to socialize. When we apply it, socialization will be a must for them. ...In your presentation, you explained many benefits of project work and what I like most is that it helps students' socialization.

A further feature of project work which can be advantageous for our students, that it increases motivation, was also revealed in the interviews.

*Contributions of project work to students' transfer ability*

The term 'transfer ability' here refers to students' skills to use what they have learned through project work in future contexts. One other benefit of project work for students' learning is that it increases learner autonomy:

Teacher 3: The ones who have the control and responsibilities are not only the teachers. Students also have responsibilities.

As can be seen in the above excerpt, students can become more autonomous through project work. When the students are more autonomous, they can be more aware of their learning and they can develop and use their own learning strategies, which then they can transfer to other lessons as well when they go to their departments.

The teachers also noted an advantage of project work for our students, that it builds on previous work:

Teacher 2: If we conduct it in the second term, the students will be able to use what they have learned in the first term [while they are preparing their projects]. They will have revised them and then they will learn the things that they haven't learned through project work.

Through project work, students can transfer what they have learned so far before starting the process of a project work task. In addition, the students can make use of what they have learned in the one step of project work during the implementation of the following steps of it.

One further benefit of project work, that it will be helpful for students in the world of work and the students will be able to transfer what they have learned in the future, is expressed by one of the teachers:

Teacher 3: Maybe they will come across with projects when they start working or maybe they will face with projects when they go to their departments and in their lives. In prep classes, they will be prepared for that.



*Other positive sides of project work*

Another positive side of project work, which was revealed in the interviews was that it is a student-centered teaching tool:

Teacher 2: I think that it [project work] is a very useful teaching tool. ...because students can learn more when they make an effort themselves. ...Therefore, it will be more efficient than the current lessons.

Teacher 3: The teaching will not be teacher-centered any more with project work. Students join actively in the learning process; which is also an ease for teachers.

Finally, it was suggested in the interviews that another positive side of using project work, is that it is not only advantageous for students but also for teachers:

Administrator 1: With project work, the teachers can understand students better. They might notice something that they haven't realized in the classroom before while the students are working or when they ask some questions. Therefore, the teachers will be closer with the students.

*Possible constraints of project work*

Although all of the teachers and administrators found project work potentially very useful for our students, they also had some ideas of possible constraints for using it with our students. For example, although they believe that most of the students will be very enthusiastic about using project work, they noted that others might not be so enthusiastic:

Administrator 1: It might be a waste of time for the weak students; they may think that it is a waste of time. ...Some students may see it as an entertainment tool and a way of evading a lesson. ...Some students may take it seriously, whereas the others may do nothing other than just being a member of the group.

Teacher 1: Some students may take advantage of being a group member and may make use of other group members' efforts and still get the grade the group will get. ...I don't know whether some of the

students will participate in a project work task instead of studying basic English.

One other possible negative point of project work that was raised, was that it might bring economic troubles for our students, as preparing final outcomes might be expensive:

Teacher 1: I don't know whether there are students who cannot afford it or whether it will bring some economic problems for the students. For example, we will want our students to research on the net. Suppose that a student paid 1 YTL for one hour of using the internet in an internet café, but will s/he be able to afford it when s/he has to go on with his/her research tomorrow? Or when they want to use multimedia in their final outcomes, they will have to go to the internet café, buy a CD, etc. and they will have to pay for them.

Yet another possible negative point of project work for our students was expressed by one of the administrators, who thought it might be difficult for introverted students:

Administrator 3: I don't think project work has negative points. However, if something like public talk will be conducted for the presentations, introverted students might have difficulty with it because of their personalities.

#### *Some considerations about project work*

One teacher mentioned the importance of making preparations and plans before conducting project work:

Teacher 3: We should consider and specify the applicable and inapplicable sides of project work and we should make preparations accordingly.

Another issue which should be taken into consideration is the importance of teachers' guidance. The importance of teachers' guidance in project work was also emphasized:

Teacher 2: The only disadvantage might be the lack of guidance of teachers. For example, if one teacher is less motivated to guide students than others, the students cannot benefit from it. If the teacher

can be enthusiastic and can guide the students, then it will be marvelous for our students.

Administrator 3: As long as the topic is appropriate and teachers' guidance is good, the students can be successful.

They further noted that teachers have an important role in motivating students, which will help learners be more successful in their projects:

Teacher 2: I think our students mirror us. For example, I see that my students are very enthusiastic to participate in different activities. I mean they can produce brilliant outcomes when they are motivated.

One further possible issue which might arise if project work is conducted with our students is that the teachers might have to overcome students' prejudices, as shown in the following excerpt:

Teacher 3: All of our students were exposed to the same style of education when they were at high school [which does not include teaching tools like project work]. Therefore, they might have some prejudices towards learning through project work. Those prejudices should be overcome by the teachers. ...Those prejudices might inhibit their learning.

A final concern which should be considered while conducting project work is students' proficiency level. This issue was expressed by one of the teachers, as can be seen in the following lines:

Teacher 3: We should know the students very well. They should be at the right proficiency level. ...The projects can be conducted starting from the easiest topics and they can be broadened later.

### *Suggestions of teachers*

In the open-ended part of the questionnaire, one teacher listed his/her suggestions for the successful implementation of project work in our institution:

Teacher:

- Projects should be planned in detail.
- Each class should have a different project and present it for another class.

- There should be a reward or projects should be included in assessment.
- Successful projects should be transferred to EU programs such as LLP (Lifelong Learning Projects).

Another teacher also had a nice suggestion in the interview. She suggested that the projects which the students made should be assessed, as the following lines indicate:

Teacher 2: It should also be assessed. It should be remembered that one of the ways to motivate the students is giving them grades, therefore, it should be one part of the assessment system. If we also include it in the assessment system, they will take it more seriously.

During the question-answer part of the teacher training session, one of the teachers suggested that we can ask students to keep diaries during the process of project work tasks. With this diary, students will be able to reflect on this process, the teachers can monitor what students are doing during the process and in addition, it can be a practice for their writing skill and can be assessed, too.

All these possible constraints and suggestions were valid points that needed to be considered before and during the implementation of project work. However, they did not outweigh the many benefits cited.

After revealing the positive and potential negative points of conducting project work with our students, I asked teachers and administrators in the interviews whether they would like to see project work implemented in the curriculum and use it as a new teaching tool in preparatory classes in the following academic years, and they all gave positive answers. In the questionnaire, they were asked to rate their opinions on a scale from one to five about the same question. All of them agreed on this issue (see Table 6 below).

<i>Item</i>	<i>DN</i>		<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>		<i>4</i>		<i>5</i>		<i>DY</i>
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	9.1	10	90.9	

Note. DY=Definitely Yes , DN= Definitely Not, F= Frequency, %= Percentage

1: Do you want to see project work implemented in the curriculum and use it as a new teaching tool in preparatory classes in the following academic years?

Table 6: Teachers' Opinions about Implementing Project Work into the Curriculum

As all the results of both qualitative and quantitative data display, both the administrators and teachers had positive reflections about project work although they were aware of some possible problems. All of them were enthusiastic to try it and wanted to see it implemented in the curriculum. Therefore, it was time to pilot the new teaching tool.

*Preparing students for the new tool (February 23, 2007)*

Before trying the new teaching tool, I felt that the new teaching tool should also be explained to the students. Most of them did not know what project work was and what their responsibilities would be in the process. If this type of information is not made explicit to students, the implementation of the new teaching tool might be inefficient. The need for this session can be understood from the second set of interviews, which was conducted after the teacher training workshop with three teachers and two administrators:

Teacher 3: Some of our students are living in a city for the first time. They come from their villages. They might not know how to make projects. ...When they are asked to prepare a project, they may think that they will only write something like a term paper. It might be a problem in the implementation process, however it will be much better if it is explained and what we want from them is clearly stated.

As highlighted in the above excerpt, there was a need for preparing the students for the new learning tool before the piloting. According to the plan that I

prepared for this session, the instructor explained to the students that they would experience a new teaching tool, called project work, and told them about the goals and benefits of project-based learning. By showing the time frame and the steps of project work, he made clear the respective roles of students and the teacher and what would be expected from students during this process. This session took approximately 30 minutes.

I, as an instigator, observed this process and saw that although the students had some worries, both the teacher and the students were enthusiastic, as can be seen in the following excerpts taken from the participant teacher's and my journal:

My journal (23.02.2007): The training was conducted in Turkish in order to make students more comfortable. They looked very interested. During the training they were curious and asked many questions. The participant teacher answered all of them and relieved the students. At first, the students were worried, however they felt comfortable as everything was made clear by the teacher.

Participant teacher's journal (23.02.2007): They [the students] were both excited and worried when they first heard this activity which is different for them. When I was giving information about project work, they were suspicious. However, when I answered their questions, they became relaxed.

As is clear from the above excerpts, the willingness of the teacher plays an important role in motivating the students. If the students do not feel comfortable with the new tool or if they become confused, the new tool might not be as efficient as it is expected. Therefore, preparing students for the new tool is needed before starting to use it and an enthusiastic teacher has an important role in this process.

*Piloting the new tool (February 23, 2007 - March 02, 2007)*

Before piloting the project work task, I prepared a plan and negotiated its details with the participant teacher. This section both relates the stages of the piloting and reports on the students' impressions on the process.

On the first day of piloting (February 23, 3 hours), the teacher and students agreed on a project called "Ideal Campus Life". The topic was decided on by the researcher and the participant teacher during the negotiations for planning the project work task. The topic was proposed to the students and they all liked it and agreed to prepare projects on their ideal campus life. The teacher first raised students' awareness about campus life in general. He encouraged students to talk about and elicited students' attitudes towards campus life at Afyon Kocatepe University. He provided them with useful vocabulary by using a grid. The grid consisted of five main topics: accommodation, food and drink, sports facilities, students' clubs, and 'shopping, banking, post office and transportation' (see Appendix D). Under these headings there were various related key words. Then, he asked some discussion questions and elicited suggestions for improving campus life at AKU.

