

**USING EPOSTL (EUROPEAN PORTFOLIO FOR
STUDENT TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES) TO FOSTER
REFLECTIVE TEACHING SKILLS OF PRE-SERVICE
TEACHERS IN TURKEY**

Kübra OKUMUŞ

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USING EPOSTL (EUROPEAN PORTFOLIO FOR STUDENT
TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES) TO FOSTER REFLECTIVE
TEACHING SKILLS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN TURKEY

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Kübra OKUMUŞ

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TEZ ETİK VE BİLDİRİM SAYFASI

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “USING EPOSTL (EUROPEAN PORTFOLIO FOR STUDENT TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES) TO FOSTER REFLECTIVE TEACHING SKILLS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN TURKEY” başlıklı çalışmanın, tarafımdan, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden olduğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve onurumla doğrularım.

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ÖZET

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARI İÇİN AVRUPA DİL PORTFOLYOSU'NUN (EPOSTL) TÜRKİYE'DEKİ ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ YANSITICI ÖĞRETİM BECERİLERİNİ GELİŞTİRMEDE KULLANIMI

Kübra OKUMUŞ

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Hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitiminde önemli olan teori ve uygulama arasındaki boşluğu doldurmaktır. Son yıllarda bu boşluğu doldurmak için önerilen yansıtıcı öğretim, akademik çalışmalarda kendine önemli bir yer bulmaktadır. Yansıtıcı düşünmenin uygulama ve uygulama üzerine yansıtma şansı sunarak hem hizmet öncesi hem hizmet sonrası öğretmenlerin mesleki olarak gelişimini sağladığı genel olarak kabul gören bir görüştür. Fakat, nasıl yansıtıcı düşünüleceği sorusunun cevabı henüz tatmin edici bir şekilde verilmediğinden yansıtıcı düşünmeyi öğretmen eğitiminde kullanmak hem öğretmenler hem öğretmen eğitmenleri için zor görülmektedir. Aslında, bu sorunun cevabını verebilmek için günlük yazma, gözlem ve video-kayıtları gibi bazı teknikler önerilmiştir. Fakat bu tekniklerin bazı zayıf yanlarının ve zorluklarının olduğu kabul edilmektedir. Bu yüzden bu çalışma yansıtıcı düşünmeyi sağlamak için başka bir tekniğin- the EPOSTL mümkün olup olmadığını bulmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışma öğretmen adaylarının EPOSTL'in yansıtıcı düşünme aracı olarak kullanılmasına yönelik düşüncelerini araştırarak EPOSTL'in yansıtıcı düşünme için yararlı olup olmadığını ve EPOSTL'in zorluklarını bulmaya çalışmaktadır. Öğretmen adaylarının bu görüşlerini saptamak için öncelikli olarak EPOSTL'in uygulanması gerekmektedir. Bu yüzden EPOSTL, Atatürk Üniversitesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği 3. sınıf öğrencilerinden 24 tanesi ile Özel Öğretim Yöntemleri II dersinde uygulanmıştır. Uygulamadan sonra, hem açık uçlu hem de kapalı uçlu sorulardan oluşan bir anket öğrencilere dağıtılmıştır. Ayrıca bu öğrencilerden 8'i ile mülakat gerçekleştirilmiştir. Böylece hem nitel hem nicel veri elde edilmiştir. Nicel veri Windows SPSS 2000 programı ile nitel veri de araştırmacı tarafından kodlanarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar öğretmen adaylarının EPOSTL'in yansıtıcı öğretim becerilerini geliştirmek için kullanılmasına oldukça pozitif yaklaştıklarını göstermektedir. Öğretmen adaylarının EPOSTL ile ilgili düşünceleri şu

şekilde özetlenebilir: EPOSTL öğretmen adaylarının öğretimlerindeki zayıf ve güçlü yanlarının farkında olmalarını sağlamıştır. EPOSTL iyi bir öz-değerlendirme ve yansıtıcı düşünme aracıdır. EPOSTL, Özel Öğretim Yöntemleri dersinin etkililiğini arttırmıştır. EPOSTL hem öğretim hem de dil becerilerinin gelişiminde etkilidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hizmet öncesi eğitim, yansıtıcı düşünme, yansıtıcı öğretim, EPOSTL, mesleki gelişim

ABSTRACT

MASTER THESIS

USING EPOSTL (EUROPEAN PORTFOLIO FOR STUDENT TEACHERS OF LANGUAGES) TO FOSTER REFLECTIVE TEACHING SKILLS OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN TURKEY

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In pre-service teacher education, it is important to fill the gap between theory and practice. In recent years, reflective teaching being suggested to fill this gap has found a crucial place in academic studies. It is generally agreed that reflection helps both pre-service and in-service teachers to develop professionally by presenting a chance of practicing and reflecting on the practice. However, using reflection in teacher education seems to be difficult for both teachers and teacher trainers as the question how to reflect has not been answered in a satisfactory way yet. In fact, there have been some suggested techniques for reflection such as journal writing, observation and video-recordings. However, it is accepted that these techniques have some challenges and weaknesses. Hence, this study tries to find out if it is possible to use another technique- the EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) for fostering reflective teaching skills. It tries to determine if the EPOSTL is useful for reflection and what the challenges of it are by investigating pre-service teachers' views on using the EPOSTL as a tool for reflection. In order to determine these views of pre-service teachers, it was needed to implement the EPOSTL. Therefore, the EPOSTL was implemented with 24 pre-service teachers in the course of Methodology II. The participants were junior class of English Language Teaching Department at Atatürk University. After the implementation, a questionnaire consisting of both open and close-ended questions was handed out to these student teachers. Moreover, interviews were conducted with 8 of these student teachers. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The quantitative data was analyzed by Windows SPSS 2000 program and qualitative data was analyzed by content analysis. The results showed that student teachers were highly positive about using the EPOSTL in order to develop reflective teaching skills. The student teachers' views on the EPOSTL can be summarized as

follows: EPOSTL helped student teachers be aware of their teaching strengths and weaknesses. It was a good way of self-assessment and reflection. EPOSTL increased the effectiveness of the Methodology courses. EPOSTL was useful in developing both pedagogic and linguistic skills.

Key Words: Pre-service teacher education, reflection, reflective teaching, EPOSTL, professional development

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| ELT | : English Language Teaching |
| EPOSTL | : European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages |
| ECML | : European Centre for Modern Languages |
| ELP | : European Language Portfolio |
| CEFR | : Common European Framework of Reference for Languages |
| CLT | : Communicative Language Teaching |
| ICT | : Information and Communication Technologies |

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This study tries to determine the opinions of student teachers on using the EPOSTL to foster reflection. If the EPOSTL enhances reflective teaching skill and if so how it does are the main points of this study. In this respect, this chapter covers background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose, significance and limitations of the study. It also involves the definitions of some key concepts addressed in the study.

1.1. Background and Statement of the Problem

Teaching English as a foreign language is a source of long-lasting debate in Turkey. It is generally regarded as one of the most important problems of Turkish education system. In order to overcome this problem, many approaches, methods and techniques have been suggested for years. Apart from these suggested approaches and methods, it has also been focused on foreign language teachers in terms of how an effective foreign language teacher should be. Hence, foreign language teacher education has aroused great interest both in academic studies and in language education policies. The concept of teacher education can be seen in three forms in these policies and studies: induction of beginning teachers, in-service teacher education, and pre-service teacher education (also known as initial teacher education). Induction involves the adaptation and preparation of beginning teachers to their job in their few first years. In that time, teachers have three types of education: basic education, preliminary education and practical education. On the other hand, in-service teacher education focuses on professional development of teachers. Finally, pre-service teacher education, which is the focus of this study, centers on the preparation of student teachers. The question of how to prepare student teachers is the subject of pre-service teacher education. In order to answer this question, it has been benefited from another question: what skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors should a foreign language teacher possess? Many

possessions can be listed in order to answer this question, but it has been summarized and generally accepted under four categories:

- foundational knowledge in education-related aspects of philosophy of education, history of education, educational psychology, and sociology of education.
- skills in assessing student learning, supporting English language learners, using technology to improve teaching and learning, and supporting students with special needs.
- content-area and methods knowledge and skills—often also including ways of teaching and assessing a specific subject, in which case this area may overlap with the first ("foundational") area.
- practice at classroom teaching or at some other form of educational practice—usually supervised and supported in some way, though not always. Practice can take the form of field observations, student teaching, or (U.S.) internship (www.k12academics.com)

While preparing the curriculum, all these categories have been taken into consideration in Turkey. Therefore, both theoretical and practical courses are included in pre-service teacher education. Relating theory with practice is important, so teaching practices and the courses that present the chance of practice are now at the heart of the pre-service teacher education. However, the problem lies under the application of the practice and the gap between theory and practice. Although the importance of practice is accepted, its effectiveness has been under debate for years. In the way of looking for suggestions for increasing benefits of the practice to professional development, one skill that a foreign language teacher needs to have has attracted great attention in recent years: reflective teaching skill. This skill is seen necessary especially, in in-service teacher education as it provides professional development. However, as Villegas-Reimers (2003) stated that although pre-service teacher education is regarded only as the professional preparation that teachers will take during their career, “the current tendency is to acknowledge that this is merely the first step in a longer process of professional development” (p.44). Being seen as the first step of professional development, initial teacher education should give a chance to student teachers for developing themselves. Sergiovanni (1996) suggests that professional development

should encourage teachers to reflect on their own practice. Killeavy and Moloney (2010) state that it is now accepted that one of the key activities in the professional development is using reflective practice. Studies on effective teaching indicates that effective practice is closely connected to inquiry, reflection and continuous professional growth (Harris, 1998). In many studies, reflection is considered as a way of professional development (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983, 1987; Moon, 1999; Forde, McMahon, McPhee and Patrick, 2006 etc.). It is “thinking about the strategies to be used to change a situation, innovate etc. using the results to inform the on-going process” (Gilpin, 1999, p. 110). It is thinking on and getting benefit from the past experience and then taking action for the future. This feature of reflection leads it to find a crucial place in teacher education. And the concepts of reflective teaching and reflective teachers have become current issues.

After acknowledging the importance of reflection in teacher education, the next step has been finding the ways that enhance the reflective teaching skills of both in-service and pre-service teachers in academic studies as the use of reflection in real life may be challenging. Baseline Survey of Pre-service English Language Teacher Education in Bulgaria 2001-2002 convincingly revealed that student teachers find it problematic to reflect on their experience during teaching practice and to self-evaluate their teaching (Thomas, cited in Velikova, 2013). Balçıkanlı (2009) states that student teachers do not know how they can engage in reflection on their teaching practice. In order to present a solution to this problem, this study tries to encourage student teachers to reflect by using a kind of portfolio designed for pre-service teachers by ECML (European Council of Modern Languages). This portfolio, the EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) was designed as a tool for reflection. It helps student teachers assess their teaching and see themselves as teachers. In addition to providing self-assessment and reflection, EPOSTL also helps student teachers be aware of recent developments and innovations in language education (Burkert, 2009). In this study, it was tried to understand if the student teachers of English Language Teaching Department at Atatürk University agree on the benefits of the EPOSTL mentioned above. The literature lacks of providing the opinions of target audience (student teachers) of the EPOSTL. Therefore, this study pays attention to the current

situation of student teachers in Methodology courses and tries to develop this course by using the EPOSTL and so enhancing reflection.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

At the heart of this study, lies the purpose of identifying student teachers' ideas on using the EPOSTL to enhance reflective teaching skills. In order to serve this aim, firstly the EPOSTL was applied with 24 student teachers and then interviews and questionnaires were conducted to gather their opinions. Following the results from these instruments, it was tried to determine the effect of the EPOSTL on fostering reflection. It was also argued if the EPOSTL would contribute to improve the Methodology courses and so to fill the gap between theory and practice via the results of both interviews and questionnaires. The third purpose of this study is to determine the challenges encountered during the use of the EPOSTL. In general, it is discussed if the EPOSTL would be able to offer a solution to the problems in initial teacher education.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Reflection is one of the key terms of teacher education. The concept of reflection dates back to 1933 when the book "How we think" of John Dewey was published. Although the emergence of this concept is not new, the studies about reflection in teacher education are generally in 1990s and 2000s. In these studies, different techniques and approaches such as observation, action research, video-recordings, journals, and portfolios have been suggested to foster reflective teaching skills of student teachers. Although all these techniques are beneficial in educating reflective teachers, they all have also some challenges and shortcomings. Thus, in this study another technique (EPOSTL) was used and it was tried to find out if it is beneficial in terms of reflective teaching and what its shortcomings are. In literature, there is an important gap in determining the effect of the EPOSTL in reflection and also its role in teacher education. That the EPOSTL emerged in 2007 may be considered as the main reason of this gap. In that time, the EPOSTL was a pilot study of ECML. Now the EPOSTL is the project that includes 2012-2015 years of ECML. The fact that this project is so new causes it not to find a place in the academic studies. In this study, the

use of this new kind of portfolio is suggested to enhance reflection that is seen as one of the most important requirements for being an effective teacher. Hence, this study is one of the rare studies that focus on use of the EPOSTL to promote reflection. Furthermore, by implementing the EPOSTL in pre-service teacher education, this study contributes to training autonomous and reflective teachers.

1.4. Research Questions

In this study, the answers of the following questions were tried to be found out.

- 1) What are the student teachers' views on the role of the EPOSTL in fostering reflective teaching skills? Do they believe that EPOSTL provides reflection?
- 2) What do student teachers think about using the EPOSTL in teacher education?
 - a. What kind of benefits do the EPOSTL provide for developing professionally?
 - b. What are the problems related to the use of the EPOSTL in teacher education?
 - c. What is the role of the EPOSTL in teacher education?

1.5. Limitations

The research is limited to the application of EPOSTL to 24 student teachers at ELT department in Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education at Atatürk University. This is a limited number especially for quantitative data. Quantitative data were gathered by means of a questionnaire consisting of 7 open-ended and 15 close-ended questions. While open-ended questions were used to gather the qualitative data, close-ended questions served to quantitative analysis.

Another limitation is the time devoted to the implementation of the EPOSTL. The EPOSTL was applied only in one semester in one course: Methodology II, which means that the data was collected during only 16 weeks. However, a longer implementation can provide more valid and reliable results.

1.6. Key Terminology

Reflection: “Reflection is a thinking process more than simple memorization and comprehension, and involves a variety of cognitive processes, such as summarization, identifying general principles, exploring various situations, reconciling options, monitoring progress, and so on” (Wang, 2009, p. 453). In this study, it is perceived as a kind of thought that helps student teachers assess and criticize themselves and then correct their mistakes and support their strengths.

Reflective Teaching: This term emerges with using reflection in teacher education. “A reflective approach to teaching is one in which teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching” (Richards and Lockhart, 1994, p 1).

European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages: EPOSTL is a kind of portfolio providing student teachers to evaluate their teaching skills, to realize their weaknesses and strengths in their subject matter knowledge and using this knowledge in real life, and to monitor their own professional improvement.

Teaching practice: a temporary period of teaching in a school undertaken by a pre-service teacher under the supervision of a teacher trainer. Teaching practice is an integral component of pre-service teacher education that serves as an important link between theory and practice and that entails the inculcation of professional practice and conduct (Ngwaru, 2013).

Methodology courses: In pre-service English language teacher education, there are some courses that give a chance of practice. Two of them are Methodology I and Methodology II. The scope of these courses is explained as follows:

ELT Methodology I: Designing and conducting needs analysis on language learner needs, writing objectives that reflect these needs and designing course syllabus at the macro level and micro level; an overview of different lesson stages and approaches to lesson planning and course design; various syllabus types and criteria for the selection of appropriate syllabus type according to the learner needs, learner age and aims of the course; standards-based teaching, proficiency descriptors, English language

proficiency standards and guidelines, Common European Framework and the European Language Portfolio; and identity.

ELT Methodology II: Classroom-based research, teacher directed research and action research, diagnosing learners' language related needs and remedial teaching activities; principles of learner monitoring and role of learner assessment in lesson planning; national and international professional organizations and practical journals.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter tried to answer the question of what the research problem of the study was by addressing the background knowledge on the problem. It gives explanations about the importance, purpose, limitations and key terms of the study. The second chapter reviews the literature related to the research problem. It begins with defining reflection and progresses by explaining its types and tools. It covers the studies on reflection and discusses these studies by comparing them. It ends with the explanations and the studies on the EPOSTL. In the third chapter, the methodology of the study is touched upon. The research design of the study is explained by giving the rationale behind selecting it. Then, the methods of data collection-interview and questionnaire-, the participants of these instruments are addressed. The procedure of the pilot study and collection and analysis of the data are presented. Fourth chapter deals with the results of both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings are discussed by giving reference to prior studies. The final chapter summarizes the findings, and provides pedagogical implications and suggestions.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the literature related to the subject of research is reviewed. Reflection, typology of reflection, the role of reflection and the tools for developing reflection are the subheadings of the first part of this chapter. In the second part of this chapter another tool that is the EPOSTL is tried to be explained and the studies on it are addressed.

2.1. Theoretical Framework for Reflective Teaching

2.1.1. Defining Reflection

“Teaching for subject matter, self and social learning is technically sophisticated” (Henderson, 2001, p. 15). Teaching effectively requires knowledge of appropriate approaches and techniques as well as of subject matter. Thus, teachers should continuously improve their proficiency in pedagogic and subject matter knowledge. One way of refining the pedagogic knowledge of teachers is reflecting on or in action. Reflection is “academic virtue and source of privileged knowledge” (Lynch, 2000, p.26) for both in-service and pre-service teachers as it encourages teachers to use their artful skills to assist students in learning in meaningful ways, which leads to genuine understanding (Dewey, 1933). According to Loughran (2005), reflection can be used in challenging situations in order to enable the learners to understand the information at hand and to help teachers guide and direct learning appropriately. He proposes that reflection promotes the ability of viewing problems from different perspectives. Many studies about reflection agree that it is necessary and useful for both in-service and pre-service teachers. Before addressing more on the views about reflection it would be helpful to answer what reflection is.

Reflection is a broad concept that can be defined in various ways. Hence, many researchers studying on reflection have focused on different aspects of reflection. Jay

and Johnson (2002) state this variety as “even a brief review of the literature on teaching reflection reveals tremendous variation” (p. 73). Of many definitions in the literature, there are few definitions agreed upon and used by many researchers. These definitions belong to Dewey and Schön. Many researchers being interested in reflection have answered the question of “what is reflection?” via generally Dewey’s and Schön’s words. Dewey’s and Schön’s thoughts on reflection are central of many posterior studies. One reason behind being stick to studies of Dewey and Schön can be the lack of full comprehension of reflection. Ward and Cotter (2004) state that the teacher educators agree that reflection is valuable for the development of teachers, but there is still some controversy on the definition of reflection. Researchers generally agree that reflection is important for teacher education but the answers of the questions why it is and how it can be incorporated into real life have not been given in a satisfactory way. There are not many empirical studies on this issue, so the extent of reflection (its applicability, disadvantages, challenges etc.) has not been identified. This leads to incomprehension of the term of reflection and accordingly lack of definition. Rodgers (2002) identifies four problems related to the few definitions of reflection. These four problems are:

First, it is unclear how systematic reflection is different from other types of thought. Second, it is difficult to assess a skill that is vaguely defined. Third, without a clear picture of what reflection looks like, it has lost its ability to be seen and therefore has begun to lose its value. And finally, without a clear definition, it is difficult to research the effects of reflective teacher education and professional development on teachers’ practice and students’ learning (p.842).

The universally accepted ‘reflection’ definition of Dewey, who is seen as the creator of the term, is “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusions to which it tends” (1933, p.9). Dewey (1933) makes the term clear by contrasting reflective action with impulsive and routine action. Impulsive action is grounded on trial and error; and routine action is “based largely on authority and tradition; both are undertaken in a passive, largely unthinking way” (Griffiths, 2000, p. 540). On the other hand, reflective action is based on active and continual review of some beliefs and knowledge. It emerges when there is a need to solve a problem. It does

not involve passive thinking. Dewey states that reflective thought is a chain (which) *“involves not simply a sequence of ideas but a con-sequence- a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each outcome in turn leans back on, or refers to, its predecessors”* (p.4). This means that reflective thought does not involve pre-determined steps or procedures that will be used by the practitioners. It is not something which can be neatly packaged as a set of techniques that teachers can use. It is a holistic way of dealing with the problems that the teachers encounter. Reflection is not a process where one can find only logical or rational problem-solving actions. It is not only about thinking. Greene (1986) points out that reflective action involves more than logical and rational problem-solving processes. Reflection attaches importance both to emotion and thought; and involves action. On that sense it ties theory and practice to each other. Thinking about teaching and learning and then practicing these thoughts and then again thinking about practice is the scope of reflection. It moves in a circular direction. According to Xie, Ke and Sharma (2008), reflection is an inquiry cycle that is used for finding solutions for a problematic situation. As it is an inquiry cycle, reflection can be seen as a phase of some experiential learning theories in some studies. For example, Kolb (1984) included reflection in his ‘experiential learning cycle’ which comprises four cycles of activity (see Figure 2. 1). These activities are: 1) concrete experience, 2) reflection, 3) abstract conceptualization, and 4) active experimentation. These activities are well expressed via an example given by Scales (2008). In the example, a novice teacher uses role play in his/her class (concrete experience). The role play is partly productive. The teacher reflects on the use of this role play and thinks of the ways that will be helpful in improving and making the role play more effective (reflection). S/he searches and makes some readings on the use of this learning method and discusses it with experienced colleagues and so improves the activity (abstract conceptualization). S/he plans to use role play by incorporating her/his new ideas into planning the next time (active experimentation), which is the beginning of another concrete experience and the same cycle. Although reflection is seen as a part of the cycle here, this cycle is a reflection cycle on the whole.

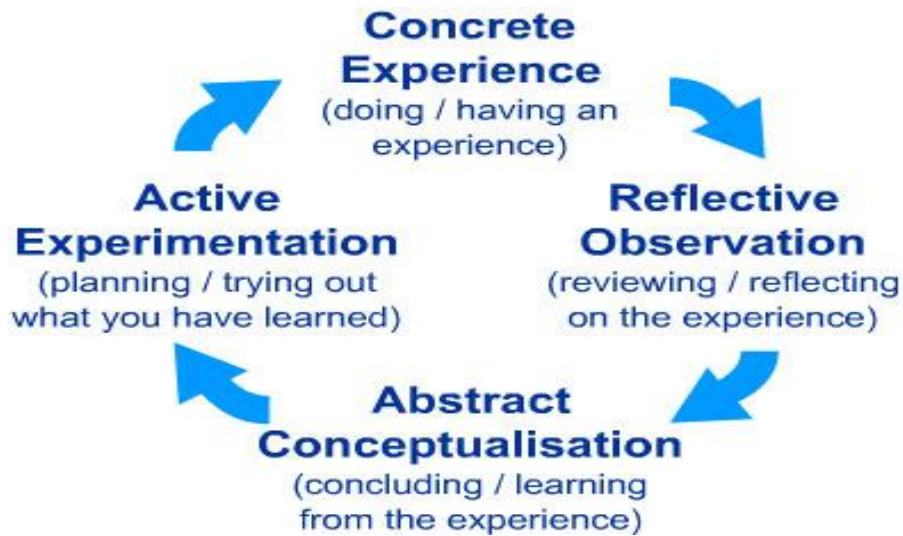


Figure 2.1. Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984)

Gibbs (1988) also suggests a cycle for reflection. He used structural debriefing to facilitate the reflection included in the "experiential learning cycle" of Kolb (1984). For him, reflecting is not enough, so putting learning and new understanding that one has gained into practice and allowing the reflective process to inform his/her practice are required. His model of reflection involves the stages of a full structured debriefing including action plan, description, feelings/thoughts, evaluation, analysis and conclusion (see Figure 2. 2). It is necessary to think about the experience one has had in these stages. For instance, in the description phase it is asked "what happened", or in action plan "if it arose again, what would you do?" These questions help thinking reflectively and so taking action for the next experience. As Kemmis (1985) stated reflection is "action-oriented" (p 140). His summary of the features of reflection will also summarize this section:

- Reflection is not purely 'internal', psychological process: it is action oriented and historically embedded.
- Reflection is not a purely individual process: like language, it is a social process.
- Reflection is shaped by ideology; in turn, it shapes ideology.

- Reflection is a practice which expresses our power to reconstitute social life by the way we participate in communication, decision making and social action (ibid 140).

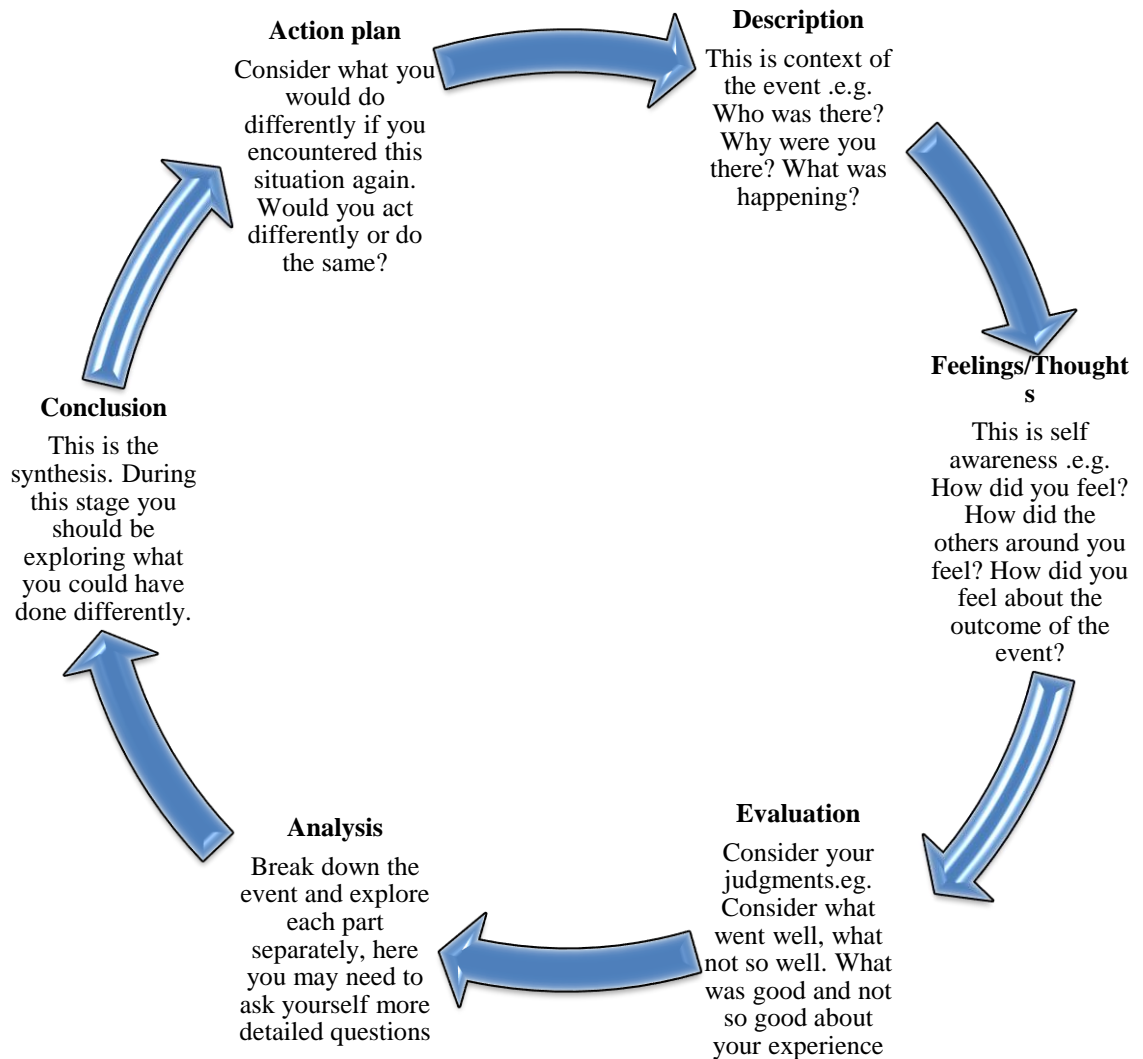


Figure 2.2. Gibbs' model of reflection (1988)

2.1.2. Reflection-in and on-action

It is impossible not to address Schön's studies on reflection as talking about reflection. Schön studied reflection not only in terms of education but of all professions. He did much research on and gave examples from different professions. Thus, it can be concluded that reflection is necessary for professional developments of all occupations.

Schön (1983) calls these professionals “practitioners” and defines professional practitioner as “a specialist who encounters certain types of situations again and again” (p.60). There should be some ways of dealing with these repetitive and sometimes very challenging situations. Schön believes that the solution is reflecting. He defines reflection as: “professional artistry to describe the kinds of competence practitioners display in unique, uncertain and conflicted situations of practice” (p.22). He (1987) thinks that reflection is necessary for practitioners as it serves as a corrective to overlearning. It helps practitioners surface and criticize the tacit understandings that have resulted from the repetitive experiences of a specialized practice. It also enables them to understand the uncertain or unique situations that they allow themselves to experience. Schön divides reflection into two parts: reflection- in and on-action. He (1983, 1987) gives the paramount importance to reflecting-in action in his studies. He bases this kind of reflection on “knowing-in action”. He (1983) explains it as follows:

When we go about the spontaneous, intuitive performance of the actions of everyday life, we show ourselves to be knowledgeable in a special way. Often we cannot say what it is that we know. When we try to describe it, we find ourselves at a loss, or we produce descriptions that are obviously inappropriate. Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feelings for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action (p.49).

Like knowing in action, reflection in action occurs in our action. It is thinking about what one is doing while s/he is doing it. In fact, in a narrow sense, it is reflecting when confronting a problem at that moment. According to Urzua and Vasquez (2008), reflection in action “refers to the making of decisions guided by tacit knowledge that occurs in the midst of acting” (p.1935). It is trying to overcome the challenging situation by trying to create ideas based on previous experiences. Griffiths (2000) states that in reflection-in-action, “rather than applying theory or past experience in a direct way, professionals draw on their repertoire of examples to reframe the situation and find new solutions” (p.541). According to Schön, to create conditions for reflection-in action, the problem should be treated as unique and standard procedures and techniques should not be applied. However, it is also not true to behave as if there had been no relevant prior experience or knowledge. Schön (1987) highlighted three key features of the reflection-in-action process:

- conscious (though not necessarily articulated in words);
- critical, involving questioning and restructuring; and
- immediate, giving rise to on-the-spot experiment and new actions (Griffiths, 2000, p.541).

The other term that Schön introduces is reflection-on-action that is the one of the most used type of reflection in education. Griffiths (2000) points out that "the deliberative end of the spectrum of reflection-in-action merges into reflection on action or after action, which is perhaps the most common form of reflection to be found in courses of initial teacher education" (p.544) (see Figure 2. 3). The teachers practicing reflection-on-action looks into what they have done during the lesson after the lesson has been over. They look back on the experiences they have had in the classroom and think what they would do differently next time. The crucial element of reflection-on action is engaging with the past experience. "In *reflection-on-action*, the practitioner reflects on the tacit understandings and assumptions s/he holds and subjects them to scrutiny in order to achieve deeper understanding of instructor/student roles, motivations and behaviors" (Pickett, 1999, p.2). Odeh, Kurt and Atamtürk (n.d.) state that reflection-on action emerges after the action has been over and it requires teachers to review, analyze and evaluate the situation.

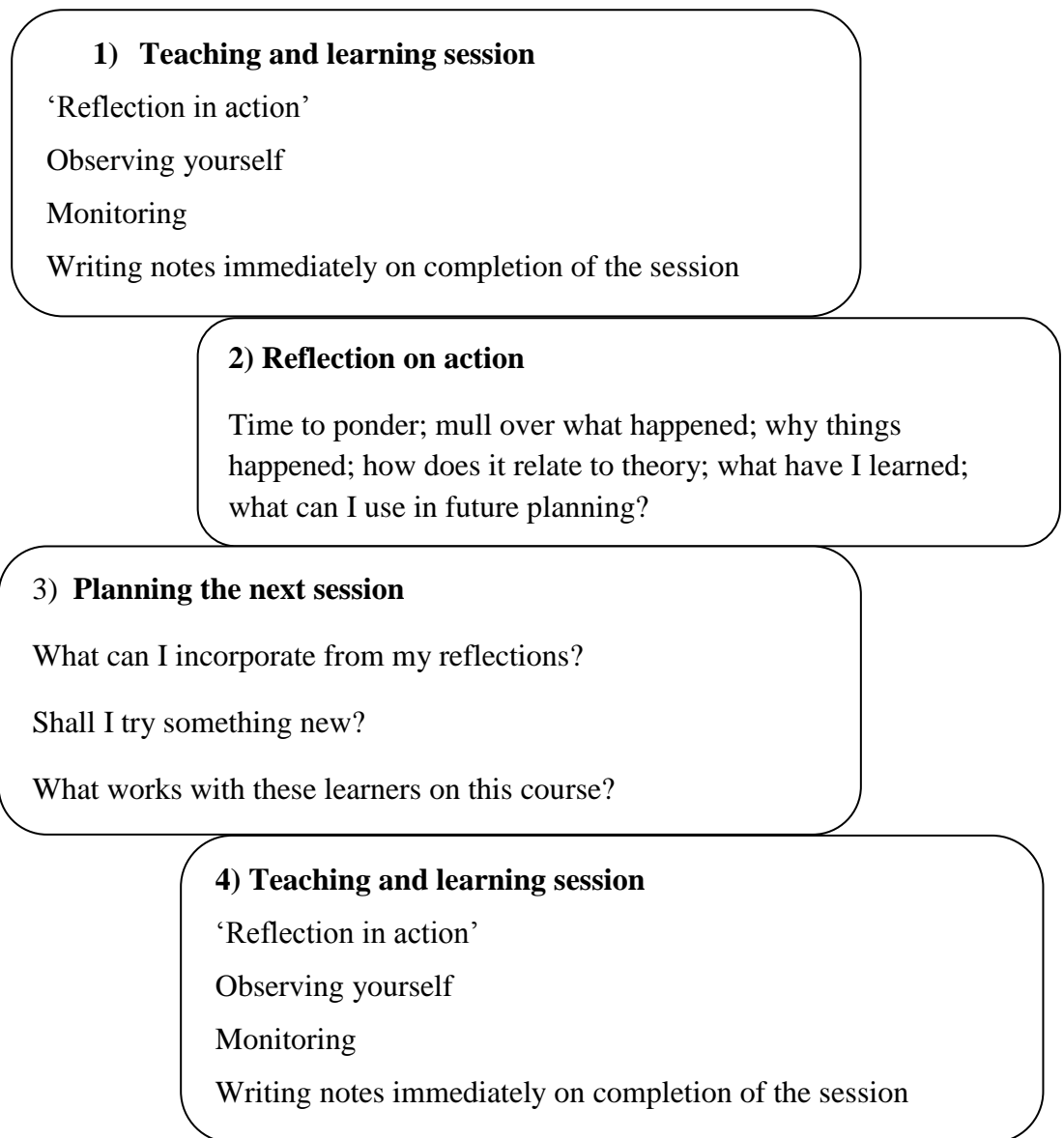


Figure 2.3. Reflection-in and on-action (Scales, 2008; p. 12)

Although the studies of Schön on reflection have been widely appreciated, they have been also criticized in some aspects. One of the critics of Schön is Eraut (1995, 2004) who criticizes reflection-in action in particular. He states that Schön fails to give relevant evidence of reflection-in action. He suggests that the examples for reflection-in action given by Schön are quite different from each other and do not take the crowded settings like classrooms in. Court (1988) also thinks that Schon's examples "seem to illustrate several rather different kinds of "reflection-in-action" and most, upon examination, appear to involve *removing* oneself from the action in order to reflect

(cited in Munby, 1989). Another criticism made by Eraut is that Schön is not interested in the critical features of the context. For Eraut, Schön does not examine everyday practice and take the fact that reflective process might serve different purposes and is different in different contexts into consideration. Moreover, Eraut criticizes that it is not clear how we distinguish reflection-in-action from reflection-on action in some cases. He adds that prepositions could be used as synchronic instead of as opposite in these cases.