Then, the students and the teacher determined the final outcome of the project. The teacher proposed some possibilities such as a brochure, a bulletin board display, an oral presentation, a poster, a website or a written report. The teacher explained that each group would be allowed to choose a different outcome. At this point, decisions about the audiences for the final outcome were also made. It was decided that teachers, administrators of AKU SFL, and other prep class students would be invited to the presentation. In order to invite them, the teacher asked

volunteer students to prepare some simple posters to be hung on the boards in the school.

After that, the students and the teacher structured the project. Students were asked to work in groups of five. They were allowed to choose their own groups, and five groups were formed. The students decided themselves on their primary roles and responsibilities within the group. In each group, students were allowed to choose one of the topics about which they would carry out research. According to the types of the final outcomes, students were encouraged to take pictures, draw charts or a campus map, present data or prepare a website. While determining the responsibilities, students' abilities and personal differences were taken into consideration and again, they were allowed to decide on and share their responsibilities in their groups. Students were informed about the time frame of the project work task and the deadline for the final outcome so that they could reach a consensus about the sequencing of project tasks.

Next, the teacher prepared students for information gathering. Students were expected to gather data mostly through the Web and brochures of other universities. The teacher asked students to brainstorm and consider the best ways to search for data. The teacher introduced relevant search engines and websites, including one of Middle East Technical University, in which the students could see the relevant information about campus life (accommodation, food and drink, sports facilities, students' clubs and shopping, banking, post office and transportation). After each student read her/his part on the handouts that show the related web-pages, they discussed and brainstormed about what to include in their final outcome. Then, they shared their decisions with the class. For the weekend, students were asked to gather



as much information as possible and bring the print outs of the relevant web pages. At the weekend, (February 24-25) students gathered data through internet or brochures and they copied the relevant parts.

On the first day of the project work task, the students were both excited about participating in such a project and worried as they had never done a project before, as can be seen in the following lines:

Learner Diary 1 (23.02.2007): It is the first day of the project. I have to admit that when I first heard about the project, I was surprised and I thought that it would be very difficult. However, when I came home and started researching, I changed my mind. I think this project will be very enjoyable and will capture a lot of attention.

Learner Diary 3 (23.02.2007): ... They gave us a project assignment. I was scared at first, because it is the first time I was assigned to prepare a project in my life.

At the weekend, they searched for their topics. While they were searching, they sometimes felt tired and sometimes felt excited when they found something new. Therefore, they had some mixed feelings, as the excerpts from the diaries indicate:

Learner Diary 4 (24.02.2007): Today was very tiring for me. I searched for the project in the internet café. I found a lot of things. I worked for four hours and I was very bored. I had a headache. I want to sleep because this project makes me feel excited and I feel tired.

Learner Diary 3 (24.02.2007): I went to the internet café to search for my topic. It was the first time that I had searched something on the net. It was very difficult. I spent a lot of time to find my topic.

After the weekend (February 26), when the students were ready to share the information with their group members, the teacher prepared students for compiling and analyzing data. The teacher encouraged students to share the data they gathered in their groups. They were asked to speak in English. Then, students brainstormed, discussed, organized and analyzed the data in their groups. They also discussed the

data that they would use or wouldn't use in their final products. That day, they got rid of their negative feelings (nervousness, worries, etc.) and felt better. They felt more self-confident and more enthusiastic, as can be seen in the following excerpts:

Learner Diary 3 (26.02.2007): ...I was very happy. I felt much better and started to dream. ...I could come up with what I can do. I hope I can achieve it!

Learner Diary 4 (26.02.2007): I am very excited because project's day is coming. ...I found out that old universities have got a lot of interesting clubs. They are going to open in my university, too. I believe that it can be!

In the next step (March 01), the teacher prepared students for the final activity. In the classroom, students rehearsed the presentation of their final outcomes. They were encouraged to anticipate what kinds of questions the actual audience might ask about their projects. The teacher not only helped them during the lessons, but also negotiated with students in his office hours.

On the last day of the piloting (March 02), the students presented their final products (see Appendices I and J) to the teachers of AKU SFL and the students from other classes.

### *Evaluation*

In this section, first attitudes towards project work are presented based on the analyzed data gathered from the students, the participant teacher and the researcher through questionnaires, learner diaries, interviews and journals; followed by an evaluation of the success of the new teaching tool.

#### *Students' attitudes towards project work*

After the piloting, the evaluation of the new teaching tool, project work, was conducted in light of the results gathered through questionnaires, the journal kept by

the participant teacher and the researcher, the learner diaries, and interviews with the participant students and the participant teacher. The students' overall ideas about project work can be seen in Table 7:

<i>Items</i> <i>PW is...</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>		<i>4</i>		<i>5</i>		<i>Items</i> <i>PW is...</i>
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	
useless	0	0	0	0	2	8.0	10	40.0	13	52.0	useful
stressful	14	56.0	4	16.0	3	12.0	4	16.0	0	0	not stressful
not fun	1	4.0	3	12.0	7	28.0	9	36.0	5	20.0	fun
boring	2	8.0	1	4.0	12	48.0	4	16.0	6	24.0	interesting
worthless	1	4.0	0	0	3	12.0	12	48.0	9	36.0	worthwhile
confusing	1	4.0	2	8.0	7	28.0	10	40.0	5	20.0	clear

Note. PW= Project Work, F= Frequency, %= Percentage

Table 7: Students' Opinions about Project Work

The results of Table 7 indicate that basically, the students were positive towards project work, though slightly more cautious and reserved than the teachers were after the piloting. The most interesting finding is that students found project work stressful although most of the teachers thought it is not frustrating.

#### *Positive attitudes towards project work*

In the process of piloting the project work, the students and the teacher had mostly positive attitudes towards project work. The advantages of project work which were revealed in this study were categorized in three groups: (a) skills it will contribute to, (b) affective benefits, (c) cognitive benefits.

#### Skills that it will improve

Students reported that project work helped them to improve their academic and research skills and to enhance their use of the technology. As the students researched their topics on the internet, made surveys and asked their friends' opinions, they learned how to use Microsoft word and power point programs and learned how to make presentations:

Student 6: I cannot claim that I am very good at searching on the net. It was difficult. However, we learned how to use different programs. ...We changed the map by using paint program. Preparing that map requires a professional practice.

Student 4: For the first time in my life, I made a research for an assignment. I haven't conducted research in English, before. ...It was difficult for me when I first started researching, but then I started to like it. I discovered different methods. ...I can prepare a power point presentation myself next time. I didn't even think of using power point for this project as I didn't know how to prepare it.

Student 3: We improved our research skills; we learned how to prepare slides, power point, and how to use a computer and Microsoft word.

Student 5: It was like a high school in the first term. I realized that I am a university student after this project as we did something academic.

Learner Diary 2 (23.02.2007): I researched the topic on my computer. I surfed on the internet. I visited a lot of universities' websites. And then, I found a lot of pictures.

Learner Diary 2 (24.02.2007): I went to my friends'. They helped me about my homework. I asked everybody 'What do you think? How is your ideal campus?' They answered to me. I wrote their answers.

Learner Diary 2 (27.02.2007): I prepared a lot of slides on my computer.

Learner Diary 1 (24.02.2007): Today I visited the websites of many universities and I added the interesting student clubs to my project.

It was also clear from the interviews and learner diaries that project work enhances creative thinking. When the students were structuring their project and preparing their final outcomes, they discussed with their friends, shared their ideas and they came up with very interesting ideas, as can be seen in the following excerpts:

Participant Teacher: They thought critically, they considered what to include or exclude in their project. They used their imaginations. They created their ideal campuses. In fact, those campuses do not exist. For example, one of the students, Arda, created a card system; they will use the same card in the campus [This card will be used by the students in various ways in the campus. The students will use only this card when they enter the campus as an identity card, when they want to get on the tramcar, which was also created by Arda, in the campus instead of tickets, when they want to borrow books from the library, and when they want to eat their meal in the cafeterias in the campus instead of giving money, etc.]. Actually it is a great idea. I don't know whether there is a university which has such a card system but it is great in terms of creativity.

Learner Diary 3 (26.02.2007): I felt better and started to dream. I thought what would make me happy in the campus. Then, some ideas got clearer in my mind.

Student 6: In the websites of universities, we can find only the currently existing things. And I am sure that nobody, even the students of those universities, thinks that they are the ideal campuses. They certainly have deficiencies, therefore the parts which we include in our projects from our imagination are the most important parts.

In addition, the students and the participant teacher felt project work helped students improve their language skills:

Participant Teacher: In terms of integrated skills, they did reading, they listened to each other and they did listening, they did writing and as they made presentations today, they did speaking. Therefore, it was an excellent activity in terms of integrated skills.

Student 6: In terms of speaking, we learned speaking fluently and fast and we learned the pronunciation of some words both in American English and British English. ...We practiced pronunciation. In my opinion, we should learn speaking, writing and reading through project work. By doing so, we can also increase our knowledge about that topic. For example, we gather information and we try to form new sentences about it. ...In fact, we did reading, and we did our best in terms of writing as we had to prepare a text for our presentation. And speaking was the main purpose here. We focused on all of these.

Learner Diary 1 (24.02.2007): I also realized that this project helps me improve my English to a great extent. I improved my vocabulary knowledge while I was reading the websites in English.

Learner Diary 1 (01.03.2007): As I read the websites in English, I learned the sentence structures and new words.