Gilliss (1989) evaluates Schön's concepts in terms of their applicability. He states that there is limited time to reflect on every occurrence. He stresses especially the difficulty of reflection in pre-service education. He suggests that even if reflective practicum is placed in education it wouldn't be in pre-service teacher education but maybe at later stages. And the reasons of this are both the limited time and the question of who will be the coach.

Fenstermacher (1989) criticizes Schön's understanding of epistemology and the dichotomy of technical rationality and reflective practice. For Fenstermacher, Schön makes the "technical rationality" - in this case "science" - evil and reflective practice good. This idea is wrong for Fenstermacher as he believes that it is the science that affects the practice and this effect is illuminative and helpful. The other thing Fenstermacher focuses on is his wonder about the results of separating people from social science. He sees this risk as a kind of enslavement as Dewey (1965) pointed out that keeping the practitioner separated from science and theory causes the practitioner to be a slave.

2.1.3. Typology of Reflection

While reviewing the literature on reflection it can be seen that there are different models and types of reflection. A number of models are suggested for reflection and these models may be quite different from each other. Ghaye and Lillyman (1997) suggest five types: 1) structured 2) hierarchical 3) iterative 4) synthetic 5) holistic. Then Ghaye (2010) proposes four kinds of reflection: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-practice, reflection-for-action and reflection-with-action. The first two are the same of Schön's classification. As for the *reflection-for-action* called also as 'anticipatory

reflection' by van Manen (1991), it is about understanding and learning about what one has done. It is also related to the planning to act positively with what has been learned. According to Ghaye (2010), *reflection-with-action* has two meanings. First one reflection-with-action is an intended action developing one's perceptions or skills. It is considering all options and making decisions and acting. The second meaning is acting 'with' a group. Ghaye suggests that improvement is possible with a team rather than acting alone.

On the other hand, Jay and Johnson (2002) identify three types: 1) descriptive reflection 2) comparative reflection 3) critical reflection (see Table 2. 1). They define *descriptive reflection* as the intellectual process of 'setting the problem' (p.77), in that the process of finding out what it will be the subject of reflection. The second type of Jay and Johnson's typology is the *comparative reflection* defined by them as the reflection that is looking at the problems from various frames or perspectives. McKenna (1999) identifies comparative reflection as:

"Any frame, by definition, causes a focus on certain information and excludes the rest. When the excluded portion includes critical information, we lose an accurate picture of the context and consequences of our decisions. Thus, when we strive to consider how a situation looks from the point of view of someone very different from ourselves, we gain far more than just the benefits of understanding others. It is a chance to explore and illuminate the limitations of our own frame" (p.13).

The third dimension-the *critical reflection* is the one that attracts most attention. "This mode of reflection is derived from political philosophers such as Habermas (1974)" (Valli, 1997, p.78). For Jay and Johnson (2002), the person who views the matter from different perspectives makes a decision by choosing among actions or incorporates the thing that s/he has discovered into better and new comprehension of the matter is reflecting critically. Fook (2006) points out that there are some assumptions that are socially restricted. Critical reflection is useful here as it encourages people to empower new and more ideas and practices. And it triggers the social change in individuals. The individuals are able to make choices on their own terms when they realize the invisible power of ideas they have learned unconsciously from their social context.

Table 2.1.

Jay and Johnson's Typology of Reflection (2002)

| Dimension | Definition | Typical questions |
|-------------|---|---|
| Descriptive | Describe the matter for reflection | What is happening? Is this working, and for whom? For whom is it not working? How do I know? How am I feeling? What am I pleased and/or concerned about? What do I not understand? Does this relate to any of my stated goals, and to what extent are they being met? |
| Comparative | Reframe the matter for reflection in light of alternative views, others' perspectives, research, etc. | What are alternative views of what is happening? How do other people who are directly or indirectly involved describe and explain what's happening? What does the research contribute to an understanding of this matter? How can I improve what's not working? If there is a goal, what are some other ways of accomplishing it? How do other people accomplish this goal? For each perspective and alternative, who is served and who is not? |
| Critical | Having considered the implications of the matter, establish a renewed perspective | What are the implications of the matter when viewed from these alternative perspectives? Given these various alternatives, their implications, and my own morals and ethics, which is best for this particular matter? What is the deeper meaning of what is happening, in terms of public democratic purposes of schooling? What does this matter reveal about the moral and political dimension of schooling? How does this reflective process inform and renew my perspective? |

Van Manen (1991, 1995) identifies three types of reflection: retrospective, anticipatory and contemporaneous. These types are actually equal to reflection on action, reflection for action and reflection in action. *Retrospective* reflection is past-oriented whereas *contemporaneous* is present-oriented. *Anticipatory* which can be seen as also prospective in literature is interested in future.

One of the best known typology of reflection belongs to Valli (1997). He identifies five types of reflection consisting of technical reflection, reflection-in and on-action, deliberative reflection, personalistic reflection and critical reflection (see Table 2. 2). As reflection-in and on-action and critical reflection were addressed before, the other three types will be dealt with here. According to Valli, in *technical reflection*, teachers evaluate themselves as to the pre-established criteria. Teachers think about general teaching behaviors such as active learning, student engagement and homework review. These behaviors are determined in accordance with the research on teaching. The main source of knowledge is the research. Technical reflection is prescriptive in that the standards, guidelines and evaluation criteria are identified by authorities and experts beforehand and the teachers evaluate their performance based on these standards. In contrast to technical reflection where the source of decision making is mainly research, in *deliberative reflection*, there are various sources such as experiences, research, advice from colleagues and personal views. All sources are equal, none of them is more important than the other. The teacher reviews all of them and makes decision. “Quality of reflection, therefore, would be judged by teachers’ abilities to weigh these competing claims and to give a good reason for the decisions they make” (Valli, 1997, p. 77). *Personalistic reflection* as its name suggests moves personal growth to the center. Teachers practicing personalistic reflection make a bridge between their personal and professional lives. They think about their life goals and about how their professional lives can help them accomplish these goals. They think not only about their own personal lives but also their students’ lives. And this thought involves not only academic achievement of the students but the students’ interests, personal desires and hopes for the future as well.

Table 2.2.

Valli's Typology of Reflection (1997)

| Type | Content for Reflection | Quality of Reflection |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Technical Reflection | General instruction and management behaviors that are based on research on teaching | Matching one's own performance to external guidelines |
| Reflection-in and on-action | One's own personal teaching performance | Basing decisions on one's own unique situation |
| Deliberative Reflection | A whole range of teaching concerns, including students, the curriculum, instructional strategies, the rules and organization of the classroom | Weighing competing viewpoints and research findings. |
| Personalistic Reflection | One's own personal growth and relationships with students | Listening to and trusting one's own inner voice and the voices of others |
| Critical Reflection | The social, moral, and political dimensions of schooling | Judging the goals and purposes of schooling in light of ethical criteria such as social justice and equality of opportunity |

Although there are many models for reflection, Quinn (2000) proposes that three processes underlie all the different models. These processes are:

- retrospection: i.e. thinking back about a situation or experience;
- self-evaluation: i.e. critically analyzing and evaluating the actions and feelings associated with the experience, using theoretical perspectives;
- reorientation: i.e. using the results of self-evaluation to influence future approaches to similar situations or experiences" (p.82)

In sum, there is not only one suggested typology of reflection. And these typologies are different from each other. However, as Quinn (2000) states, they all have the same process.

2.1.4. Phases of Reflection

Dewey (1933) identified five phases of reflection. In fact he classified two phases at first but then identified them as five. As Rodgers (2002) states Dewey is confused about the phases and it is the reader's work to divide the phases up. For instance, in *How We Think* (1933), firstly, he writes two phases that are "(1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity" (Dewey, 1933, p.12). Then he identifies five phases in the same book. He also identifies five slightly different phases in *Democracy and Education* (1916). The five phases that he writes in *How We Think* are: 1) suggestions, 2) intellectualization, 3) hypothesis, 4) reasoning, 5) testing. According to Dewey, it is not necessary that these phases occur in a particular order. However, they need to fit together in order to create the process of reflection.

1) Suggestions: According to Dewey (1933), when one encounters a "disturbed and perplexed situation" (p. 107), direct activity is seized momentarily. However, as acting is natural, inclination to continue acting is diverted and takes a turn to an idea or suggestion. At the phase of suggestion, the mind finds a possible solution. Loughran (2005) defines suggestion as "the ideas or possibilities which spring to mind when one is initially confronted by a puzzling situation" (p.5).

2) Intellectualization is "the difficulty or perplexity that has been felt (directly experienced) into a problem to be solved, a question for which the answer must be sought" (Dewey, 1933, p.107). According to Dewey, beginning with "ready-made" (p. 108) problems is not natural; in other words, such a problem can be seen as an assigned task. At first, there is no situation and problem but there is a disturbed situation in which difficulty infects the entire situation. However, knowing what the problem is and where it comes from will make reflection easier. If the problem is known precisely, the solution comes out. Both problem and solution occur simultaneously. Loughran (2005)

sums this process as “seeing ‘the big picture’ and recognizing the real cause for concern” (p.5).

3) *Guiding the Idea / Hypothesis*: The first suggestion emerges not in a long process; it just comes impromptu. Therefore, this suggestion does not have an intellectual element. The intellectual element occurs only when we think about the use of this suggestion. And it is possible to use it in a controlled way by some state of affairs. As stated before, when the difficulty is defined, the solution comes out. “The facts or data set the problem before us, and insight into the problem corrects, modifies, expands the suggestion that originally occurred. In this fashion, the suggestion becomes a definite supposition or, stated, more technically, a hypothesis” (Dewey, 1933; p. 109-110).

4) *Reasoning* is “the mental elaboration of the ideas or supposition” (p.107). Dewey suggests that reasoning provides extending knowledge. It relies on the background knowledge and on the facilities that ensure transferring knowledge and making it public, an open resource.

5) *Testing the Hypothesis by Action*: “The concluding phase is some kind of testing by overt action to give experimental corroboration, or verification, of the conjectural idea” (p.113-114). Reasoning indicates that if the idea is accepted, certain consequences follow. Until the phase of testing, the conclusion is hypothetical or conditional. In testing, the hypothetical conclusion is tested by taking an action.

Dewey (1933) proposes that one more phase may be added. As to the condition of case, some sub-phases can be included. This case could be a practical or a scientific one. As the practical cases can be much more difficult to be dealt with the phases can be commented differently and some other phases may occur.

2.1.5. The Role of Reflection in Education

Reflection has an important role for all professions as it is “an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it” (Boud, Keogh and Walker, 1985, p.19). However, the profession on which the effect of reflection is one of the most discussed is teaching. Dewey introduces the term of reflection for educators. Many things have been put forward in order to train

effective teachers and reflecting on practice is one of the favorite one. Therefore, the term reflective teaching emerges and it has been popular in the field of teacher education. Reflective teaching is the self-evaluation process in which teachers improve themselves on their own. Schön (1989) defines reflective teaching as follows:

“By reflective teaching, I mean what some teachers have called “giving the kids reason”; listening to kids and responding to them, inventing and testing responses likely to help them get over their particular difficulties in understanding something, helping them build on what they already know, helping them discover what they already know but cannot say, helping them coordinate their own spontaneous knowing-in-action with the privileged knowledge of the school (p.19).

According to Swain (2002), reflective teaching is the process of learning from mistakes and repeating success by thinking on the experience. Norton (1994) defines reflective teaching as a disciplined inquiry into the motives, methods, materials and consequences of educational practice. This is effective for teachers in thoughtfully examining conditions and attitudes which block or increase student achievement (Kirazlar, 2007). Pennington (1992) expresses that reflective teaching is a movement where pre-service or in-service teachers examine their own teaching practice with its underlying basis, and accordingly rethink about the alternative means for achieving their ends. Calderhead and Gates (1993) state that reflective teaching helps teachers look into ideologies critically and think about their practices’ value. They list the aims of reflective teaching as follows:

- to enable teachers to analyze, discuss, evaluate and change their own practice, adopting an analytical approach towards teaching;
- to foster teachers’ appreciation of the social and political contexts in which they work, helping teachers to recognize that teaching is socially and politically situated and that the teacher’s task involves an appreciation and analysis of that context;
- to enable teachers to appraise the moral and ethical issues implicit in classroom practices, including the critical examination of their own beliefs about good teaching;

- to encourage teachers to take greater responsibility for their own professional growth and to acquire some degree of professional autonomy;
- to facilitate teachers' development of their own theories of educational practice, understanding and developing a principled basis for their own classroom work;
- to empower teachers so that they may better influence future directions in education and take a more active role in educational decision-making (p. 2).

These aims show that reflective teaching is interested in not only pedagogical development of teachers but their improvement in thinking on social and political matters as well. As Brubacher, Case and Reagan (1994) state, reflective teaching is the attempts of teachers to understand and make sense of the world. It is not limited to classrooms as it is not limited to educational needs of students. The components of reflection are the best indicators of the extent of reflection. For instance, moral element of reflection requires teachers to think about moral issues such as justice, empathy and values and this is an evidence for the social side of reflection. Another example can be the critical component that is related to the socio-political dimension of teaching. Each element addresses to a different side of reflection. Practical element is the actual act of reflection whereas cognitive element is the conscious efforts for professional development. Affective element concentrates on the students' affective states and meta-cognitive component is about the teachers' awareness about their personality and their teaching. Akbari, Behzadpoor and Dadvand (2010) classify these elements by giving a definition and a sample item that is useful to measure each element (see Table 2. 3).

Table 2.3.

Components of Reflection (p. 215)

| Component | Definition | Sample item |
|------------------|--|--|
| Practical | Actual act of reflection by using different tools, such as keeping journals, talking to colleagues | After each lesson, I write about the accomplishments/failures of that lesson or I talk about the lesson to a colleague. |
| Cognitive | Conscious efforts for professional development by attending conferences and reading professional books and journals | I look at journal articles or search the internet to see what the recent developments in my profession are. |
| Affective | Deals with knowledge of learners and their affective/cognitive states | I think about my students' emotional responses to my instructions. |
| Meta-cognitive | Deals with teachers' knowledge of their personality, their definition of learning and teaching, their view of their profession | I think about my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. |
| Critical | Deals with the socio-political dimension of teaching | I think of ways to enable my students to change their social lives in fighting poverty, discrimination, and gender bias. |
| Moral | Deals with issues of justice, empathy, and values | I believe in the concept of justice and try to show it in my classroom practice. |

These elements also show how a reflective teacher should be. As for these elements, a reflective teacher gives importance to professional growth, uses some tools to foster reflective thinking, takes students' affective and cognitive states into account, and is sensitive to the social and political issues. According to Dewey (1933), reflective

teachers need to be open-minded, wholehearted and responsible in order to reflect effectively. An open-minded teacher is the one who is eager to listen to more sides than one, focuses on alternatives and acknowledges the possibility of making mistakes even in his/her favorite beliefs. Open-mindedness is an active and positive thing and it differs from empty-mindedness that has hospitality to new ideas. Wholeheartedness emerges when the teacher is thoroughly involved in a subject. Rodgers (2002) states that it is not possible for a teacher to accomplish to observe and gather information about learners and their learning, and one's teaching without wholeheartedness. Dewey (1933) suggests that responsibility is regarded generally as emotional but it is also intellectual. Intellectual responsibility consists of integrity, consistency and harmony in the belief.

Apart from Dewey, there are some other researchers that are interested in features of a reflective teacher. According to Valli (1997), reflective teaching is, as it is in the simplest form, "teaching with careful thought and judgment" (p.68). As to this definition, reflective teacher is the one who thinks and judges carefully. Reflective teacher is the one who has the skill of reflective thinking in that he evaluates his own teaching process and increases his professional potential with new ideas. Valli (1997) states that "reflective teacher can look back on events, make judgments about them, and alter their teaching behaviors in light of craft, research, and ethical knowledge" (p.70). Here we face the question "Is a reflective teacher a good teacher?" Russell (1993) answers this question as "not necessarily" (p.146). He believes that we should hold reflection separate from the question "How should a good teacher be?" if we want to reach the full understanding of reflection. On the other hand, Lyons (1998) believes that the teachers who are able to reflect critically on their practice accomplish teaching. Bella (2004) also thinks that reflective teachers are successful teachers. She states this as follows:

Teachers who think reflectively are highly successful educators in the classroom. They do not simply sigh with relief when things go well, and vow never to do something again when things do not go as planned in class. Instead, reflective teachers want to make sure they can duplicate the high points when there is a rich atmosphere in their classrooms... They also want to look closely at problems that impede the highest level of learning in their classrooms, so that the cause of the problem can be minimized in the future.

Reflective teachers find the value in taking the time to reflect... and develop strategies to ensure that their own learning as educators never stops and their teaching only grows stronger (p.24).

Posner (1999) answers the same question by contrasting reflective and non-reflective teachers. For Posner, non-reflective teachers depend on routine behavior and are guided more by impulse, tradition, and authority than by reflection. They accept everyday reality in schools without criticizing. Posner believes that, on the other hand, reflective teachers consider and reconsider beliefs and practices actively, persistently, and carefully.

It may not be said that the teachers who are not practicing reflection are incompetent teachers. However, it can be said that reflection helps teachers being effective teachers. It contributes to teachers' professional development. Osterman and Kottkamp (1993) see reflective teaching as a professional development process. They maintain that reflection is in contrast with the traditional practice of professional development, as the immediate objectives or purposes of the two approaches are different although they have the same goal. Hence, reflection is strongly suggested in teacher education in many academic studies. For example, Tok (2008) made an experimental study with 63 student teachers in order to find out the impact of reflective thinking activities on the student teachers' attitudes toward teaching profession, performance and their reflections. She used column writings in her experimental group to develop reflective thinking. The results showed that there was a significant difference between experimental and control group in favor of experimental group in that the reflective thinking activities contributed to student teachers' performance. Similar results were found in the study of Ahmed and Al-Khalili (2013). They investigated the effect of reflective teaching approach on teaching skills of student teachers. After they trained the student teachers on the use of reflective teaching on their practices, they conducted a questionnaire involving 26 open-ended questions. The results showed that reflective teaching approach was useful in some teaching skills such as lesson planning, classroom management, use of new materials, introduction, and evaluating teaching and learning process.

The study of Menon and Alamelu (2011) is important for providing further evidence for the benefits of reflective teaching. They conducted a research with two teachers in order to see the role of reflective teaching in the evolution of an effective teacher. In order to achieve this goal, they used self/peer observation, teacher diary, brainstorming and group discussions and also student feedback. The findings were also important as they proved many benefits of reflection. One benefit was that reflection helped teachers change their instructional repertoire, rethink about the ethical issues related to classroom practices, see the impact of their teaching and help them be competent teachers. Another benefit that was found in the study was that reflection made teachers skilled at dealing with the troubleshooting problems that they encountered in the classrooms. Furthermore, it encouraged the teachers to redefine their attitudes towards teaching and learning and assisted them to renew their feelings and insights for self-improvement.

These studies show that reflective teaching is a key skill for professional development of teachers. Therefore, it is necessary for being effective foreign language teachers. It cannot be said that a teacher who does not reflect is not a good teacher, but it is agreed that reflective teachers are successful teachers.

2.1.6. Tools for Developing Reflection

The necessity of reflection produces the question of how we improve reflective thinking in teacher education. As reviewing literature, it can be seen that many tools are suggested to answer this question. These tools are journals (Boud, 2001; Moon, 2006; Walker, 1985; Scales 2008), action research (Lewin, 1946; O'Sullivan, 2002; Norton, 2009; Sowa, 2009; Hagevik, Aydeniz and Rowell, 2012), observation and video-recordings (Schratz, 1992; Gebhard and Oprnady, 1999), portfolios (Wade and Yarbrough, 1996; Berrill and Whalen, 2007; Stolle, Goerss and Watkins, 2005; Mues and Sorcinelli, 2000), group discussions and seminars (Valli, 1997; Richards and Lockhart 1996). With the integration of the technology into education, e-portfolios (Pelliccione, Dixon and Giddings, 2005; Barrett, 2000) and blogs (Bayrak and Usluel, 2011; Killeavy and Moloney, 2010; Xie, Ke and Sharma, 2008; Machado 2009) are also seen as helpful tools for reflection.

2.1.6.1. Journals

“We share the assumption of many teacher educators that reflective writing can promote reflective thinking” (King and Kitchener, 1994; Ross, 1990 cited in Spalding and Wilson 2002 p.1396). One of the most common and helpful ways of reflective writing is keeping a journal. “A journal is a teacher’s or a student teacher’s written response to teaching events” (Richards and Lockhart, 1996, p. 7). Scales (2008) names journal as “the professional development journal” and defines it as “written record of your experiences of, and feelings about planning, preparing and delivering teaching and learning” (p.16). According to him, professional development journals consisting of general accounts of learning sessions are useful as it helps student teachers or teachers see improvement points for action planning. In fact, journal writing serves many purposes. Moon (2006) lists these purposes as following:

- 1) to record experience
- 2) to facilitate learning from experience
- 3) to support understanding and the representation of the understanding
- 4) to develop critical thinking or the development of a questioning attitude
- 5) to encourage metacognition
- 6) to increase active involvement in and ownership of learning
- 7) to increase ability in reflection and thinking
- 8) to enhance problem-solving skills
- 9) as a means of assessment in formal education
- 10) to enhance reflective practice
- 11) for reasons of personal development and self-empowerment
- 12) for therapeutic purposes or as a means of supporting behavior change
- 13) to enhance creativity
- 14) to improve writing
- 15) to foster communication and to foster reflective and creative interaction in a group
- 16) creative interaction in a group
- 17) to support planning and progress in research or a project
- 18) as a means of communication between a learner and another

The above items show both the purposes and benefits of journals. As can be seen in the list, many items are directly related to reflection. The others such as developing critical thinking and enhancing problem-solving skills are also linked to reflection as they are required for reflective thinking. Keeping journal is one of the best techniques to be used for promoting reflection. Lee (2005) used journals in his courses to promote reflection in pre-service education. He gathered data from the response journals and interviews that were done with 13 undergraduate students. He found that students see journals as a good opportunity to practice and improve reflective thinking and valuable outcomes of self-development through practicing reflective thinking. One of his interviewees stated that “I get time to really, you know, to rethink what I’ve learned in class”. Lee (2007) also searched the effect of journal writing and studied with 31 pre-service teachers from two Hong-Kong universities. One group was assigned to write dialogue journals whereas the other group wrote response journals. The study lasted for a year. He gathered the data from the journal entries and interviews. The results showed that both types of journals provided pre-service teachers with a reflective tool. Lee stated that he discovered the tremendous value of response and dialogue journals in fostering reflection after he had used them. Tang (2002) conducted a case study in order to determine the effectiveness of journal writing in developing reflective thinking. She found that journals were useful for enhancing reflective learning and they required the student teachers to reflect on their teaching practices. Francis (1995) also used journal writing in pre-service teacher education and he concluded that journal writing provided pre-service teachers with professional growth and increased self-awareness. Chiptin (2006) conducted a qualitative research in order to determine the effectiveness of journal writing in developing reflection and used a theoretical framework for this aim. The participants of this study were 28 pre-service teachers. The data were gathered by the journal entries. The results showed that the theoretical framework used in the study helped pre-service teachers reflect on the identified problems and enabled them to use the information to formulate a tentative theory or solution to solve these problems.

In spite of having many benefits, journals can be time-consuming so it may be difficult for student teachers. Selfe and Arbabi (1986) propose that one reason why journal-writing can fail is the lack of time. It is especially difficult when reflecting in

action as it requires to stop and to think in order to write, which is impossible in the midst of an action. However, it can be used more easily as reflecting on action.

Journal writing might be a challenging process, but its benefits should not be underestimated. Thus, it can be used in pre-service education by eliminating the problems related to time.

2.1.6.2. Action research

Another technique for promoting reflection is doing action research as “reflection is a critical component of action research” (Vaccarino, Comrie, Murray, and Sligo, 2007, p.8). Action research theory suggests that “change does not come about as a result of spontaneous acts, but through reflection on and understanding of specific problems within their social, political, and historical contexts” (Selener, 1997, p. 105). And this is possible with action research. Corey (1953) defines action research as ‘research that is undertaken by educational practitioners because they believe that by so doing they can make better decisions and engage in better actions’ (p. viii). According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), action research is a “self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understandings of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (p. 162). Macintyre (1991) describes action research as an “investigation, where, as a result of rigorous self-appraisal of current practice, the researcher focuses on a ‘problem’ (or a topic or an issue which needs to be explained), and on the basis of information (about the up-to-date state of the art, about the people who will be involved and about the context), plans, implements, then evaluates an action, then draws conclusions on the basis of findings” (p. 1). Reason and Bradbury (n.d.) point out that action research tries to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice for the improvement of individuals and their communities. Gore and Zeichner (1991) and Burns (2005a, 2005b) found that action research provided student teachers to reflect more critically about their practices especially concerning the strategies they use in the classroom to help all students learn.

Except for improving reflection, action research has other benefits and these are highlighted based on the action research carried out in some studies. For example, Sowa

(2009) conducted action research with 6 teachers. The findings of the survey show that action research makes teachers familiar with the “complexity and rewards of teaching ELLs (English Language Learners)” (p. 1031) by bringing them in an understanding of their students. Hannay, Telford and Seller (2003) carried out a pilot study with 13 teachers and a principal. The participants were asked for using action research and then focus group interviews were conducted. The findings suggest that action research is promising about combining teacher learning, continual growth and teacher ownership with the appraisal process. Hannay, Telford and Seller (2003) highlighted that action research;

- increases teacher ownership of the change initiatives;
- enhances collaboration of participants,
- increases teachers’ willingness to invest time to address problems;
- provides a forum for teachers’ voice;
- facilitates school improvement. (p. 123)

Hagevik, Aydeniz and Rowell (2012) used collaborative discussions, final written documents, presentations, and follow-up surveys to examine the role of action research in promoting critical reflective thinking among twenty pre-service teachers engaged in a year-long middle level program. They found that conducting action research “(a) engaged them in inquiry into their own practice, (b) was a means to reflect upon and determine ways to change their teaching practices, and (c) promoted critical reflection in a collaborative learning environment” (p. 675). Seider and Lemma (2004) used a questionnaire and also focused interviews with 40 students that used action research as a part of their master program for nine years. They reported that action research had benefits such as increasing professional efficacy, having positive professional influence on teachers and their teaching strategies. Even though they found that action research had immediate benefits for students, any finding about the long term benefits was not determined. Although action research can increase the reflective teaching skills of teachers, it may be challenging as it requires time and effort. Thus, teachers may be reluctant to carry out action research for their professional development. Nunan (1993) found out that there were some problems addressed by teachers in terms of conducting action research. These problems were lack of time, lack

of expertise, lack of continuous support, fear of being shown as inefficient teachers and fear of producing a public account of their research for a wider audience.

2.1.6.3. Observation and Video-recordings

Observation is “visiting a class to observe different aspects of teaching” (Richards & Lockhart 1996, p.12). According to Gebhard and Oprnady (1999), observation helps “to construct and reconstruct our own knowledge about teaching and thereby learn more about ourselves as teachers”. Observation presents benefits for both the observer and the teachers who are observed. The observer watches and learns new ideas, techniques, strategies and resources from the person s/he observes. S/he can also gain insight into his/her own teaching as s/he has a chance of comparison and evaluation of herself/himself and the person s/he observes. Furthermore, s/he becomes aware of students’ reactions and looks at them from a different perspective as s/he is an objective outsider. S/he can take an active role in creating professional learning community by taking the students’ interests and interaction into consideration. By doing all of the mentioned above, s/he helps her/his own professional development.

As to the benefits of observation for the person who is observed, firstly, observation presents the opportunity of seeing class through someone else’s eyes and so taking input such as suggestions, new ideas on teaching from him/her. Secondly, the person who is observed re-evaluates her/his class from a different perspective. Like the observer the person who is observed also creates professional learning community by taking the students’ interests and interaction into consideration. And finally s/he develops professionally. A teacher who both observes and is observed is engaged in professional development as s/he reflects on her/his practices through observation (www.educ.ualberta.ca).

The benefits above mentioned all serve to foster reflection. Hence, observation has an important potential for developing reflective teaching skills. Day (2013) tried to find out if observation in an ELT practicum helps reflective teaching. He studied with 15 graduate students that taught EFL at two universities of Thailand. He gathered data from two questionnaires. The results of the questionnaires showed that observation enabled them to engage in reflective teaching and learning process by providing them to

gain insights into their own teaching. It was also found that the students found reflective teaching beneficial and they would use it after the practicum.

Richards and Lockhart (1996) suggest that teachers in many language programs sometimes do not want to be a part of observations or other related activities as observation is generally considered as a tool for evaluation. Wang and Steth (1988) point out that many teachers think that the 'important people' who observe them judge their performance based on their own criteria instead of appropriate criteria and then make unwelcome 'suggestions' for change, which resents the teachers. Fatemipour (2009) states that although video-recordings provide valuable data for reflective teachers, some teachers are not positive about being observed by their colleagues, so they do not teach normally during observation.

As a teacher can be observed by other teachers, s/he can also observe himself. S/he can do this by video-recording her/his class. After class, s/he watches and evaluates herself/himself. Schratz (1992) points out:

“Audio-visual recordings are powerful instruments in the development of a lecturer's self-reflective competence. They confront him or her with a mirror like "objective" view of what goes on in class. Moreover, class recordings which are kept for later use, can give a valuable insight into an individual teacher's growth in experience over years” (p. 89).

According to Tice (2004), video-recording of the lesson helps teachers be aware of what is happening in the class. Video-recordings also enable teachers to identify their own strengths and weaknesses. Gün (2011) included 4 teachers, 3 trainers, learners and colleagues in her study in which observation and video-recordings were used. The results confirmed the value of videos in reflection. The teachers could identify their strengths and also potential areas of improvement thanks to video-recordings. On the other hand, Richards and Farrell (2005) believe that the lesson where a camera is included is not a real or representative one as the presence of camera will affect the dynamics of the lesson. The teachers knowing that they are recorded may not behave as usual. Fatemipour (2009) trying to find out the most effective reflective tool included peer observation, audio-recordings, student feedback and diaries in his study. He found out that audio-recordings were the least effective tool in reflection. He concluded that audio recordings can be intrusive and affect both students' and teachers' behaviors.

However, Kember's (2000) findings are not parallel with this thought. He suggests that audio-recording is the least intrusive tool of reflection. Akalin (2003) using the video-recording in her Methodology class also found out student teachers had positive attitudes towards using video-recordings. She stated that %80 of the students thought that video-recordings were useful for their teaching.

In sum, the knowledge of being recorded may influence teachers' and students' behaviors and a lesson with camera may not be a typical one. However, it is clear that video-recordings promote reflection by helping teachers be aware of their weaknesses and strengths.

2.1.6.4. Portfolios

Portfolios are one of the alternative assessment techniques. Therefore, the studies on portfolios are generally about their use in assessing the works of students (Sharifi and Hassakhah 2011, Wolf 1989, Pierce and O'Malley 1992, Barton and Collins 1997). Pierce and O'Malley (1992) define portfolio process as "the use of records of a student's work over time and in a variety of modes to show depth, breadth, and development of the student's abilities" (p.2). On the other hand, portfolios are also used by teachers to evaluate themselves. They are gradually being a tool that helps individual teachers develop and improve their profession (Bird, 1990; Zeichner and Wray, 2001). Portfolios used in teacher education are sometimes called as 'teaching portfolios'. Mues and Sorcinelli (2000) address six benefits of teaching portfolios. First one of them is various sources of evidence of teaching performance that portfolios provide. This variety is crucial in gaining a more comprehensive view of how a teacher deals with the different responsibilities of teaching. Thus, portfolios reflect mental substance and complexity of teaching. The second one is its role in making teaching more visible. Portfolios show a variety of activities related to teaching, and this demonstration makes teaching more concrete. The third one is that they present initiative to teachers for reflecting on and assessing teaching. Teachers are free to select the evidence that they want to include in their portfolio. And they can explain and document them in the way that they desire. Fourthly, teachers take the opportunity of thinking on their own teaching and of modifying teaching strategies or priorities as needed and of reflecting on their future goals related to teaching thanks to portfolios.

The fifth benefit of portfolios is that they contribute to collaboration among school members. As developing portfolios teachers work with their mentors or colleagues and share their approaches and views on teaching with each other. Finally, portfolios make teaching more valuable by making it a “subject of intellectual and scholarly discussion throughout the institution” (p. 2) as portfolios make teaching more visible and present the opportunity of sharing ideas on teaching.

The underlying principle of ‘teaching portfolios’ is providing teachers to reflect on their teaching. According to Berk (1999) and Wolf (1996), reflection is the characteristics of teaching portfolios. “Ultimately, the portfolio as a process demanding at its best constant reflection on teaching and learning holds the promise—however fragile— of forcing a broader reflection on the ways teachers are educated and continue in their professional development” (Lyon, 1998, p. 4). Portfolios are important reflective learning experiences (Freidus, 1996; LaBoskey, 1994; Lyons, 1996, 1997, 1998). Studies showed that the novice teachers were of the opinion that reflection was the most important part of portfolios (Freidus, 1996; LaBoskey, 1994; Lyons, 1996, 1997). Stolle, Goerss and Watkins (2005) suggest that pre-service and in-service teachers have a chance to reflect on their own learning and see themselves as teachers by developing portfolios.

These studies show the effectiveness of portfolios in reflecting on competencies and behaviors. Criticizing this, Tigelaar, Dolmans, de Grave, Wolfhagen and van der Vluten (2006) focused on the other aspects of teacher functioning such as the teaching environment and individual teachers’ beliefs, professional identity and mission. They gathered the data from the portfolios of five teachers. They were able to identify examples of reflections on aspects like beliefs, identity and mission. However, they also found that reflecting on inner aspects of functioning was more difficult than reflecting on outer aspects for teachers.

2.2. EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages)

As stated before, there are various ways of promoting reflection in teacher education. One new and promising way of this is EPOSTL. Newby (2011) highlights the role of the EPOSTL in reflection by stating that “the reflection function represents

the very essence of the EPOSTL” (p. 12). The EPOSTL is a kind of portfolio but it is different in some aspects. Before touching on these aspects, it is logical to give place to the definition of the EPOSTL by one of its creators. Newby (2012) defines the EPOSTL as:

“A document intended for students undergoing their initial teacher education which encourages them to reflect on the didactic knowledge and skills necessary to teach languages, helps them to assess their own didactic competences and enables them to monitor their progress and to record their experiences of teaching during the course of their teacher education” (p.1).

This definition shows that the EPOSTL is created for pre-service teachers. The creators of the EPOSTL are teacher educators from five countries (Armenia, Austria, Norway, Poland and U.K.). These educators set three general tasks that are

- to address the content of teacher education with a view to identifying ‘core competences’;
- to formulate corresponding didactic competence descriptors relating to language teaching;
- to embed these in a portfolio to help student teachers reflect on their knowledge, skills and values” (Newby, 2007, p.23).

For achieving these tasks, the teacher educators get benefit from other three projects and they base the EPOSTL on these projects (see Figure 2. 4). These projects that contribute to the EPOSTL are 1) European Profile for Language Teacher Education: A Frame of Reference, 2) the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR): Learning, Teaching, Assessment, and 3) the European Language Portfolio. The European Profile “deals with the initial and in-service education of foreign language teachers in primary, secondary and adult learning contexts and it offers a frame of reference for language education policy makers and language teacher educators in Europe” (Kelly, 2004). CEFR deals with the necessities that a language learner has to learn to communicate in this language and the knowledge and skills that are required to act effectively. And finally, the European Language Portfolio is a document that is developed by the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe with the aims “to support the development of learner autonomy,

plurilingualism and intercultural awareness and competence; to allow users to record their language learning achievements and their experience of learning and using languages” (www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/elp/). ELP (European Language Portfolio) is sometimes considered the same as the EPOSTL as it is also a kind of portfolio. However, ELP focuses mainly on learners, whereas the EPOSTL addresses the student teachers. Another main difference is that the ELP has language descriptors unlike the EPOSTL, in which we can see didactic descriptors. And finally, ELP is both a process and a showcase portfolio but the EPOSTL has not a showcase function; that is to say, it is not available for instructors or employers, it is only for the student teachers.