Student 4: I realized that I improved my pronunciation. ...I speak more fluently.

Student 3: In my opinion, this project was very beneficial in terms of improving our English. ...We downloaded some texts about universities in English. We came across some words that we hadn't known before. We were able to comprehend the text by looking those words up in the dictionary or guessing the meaning while reading. Therefore, we improved our vocabulary. ...We improved our speaking, writing and vocabulary. ...I can easily say that project work is very beneficial. ...From the beginning of this year, whenever I heard a new word from my teacher, I would write it. I used to speak in the dormitory myself in order to use that word. My friends used to say 'Hey! He is crazy!' but I spoke English myself. However, with this project, we not only improved our speaking [in front of an audience], but also our reading skill as we read while we were researching.

Student 5: I know that I improved my pronunciation.

As can be seen in the above excerpts, the students felt they improved their overall English while they were preparing the project, in particular their pronunciation and vocabulary knowledge. These results are echoed in the second part of the questionnaires distributed to the teachers after the teacher training session, in which the teachers were asked how much they thought their students would learn through project work and 81.8% of them agreed that project work would contribute to their students' learning. When students were asked how much they thought project work contributed to their learning English and 68.4% of them agreed quite strongly that project work helped their learning English and all but one student felt project work had at least a moderately positive affect on their English (see Table 8).

<i>Item</i>	<i>Nothing</i>		<i>Just a little</i>		<i>Moderate</i>		<i>Quite a bit</i>		<i>A great deal</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
How much did PW contribute to your learning English?	0	0	1	4.0	7	28.0	16	64.4	1	4.0

Note. PW= Project work, F= Frequency, %= Percentage

Table 8: Students' Opinions about Learning English through Project Work

#### Affective benefits

It was also revealed that project work was an enjoyable learning tool for students. According to the results of the questionnaires, 72.8 % of the teachers felt that project work would be fun, and 56 % of the students agreed that it was fun. The following lines reflect students' opinions qualitatively:

Learner Diary 2 (23.02.2007): I think the project is useful for us because our lesson was very enjoyable.

Learner Diary 1 (01.03.2007): I think this project was very nice. I enjoyed it a lot while I was preparing this project.

The results of the qualitative data also show that project work truly did enhance socialization and cooperative learning, as presupposed by the teachers and the administrators after the teacher training section. Their presumption turned out to be true after the piloting:

Participant Teacher: It was very beneficial in terms of cooperative work. They worked collaboratively; they learned to work collaboratively.

Student 4: Our class was a newly formed one. Project work was very good in terms of making new friends and I also saw how important helping one another in a group work is. We couldn't have achieved it, if we hadn't worked in a group.

Student 3: It was enjoyable because we made close friends. Even if there were only four or five people in groups, we had a chance to make new friends.

Learner Diary 3 (26.02.2007): It is the 4<sup>th</sup> day of project work. This morning I and my friends in my group discussed what we would do about our project and what we should add to it. ...In fact, I like working on this project. It is very enjoyable to work in a group and research about campus life in different universities.

Learner Diary 2 (28.02.2007): We went to have our lunch all together and then to our class in order to study. We discussed about what we should do with our group members.

Another positive point about project work which was revealed is that it helps students to be more self-confident. Although the students were worried and nervous before presenting their final outcome, they realized that they became more self-confident after everything was finished, as can be seen in the following excerpts from interviews and learner diaries:

Participant Teacher: They also gained self-confidence and they learned how to make presentations.

Learner Diary 2 (02.03.2007): The best thing that I liked today was the fact that my friends congratulated me. I really believe that I will get what I deserve and these congratulations showed me that my efforts were not wasted. It made me very happy. It was a very happy day. I will not replace anything with the happiness that is an outcome of my efforts.

Student 6: It will help the students who are scared of speaking in front of other people. Instead of facing with it after they graduate and when they try to find a job, it will be much better for them to face with it at prep class and rehearse it among his/her group members.

Student 4: At first, I thought I would only conduct research about my topic and my friends would present because I thought it would be very difficult to make a presentation. ...However, I had to make the presentation. ...I had lost my self-confidence; I was scared of doing it. I thought I would not be able to achieve it in front of that many people, especially in front of our teachers. ...but it was beneficial for me; at least I became self-confident. In the next project I will be more relaxed and less nervous.

Student 3: It was helpful as we spoke in front of other people and overcame our nervousness.



Student 5: I liked it very much when I saw that everybody was listening to us and nobody talked to each other during the presentation. ...Some of our friends feared speaking in front of other people so I think many of them could take benefit of it.

Yet another presumed benefit of project work, that it increases motivation, is one of the results which was revealed during the piloting:

Teacher's Journal: It also made me happy because I didn't have to motivate them into the topic because they were self-motivated. The reason was so clear: It was because the project belonged to them. It was theirs. It was their own production. They had made something which made them feel proud.

#### Cognitive benefits

Another positive characteristic of project work, that is it not only improves students' language skills, but also improves their content knowledge, is also revealed in the interviews and from the learner diaries. The students felt that they improved not only their language skills but also their knowledge about campus life in different campuses. In addition, one of the students said that he felt that would be able use what he had learned while preparing a similar project in the future.

#### *Negative attitudes towards project work*

During the process of piloting the project work task, the students also had some negative attitudes towards it. Students reported in the interviews and diaries that project work is sometimes stressful, boring and tiring, as can be seen in the following lines:

Student 3: I can say that it was a little bit stressful because we were researching and discussing what to do and how to do it. We were worried about whether we would be able to achieve it or not.

Learner Diary 4 (27.02.2007): I feel bored and bored in this project. I think preparing a project is sometimes good and enjoyable, but sometimes bad and boring. I spent many hours for this project this week. Sometimes I can't do my homework so I don't wanna join the project.

The reason why they found it stressful, boring and tiring might be related to the time limit they were given. In the open-ended part of the questionnaire, in the diaries of students, and during the interviews it was revealed that the one-week-time limit was very short for them to complete such a project:

Learner Diary 1 (28.02.2007): It is the sixth day of the project. The fact that we have a very limited time is very bad for us. ... These last days are very tiring. All my group members have been sleepless for two days, but I know that it's worth it. It will be a great study.  
 ...(01.02.2007) I think this project was wonderful. I enjoyed a lot while preparing this project. The only problem was that we had to complete the project in one week. In order to achieve it, we became very tired and sleepless.

Student 6: One week was not enough for gathering data.

Student 3: We should do one more project this term but the process should be longer. One week was not enough to prepare this project but we did our best.

In the questionnaire, students were asked whether they would like to participate in project work tasks again and to rate their opinions on a scale (See Table 9). Just over half of them wanted to use project work as a new learning tool, while 16% of them did not, and 32% of them were neutral. The possible reasons for these results may be revealed in the next section.

<i>Item</i>	<i>DN</i>	<i>1</i>		<i>2</i>		<i>3</i>		<i>4</i>		<i>5</i>		<i>DY</i>
		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	
Do you want to participate in PW tasks again?		1	4.0	3	12.0	8	32.0	9	36.0	4	16.0	

Note. PW= Project Work, DY=Definitely Yes , DN= Definitely Not, F= Frequency, %= Percentage

Table 9: Students' Opinions about Participating in Project Work Tasks Again

*Evaluation of the success of the new teaching tool*

In order to fully evaluate the success of the new teaching tool, I compared the needs of the students (See page 58) and the goals that I set (See pages 59-60) with the findings that I came up with during and after the piloting (See pages 86-98). The comparison showed that project work met many of the needs of students and helped to achieve most of the goals.

In fact, the topic of the project was not related to the students' disciplinary branches, therefore it did not meet their needs in terms of ESP. However, it was obvious from the findings that project work increased their content knowledge, which means that if the topic chosen were related to their branches, it could meet their ESP needs.

While the students were preparing their projects, they discussed and negotiated with their group members, therefore they were able to participate in transactional conversations. On the last day of the piloting, they presented their final outcomes in front of their teachers and the students from other classes. Hence, they were able to speak in English in front of an audience. The students also listened to and understood their classmates both during the discussions and during the presentation. They were also able to develop confidence in speaking in front of an audience and they developed more positive attitudes towards listening to their classmates. All these findings show that the goals of speaking and listening were achieved.

As the students increased their content knowledge, they were able to recognize new words related to the topic of the project both while reading texts about their topics while they were researching, and while they were listening to their

friends, so the amount of their passive vocabulary increased. They were also able to use the new words while they were writing and presenting their final outcomes, which shows that they increased their active vocabulary. Before experiencing project work, they were accustomed to learning new words through some mechanic ways such as memorizing, repeating or writing the words again and again, which was boring for them. However, project work helped them to learn new words through reading, listening, writing and speaking, in a more meaningful way. Some students also developed their vocabulary learning strategies such as guessing the meaning from the context and dictionary use during the project work piloting. Consequently, they developed more positive attitudes through learning new words through project work. These findings show that the goals about vocabulary were also achieved.

The findings also show that the goal related to research skills was achieved. As project work requires students to conduct research about a certain topic, the students increased their research skills by searching on the internet and conducting informal interviews. The findings confirm that project work not only increased their research skills, but also increased their academic skills, as they made presentations and wrote reports.

The findings do not show whether the transfer goals were achieved or not as they are more long-term goals. Whether they have been achieved or not can only be known if and when the students' future academic or business lives are observed. Although whether those goals have been achieved or not is not clear at the moment, those goals give a purpose for using project work both to students in learning English and to teachers in teaching English.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, data gathered through interviews, questionnaires, learner diaries and journals were analyzed. The steps in the research design of this study were followed in the data analysis. The analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data was displayed. The following chapter will discuss the findings of this study in the light of the relevant literature and answer the research questions.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

### Overview of the Study

This study investigated the administrators', teachers' and students' attitudes towards implementing a new learning tool into the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages (AKU SFL) and explored teachers' and students' attitudes towards that tool in a university EFL program. In addition, it also revealed insights about the process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context.

This study was carried out with the participation of 11 teachers (three of whom are also administrators) and one randomly selected class of 25 students together with their teacher. Questionnaires, interviews, learner diaries, classroom observation, and journals were used as data collection tools. In this study, first the problems in the existing curriculum and the needs of students were identified. To do so, two administrators, two teachers and two students were interviewed. Next, some goals were set by the researcher on the basis of the needs of the students. Then, in the light of those goals and a review of the literature, project work was chosen as a new teaching tool. After that, a teacher training session was conducted by the researcher with the participation of three administrators and nine teachers. After that, attitudes of teachers and administrators towards the new tool and its implementation in the curriculum were revealed through questionnaires and interviews with three teachers and two administrators. Then, the students were trained and a project work task was piloted over the course of one week. After the piloting, project work was evaluated by the questionnaires given to 25 students, interviews with four students and the participant teacher, learner diaries, and the journals of the participant teacher and the

researcher. Data were analyzed following the steps of the research design, as was illustrated in chapter 3.

This chapter answers the research questions of this study along with discussions relating the findings of the qualitative and quantitative data, which are interpreted in the light of relevant literature. After answering the research questions, the limitations of the study, pedagogical implications and proposals for further research are presented in this chapter.

### Findings and Discussion

In this section, the results of this study are categorized according to their relation to the research questions, and are therefore divided into three main sections.

*Research question 1: What are teachers' and students' attitudes towards the new learning tool which is intended to be implemented into the curriculum?*

#### *Teachers' general attitudes*

The analysis of data indicated that teachers at AKU SFL mostly had positive attitudes towards project work after they were trained about it, though without having actually conducted it. According to the results of the questionnaire, they felt that project work would be useful, not frustrating, fun, interesting, worthwhile, and clear. After actually being exposed to project work in the piloting, students found it useful, fun, worthwhile, and clear. In addition, most of the teachers (63.6% of them) thought that students can learn English 'quite a bit' through project work. It is an interesting coincidence that nearly the same amount of students (64.4%) thought that they learned English 'quite a bit' through project work. Therefore, it is clear that teachers' presumptions about project work were reflected in the students' actual experiences.

The teachers found project work to be a student-centered teaching tool, that they felt would increase learner autonomy. This might be an expected finding as the earlier studies asserted the same result (Alan & Stoller, 2005; Eyring, 1997; Gökçen, 2005; Hedge, 1993; Kayser, 2002; Malcom & Rindfleisch, 2003; Stoller, 1997). The teachers also felt that project work can be useful for building on previous work, and again, this finding supports the earlier literature (Moss & Van Duzer, 1998). In addition to what the literature has said about the benefits of project work, in this study it was revealed that project work has the potential not only to contribute to students' learning, but also to teachers' self development. After the teacher training session, the teachers felt that by conducting project work in their classes, they would be able to learn new ways of teaching as it would be a different experience for them, too. For example, since they did not use different teaching tools other than the selected book, using project work would give them the opportunity to conduct different teaching tools such as discussions and presentations. Project work would also be a different experience for the teachers if they were to ask the students to research and prepare a final product such as a report or a poster. In addition, project work would help raise teachers' awareness towards process-oriented teaching tools, which they have not experienced before. Finally, teachers would also become more familiar with using peer-evaluation and self-evaluation in their classes rather than using only teacher evaluation. In brief, implementing project work would allow the teachers to experience a more learner-centered way of teaching.



*Overlap between teacher presumptions and student attitudes*

Additionally, it was revealed that some attitudes of the teachers overlapped with those of students. These can be broadly categorized into attitudes about affective benefits of project work and skill-related benefits.

*Affective benefits*

In terms of affective benefits, before piloting project work, the teachers presupposed that it would increase students' motivation and enthusiasm. After the piloting, the students also stated that they found project work motivating and therefore, they were enthusiastic to participate in the project work task. This finding also supports what the relevant literature says about project work's motivating benefits (Alan & Stoller, 2005; Lee, 2002; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995; Tessema, 2005; Wrigley, 1998). Students' comments in their diaries suggested that they appreciated the meaningfulness of the tasks, and this was likely a motivating factor for them.

Another overlap between teachers' presumptions and students' subsequent attitudes is that project work increases socialization through cooperative learning. This result is similar to what Gaer (1998) and Hedge (1993) found in their studies. The students in different classes at AKU SFL are mixed randomly and new classes are formed in the second term. Since the piloting started at the end of the first week of the second term, the students did not know each other very well when they formed their groups and started to work on their project. There is clear evidence that project work enhances socialization, as the students and the participant teacher stated both in the interviews and in their diaries that they made close friendships during the piloting. These friendships emerged because they had to spend a lot of time together, work hard, and negotiate, even though they did not know each other beforehand.

*Skills related benefits*

Teachers' and students' ideas also overlapped in terms of project work's potential benefits for improving various skills- from language skills to research skills, and even work related skills. In terms of language skills, their positive attitudes towards project work's potential benefits supports what the literature claims (Alan & Stoller, 2005; Kagnarith, Theara & Klein 2007; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995). In this study, project-based learning was perceived as meeting students' language needs and integrating all four skills. In addition to listening, speaking, writing and reading, students also reported feeling that it improved their vocabulary and helped them learn different sentence structures. Moreover, in the interviews most of the students reported that they improved their pronunciation, a point not found to have been mentioned in project-based research in the literature. They reported that they studied and practiced the pronunciation of the new words they learned because they had to present their final outcomes orally in front of an audience. They stated that they learned the pronunciation of new words by asking their teacher or by using a dictionary hence project work helped them to improve their pronunciation. Furthermore, they reported that they could see improvement in their language at the end of the project work piloting.

The teachers also thought that students would be able to improve their academic and research skills through project work. After the piloting, students also felt that they had actually improved their academic and research skills as they searched on the internet, they made surveys, they compiled and analyzed data they gathered, and they wrote a report and presented it orally in front of an audience. This finding, which emphasizes project work's ability to promote academic and research

skills, is similar to that of Alan & Stoller (2005), Beckett (2005), Gaer (1998), and Hedge (1993).

The last overlapping finding about skills is about professional skills. Both teachers and students highlighted in their diaries that project work will help students in the world of work. As project work promotes content knowledge, students felt that they will be able to use what they have learned when they start working. In addition, project work increases socialization and cooperative learning, which can be helpful for students in their professions. This finding also supports what Green (1998) and Wrigley (1998) suggested in their studies.

#### *Mismatches between teacher presumptions and student attitudes*

In this study, there were some findings in which the teachers' presumptions about project work did not match with students' actual reports. Four of these mismatches were a pleasant surprise. First, after the teacher training, the teachers did not presume that project work could enhance content knowledge. However, the students felt that project work did increase their content knowledge, which also supports what the relevant literature says (Beckett & Slater, 2005; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Stoller, 1997; Stoller, 2006). In this study, students prepared projects about their ideal campus life. They increased their content knowledge especially about five main topics, which were accommodation, food and drink, sports facilities, students' clubs, and shopping, banking, post office and transportation on a campus. In fact, the topics could be altered so that the content knowledge gained would be more directly related to their disciplinary studies.

One other finding of this study, which was realized by the students but was not presupposed by the teachers is that project work might stimulate students'

creative thinking skills and use of imagination. For instance, one of the students stated that s/he started to imagine and tried to find something new for her “ideal campus”. The students also stated in the interviews that while they were discussing their topics with their group members, they came up with different ideas. This finding is also similar to what Alan & Stoller (2005), Hedge (1993), and Kayser (2002) found.

Another mismatch between the students and the teachers is that one of the administrators, who also teaches prep classes, was concerned that introverted students might have difficulties if they were asked to make a presentation in front of an audience. Contrary to this belief, even those students who had themselves thought that they would not be able to speak in front of other people, gave speeches and successfully made their presentations. They admitted in the interviews and in their diaries that they had been worried, stressed and excited before they presented their final outcomes, however they felt so self-confident after the presentation that they expressed a willingness to prepare new projects. This finding about project work’s promoting self-confidence supports what the recent literature says (Skehan, 1999; Wilhelm, 1999, as cited in Stoller, 2006).

The teachers had also expressed concerns that project work might bring some financial trouble for the students, since in order to do research, collect data, and prepare their final outcomes, the students would have to spend extra money. However, none of the students mentioned that they had financial troubles while they were preparing their projects. In this project, students reported that each group of five people had to spend between 5-10 YTL to afford CDs, files, print outs and the time they spent in an internet café. Although they had to spend this amount of money,

they reported that it was not an amount that constituted a financial problem for them. Although the students did not have such problems in this study, it is a genuine issue to be taken into consideration while planning a project work task, and making decisions about the final outcomes.

The last mismatch, which brought an unpleasant surprise is that although the teachers did not anticipate it, the students emphasized that project work was stressful for them. The reason why they found it stressful however may not lie in the nature of project work itself but in the timeframe of the study. Because the piloting took only one week, the students had to complete their projects in a hurry and this was stressful for them. During the piloting, they had to keep up with their lessons, other assignments and studying for their fortnightly quiz, while at the same time working hard to complete this project. There is no doubt that project work requires from students a great deal of effort and investment therefore it can sometimes be tiring for students, as pointed out by Legutke & Thiel (1982, as cited in Carter & Thomas, 1986).