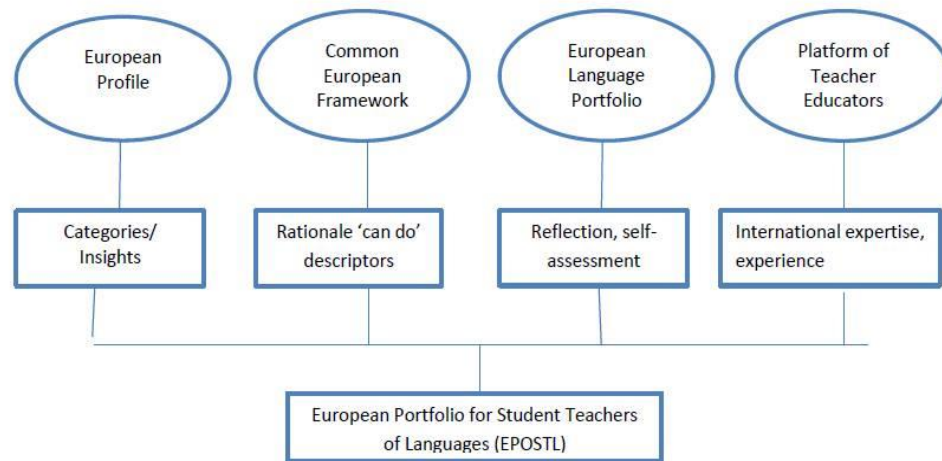


Figure 2.4. European input to student teacher portfolio

The EPOSTL was created for student teachers as a tool for reflection, so its main goal is providing reflection but there are also some other benefits related to professional development of student teachers. These aims of the EPOSTL are listed as follows:

1. to encourage students to reflect on the competences a teacher strives to attain and on the underlying knowledge which feeds these competences;
2. to help prepare students for their future profession in a variety of teaching contexts;
3. to promote discussion between students and between students and their teacher educators and mentors;
4. to facilitate self-assessment of students' competence;

5. to help students develop awareness of their strengths and weaknesses related to teaching;

6. to provide an instrument which helps to chart progress.

7. to serve as the springboard for discussions, topics for term papers, research projects etc.

8. to provide support during teaching practice and assist in discussions with mentors; this will help mentors to provide systematic feedback (Newby, Allan, Fenner, Jones, Komorowska and Soghikyan, 2007 p.5).

These aims serve to improve the language teacher education. EPOSTL tries to create awareness of student teachers' own teaching, and to help them see their progress. It also informs the teacher trainers about their trainees' professional development.

2.2.1. The Sections of the EPOSTL

It is inferred from the Newby's definition of the EPOSTL that assessment, monitoring and recording are the key words of this portfolio. EPOSTL is interested in self- assessment of student teachers and it provides this with different sections. These sections are *Personal Statement*, *Self-Assessment*, *Dossier*, *Glossary*, *Index* and *Users' Guide*. *Glossary* provides the most important terms related to language learning and teaching in the EPOSTL. *Users' Guide* gives detailed information on the use of the EPOSTL. *Index* helps student teachers to locate terms in the descriptors. As *Personal Statement*, *Self-Assessment* and *Dossier* are the main sections of the EPOSTL, they will be addressed in a more detailed way.

2.2.1.1. Personal Statement

“As has commonly been documented, newly qualified teachers tend to be strongly influenced by the teaching they experienced themselves while at school. It is an important task of the Personal Statement section to help students to reflect on these practices and develop a critical awareness of – in the positive and negative sense – the teaching procedures used by their own school teachers” (Newby, 2011, p.11).

In this section, student teachers answer some questions about their experiences and expectations related to teaching. The main aim of this section is to provide reflection. It is written at the beginning of the Personal Statement section that “the aim of the Personal Statement is to help you to reflect on aspects related to teaching in general and to think about questions that may be important at the beginning of your teacher education.” The Personal Statement section consists of four main questions. These questions are about student teachers’ own experiences that influence their teaching, aspects of teaching, expectations of teacher education course and some features of a language teacher. Makinen (2011) dealing with the use of Personal Statement applied Personal Statement section in the context of Finnish subject teacher education. She concluded that personal statement section had some advantages such as promoting the exploration of practical and theoretical aspects of language teaching, getting the students teachers to think about teaching flexibly, making them aware of the necessary questions for teaching and learning to promote the professional development. Makinen (2011) stated that “the Personal Statement also familiarized them with the concept and function of reflection, both in the form of personal reflection and dialogic reflection” (p.53).

2.2.1.2. Self-Assessment

The most important part of the EPOSTL is Self-Assessment as the main function of it is providing assessment. Self-Assessment section “identifies a core of 195 didactic competences expressed as ‘can-do’ descriptors, which enable reflection and self-assessment at different stages of teacher education” (Newby, 2011, p.6). According to Newby (2011), reflection and self-assessment are two functions of Self-Assessment section. He states that reflection function provides student teachers to think about and discuss specific competences and review the requirements of being competent in a specific area. And the self-assessment function helps student teachers make a qualitative judgment about their improving competences and chart their development and progress by coloring the bars under each descriptor. Descriptors are the ‘can-do’ statements that can be found in Self-Assessment section of the EPOSTL. They ask student teachers for evaluating themselves by coloring a bar that exists under all of the descriptors. Student

teachers write dates in columns of these bars, which helps them see their improvement. An example is given below:

“I can evaluate and select a variety of activities which help learners to reflect on their existing knowledge and competences.” (Independent Learning-Learner Autonomy)



Figure 2.5. An example of coloring bars

According to Çakır and Balçıklı (2012), there are some underlying principles that form the descriptors. These principles are the concept of teacher/learner autonomy, CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), interdependence of language and culture, ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), and independent learning.

The Self-Assessment consists of 7 main categories with 31 sub-categories (see Figure 2. 6). 195 ‘can-do’ descriptors are involved in these categories. The main categories are 1) context, 2) methodology, 3) resources, 4) lesson planning, 5) conducting a lesson, 6) independent learning, 7) assessment of learning. The descriptors in the category of *Context* focus on the framework within which teachers work and on the professional duties they have to perform. *Context* consists of curriculum, aims and needs, the role of the language teacher, and institutional resources and constraints. *Methodology* is the most comprehensive part of Self-Assessment section. It involves the sub-categories of speaking/spoken interaction, writing/written interaction, listening, reading, grammar, vocabulary and culture. The category of *resources* deals with various sources that teachers can benefit from while locating, selecting and/or producing ideas, texts, activities and reference materials useful for their learners. *Lesson planning*, as its name suggests, is concerned with the planning of a course. As a plan is prepared by taking into account lesson objectives and content, this category consists of identification of learning objectives, lesson content and organization. In the category of *conducting a lesson*, descriptors address the things a teacher does in a modern language classroom, the skills required and the interaction between the teacher and her/his students. Using lesson plans, content, interaction with learners, classroom management and classroom language form the basis of this section. *Independent learning* focuses on how

autonomous learning can be achieved. The tools improving autonomy such as portfolios and projects are the concerns of this category. It comprises the subcategory of learner autonomy, homework, projects, portfolios, virtual learning environments and extra-curricular activities. The last category of Self-Assessment section is *assessment of learning*. In this category, the descriptors are related to choices the teachers have to make during the assessment of learning outcomes or processes of learning. Designing assessment tools, evaluation, self- and peer assessment, language performance, culture and error analysis constitute the scope of the descriptors in this section.

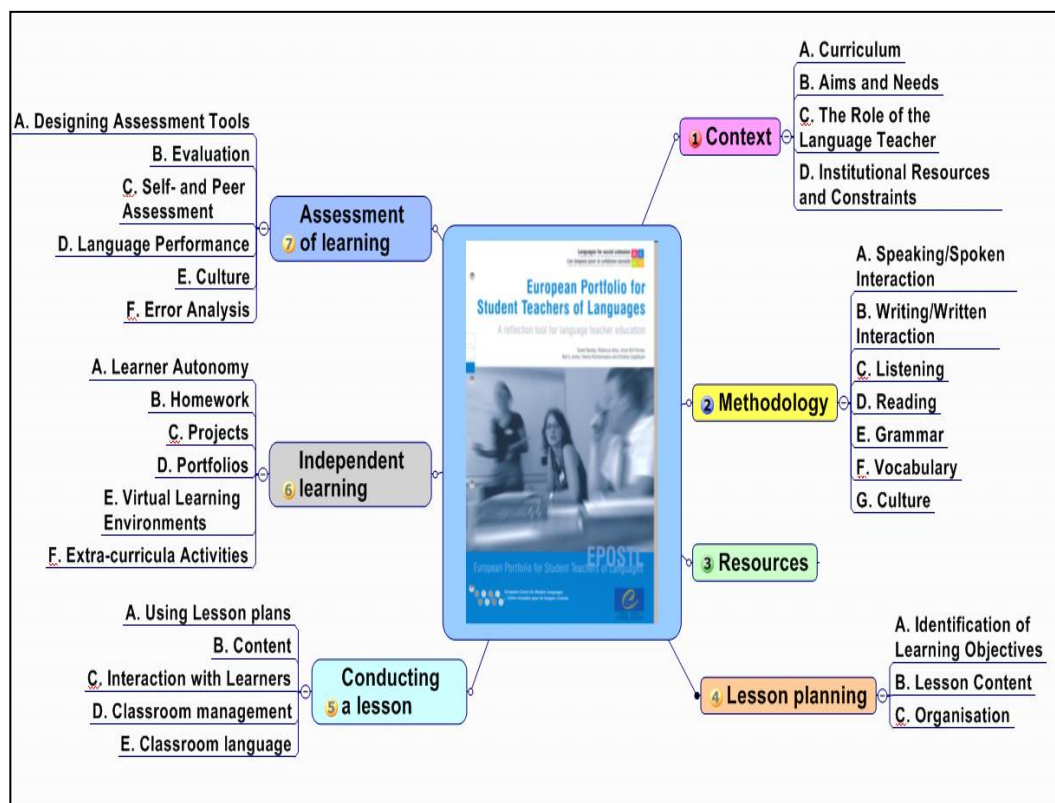


Figure 2.6. Section of Self-Assessment

Dealing with Self-Assessment section can be perceived as highly challenging by student teachers as there are many descriptors. In order to change this perception, Newby (2011), during his implementation in which student teachers watched a video-recording and were asked to give feedback set student teachers free in choosing the categories which they thought were more useful in analyzing the video. Student teachers can choose the descriptors that they will complete as to the content of their

microteachings. And so they would not be overwhelmed under the extensive content of Self-Assessment section.

2.2.1.3. Dossier

Dossier “encourages the student to provide evidence of progress and to record examples of work relevant to teaching” (Newby, 2011, p.6). Dossier is the same with portfolio in principle as it is a collection of evidence of the works that have been completed. It has two main functions. One of them is providing student teachers to confirm claims that their self-assessment of the ‘can-do’ descriptors is an accurate reflection of their specific abilities and skills. And the other function is providing student teachers to evaluate their progress and improvement. Student teachers are free to collect what they want to include in their Dossier. However, the EPOSTL suggests six types of evidence:

- a) evidence from lessons you have given
- b) evidence in the form of lesson observations and evaluations
- c) evidence such as detailed reports, comments, checklists etc. compiled by different people involved in your teacher education
- d) evidence from your analysis of what you have done as a teacher-your ‘teacher actions’ – and from learners’ tasks and related performance
- e) evidence in the form of case studies and action research
- f) evidence from reflection (Newby et al, 2007).

The EPOSTL is a portfolio that can be found in ECML (European Center for Modern Languages) web site (<http://www.ecml.at/>). This portfolio is needed to be downloaded and printed, which can be time-consuming and demanding for student teachers. Therefore, Mirici and Demirbaş (2013) made this material an electronic material that was e-EPOSTL. They suggested transforming the EPOSTL into e-EPOSTL, which would make the use of portfolio easier.

2.2.2. Studies on the EPOSTL

As the EPOSTL is newly introduced (in 2007) to language teachers and learners, it is so difficult to find research study on the use of the EPOSTL. However, there are

few studies whose results are worth to be addressed. These studies are all pilot studies that were carried out in Methodology courses or teaching practice or both of them. For example, Velikova (2013) used the EPOSTL in both the Methodology courses and in the teaching practices. She found that the trainees were of the opinion that the EPOSTL was a beneficial tool for professional development and it enhanced self-reflection and raised awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in teaching. The beginner teachers stated that the EPOSTL fostered inquiry and active experimentation so it facilitated professional development and lifelong learning. Another study was done by Çakır and Balçıkanlı (2012) in order to determine the student teachers' views about using the EPOSTL to improve teacher autonomy. The pilot study was carried out with 25 student teachers and 4 teacher trainers. The data were collected from interviews. The findings highlighted that the EPOSTL was beneficial in terms of reflection, self-assessment and awareness. Both student teachers and teacher trainers regarded the EPOSTL as a reflection tool that provides student teachers to assess their teaching practices from different perspectives. Strakova (2009) also found that the EPOSTL was a good way of promoting reflective skills of student teachers. She carried out a pilot study that lasted for two years. After the implementation of the EPOSTL, the data were gathered through both questionnaires and focus group interviews. As a result of analysis of these data, Strakova also found another three important benefits of the EPOSTL. Firstly, the EPOSTL deepens the insight on learning and teaching process. Secondly, it encourages students to be more aware of the teachers' work. And finally it enables students to develop competence.

The studies show that the EPOSTL is useful for teachers' professional growth as it enables them to see their weaknesses and strengths in their practices. The EPOSTL is not only useful for the practice but also planning the practices. The study of Fenner (2011) supports this idea. She piloted the EPOSTL to find its effectiveness in promoting reflection. She used it in three contexts: in lectures at the university, in seminars and during the teaching practices of student teachers. She collected the data through questionnaires with open-ended questions that were answered both by the students and the mentors. The findings showed that the EPOSTL helped student teachers plan and critically reflect on the important task of planning lesson based on learning aims and objectives.

The potential of the EPOSTL encouraged Burkert (2009) to propose using the EPOSTL as a course in initial teacher education. Her first aim was to determine the capacity of the EPOSTL to fill the gap between theory and practice. To serve this aim, she gave a questionnaire to 54 teachers in order to identify their views about reflection and self-assessment. Based on the questionnaire and the literature, she suggested that the use of the EPOSTL as a tool for reflection and self-assessment might contribute to an improvement of the rather unsatisfactory state of affairs of teacher education. She stated that the implementation of the EPOSTL in teacher education would undoubtedly have an influence on course content and this way ascertain the treatment of areas such as new trends in the field of language education. Furthermore, reflection on the didactic competences referred in the descriptors would raise student teachers' awareness of values and beliefs, as well as theoretical principles of teaching and learning languages which underlie the descriptors. Therefore, she formed a course plan that was integrated with the EPOSTL.

Although the EPOSTL seems very promising in professional development of teachers, there may arise also some problems during the implementation of it. Burkert and Schwienhorst (2008) see four possible problems with the EPOSTL. Firstly, the problem is about the descriptors. They state that descriptors may be seen as contradictory to each other as "they may sometimes be misinterpreted as teacher actions that lead to predictable learning outcomes, or teacher actions that might infringe on the learners' autonomy" (ibid, 246). Secondly, it can be considered as a checklist of being a good teacher by the teacher educators. However, the main aim of the EPOSTL is not to evaluate the student teachers but provide them to reflect on their own practices. Thirdly, the EPOSTL has no global scale and levels. This leads to subjective assessment. "There is no system of reference, no global scale with levels that student teachers can refer to when assessing their own progress, apart from the descriptors themselves" (ibid, 246). And finally, the answer of the question if the student teachers will use both the EPOSTL and the ELP simultaneously remains unclear. The EPOSTL focuses on didactic competences and ELP focuses on linguistic competences. Should these competences be dealt with separately? If so, will the student teachers use the two different portfolios and won't it be difficult and challenging to use the two portfolios at the same time?

The prior studies indicate that the EPOSTL provides professional development by engaging student teachers in self-assessment, autonomy and reflection. However, some reforms might be needed to eliminate the problems that might arise from the implementation.

2.3. Conclusion

The review began with an attempt to understand the phenomena of reflection as it is complicated and so broad. The literature shows that it is necessary and useful to reflect. However, it is problematic to define and determine the extent of reflection. As it is seen useful, many good criteria for being a good teacher are included in reflection. As reviewing carefully, it can be concluded that reflection involves self-assessment, getting and giving feedback, critical thinking, problem-solving process, which makes the term of reflection complicated. Although it is emphasized that reflecting is crucial for teachers, there are not many studies proving its importance and usefulness. Akbari (2007) states that there is not much solid evidence for the use of reflection in teacher education. He finishes his study with the sentence “It is good to reflect, but reflection itself also requires reflection” (p. 207).

John Dewey and Donald Schön are the originators of the term of reflection, so the literature on reflection focuses on these researchers’ studies. Dewey sees reflection as an important kind of thought, but he also emphasizes that reflection is more than a rational and logical thought. The most important contribution of Schön to literature of reflection is the terms reflection-in and on-action. The first type is an immediate reflection in that it is reflecting in the midst of the action. The second one is related to the past experiences; it is reflecting after the action has occurred. Apart from Schön’s reflection types (1983,1987), the typology of Valli (1997), Jay and Johnson (2002), van Manen (1991, 1995) and the reflection models of Kolb (1984) and Gibbs (1988) are also important for understanding reflection.

After acknowledging the importance of reflection in teacher education, the question of how we can foster reflective thinking emerges. In order to promote reflective thinking, many techniques have been suggested. Some of these techniques are action research, observations, video-recordings, group discussions, journals and

portfolios. In this study, the suggested way is the EPOSTL. The EPOSTL is first piloted in 2007, so the number of the studies on the EPOSTL is so limited. Many of existing studies belong to some of its originators (Newby, 2007, 2011, 2012; Fenner, 2007, 2011; Jones, 2007, 2011) and they are generally the outcomes of the first pilot studies. In the pilot studies, it was tried to determine how the EPOSTL could be incorporated into pre-service teacher education. Therefore, some researchers used it in teaching practicum (Orlavo, 2011; Nihlen, 2011; Ingvarsdottir, 2011) while others used it in the courses related to the teaching (Makinen, 2011; Bagaric, 2011; Çakır and Balçıklı, 2012)). Moreover, it is also possible to see the studies that used the EPOSTL in both in lectures at university and in teaching practicum (Fenner, 2011; Velikova, 2013).