#### *Teachers' suggestions*

The teachers' attitudes towards project work were also revealed through their ideas about issues that should be taken into consideration about project work implementation. The teachers proposed three suggestions:

##### *Preparations for project work*

Teachers were very clear in stressing that preparations and plans would have to be made before conducting a project work task, something which is not new in the literature. The teachers' idea that each project requires careful pre-planning, scheduling, and cooperation among teachers supports the relevant literature as

pointed out by Gökçen (2005) and Legutke & Thiel (1982, as cited in Carter & Thomas, 1986). In addition, Alan & Stoller (2005) present a number of questions to be posed while planning a project work task in order to maximize its benefits, which also shows that project work requires careful planning. As project work is a teaching tool which takes considerable time and requires certain steps to follow, it should be planned very carefully while it is being implemented in the syllabus. More specifically, since AKU SFL adheres to a “unity principle”, which obliges all teachers to act in the same way at the same time, there is a particular need for pre-planning and preparations in the implementation of project work in the curriculum.

*Teachers’ guidance in project work*

Another issue raised by the teachers is their understanding that their guidance and effort in motivating students would play an important role in the success of project work. Teachers’ roles as a guide, a facilitator, and a consultant were also mentioned in the relevant literature on project work (Fried-Booth, 1986; Gaer, 1998; Green, 1998; Sheppard & Stoller, 1995). Moreover, the fact that teachers have an important role in motivating students while conducting this kind of a teaching tool was also presumed by the teachers. According to Dörnyei (2001, p.31), three indispensable motivational conditions are: “appropriate teacher behaviors and a good relationship with the students, a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere, and a cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms” all of which can only be enabled by teachers.

*Preparing traditionally-oriented students for project work*

One other issue that was revealed by the teachers was their concern that teachers might have to overcome students' prejudices about a new way of learning. As most of the students at AKU SFL have been primarily exposed to traditional, teacher-centered ways of teaching, they are not used to this kind of process oriented, learner-centered way of learning. It has been argued that students who are accustomed to close control, monitoring, and structured formal classes on grammar, may refuse to accept the changes necessitated by a switch to project-based learning (Wright, 2003, as cited in Kemaloğlu, 2006). However, in this study, although the teachers presumed that the students might be prejudiced towards the new learning tool, the students did not resist change in the piloting process. It is probable that the reason why this study's results differed from those of Wright's study is because a session, in which all the questions in the students' minds were made clear, was conducted before the piloting started. Another solution for this problem that has been proposed (Eyring, 1997) is to conduct project work together with other classroom activities rather than allotting the whole course to project work. This helps traditionally-oriented students become familiar with project-based work, and proved to be the case in this study. As all the lessons during the one-week-long piloting process was not devoted to only project work, the students in this study did not resist the new way of learning. Seven hours of lessons out of 25 were devoted to the project work task on that week (The time allotted for the actual presentation of the final outcomes is not included as the presentations were conducted after the regular class-hours finished).

*Level Appropriateness*

One last issue that was raised by the teachers was about the project topics and tasks, and their importance that they should be appropriate for the proficiency level of the students. This concern stemmed from the teachers' experiences implementing presentations, and their feeling that the attempt failed because the students' proficiency levels were not high enough. It is an important issue that when making decisions about implementing a new teaching tool, students' proficiency levels should be taken into consideration. However, in this study, it was revealed that the students can be successful in achieving the goals of the new tool if the selected topic and tasks are appropriate for their level. In order to enhance motivation, students should be engaged in tasks which are neither too easy, nor too difficult, yet are challenging (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1993; Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988; Egbert, 2003 as cited in Stoller, 2006). To conclude, in order to make the most of project work, when the topics and the tasks are chosen, the proficiency level of students should be taken into consideration.

*Project work as an assessment tool*

The analysis of the data also indicates that teachers had valuable suggestions about using project work. For instance, they thought that project work could be used as not only a teaching tool, but also an assessment tool. In fact, this is not a new idea, as in their study, Slater, Beckett & Aufderhaar (2006) show how the social practice of doing project work can be assessed. They suggest sound research-based assessment models through which project work can be evaluated holistically. With these models, assessment of project-based learning can reveal connections among language, content, and thinking skills. In fact, project work itself has been used as an



assessment tool as well as a teaching tool in some EFL contexts in Turkish universities (Gökçen, 2005) and can also be used both as a teaching tool and an assessment tool at AKU SFL, too.

In addition, one of the teachers suggested that students can keep a diary during the process and write what they do for the project and how they felt so that they will be able to reflect on their learning and practice their writing skills. He also suggested that their writing skills can be assessed through these diaries. In fact, keeping a diary throughout the process of a project work task is not a new idea, as in their study, Beckett & Slater (2005) proposed the project framework, which consists of a planning graphic and a learner diary. Although this diary was not proposed as an assessment tool, it can be used for assessment purposes, as one of the teachers suggested.

As a conclusion, both the teachers and the students mostly had positive attitudes towards project work. They believed in the benefits of using project work, although because of the conditions of the study, the students found it somewhat stressful. In addition, the teachers reported that they learned what to consider while planning and conducting project work.

*Research question 2: What are the administrators', teachers' and students' attitudes towards implementing the new learning tool into the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages?*

Data analyzed in this study revealed that both the administrators and teachers are ready to see project work implemented in the curriculum and to use it as a new teaching tool in preparatory classes in the following academic years. The clearest proof of their enthusiasm for incorporating project work into the curriculum is that

they did not wait until the next academic year to do so. As the teacher training was conducted at the end of the first term, they all agreed to implement project work in the syllabus of the second term and the teachers responsible for the syllabus design planned and included it in the syllabus during the mid-term break and started to immediately use it in the second term.

In fact, the teachers did not present any resistance to implementing project work in the curriculum. This might be surprising as teachers at other schools have been less positive about project work (Akkaş Keleş, 2007). Rather, the teachers at AKU SFL were very positive in general. This might be because they felt more confident after the teacher training. The teacher training was very helpful for their self-improvement as both theoretical and practical issues were covered, a sample of project work was presented, and the teachers were given the opportunity to practice preparing project work plans for AKU SFL students. Before they were trained, they did not know much about project work, how it is conducted, and what their own and their students' roles would be. After the training they saw that project work might meet students' needs and contribute to students' learning. Finally, they believed in the use of project work in prep classes and wanted to see project work in the curriculum.

After the piloting, the students were also asked whether they would like to participate in a project work task again in the second term. Although the majority of the students wanted it, a considerable number of students (32%) were neutral and a few (16%) openly said they did not want it. The reason why a few of them did not want to experience project work again might be because of the length of time devoted to piloting in this study. As the students had to complete the entire project in

one week, they found the experience stressful, and were therefore unwilling to do it. This finding about the perceptions of students is similar to that of Akkaş Keleş (2007), as, although the students at Muğla University School of Foreign Languages mostly had positive attitudes towards project work, some of them were reluctant to participate in project work tasks.

To conclude, the analyses of qualitative and quantitative data indicated that all the teachers and administrators were open to change and want to see project work implemented as a new teaching tool in the curriculum. In addition, a slim majority of the students want to experience a project work task again. Under different circumstances, it is possible that this percentage could be higher.

*Research question 3: What insights does this study reveal about the process of implementing curricular change in general?*

In this study, the importance of teacher training, preparing students for the new learning tool, and taking teachers', students', and administrators' opinions into consideration in the steps of a curricular change process were revealed. In addition, this study provides a proven model for how a curricular change can best be undertaken.

First, the teachers must be ready. They should be proficient in the subject, pedagogy and design of the new teaching tool if it is to be implemented it into the curriculum (Pratt, 1980). In this study it was revealed that both the teachers and administrators strongly supported the idea that teacher training be an essential part of the process of curricular change. This finding supports what is said in the literature (e.g. Markee, 1997). Evidence was thus found for the idea that as teachers and administrators learn more about new methods, techniques or teaching tools, they

become willing and enthusiastic to use them. After the teacher training, the teachers clearly felt more self-confident about using project work in their classes as they knew how to conduct it, and were aware of the roles of students and themselves, because the training helped them see that project work was viable. They came to believe that it could meet students' needs, and was worth using despite its costs in terms of time, energy, and commitment. Consequently, they were ready to try using it.

Another significant finding of this study is about the importance of preparing students for the new learning tool before starting to use it. In this study, the students did not know what project work was and what they were supposed to do in the process. Therefore, a session was conducted before piloting. This session was beneficial as all the students were able to ask questions and clarify what project work would mean for them. The data strongly suggest that preparing the students for the new tool before starting to use it helped raise their openness to it and subsequent positive attitudes. This finding also supports what the relevant literature says, as Markee (1997) suggests the students will benefit more if the new teaching tool is made clear to them therefore they should be enlightened about the potential advantages and how they might benefit from it. For instance, in Kemaloğlu's study (2006), some students reported that they were not given an adequate amount of information from their teachers thus they suggested receiving more informative sessions before and during the process of a project work task. Interestingly, although this kind of learner training for the implementation of project work is suggested by many researchers (Beckett, 2005; Eyring, 1997; Hedge, 1993; Moulton and Holmes, 2000), studies have shown that it is largely neglected in university level EFL

contexts in Turkey (Akkaş-Keleş, 2007; Gökçen, 2005; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Subaşı, 2002).

Another important point in this study is a solid reminder that it is important to consider students', teachers' and administrators' opinions in each step of a curricular change process. In this study, in each step their feelings, ideas and suggestions were considered. Without their comments, the implementation of the new teaching tool wouldn't have brought the desired results. In most cases, change in curriculum is a top-down process, in which teachers are obliged to implement the changes that have been directed by a level above them (Akkaş Keleş, 2007). Rather, this study reveals that curricular change can be more successful when following a bottom-up process.

This study provides a model for a curricular change process including certain steps to be followed. In this study, the starting point was identifying the problems in the curriculum and the needs of the students. Next, the goals were set based on the identified needs. Then, an appropriate teaching tool was selected. After that, a teacher training workshop was conducted. Then, plans and preparations were done through negotiations between the teacher and the researcher, followed by student training and piloting the new tool. Last, the new teaching tool was evaluated. Although the importance of these components has been emphasized by other researchers, too, they are mostly neglected when innovations are made. When a curricular change is done improperly, it may not bring the desired results (Akkaş Keleş, 2007; Gökçen, 2005; Kemaloğlu, 2006; Subaşı, 2002). Therefore, other schools might benefit from this model when they want to implement a new teaching tool into their curricula.

### Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study suggest that project work can be used as both a teaching and an assessment tool at AKU SFL and can be integrated into the syllabi of both the Main Course and the Skills courses. Although most research on project work has emphasized its use in ESL contexts, this study suggests that it can also be used in EFL contexts, as it is found to be an effective and popular teaching tool. The study also suggests that with careful planning and modifications, project work can be used for students from every level and every age group. In addition, during the implementation of a project work task, learner diaries can be used to help students to reflect on their learning. Moreover, ongoing learner training sessions about some specific topics (i.e. writing references, plagiarism) can be conducted throughout the process. Furthermore, not only the students and the teachers, but also the local people who might be interested in the project topics can be invited to the presentations. Last, the projects can be modified or prepared and proposed to EC LLP (European Commission Life Long Learning Programmes) (e.g. Erasmus, Leonardo, Comenius, Gruntvig) to improve the quality of European preschool, elementary, secondary schools, and higher education, and to participate in the exchange programmes, individual training visits, contact seminars, and individual project preparatory visits.

### Limitations

There are some limitations in this study. As there was a limited time for carrying out this research, the number of data collection tools used specifically for the process of needs analysis was limited. Granted, in order to enable triangulation, interviews were conducted with administrators, teachers, and students. However, a

more detailed needs analysis could have been conducted by using questionnaires, student evaluation forms, and checklists.

Another limitation of this study is that the time frame for the project work plan had to be squeezed into one week. If it had lasted more than one week, the students might have not been so stressed, which might have affected their attitudes in a positive manner. On the other hand, more time might also have meant that other issues as well might have emerged, particularly as the students' initial enthusiasm over a novel activity wore off.

A third limitation of this study is that there was no time to conduct any follow-up to reveal the subsequent attitudes of teachers other than the pilot study participant teacher. As the other teachers themselves actually began to implement project work in the second term, data could have been collected through interviews and questionnaires in order to make the findings of the evaluation part more reliable. Instead, the teachers' perceptions remained based primarily on their 'hypothetical' ideas following the training session.

#### Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, some suggestions can be made for further research. First, a more detailed needs analysis can be conducted in a similar study. Second, in such a study, a project work task should be conducted in a longer period of time. Third, a course evaluation study can be conducted in order to evaluate the success of project work after its implementation in the curriculum.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed that teachers, students, and administrators had positive attitudes towards project work and its implementation in the curriculum at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages (AKU SFL). In addition, all sets of participants indicated some possible constraints of using project work and made various suggestions for possible improvements.

Most importantly perhaps, this study has highlighted some major aspects of a successful process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context. In this model of a curricular change process, the steps of identifying the problems in the existing curriculum and needs of the students, setting goals, selecting an appropriate teaching tool, training the administrators and teachers on the new teaching tool, preparing the students for the new teaching tool, piloting and evaluating the tool were all followed. During this process, in particular the importance of teacher training, preparing students for the new tool, and taking administrators', teachers', and students' opinions into consideration in all of the steps of a curricular change was revealed. Insights from this study may prove useful in guiding both project work practices and curriculum development practices.



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## APPENDIX A: ÖĞRENCİYLE YAPILAN MÜLAKAT ÖRNEĞİ

T- Peki nasıl gidiyor derslerin işlenişi?

S- Ya müfredat açısından çok sıkıcı, bizim için çok sıkıcı. Yani genelde hep aynı şeyler üzerinde donuyor. Tek kitap. Pek fazla şans da yok elimizde aslında. O yüzden, uyuyoruz ama çok sıkıcı.

T- Peki sıkıcı olmasının sebebi sadece kitaba bağlı mı olmak?

S- Sadece kitaba bağlı olmak bir de genelde aynı şeyler tekrarlanıyor kitapta da. O yüzden yani ne bileyim. İşte geçenlerde bir şeyler yapmıştık. Film izledik İngilizce, onun kelimelerini falan çalıştık. Yaratıcı bir şeyler oluştu aslında. Hem kelime katması açısından – 150–200 tane yeni kelime öğrendik gayet iyiydi yani onlar.

T- Peki, sence, ders kitabına çok bağlı gidiyorsunuz galiba, bunun dışında herhangi önerebileceğin bir şey var mı?

S- bunun dışında, biz bazen hocalardan talep ediyoruz. İşte ne bileyim, worksheetler falan getiriyorlar.

T- onlar daha çok gramer?

S- onlar daha çok gramer ağırlıklı genelde.

T-Peki senin beklentin ne bu hazırlıktan, öncelikle onu bir sorayım.S-ya benim hazırlıktan beklentim, ya bir altyapı var bizde, herkeste var bir altyapı. Hem nasıl diyeyim, gramer konusunda gerçi konuşma açısından ya da bi rahat konuşma açısından genelde herkes karşıdakinin konuşmasını anlayabiliyor ama bi konuşma...

## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE STUDENT ORAL INTERVIEW

R: How is the way the lessons are conducted going?

S: It is so boring in terms of the content of the syllabus, very boring for us. Always the same things. Only the book. We don't have any other alternatives, actually. So we have to follow it but it is very boring.

R: OK. Do you think the reason for its being boring is dependence on the book?

S: Depending solely on the book, in addition, the book has too many revisions and the same subjects are repeated. That's the reason, I don't know. For example, we did something lately. We watched a movie [in English] and studied the words [we didn't know] in the movie. We did something creative in terms of learning new words. We learned 150-200 words. It was great!

R: So, I think the lessons are too much dependent on the book. Do you have any other suggestions in your mind [other than watching movies]?

S: Other than that we sometimes want our teachers [to bring something new]. They bring some worksheets, for example.

R: And they are mostly about grammar?

S: Yes, they are mostly about grammar.

R: What are your expectations in terms of the education in prep classes? I want to ask it first.

S: My expectations from the prep class. We have background from our previous English courses, everybody has, in terms of grammar and we can comprehend when somebody speaks. However, we have a difficulty in speaking fluently. For example, I want to ...

## APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear colleagues,

This questionnaire is given in order to collect data concerning your attitudes towards project work and its implementation in the curriculum. The data collected through this questionnaire will be used in a master thesis on an Exploratory Study of Curricular Change: Project Work in an EFL Context. The aim of this study, conducted at the Bilkent University MA TEFL program, is to provide insights about the process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context by identifying the problems in the existing curriculum, training teachers and students on a new teaching tool to be implemented into the curriculum, piloting the new tool, and investigating students', teachers' and administrators' attitudes towards that tool. Your answers to the questionnaire will be kept completely confidential and will not be revealed to third persons. The questionnaire does not have right or wrong answers. For the success of the investigation, please do not leave out any questions and give genuine answers. Please circle the number that indicates the answer that is most appropriate for you.

If you would like to get further information about this questionnaire, please feel free to send me an e-mail. Thank you for your kind cooperation.

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Please rate your opinions about project work on the following scale:

Useless	1	2	3	4	5	Useful
Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Not Frustrating
Not fun	1	2	3	4	5	Fun
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	Interesting
Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	Worthwhile
Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Clear

How much do you think your students will learn English through project work? Circle the number that indicates your response.

Nothing	Just a little	Moderate	Quite a bit	A great deal
1	2	3	4	5

Do you want to see project work implemented in the curriculum and use it as a new teaching tool in preparatory classes in the following academic years?

Definitely not      1      2      3      4      5      Definitely yes

Please use the space below to add any other comments you may have about project work and implementing it in the curriculum of preparatory classes at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages.

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE LESSON PLAN OF THE PROJECT WORK TASK (THE  
FIRST DAY)

**THE PROJECT: IDEAL CAMPUS LIFE**

**Step 1 Students and instructor agree on a project:** The teacher raises students' awareness about the campus life in general, first. He encourages students to talk about and elicits students' attitudes towards the campus life at Afyon Kocatepe University. He provides them with useful vocabulary by using a grid. Then he asks some discussion questions and elicits suggestions for improving the campus life of AKU.