In these studies, the EPOSTL proves itself; the student teachers involved in the project developed positive attitudes towards using it. The reason of these positive attitudes is the contribution of the EPOSTL to professional development of pre-service teachers. EPOSTL raises awareness of one's own teaching, gives him/her chance of self-assessment; and provides reflection.

The studies that are mentioned in this chapter show that it is important to reflect for professional development of student teachers. Reflection is accepted as necessary in teacher education, but it is not practiced in real life. In order to provide student teachers to reflect, a new tool for reflection which is the EPOSTL has been suggested in recent years. This study focuses on the use of this new reflective tool in pre-service teacher education. The method, instruments, participants and data analysis of this research that were used to determine the student teachers' views on the effect of EPOSTL on developing reflective teaching skills will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY

Reflection is an important kind of thought helps both in-service and pre-service teachers to develop professionally. There are many ways of promoting reflection, and a new one is the EPOSTL. In this study, it is tried to determine what student teachers of English Language Teaching Department at Atatürk University think about the role of the EPOSTL in teacher education, specifically its role in enhancing reflective teaching. The method and the instruments that were used in this study in order to find the answer of this question are addressed in this chapter. This chapter also focuses on the participants and the data analysis of the study.

3.1. Method

In this study a mixed but mainly qualitative research was carried out. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) define mixed type research by analyzing 19 definitions of mixed type as “the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (p.123). In mixed research, both qualitative and quantitative research is used. This combination can be in terms of data collection instruments, analysis, viewpoints or inference techniques of both methods. Rossman and Wilson (1985) identified three rationales for using mixed type. First, mixed type is used to ensure corroboration or confirmation of each other by triangulating them. Second, it is used in order to provide or to develop analysis to get richer data. Third, it is used to start new modes of thinking by attending paradoxes that arise from the two data sources. The first reason that Rossman and Wilson identified is the main reason of using mixed type in this study. Both the qualitative and the quantitative have idiosyncratic characteristics and important designs but they have also some weaknesses. Johnson and Cristensen (2004), list these weaknesses of these two research designs as follows:

Weaknesses of quantitative research;

- The researcher's categories that are used might not reflect constituencies' understandings
- The researcher's theories that are used might not reflect local constituencies' understandings
- The researcher might miss out on phenomena occurring because of the focus on theory or hypothesis testing rather than on theory or hypothesis generation
- Knowledge produced might be too abstract and general for direct application to specific local situations, contexts, and individuals (p.411).

Weaknesses of qualitative research;

- Knowledge produced might not generalize to other people or other settings
- It is difficult to make quantitative predictions
- It is more difficult to test hypotheses and theories with large participant pools
- It might have lower credibility with some administrators and commissioners of programs
- It generally takes more time to collect the data when compared to quantitative research
- Data analysis is often time consuming
- The results are more easily influenced by the researcher's personal biases and idiosyncrasies (p.412).

One solution to eliminate some of the weaknesses of the two designs can be using mixed type. Mixed type has also some weaknesses such as being time-consuming and challenging but these weaknesses are not related to credibility or validation but to the use of it. Hence, mixed type is used in this study to increase the reliability and validation of the results. Despite being mixed, this study is mainly qualitative as it tries to understand views of the participants. Qualitative research is necessary especially if the researcher concentrates on the beliefs or feelings of the participants. "The qualitative paradigm focuses on the voices of the participants" (Auerbach and Silverstein, 2003, p.126). This study gives voice to student teachers on the use of the EPOSTL to foster reflection, so it is mainly qualitative.

3.2. Participants

3.2.1. Participants of the questionnaire

The participants of this study were 24 undergraduate students (juniors) at English Language Teaching Department at Atatürk University. The rationale for selecting participants from juniors is that they have Methodology course in that year. Being one of the courses that present teaching practice opportunities to student teachers, methodology course was especially selected. At first, 25 students were chosen as this study required implementation and collected data with interview and questionnaire. However, one of our participants declared that she would not be included in the study, so the final number was 24. As to the profile of the participants, 6 of them were male and the rest-18-were female. 9 students were at evening class and the other 15 had education in daytime. These 24 student teachers implemented the EPOSTL and took part in the questionnaire.

Table 3.1.

General Profiles of Participants of the Questionnaire

| | | AGE | | | | | Total |
|--------|--------|-----|----|----|----|-----|-------|
| | | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24+ | |
| GENDER | Female | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 18 |
| | Male | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| Total | | 2 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 24 |

3.2.2. Participants of the interview

The subjects of the interview were 8 student teachers who participated in the pilot study and the questionnaire. These 8 students were selected based on both their voluntariness and their motivation that they showed during the process. The researcher observed the participants and saw their motivation level. Both the most motivated and the least motivated students were chosen for the interview. The rationale behind the selection from both sides was to ensure an objective perspective which would increase

the reliability of the study. Of the 8 students, 4 students were female and 4 were male. 3 students had education at evening class and the rest had education in day-time.

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. The Questionnaire

Questionnaires are used when a researcher wants to find information about participants' feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values and thoughts. In this study, it is aimed to find out the student teachers' views about using the EPOSTL for improving reflective teaching skills. Hence after the pilot study, a questionnaire was conducted to 24 student teachers. The questions of this questionnaire were devised based on the works of Çakır and Balçıkanlı (2012), Bagaric (2011) and Akbari's (2010) reflective teaching inventory. The questionnaire was revised by 4 experts and 2 colleagues. The questionnaire consisted of 7 open-ended and 15 close-ended questions. In literature a close-ended questionnaire on the use of EPOSTL is not available as there is lack of studies about this subject. As there is not enough sample, the beliefs about the use of EPOSTL in developing reflection are difficult to estimate. Dörnyei (2003) states open-ended questions are necessary when the range of possible answers is not clear. Another reason of using open-ended questions in this study is providing qualitative data. Open-ended questions are useful in collecting data for qualitative research that is the most important part of the study.

The questionnaire also involved 15 close-ended questions that were devised with Lickert five-point scale. It was tried to provide the consistency in and between the answers of the student teachers with these 15 questions. There were scales from 1 to 5 for each statement ranging from the "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Each number corresponded to a level of agreement or disagreement of the participants with the statements. The response "Strongly disagree" corresponded to 1, "Disagree" to 2, "Neutral" to 3, "Agree" to 4, and "Strongly agree" to 5. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a given statement by the way of an ordinal scale. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as 0,79.

3.3.2. The Interview

Interviews were done with 8 student teachers that had been part of the EPOSTL implementation and answered the questionnaire. According to Gray (2004), there are four reasons of using interviews as a means of data collection. These are:

- There is a need to attain highly personalized data.
- There are opportunities required for probing.
- A good return rate is important.
- Respondents are not fluent in the native language of the country, or where they have difficulties with written language (p.214).

The first three of these reasons are also the reasons of doing interview in this study. Moreover, as Seidman (2006) states, interview is a necessary road to inquiry if the aim is to understand the people involved in education and their experience. This study is concerned with the experience of the student teachers with the EPOSTL, hence interview seemed necessary to collect data.

Newton (2010) points out that a type of interview can be placed between structured and unstructured interviews and this is semi-structured interview. He shows the rationale behind this as the closeness of unstructured interviews to observation and the structured interviews to the questionnaire. In this study, as observation was not targeted and the questionnaire was already used, semi-structured interview seemed appropriate to the goal of the study. Another reason of conducting semi-structured interview was giving chance to participants to tell their stories without limiting them and, while doing this, not letting them stray from the point. Semi-structured interviews are also necessary when the issue is complex. Barriball and While (1994) state that semi-structured interviews are “well suited for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive issues and enable probing for more information and clarification of answers.”. In this study the terms of reflection can be complex for the participants and the EPOSTL is new to them, which leads us to use semi-structured interviews.

The interview originally had 7 questions, but some extra questions were also asked in the course of interviews. The questions of the interview were all open-ended. The questions were related to the effect of the EPOSTL on reflective teaching skills.

These questions were also a chance for evaluating the whole process. As the interview questions were semi-structured, there was not much restriction on participants so they made also a holistic evaluation of the EPOSTL.

3.4. Procedure of the Pilot Study and Data Collection

In order to identify student teachers' views about using EPOSTL in fostering reflection, the EPOSTL was needed to be practiced by the student teachers. After the participants had been selected, two information meetings, one of which was with the evening students and the other was with the day-time students, were held. In these meetings, the EPOSTL and the process were explained. Some questions "why are we doing this research, what will we do in this process, how will the implementation work, what is the EPOSTL?" were tried to be answered to inform the participants. An online group that showed the whole process and functioned as a dossier (teaching portfolio section of the EPOSTL) was created in the social media. Micro and macro teachings were uploaded to this website and peer feedback for these practices was provided via this group. A few weeks after the meetings, the student teachers did their microteachings. Each student that did his/her microteaching came together with the researcher and watched his/her video-recorded microteaching. While watching, the researcher asked some questions about the student's teaching practice to provide his/her to think reflectively. Firstly, the student teacher made self-assessment and then the researcher evaluated her/him and took notes. Nearly a month after the microteachings, macro teachings were done in Methodology course. Again the student teachers and the researcher watched the video-recorded microteachings and assessments were done by both the student teachers and the researcher. This process was repeated for all the participants. After completing micro and macro teachings, the student teachers began to complete descriptors- can-do statements involved in Self-Assessment section of the EPOSTL. The methodology part of descriptors were completed by the student teachers as they did their teaching practices in speaking, writing, listening, reading, grammar, and vocabulary. The student teachers were free to do their teaching practices in the skills or fields which they want. They completed the descriptors of the skills and fields in which they did their practices. And the implementation was completed.

A few weeks later, the questionnaire was mailed to the participants and they were asked to answer it in a few weeks to give them time to think about and evaluate the experience they had.

Subsequent to the mailing questionnaire, interviews were held with 8 student teachers one by one while filling of the questionnaires was also in progress. Before conducting the interview, the participants' consent was taken by making them sign a consent form. Each interview lasted between 10-15 minutes. The interviews were conducted in the native language of the participants, Turkish, in order to decrease the speaking anxiety that may stem from using a foreign language and get more valid data as language blocks might influence the accuracy of the data. The interviews were recorded by using cameras.

After completing all the interviews, the recordings were listened, transcribed and translated into English by the researcher. Two colleagues did proof-reading the translated version of the interviews' transcriptions to see if there is inconsistency between the original and the translated text.

3.5. Data Analysis

3.5.1. Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Content analysis was carried out for the interview and the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define content analysis as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.” According to Downe-Wamboldt (1992), the goal of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (p. 314). In this study, to understand the reactions of pre-service teachers to the use of the EPOSTL, two sources of qualitative data were used; and, to analyze them coding was carried out. Firstly, collecting the questionnaires was completed so the coding of the open-ended questions in the questionnaire was done first. The data were read repeatedly by the researcher. Then, they were read word by word to form the codes by highlighting the exact words from the text that appear to capture key thoughts or concepts. Then, the

codes were sorted into categories based on how different codes were related and linked. Next, themes for each category were developed. The process of coding can be seen in the figure of Elo and Kyngas (2007). It can be seen that there are two processes of coding in Elo and Kangis's study: inductive and deductive. In this thesis, the approach is inductive where there is no pre-determined category in contrast to deductive approach where the content analysis is done to retest existing data in a new context (Catanzaro 1988).

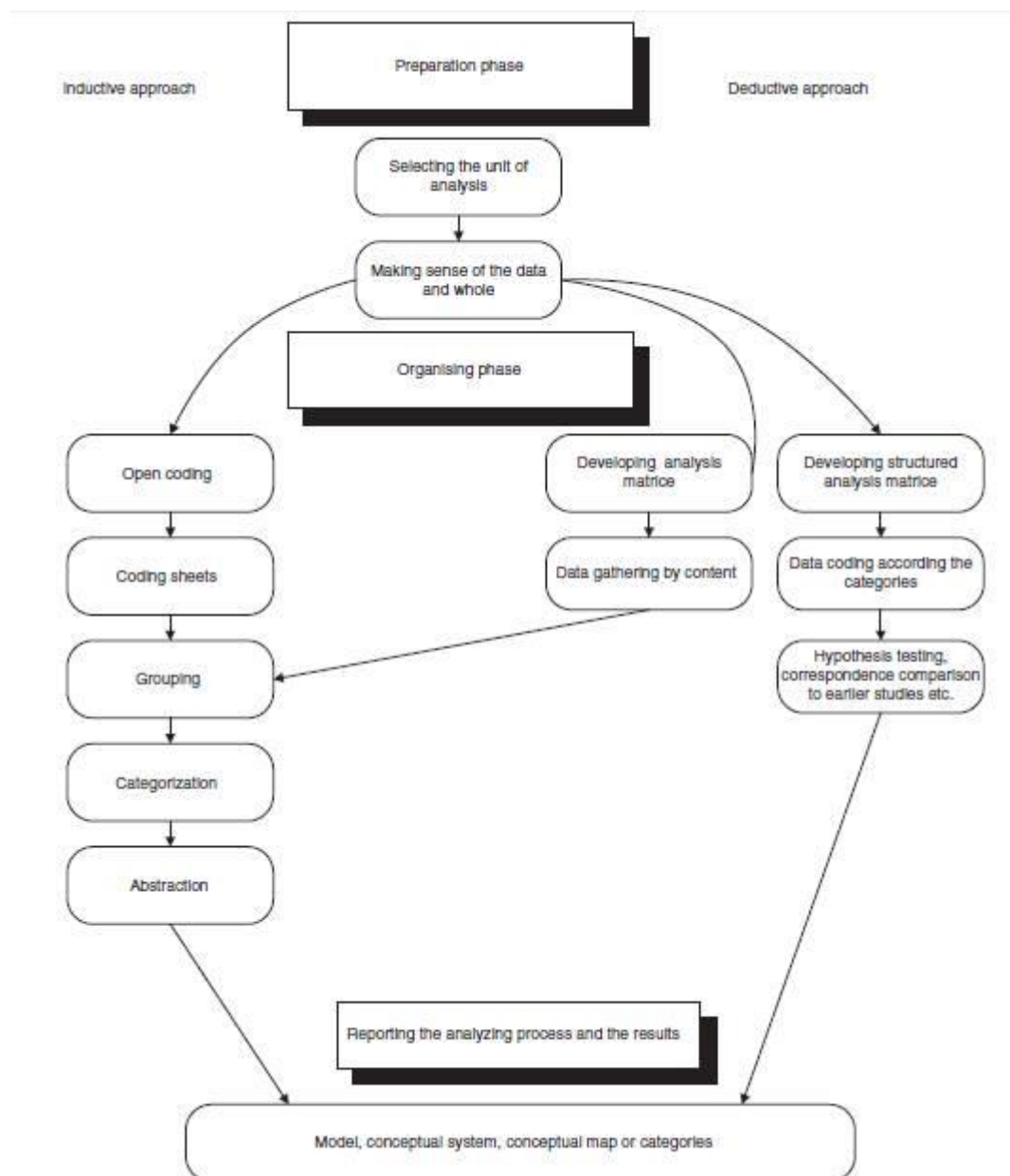


Figure 3.1. Preparation, organizing and resulting phases in the content analysis process.

A month after coding, the researcher reviewed the codes and themes again. And an inter-coder who is an expert also reviewed the codes.

3.5.2. Analysis of the Quantitative Data

The quantitative data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed in Windows SPSS 20. In the analysis, the data were studied in terms of the general descriptives including means, minimum-maximum scores, and frequencies in the quantitative analysis. It was also tried to find whether there were differences between the participants according to some variables. For this purpose, independent sample t-test and ANOVA were used. In addition, bi-varied correlation analysis was made. Different dimensions of findings were correlated to determine the interrelationship between the different factors and variables of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, in order to collect data that would help to determine the student teachers' views on using the EPOSTL as a tool for reflection, firstly a pilot study was carried out with the student teachers. Then, a questionnaire was handed out to student teachers. And interviews were done to gather data. As a result, both qualitative and quantitative data were obtained. In this chapter, firstly the results of qualitative and then the results of the quantitative data will be given. This chapter also discusses the findings by addressing the prior studies.

4.1. Results of the Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data were collected with two instruments: questionnaires and interviews. In order to analyze the data obtained from these instruments, content analysis was used. The qualitative data were read repeatedly by the researcher and firstly codes, then categories and finally the themes were formed. As a result of this analysis, 15 themes emerged. 9 of these themes emerged as analyzing the data obtained from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. And 6 of them are the result of analysis of the interviews. Firstly, the themes of questionnaire and then, the themes of interviews will be addressed.

4.1.1. Results of the Qualitative Data Gathered through the Questionnaire

The questionnaire conducted to 24 student teachers had 7 open-ended questions. As to the results of the analysis of these open-ended questions, 9 themes were obtained. The themes are generally related to the use of the EPOSTL. First opinions about and suggestions for the EPOSTL and also its role in some aspects of teaching are addressed in the themes. The themes are explained below with some extracts from the questionnaires. In the presentation of these extracts, numbers for the participants (from Participant 1 to Participant 24) were given.

Theme 1: First thoughts and feelings about the EPOSTL

The first theme is related to the first thoughts and feelings about the implementation of the EPOSTL. The answers of the student teachers to the question what the student teachers thought about the EPOSTL when they first met it form the categories of this theme. As the first views are both positive and negative, the categories are divided as positive and negative thoughts and feelings (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1.

The First Thoughts and Feelings on the EPOSTL

| Theme: First Thoughts and Feelings about the EPOSTL | |
|--|---|
| Categories | Codes |
| Positive thoughts and feelings | I felt that I would be successful I was excited I thought it would be a good experience I thought it would be an important study for learning and teaching I thought it would be a serious high academic study I thought it would be entertaining |
| Negative thoughts and feelings | I was scared I was worried I had no idea what it could be and how I could use it I thought it as a classic research thing I was frightened as it is different from other micro and macro teachings I thought we would just do our presentations then it would finish |

Some of the participants stated that their first feeling about the EPOSTL was fear as they thought that the process would be challenging. *Participant 17* expresses this fear with its reason as follows:

“I was scared of the EPOSTL because I would make a lot of presentations and I did not anticipate it”.