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>Food and Drink</b>	<b>Sports Facilities</b>	<b>Students' Clubs</b>	<b>Shopping, Banking, Post Office, Transportation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Dormitory</li> <li>•Guest house</li> <li>•Internet connection</li> <li>•Telephone</li> <li>•Studying room</li> <li>•Kitchen</li> <li>•Vending machine</li> <li>•Hot water service</li> <li>•Washing machine</li> <li>•Application procedure</li> <li>•Registration</li> <li>•Costs</li> <li>•Regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•cafe</li> <li>•restaurant</li> <li>•canteen</li> <li>•cafeteria</li> <li>•meal</li> <li>•price</li> <li>•kinds of food &amp; drinks</li> <li>•serve</li> <li>•cooked food</li> <li>•fast food</li> <li>•buffet</li> <li>•weekly menu</li> <li>•table d'Hote cafeteria</li> <li>•A la Carte cafeteria</li> <li>•Vending machine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical exercise</li> <li>• Trainer</li> <li>• Gym</li> <li>• Field</li> <li>• Court</li> <li>• Schedules</li> <li>• Pool</li> <li>• Ping pong tables</li> <li>• Fitness center</li> <li>• Sports teams</li> <li>• Sports leagues and tournaments</li> <li>• Sports courses</li> <li>• Reservation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerts</li> <li>• Exhibitions</li> <li>• Conferences</li> <li>• Performances</li> <li>• Activities</li> <li>• Membership form</li> <li>• Office of Health, Culture and Sports</li> <li>• Students' clubs and societies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Drugstore</li> <li>•Photography shop</li> <li>•Shopping center</li> <li>•Bookstore</li> <li>•Branches of the banks</li> <li>•ATM</li> <li>•Working hours</li> <li>•Card phones</li> <li>•Entrance gates</li> <li>•Bus/minibus</li> <li>•Departure times</li> <li>•Ring buses</li> <li>•Taxi</li> <li>•Tramcar</li> <li>•Metro</li> </ul>

Discussion Questions:

1. Where do you stay in Afyon? If you stay in a dormitory, what facilities does it provide? How should an ideal dormitory be?
2. What kind of food and drinks are available/not available in our campus? Are there different places to eat in the campus?
3. What are the sports facilities of Afyon Kocatepe University? Are you interested in any of the sports facilities? Which sports facilities are lacking in the campus of AKU?
4. What are the names of the student clubs at AKU? Are you a member of any of them? Are there any other clubs that you would like to join but do not exist at AKU? What kind of activities do the members of the clubs perform?
5. What are the shopping, banking, post office and transportation facilities in the campus of AKU? Are you satisfied with them?
6. Have you ever seen any other university campuses? Can you compare it with the campus of AKU? How happy are you with the current campus life?

**Step 2 Students and instructor determine the final outcome of the project:**

The teacher proposes some possibilities of final outcomes such as brochure, bulletin board display, oral presentation, poster, website and written report. By taking students opinions into consideration, the final outcomes will be determined. Each group can choose a different outcome. At this point, decisions about the audiences for the final outcome will also be made. Teachers, administrators of AKU SFL and other prep class students can be

invited to the presentation. In order to invite them, the teacher asks volunteer students to prepare some simple posters to be hung on the boards in the school.

**Step 3 Students and instructor structure the project:** Students will be asked to work in groups of 5 and they will be allowed to choose their own groups. Each group is required to prepare one project about their ideal campus life. Then students in each group decide on their primary roles and responsibilities. At this point, the roles will not be assigned by the teacher. In each group students will be allowed to choose one of the topics that they will do research (accommodation, food and drink, sports facilities, students' clubs and shopping, banking, post office and transportation) according to their interests. According to the types of the final outcomes, students will be encouraged to take pictures, draw charts or campus map, present data or prepare a website. While determining responsibilities students' abilities will be taken into consideration and again, they will be allowed to decide on and share their responsibilities in their groups. Students will be informed about the time frame of the project work task and the deadline for the final outcome so that students reach a consensus about the sequencing of project tasks.

**Step 4 Instructor prepares students for information gathering:** Students will gather data mostly through the Web and brochures. The teacher asks students to brainstorm and consider the best ways to search data. The teacher introduces the relevant search engines or websites. Then, he distributes copies of a website of a university, in which the students can see the relevant information about campus life (accommodation, food and drink, sports facilities, students' clubs and shopping, banking, post office and

transportation). After each student reads her/his part, they will discuss and brainstorm about what to include in their final outcome. Then they share their decisions with the class. (This last activity can be homework if there is no time left and the students can share their decisions in the next lesson). At the weekend, students will be asked to gather as much information as possible and bring the print outs of the relevant web pages.

## APPENDIX E: INVITATION POSTER



## APPENDIX F: SAMPLE OF THE JOURNAL KEPT BY THE PARTICIPANT

## TEACHER

And I also requested the one we presented the work to be open to the comments. Because they could provide them with a chance to correct their possible mistakes. It was a quite productive day for the students because they saw their possible problems before they really performed.

On the day we had a rehearsal, we had to have a change in the class. Because we didn't have the necessary equipment in our class. But it didn't seem to be an obstacle for them. Even though they were performing it just in front of their classmates, they were all quite excited. After the presentation, I invited other class members to comment on the project and I requested that they be productive.

## APPENDIX G: SAMPLE OF A LEARNER DIARY

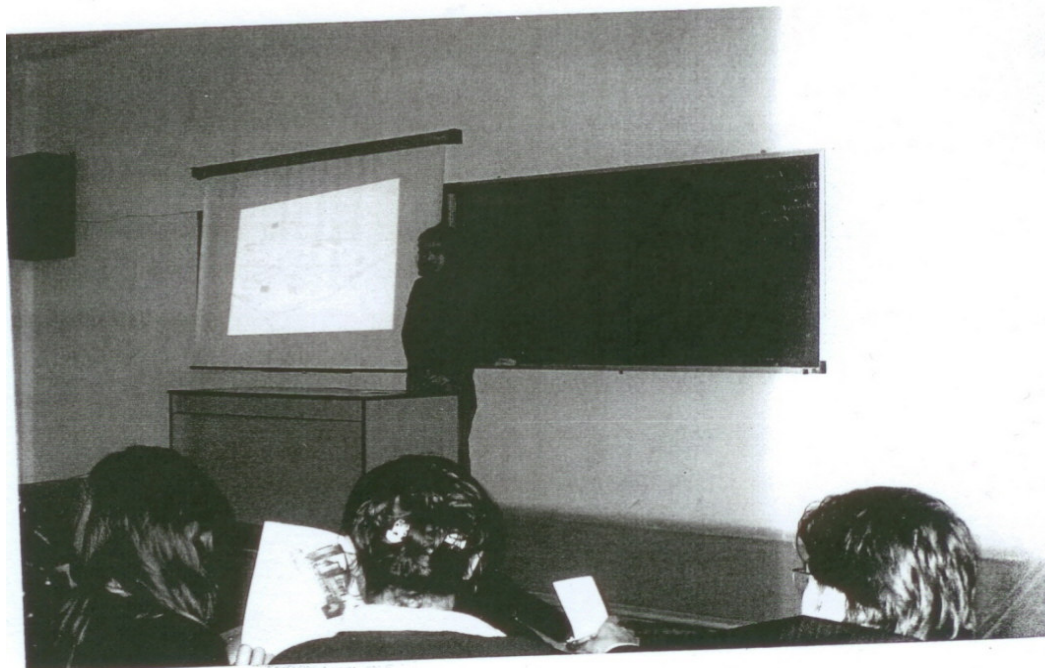
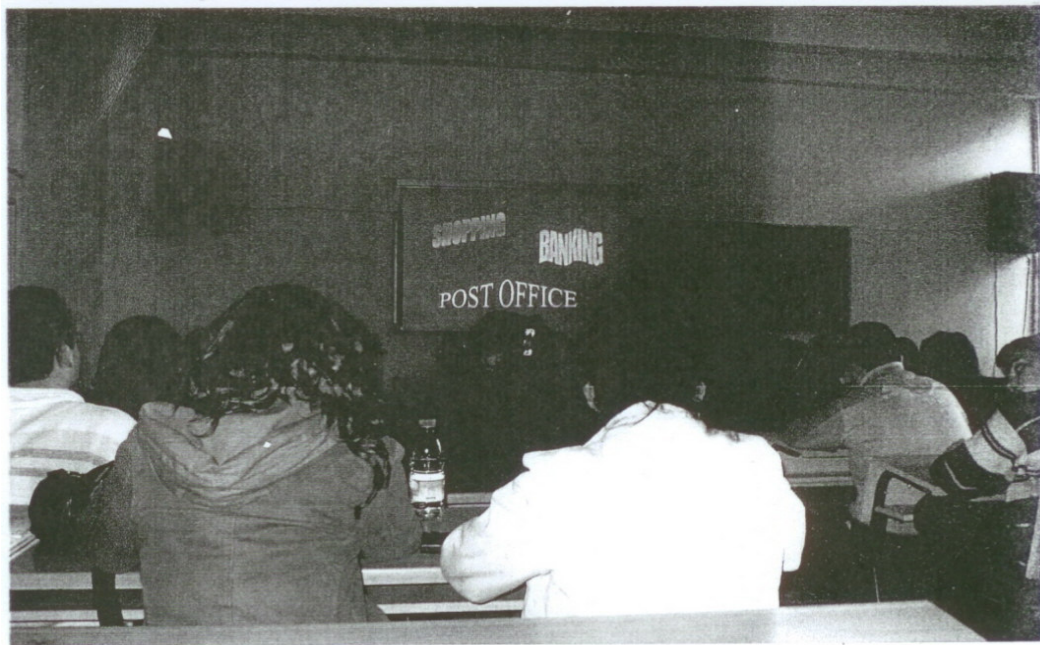
My opinion is this. I said it don't like my scripts. Because there is nothing to do for example there isn't any shopping center. But I love shopping. Meanwhile this camp is more beautiful than the city center. My friend always agree me. Baker, Bilal, Emrah and Recep are my friend. We are a group. I gave a topic to research. The topic is Student's clubs.