They were not familiar with the process. The student teachers stated that they had not participated in such a study before and had no idea about the EPOSTL. The following extracts exemplify this as follows:

“I had no idea what it could be and how I could use it when I heard of it for the first time” (Participant 15).

“Because of my lack of knowledge about it firstly I could not understand the usefulness of it. I understood it is such a classic research thing” (Participant 8).

They stated that they knew nothing about the EPOSTL. They participated in this study for their lecturer’s sake and they hoped they would get better marks thanks to this study. Two participants expressed their earlier thought as follows:

“At first, I had no idea about the EPOSTL. Actually I participated in this activity because I thought it would increase my marks. I accepted this proposal without knowing anything about the EPOSTL” (Participant 20).

“Firstly, I thought that it was just for the teachers’ sake but then I realized that it was very beneficial to my ‘teaching’ life” (Participant 12).

On the other hand, the EPOSTL had also *positive* impact on some of the students. Although they did not know the process, they were excited as they anticipated that it would be a good experience and an entertaining process. The following statements of two participants can be given as examples for their positive impression of the EPOSTL:

“First impression was that the EPOSTL would be entertaining and would be on purpose of self-assessment” (Participant 22).

“Firstly, I thought that it would be a good experience for me. Hence, I became a volunteer to participate” (Participant 4).

A few participants stated that they anticipated that they would be successful in this project. They stated:

“I felt that I would be successful” (Participant 2).

“At the beginning of this process, I was sure that I would accomplish and I was right” (Participant 1).

Some of the student teachers emphasized that they knew nothing about the EPOSTL, which left both positive and negative impressions on them. *Participant 9* reported his/her feelings as follows:

“At first, I was worried about this study. Because I had never participated in any study like this. On the other hand, I was excited about it. All I knew it would be a serious high academic study, so I wanted to participate in it”.

They thought that the EPOSTL would be different from their previous presentations. This anticipation had both positive and negative effects on them. One of the participants expressed his/her first feelings as follows:

“The first impression of the EPOSTL was a bit frightening and exciting because this work would be different from the other micro-macro teaching” (Participant 7).

Although the reason of participating in the study was not learning from the EPOSTL, when the process was started the student teachers were of the opinion that EPOSTL could be beneficial to their teaching life. They thought that the EPOSTL was actually helpful for their job as they regarded the EPOSTL as a good way of professional development. The following quotations are good examples of the change in student teachers’ ideas:

“Firstly, I thought that we would just do our presentations then it would finish. But later I realized that we can be really good teachers” (Participant 11).

“Firstly, I did not understand what the meaning of the EPOSTL was but then I realize that it was very beneficial to me” (Participant 19).

“First, I thought we would just do what our teachers would ask to do. But when I started to do something on my own I saw that I could actually produce something, I could do good stuff with new, original ideas. That project showed me what I could do to improve my talents about teaching. Actually I liked that project because of that” (Participant 5).

The EPOSTL is very new in teacher education. Hence, the student teachers had not met it before this pilot study. This unawareness of the EPOSTL caused anxiety on some of the student teachers. On the other hand, some of the student teachers were excited as they hoped that they would learn new things about teaching.

Theme 2: EPOSTL for raising awareness

In this theme, it is dealt with how the EPOSTL helped student teachers raise their awareness in different aspects. The student teachers that were like real teachers in their practices felt empathy both with teachers and students and raised awareness about professional life, which forms the categories of this theme (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2.

EPOSTL for Raising Awareness

| Theme: EPOSTL for Raising Awareness | |
|--|--|
| Categories | Codes |
| Empathy with students | I began to think like a student I learned students' needs and emotions |
| Empathy with teachers | I understand how it is to be a teacher I understand how difficult it is to teach English I realize how difficult it is to control classes especially crowded classes |
| Teaching as a professional | I realize that I love what I am doing I feel as a real teacher I realize that we can be really good teachers I realize how I can develop myself |

It is necessary for a teacher to understand the students' thoughts, feelings and needs for creating an effective learning atmosphere. Teachers should be aware of their students' needs in order to meet them. Understanding their both feelings and needs is possible with feeling empathy with them. The participants of this study who acted like real teachers felt *empathy with students* thanks to the EPOSTL. Some stated that they were in students' shoes and thought like them and understood their emotions and needs. Two participants expressed this as follows:

“.... *I also began to think like a student...*” (Participant 9).

“*I learned students' needs and emotions, because they were generally active in my lessons*” (Participant 10).

As being teachers, they also felt *empathy with teachers* and were able to see the challenge of this profession. *Participant 4* was the one who really felt empathy and saw the challenges of teaching. S/he emphasized the difficulty of teaching English in particular. S/he stated that:

“*I understand how to be a good teacher and how difficult it is to teach English. Hence, I learned so much from the EPOSTL.*”

Apart from teaching, she also addressed the difficulty of managing class as follows:

“I realized exactly the difficulty of being a good teacher and controlling the class. It is really difficult to control, especially, crowded classes.”

The third category of this theme moves from empathy to the *awareness as a professional*. The student teachers were teachers in their practices. This made them feel how to be a teacher. *Participant 7* stated:

“I thought and felt myself as a real teacher while I was teaching.”

Some participants noted that they understood how to be a good teacher and how they could develop themselves in order to be a good teacher. They stated that the EPOSTL helped them think about how to be effective teachers. One of them expressed his/her ideas about this subject as follows:

“I realize that we can be really good teachers” (Participant 11).

Feeling like a teacher assists realizing their feelings on their future job. One participant stated this as follows:

“I realize that I love what I am doing. I can thank you even just for this” (Participant 20).

These findings show that the EPOSTL has an important role in raising self-awareness. Self-awareness is the “process of getting in touch with your feelings and behaviors” (Gold and Roth, 1993; p.141). It is important in teaching as it enables teachers to understand how the learners affect teachers’ own emotional processes and how the teachers affect the learners, as well (Richardson and Shupe, 2003). According to the findings of this study, self-awareness level of the student teachers increased after the process. This awareness was not only in terms of empathy but of their weaknesses and strengths that are the subject of the next theme. The student teachers made two presentations in which they acted like real teachers. They planned the course, tried to teach and engaged in classroom management. Then they evaluated themselves both by watching their video-recordings and by completing descriptors. This process enabled them to be aware of how it was to be a teacher. Therefore, it can be concluded that the EPOSTL is an awareness-raising project. The findings of Ingvarsdottir (2011) who piloted the EPOSTL for two years support these findings. He found that all participants agreed that the EPOSTL was an awareness-raising tool because it made discussions

more profound and gave each participant a common framework and an equal voice; and the discussions were not in the form of previous hierarchical model.

Theme 3: Student teachers' teaching weaknesses they realized thanks to the EPOSTL

One of the most important benefits of the EPOSTL is creating awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses. The participants of this study realized many weaknesses and strengths that they had not been aware of before the EPOSTL. This theme involves codes that show the weaknesses of the student teachers that they realized thanks to the EPOSTL (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3.

Student Teachers' Weaknesses They Realized Thanks to the EPOSTL

| Theme: Student Teachers' Teaching Weaknesses They Realized thanks to the EPOSTL | |
|--|--|
| Categories | Codes |
| Teaching four skills | Designing listening activities Teaching reading Designing activities that are time-consuming Beginning the lesson without warm-up Not finding original ideas for reading and writing activities Teaching four skills and vocabulary |
| Adjusting level | Choosing the right level Teaching for intermediate level |
| Use of language | Speaking English Using classroom language in an appropriate way Teaching the lesson in the wrong way |
| Interaction | Listening to the students and reply to their questions Giving feedback to the students is a little inadequate |
| Other | Missing small details Being sometimes lazy to do something Using the board |

There were some problems the participants uttered in *teaching four skills*. As they were free to make presentation in the field that they wanted, there were many different presentations on teaching both four skills and the other fields. Some students stated that they were not good enough at listening, some others at reading, and some

others at writing. For example, *Participant 5* reported that s/he had some problems both in teaching reading and in teaching writing. S/he explained them as follows:

“My weaknesses are: I can create new things, new materials, or even new techniques in speaking, pronunciation or listening (skills that I’m really good at). But when it came to reading and writing, all my original ideas just went away. I could not think anything to make these courses more effective. But now I can.”

Participant 21 also pointed out her problem in teaching reading by giving the reason of the problem as follows:

“....at teaching reading I chose a long text so the students were passive and they did not read the text enough.”

One of the participants stated that he had problems in designing listening activities:

“I did not know how to do a listening activity, but I thought that I knew. It helped me discover my weaknesses especially in this area” (Participant 8).

Participant 20 stated that he saw his weaknesses in four skills and vocabulary. S/he stated:

“.....I realized that I had some problems in teaching four skills and vocabulary. Thanks to the EPOSTL I learned important points in teaching reading, writing, listening, speaking and vocabulary. For the last thing, I should improve my speaking ability in the class.”

In teaching these skills, there were some other problems that were related to the activities. *Participant 22* identified her/his weaknesses as choosing time-consuming activities and not doing warm-up activities:

“Starting course without warm-ups and time-consuming activities are my weaknesses.”

Another weakness was not being able to choose the right activities that would address to the language level of the students. Three participants stated that they had weaknesses in *adjusting the right level* and also being stuck to teaching in the same level. For example, *Participant 10* stated:

“I realized that I did not teach a topic for intermediate level. Generally I want to teach for primary schools.”

Another weakness was in *using the target language* while teaching. Some of the students saw their weakness in using English in class, whereas some others regarded it as their strength. In fact, the participants that regarded speaking English as their strength outnumber the participants that considered speaking English as their weakness. One of the participants who had difficulty in speaking English was *Participant 20* who highlighted this situation as follows:

“... I have speaking anxiety. I cannot speak English fluently in front of people, so while talking to my class and while giving instructions my speech continued with pauses.”

While teaching in English, it is important to use English at the level that students can understand. It is no use of using English fluently and accurately in the class if the students do not understand. Some participants stated that they used a higher level of English than their students could understand. For example, they did presentations for pre-intermediate level, but the English they used was nearly advanced in some cases. Hence, the two weaknesses that students identified were *“not using classroom language in an appropriate way”* and *“teaching the lesson in the wrong way”* (Participants 19-12).

Another category of this theme is *interaction* between the students and the student teachers of this study. Interaction involves all kinds of communication with students or between students. Two participants stated that they were not good enough at communicating with students. One participant stated that s/he was ineffective in giving feedback (Participant 2) to the students whereas the other had a problem in listening to the students (Participant 11). S/he stated:

“It was really hard for me to listen to the students because I thought only my aim for the class; it was difficult for me to listen and reply their answers.”

There were *other weaknesses* that were not common but individual. For example, *Participant 15* stated that s/he was not good at using the board. S/he thought that the pictures and writings s/he used on the board were complicated; it was difficult

for learners to understand what there were. On the other hand, *Participant 23* wrote her/his weaknesses as missing small details and being lazy to do something related to teaching.

The findings show that the student teachers had different weaknesses in different aspects of teaching. It is very natural as they are still in training; even in-service teachers may have some weaknesses in these or other aspects. However, the important thing is giving effort to realize and eliminate these weaknesses, which is essential in reflective teaching. This process begins with awareness as one cannot develop her/himself without knowing in which field s/he needs to improve herself/himself. The EPOSTL seems to be successful in creating awareness of weaknesses. It presented student teachers a chance of knowing what they were doing. On that sense, the EPOSTL seems to be successful in triggering reflection as without knowing what the problem is it is impossible to solve it.

Theme 4: Student teachers' teaching strengths that they realized thanks to the EPOSTL

There were also students' strengths that they realized thanks to the EPOSTL. These strengths formed the third theme with three categories: classroom environment, teaching new language, and general style and management (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4.

Student teachers' teaching strengths that they realize thanks to the EPOSTL

| Theme: Student Teachers' Teaching Strengths that They Realize thanks to the EPOSTL | |
|---|--|
| Categories | Codes |
| Classroom environment | Disciplined |
| | Respectful to the students |
| | Students felt secure and motivated |
| Teaching new language | Teaching grammar |
| | Enjoyable speaking course |
| | Speaking English |
| | Games I used were simple and useful |
| | I like my activities |
| | Using figurative language |
| General style and management | Pronunciation |
| | Handling class |
| | No difficulty in speaking in front of students |
| | Communication with students |
| | My position in the class is good |
| Intonation of voice | |

Some students realized that they were good at creating a good *classroom environment*. They became aware of the learning atmosphere that they formed. One participant addressed her/his speaking course as follows:

“... My communication with my students was good; they felt secure and motivated.... I did an enjoyable speaking course” (Participant 7).

Another participant stated that her/his class was disciplined and there was respect in the class (Participant 23).

As for the category of *teaching new language*, a few participants stated that they were good at teaching grammar, and one was good at designing effective speaking courses. *Participant 7* and *Participant 21* expressed their strengths in these fields as follows:

“Speaking course, it was right level and subject; and the students tried to speak during the lesson. I did an enjoyable speaking course”.

“I was good at teaching grammar”.

4 participants stated that they were good at speaking English. One of them stated:

“Speaking English during the lesson is my strength” (Participant 19).

Two participants thought that they chose and did good activities. One of them expressed this as follows:

“My games about the topic were simple and useful for students” (Participant 3).

Some of the participants addressed their strengths in their *general style and management*. In general sense, they were good at handling the class, communicating with the students and speaking in front of the class. Two student teachers thought that they had an effective communication with students. One of them reported:

“I realize that I can create a good communication with students” (Participant 10).

Their position in the class and use of their voice effectively were the other strengths they stressed. *Participant 3* expressed his/her strength as follows:

“My strength in my teaching is my voice. I think my voice intonation is good enough” (Participant 3).

Like it is necessary to eliminate weaknesses it is also necessary to support strengths. In order to achieve this, a teacher should be firstly aware of them. And as to the analysis of the questionnaire, the EPOSTL provided this. The findings of Velikova (2013) show parallelism with the findings of this study. She found that “trainees almost unanimously find the portfolio as a useful tool for professional development, supporting self-reflection and raising awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in teaching” (p.211).

Theme 5: EPOSTL as a chance of assessment

One of the main functions of the EPOSTL is providing assessment. The statements of the student teachers on evaluating and then correcting themselves formed this theme (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5.

EPOSTL as a Chance of Assessment

| Theme: EPOSTL as a Chance of Assessment | |
|--|---|
| Categories | Codes |
| Correction | Detailed feedback |
| | Useful about error analysis |
| | Chance to correct ourselves |
| | Chance of correcting our mistakes such as mispronouncing a word, not setting appropriate level, being unable to use the target language effectively |
| | Chance of correcting my faults and completing missing parts at second presentation |
| Self-assessment | Chance of self-criticism |
| | Self-assessment has developed in a positive way |
| | Evaluating ourselves both in the beginning and at the end of the study |
| | Seeing my mistakes |
| | Seeing my negative attitudes |
| | Seeing my strengths and weaknesses |
| | Learning where we are |

7 participants stated that they saw their strengths and weaknesses, mistakes and negative attitudes. EPOSTL enabled them to *assess themselves*. The following quotation exemplifies this benefit of the EPOSTL:

“Initially, I did not know how good I am at teaching listening, reading, writing, speaking and grammar. I realized my weaknesses. EPOSTL provided self-assessment” (Participant 21).

Seeing their weaknesses gave an opportunity of eliminating these weaknesses to student teachers. The participants who evaluated themselves after the first presentations saw their mistakes, weaknesses and strengths. In the second presentation, they tried to correct their mistakes. The following quotations are good examples of their effort to improve their presentations:

“It is very useful about improving error analysis. When I watch myself, I have some opportunities about correcting my mistakes or seeing the good and effective sides of my lesson” (Participant 18)

“I watched micro teaching and then I gave myself feedback. After I watched macro teaching, I gave feedback for the second time, so I saw my mistakes and I did correction” (Participant 6).

“I saw my mistakes, negative attitudes and thought on them and improved myself” (Participant 2).

The implementation of the EPOSTL took 4 months- nearly a semester where they made two presentations. They had a chance to evaluate themselves both before and after the study. One of the participants expressed this chance as follows:

“I think this study is very efficient for students. It evaluates students both in the beginning and at the end of the study. Thanks to micro teaching, students who make presentations can see where they have made mistakes. Then they try to develop their deficient aspects such as mispronouncing a word, not setting appropriate level, being unable to use the target language effectively and so forth” (Participant 9).

The participants were of the opinion that not only the self-assessment but also the lecturer (researcher) assessment was useful as it provided them with detailed feedback. One of them conveyed his/her ideas about lecturer feedback as follows:

“I made a micro teaching and then a macro teaching. Most important thing in these two teaching activities was getting feedback from my lecturer. My lecturer gave me detailed feedback about my performance after each presentation. At first feedback, I saw my faults or missing parts then at second feedback I completed the missing parts and corrected my faults” (Participant 20).

The findings show that the EPOSTL is very useful in providing assessment especially self-assessment. The participants discovered their teaching and improvement also thanks to the feedback given from the lecturer. However, they discovered and made sense of them especially when they assessed themselves. They stressed the importance of the EPOSTL in encouraging self-assessment. They thought positively about this project particularly for they had a chance to assess themselves. They learned about self-assessment. On this issue, Jones (2011) stated that his student teachers with whom he carried a pilot study learned what the self-assessment was. The participants of Jones’s study emphasized that although self-assessment had been encouraged during their training year, they did not know what it exactly was, but thanks to the EPOSTL they learned what was involved in self-assessment.

Orlova (2011) who focuses on the Self-Assessment section of the EPOSTL found similar results. She integrated the EPOSTL into the seminars of pre-service education. She found that the EPOSTL improved the constructive self-criticism of the student teachers. Self-criticism is important as it develops teachers professionally and enables them to see this development. One of the participants of this study expressed this as follows:

“We had the chance of self-criticism so we had the chance of seeing our improvement” (Participant 11).