I researched this topic from my computer. I surfed on the internet I visited a lot of universities web site. And then I found a lot of pictures about universities. I am very tired now. Because This day was tiresome a day. Now I want to sleep OK! See you =))

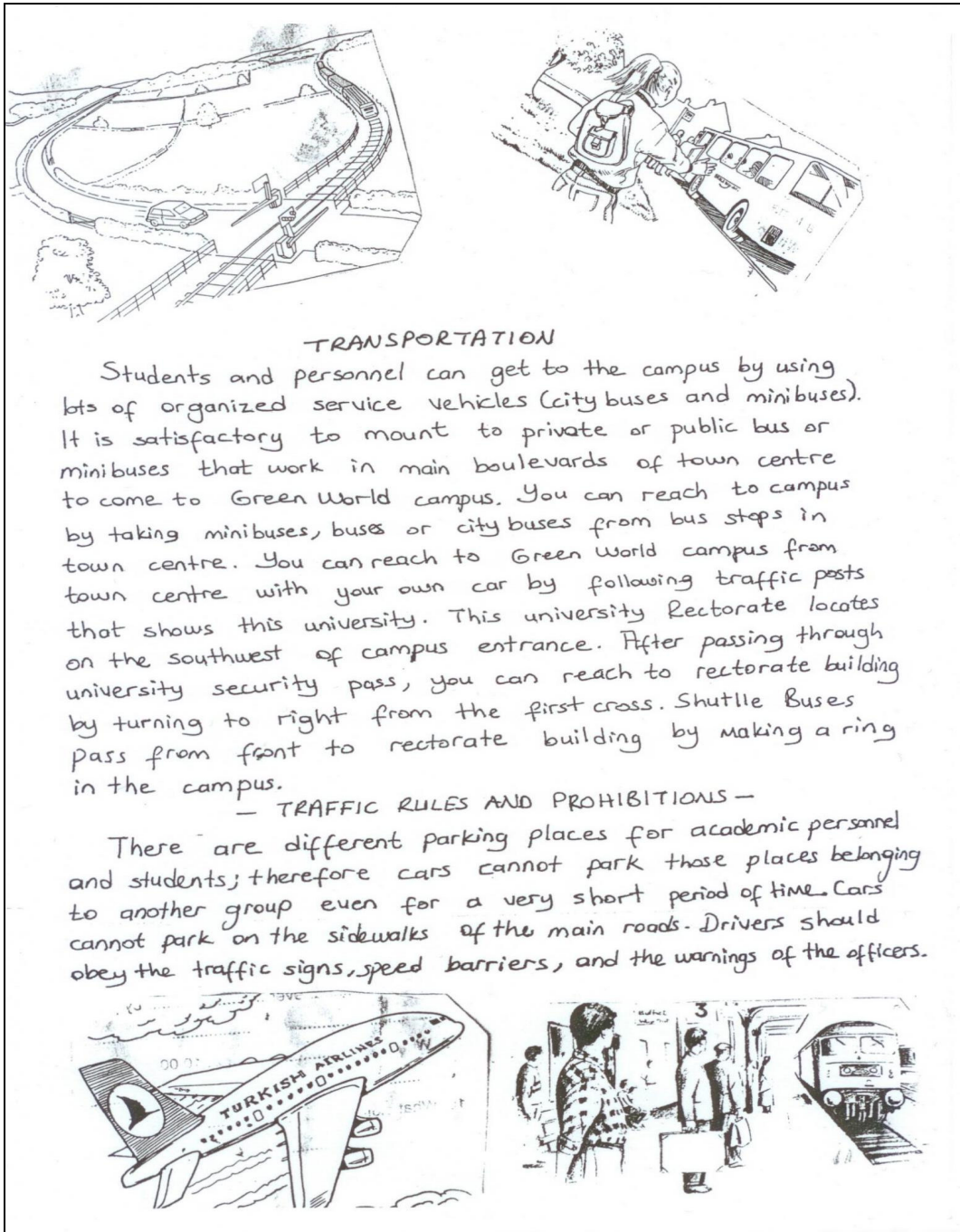
GIPTA



APPENDIX H: PHOTOS FROM THE PILOTING

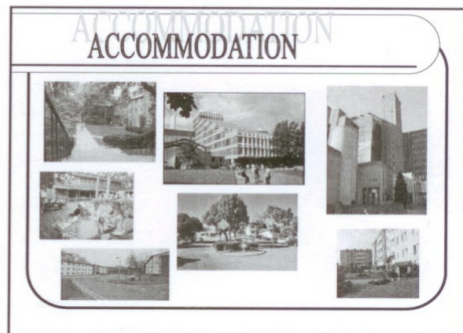
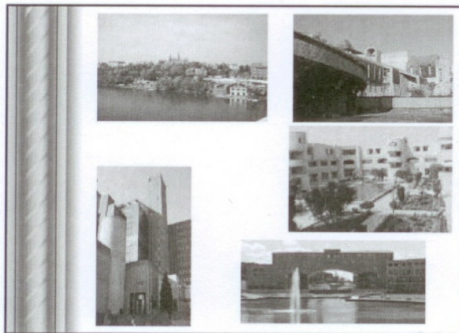


## APPENDIX I: SAMPLE FINAL OUTCOME (REPORT)



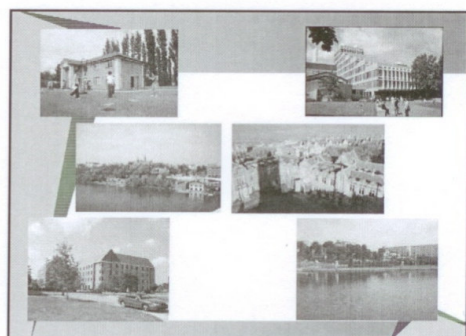
APPENDIX J: SAMPLE FINAL OUTCOME (POWER POINT SLIDES)

we wanted to form the best  
and the most worthwhile  
university for the student



**Student Dormitories**

- There is no accommodation problem for 21. century of university
- Public and private dormitories are available near the campuses.  
There is also private dormitories in the city centre





## APPENDIX K: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Dear students,

This questionnaire is given in order to collect data concerning your attitudes towards project work and its implementation in the curriculum. The data collected through this questionnaire will be used in a master thesis on Curricular Change through Project Work. The aim of this study, conducted at the Bilkent University MA TEFL program, is to provide insights about the process of implementing curricular change in an EFL context by identifying the problems in the existing curriculum, training teachers and students on a new teaching tool to be implemented into the curriculum, piloting the new tool, and investigating students', teachers' and administrators' attitudes towards that tool. Your answers to the questionnaire will be kept completely confidential and will not be revealed to third persons. The questionnaire does not have right or wrong answers. For the success of the investigation, please do not leave out any questions and give genuine answers.

Please circle the number that indicates the answer that is most appropriate for you.

If you would like to get further information about this questionnaire, please feel free to send me an e-mail. Thank you for your kind cooperation.

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Please rate your opinions about project work on the following scale:

Useless	1	2	3	4	5	Useful
Frustrating	1	2	3	4	5	Not Frustrating
Not fun	1	2	3	4	5	Fun
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	Interesting
Worthless	1	2	3	4	5	Worthwhile
Confusing	1	2	3	4	5	Clear

How much did project work help your learning English?

Nothing	Just a little	Moderate	Quite a bit	A great deal
1	2	3	4	5

Do you want to experience project work as a learning tool again this term?

Definitely not            1      2      3      4      5      Definitely yes

Please use the space below to add any other comments you may have about project work and implementing it in the curriculum of preparatory classes at Afyon Kocatepe University School of Foreign Languages.

## APPENDIX L: ÖĞRENCİLERE UYGULANAN ANKET

Sevgili öğrenciler,

Bu anket, sizin proje çalışmaları ve bunun müfredata eklenmesi hakkındaki tutumlarınızı öğrenmek amacıyla yapılmaktadır. Bu anketle toplanan bilgiler Proje Çalışmaları Yoluyla Müfredat Değişimi konulu bir yüksek lisans tezinde kullanılacaktır. Bilkent Üniversitesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği Yüksek Lisans programında yapılmakta olan bu araştırmanın amacı müfredattaki problemleri belirledikten sonra müfredata eklenecek yeni öğretim aracı olan proje çalışmaları hakkında öğretmenleri ve öğrencileri eğiterek, yeni öğretim aracının pilot çalışmasını uygulayarak, öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerin ve idarecilerin yeni öğretim aracına karşı tutumlarını öğrenerek, müfredat değişimi süreciyle ilgili detaylı bilgi sağlamaktır. Bu ankette vereceğiniz cevaplar tamamen gizli tutulacak ve hiçbir şekilde üçüncü kişilere açıklanmayacaktır. Bu ankette yanıtlayacağınız soruların doğru ya da yanlış cevapları yoktur. Araştırmanın sağlıklı bir şekilde yürütülebilmesi için lütfen hiçbir soruyu atlamadan tüm sorulara samimi bir şekilde cevap verin.

Lütfen sizin için en uygun cevabı gösteren rakamı yuvarlak içine alın. Bu anket hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek isterseniz, benimle e-mail adresimden iletişim kurmaya çekinmeyin. Katılımınız için teşekkürler.

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Proje çalışmalarını hakkındaki fikirlerinizi ařađıda 1'den 5'e kadar verilen seeneklerden grřlerinizi en iyi ifade eden rakamı yuvarlak iine alarak belirtiniz.

Yararlı	1	2	3	4	5	Yararsız
Stresli	1	2	3	4	5	Stressiz
Eđlenceli deđil	1	2	3	4	5	Eđlenceli
Sıkıcı	1	2	3	4	5	İlgin
Uygulamaya deđer	1	2	3	4	5	Uygulamaya deđmez
Karmařık	1	2	3	4	5	Aık, net

Proje çalışmalarını İngilizce đrenmenize ne kadar katkıda bulundu?

Hi	Sadece biraz	Orta derecede	Olduka	ok fazla
1	2	3	4	5

Bu dnem bir đrenme aracı olarak tekrar proje çalışmalarını yapmak ister misiniz?

Kesinlikle hayır	1	2	3	4	5	Kesinlikle evet
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Proje çalışmalarını hakkında ve proje çalışmalarının Afyon Kocatepe niversitesi Yabancı Diller Yksek Okulu Hazırlık Programını mfredatlarına koyulması hakkında başka fikirleriniz varsa ltfen ařađıya yazın.

## APPENDIX M: SAMPLE OF THE JOURNAL KEPT BY THE RESEARCHER