These findings imply the usefulness of the EPOSTL in nurturing reflection as self-assessment is necessary for reflection. Boud (1990) states that it is possible to develop reflective practice by engaging in self-assessment. Similarly, Boruah (2013) points out that self-assessment is a reflective activity that provides language and content development. Not only language and content development but pedagogical development is also supported by self-assessment as it can be inferred from the findings of the next theme.

Theme 6: EPOSTL for teaching

This theme is more general as it includes various aspects of teaching. The participants shared their opinions about how the EPOSTL helped them with teaching; specifically with teaching skills, using methods, controlling classes and thinking on teaching (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6.

EPOSTL for Teaching

| Theme: EPOSTL for Teaching | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Categories | Codes |
| Skills | It developed my speaking I learned some strategies about teaching grammar and making listening activities It helped me improve in vocabulary, grammar, listening, and speaking I learnt important points in four skills + vocabulary I taught that grammar is taught just in native language but at beginner level now I don't think so We will be successful in both pedagogical skills and language skills The EPOSTL improved my skills It improved using target language appropriately |
| Methods and techniques | It presented me useful methods I learnt basic methods I began to use other methods It helped me about teaching strategies I learned the rules of teaching I learned how to prepare my classes I learned how to teach lessons easily and effectively It reflected main points of teaching and learning strategies It helped me to express my own way of teaching better than before using the EPOSTL I corrected my mistakes about teaching activities such as methodology, speaking |
| Classroom management | I learnt how to control the lesson I learnt how to behave in class or in unexpected events in the atmosphere of classroom. I thought about classroom language Cooperation with students has developed My attitudes towards students improved I learned how to deal with students, how to start the course, how to use voice It helped me about the management of the class with methods, and activities |
| Cognitive issues | I helped to think extensively It developed critical thinking I improved my theoretical knowledge |

The student teachers thought that they developed their teaching of language skills with the use of the EPOSTL. They stated that the EPOSTL developed the *four skills* for teaching. Some of them mentioned some skills in particular they improved in their teaching. For example, *Participant 8* stated that s/he learned new things in teaching grammar and listening.

“It helps me about teaching grammar and making listening activities. I learn some strategies about them.”

Participant 16 also thought s/he learned about teaching grammar. S/he used to believe teaching grammar was possible only with using native language in classroom. However, after s/he made her presentation in English, her/his ideas changed and s/he stated this change as follows:

“I think it is very useful for us because it helps us to understand how a topic is taught in an enjoyable and useful wayIt helps to arrange my thoughts about how to teach a topic in English. Before this, I taught at beginner level; I used to think that grammar could be taught just in native language at this level, but now I don't think so.”

Apart from teaching skills, they also improved their own linguistic skills. They taught in English, so some participants stated that they developed their speaking skills. By talking in front of their classmates, they tried to overcome their speaking anxiety, and this effort resulted in a better speech. One of the participants reported:

“It also improves using target language effectively and using it in appropriate times” (Participant 9).

Not only the language skills but also the pedagogic skills were developed after the implementation of the EPOSTL. The participants learned about using different teaching *methods and techniques*. They stated that the EPOSTL presented them useful methods. Similarly, they became aware of different learning strategies. *Participant 14* explained this as follows:

“EPOSTL is very useful for every teacher because it reflects main points of the teaching and learning strategies”.

The student teachers also began to use various activities and materials. One of them reported this as follows:

“Definitely I can say that it contributed to my professional development about teaching with activities, materials etc.” (Participant 24).

Student teachers agreed that they learned teaching and also planning teaching. *Participant 11* expressed this as follows:

“After this project we learned how to teach and how to prepare our classes”.

They believed that the EPOSTL helped them to find their own teaching style. Two participants reported this belief as follows:

“It helped me to express my own way of teaching better than before using the EPOSTL, such as using different materials; while teaching and observing others I realized some other important points and also I had a chance to distinguish pros and cons after getting experienced with the EPOSTL” (Participant 1).

“It helped me to act my own teaching strategy. I benefited from my own teaching way” (Participant 22).

The student teachers tried to form a real classroom in their presentations. They acted like a real teacher and their classmates acted like his/her students. Thus, they were also engaged in *classroom management*. They believed that they became aware of the difficulty of managing classroom. One of the participants exemplifies this belief as follows:

“I realized exactly how to be a teacher and how to control the class. It is really so difficult to control especially crowded classes. I realized this” (Participant 4).

This awareness helped them overcome this difficulty. They learned how to behave and handle with the unexpected events in the class. They were engaged in discipline also in terms of communication with students and their general position in the class. The following extracts exemplify this well:

“Its contribution is so much to me because I learnt how to deal with students, how to start the course, how to have a strong voice during a speech” (Participant 22).

“The EPOSTL helped me reflect on my own teaching practice. If I become a teacher I will be able to control the lesson” (Participant 12).

EPOSTL provided development both cognitively and practically. Some student teachers emphasized its practical way whereas others its *cognitive usefulness*. For example, *Participant 9* highlighted the contribution of the EPOSTL to practice as follows:

“Knowing a language is very different from practicing it. Yes, a teacher can know language forms very well. But, if he cannot reflect this knowledge, there will be no meaning. We, as students, have learnt language forms. But we had no opportunity to practice it. Thanks to the EPOSTL, we can use the target language in practice.”

On the other hand, some students stated that the EPOSTL enabled them to think critically and extensively. Students practiced what they had learned before; and they learned new things related to teaching thanks to these practices; and then they implemented what they had just learned in the next practice. *Participant 20* expressed this process as follows:

“In addition to loving one’s job and having the experience, having theoretical knowledge is also very important in teaching English. In this project I improved my theoretical knowledge and I got a chance to practice in teaching”.

The participants who practiced teaching learned how to teach. Without practice the theory is alone not enough especially in teaching. They tried to teach and they saw what it was like. They learned about teaching skills, using methods, controlling classes and thinking on teaching. They learned linguistic skills which are essential in foreign language teaching. They learned pedagogical skills which are crucial in teaching. They learned about classroom management which is necessary to provide the learning atmosphere where learning can emerge. Finally, they thought critically, which is necessary to initiate reflection. A teacher should have these qualities in order to teach

effectively. The EPOSTL helped them improve these qualities, so it can be concluded that the EPOSTL contributes to professional development of language teachers.

Theme 7: Self-confidence

The findings related to the EPOSTL were not only practical and cognitive but also affective. The affective benefit of the EPOSTL was increasing self-confidence of the student teachers. This theme deals with the contribution of the EPOSTL to the self-confidence of student teachers both in their practices and in their personal life (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7.

Self-Confidence

| Theme: Self-Confidence | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Categories | Codes |
| Self-confidence in practices | It encourages me while teaching a language as a teacher I am not anymore excited while making presentation It showed me what I can do to improve my talents on teaching It helped me cope with teaching to my friends |
| Self-confidence in general | I believe in myself more than ever I trust myself and my knowledge I make presentations in a more relaxed way My self-confidence has developed It was helpful in reducing stress EPOSTL gave me courage to express myself and share my ideas well It makes people brave about trusting him/herself |

Developing self-confidence was one of the most emphasized contributions of the EPOSTL by the students. They stated that they were not worried and nervous in their *practices* after the EPOSTL as they had been before. The following extracts exemplify this well:

“Previously, while I was making presentation, I was too excited. Now I am not excited about it” (Participant 17).

“Through the presentation, my self-confidence has developed, now I can make my presentations in a more relaxed way” (Participant 9).

EPOSTL helped them see their teaching talents and the way how to develop them, which is exemplified by the statements of *Participant 8* as follows:

“It encouraged me about teaching, gave me self-confidence, because I know how to accomplish my lessons with fulfilling some strategies”.

They began to trust their knowledge, talents and ideas. They trusted themselves *in general*. They had courage to share and apply their ideas related to teaching in their micro and macro teachings. The following quotations are good examples of this situation:

“EPOSTL gave me courage to express myself and to share my ideas well” (Participant 1).

“It is pretty much useful I think. To be honest, I never think that I cannot do anything. I always think that if I want I can do the best. But I cannot find enough courage to apply my ideas. Thanks to the EPOSTL, I believe in myself more than ever....Actually, I really think to apply this project with my own students in the future. Because first of all, it contributes to your self-confidence. After that, you start to make your job as required already” (Participant 5).

EPOSTL encouraged them to be in front of people. The participants stated that they got rid of their shyness in making presentations. The following quotation exemplifies this well:

“Especially, it makes people brave about trusting himself/herself. Watching yourself makes you happy and sometimes shy, but it really helps about improving your vocabulary, interaction, grammar, listening, speaking, and so on....Before the EPOSTL I did not speak in class activities or lessons. I felt ashamed as if when I spoke I would make mistakes and everyone would laugh at me. After the EPOSTL I started to trust myself and my knowledge....As I said before, I started to trust myself and my knowledge after the EPOSTL” (Participant 18).

According to Moore (1952), teachers need two things which are self-confidence and competence. He believes that only teachers being self-confident and competent can achieve working creatively with their learners. According to Dobbins (1996), enhancing

self-esteem generates enhancing student teachers' own learning. In his study carried out with student teachers, he found out that self-confidence influenced many aspects of their practicum experience. In addition to affecting teaching, self-esteem affected also how the student teachers interpreted their practicum, their ability to interact and cope with the learners. As self-esteem enhances learning on teaching, it is necessary to provide it in teacher education. The findings of this study show that the EPOSTL can achieve this-increasing self-confidence. It reduced the stress of student teachers by engaging them in practice. They saw themselves, their talents, and what they should do to correct mistakes. And this resulted in a higher level of self-confidence.

Theme 8: Overall evaluation of the EPOSTL

In this theme, an overall evaluation of the EPOSTL was made. The questions how student teachers regard and define the EPOSTL form this theme (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8.

Overall Evaluation of the EPOSTL

| Theme: Overall Evaluation of the EPOSTL | |
|--|--|
| Categories | Codes |
| What is the EPOSTL? | Good way of professional development |
| | Useful way of practicing teaching |
| | Chance to practice in teaching |
| | Good way of reflecting on our teaching practices |
| | Useful planning device |
| How did you find the EPOSTL? | Useful |
| | Enjoyable |
| | Productive |
| | Funny |
| | Generative |
| | Pretty awesome |
| | Great experience |
| | Great project |
| | Good guide |
| Beneficial to my teaching life | |

Student teachers see the EPOSTL as a way of professional development and practicing teaching. Micro and macro teachings they did provided them to practice in teaching. Therefore, student teachers see the EPOSTL as a chance to practice in

teaching and so as a road to professional development. The following quotations can be given examples for this view:

“EPOSTL was a useful way to practice teaching” (Participant 3).

“It is really a useful work for teachers, especially, it is a guided practice for them” (Participant 24).

It is necessary for a teacher to make plan before the lesson in order not to be puzzled during the lesson. The participants of this study made planning before their presentations. Thus, they stated that the EPOSTL was useful in planning. One of them expressed his/her ideas on this subject as follows:

“It develops four skills of teaching. It is a useful planning device for a teacher. It develops our self-assessment. You learn where you are” (Participant 21).

Being created as a reflective tool, the EPOSTL seemed to achieve its goal according to the statements of the *Participant 17*:

“I think the EPOSTL is a good way of reflecting on our teaching practices. So, I am satisfied about it and while I was preparing my presentations, I really enjoyed.”

EPOSTL gave a chance to student teachers to be a teacher. Therefore, they experienced being a teacher, which can be understood from the statements of *Participant 4*:

“As a whole, it really was a good experience for me and I think that I understand how it is to be a teacher. It was a good guide for me”.

The participants were of the same opinion that the EPOSTL was a useful project. The usefulness of it in various aspects such as assessment, awareness and teaching were addressed in other themes. However, in general, the participants stated that it was useful as it helped them with teaching. The following extracts reflect the common views of the student teachers:

“EPOSTL is very useful for every teacher because it reflects main points of the teaching and learning strategies...After the evaluations I realized that

EPOSTL was very useful and fruitful in language teaching or learning” (Participant 14).

“When I started to work on the EPOSTL I realized that it was a useful project. I learned new and useful things. The things that I’ve learned in this project can be helpful for my job, teaching. I appreciate participating in this project” (Participant 20).

“I think that it is very useful for us because it helps us understand how a topic is taught in an enjoyable and useful way” (Participant 16).

The EPOSTL helped the student teachers improve their skills. Thus, *Participant 22* regarded it as generative:

“It’s generative. The way it is tried on students and assessed is fairly useful. It contributes to teachers’ skills and competence.”

Another participant stated that the EPOSTL was productive when s/he was asked about her/his suggestions about it:

“I think it is very productive. I cannot see any deficiency of it” (Participant 9).

Many of the participants stated they enjoyed during the process. They found the EPOSTL enjoyable. One of them expressed this as follows:

“...while I was preparing my presentations, I really enjoyed” (Participant 17).

Participant 1 made a general evaluation of the EPOSTL and stated:

“If we talk in general aspect, including all materials that we used, it was pretty awesome.”

All the participants were positive about the EPOSTL. It is reported that it is a useful tool for improving teaching practicum. It presents the opportunity of reflection that is an important road to be a good language teacher. It does not make the student teachers bored as they are active in the process. Although self-evaluation may sometimes cause anxiety, it also gives excitement and enjoyment. Considering these findings, it can be concluded that the EPOSTL is a useful and enjoyable portfolio that provides self-assessment and reflection in the practices of student teachers.

Theme 9: Suggestions for the EPOSTL

The student teachers were asked about their suggestions for the EPOSTL. Their answers formed three categories: suggestions for 1) the process of the EPOSTL, 2) the extension of the EPOSTL, and 3) introduction of the EPOSTL (see Table 4.9).

Table 4.9.

Suggestions for the EPOSTL

| Theme: Suggestions for the EPOSTL | |
|--|--|
| Categories | Codes |
| Process of the EPOSTL | Interviews with students who took place in the classes should be done The students' opinions should be gathered by the ones who lead the EPOSTL It should be practiced and rehearsed many times All parts of the lesson and topic should be assessed Real students and classroom should be used Participants' experience should be shared with others who are new to the EPOSTL The studies should be evaluated together with classmates |
| Extension of the EPOSTL | It should be more common It can be placed in some lessons at the university It would be better for the other ELT students to benefit from it by being part of this process It should be enlarged to broader classrooms such as students with 50 and over |
| Introduction of the EPOSTL | Explanations at the beginning can be given in more detailed way If students know the meaning of EPOSTL then they can do whatever they want easily and consciously |

One of the difficulties that the student teachers encountered during the process was involving their classmates in their practice. The reasons behind this were that they were shy of being a teacher to their classmates and that their classmates knew what they taught. Some of them chose teaching for beginner or intermediate level students but the level of the class was advanced and their peers had already known what were taught. Based on this problem, the participants suggested making presentations with real classroom and students. They proposed making micro and macro teachings with real

students; in other words, with the students that were at the level that they targeted. The following quotations can be given examples for this suggestion of the student teachers:

“I suggest that presentations can be in real classrooms not in our own class” (Participant 4).

“Maybe, we can use real classrooms” (Participant 13).

Another suggestion was related to peer feedback. The participants proposed interviewing or gathering feedback from their classmates. In fact, peer feedback was provided in the process. However, their suggestion was that the peer feedback should be gathered by the researcher. The researcher should interview with their classmates and learned what they thought about the practices of others. One of the participants reported this as follows:

“The most important point is, in my opinion, to interview with the students in the classes. Their opinion should be gathered by the ones who lead the EPOSTL not the ones in the study” (Participant 15).

Making more practice and assessing all parts of the lesson were also proposed. The student teachers wanted to make more presentations and make and get more evaluation. They wanted to continue the project and to have a chance to make more practice.

Some participants stated that the EPOSTL functioned quite well when they were asked about suggestions to improve the EPOSTL. As student teachers were positive about using the EPOSTL, some of them suggested that the EPOSTL should be more common. The following extract is a good example for this suggestion:

“I should be more common I think. When someone says ‘the EPOSTL’, people should know what it actually is” (Participant 5).

Some stated that each student teacher should have a chance to use the EPOSTL. Therefore, they suggested it to be a course in the university or be a part of a lesson. Two of them expressed this suggestion as follows:

“It was a great experience for me and I was lucky to be chosen. But I can honestly say it would be better for the other ELT students to benefit from it by being a part of this process” (Participant 1).

“Maybe this portfolio can be placed in some lessons at the university with the aim of educating language teachers about learning strategies in a detailed way” (Participant 8).

They believed that the courses in the university were appropriate for this suggestion. *Participant 22* expressed this idea as follows:

“It should be enlarged to broader classrooms such as with 50 and over. Lectures are proper for these suggestions”.

Another suggestion was giving more detailed information about the EPOSTL. As it is stated in the category of first impression, the student teachers had not heard about the EPOSTL before. Although a meeting where the EPOSTL was introduced was held, the EPOSTL could not become clear for some student teachers. This situation was expressed by one of the participants as follows:

“At the beginning of the project some information was given to us. However, I did not understand much from that briefing. That briefing could have been more detailed” (Participant 20).

The participants thought if the EPOSTL could be fully understood, the process would function easier. The following extract exemplifies this well:

“I think all of these runs quite well. But anyway, if students know the meaning of EPOSTL then they can do whatever they want easily and consciously” (Participant 19).

The findings show that the student teachers have three suggestions in basic. One of them is using the EPOSTL in real classrooms, the second one is making more explanation on it and the third one is making it more common. The first two suggestions are related to the implementation of the study in the context that is chosen for this study. In this study, Methodology classes were chosen for teaching practices. Therefore, the classroom environment was not a real one. The last suggestion is concerned with the student teachers' positive attitudes towards using the EPOSTL. As they thought the EPOSTL contributed to their teaching skills, they proposed it to be placed as a course in universities.

4.1.2. Results of the Data Gathered through the Interview

In the analysis of the interview done with 8 student teachers, 6 themes emerged. The themes are related not only to the use of the EPOSTL for reflection but also to a comparison of their teaching between before and after the EPOSTL. While the results of the open-ended questions in the interview involve a holistic evaluation of the EPOSTL implementation, the interview focuses on its role in reflection. The themes obtained from the interviews will be explained below with some extracts. In the presentation of these extracts, numbers for the interviewees (from Interviewee 1 to Interviewee 8) were given.

Theme 1: Meta-cognitive component of reflection

This theme is concerned with the role of the EPOSTL in increasing meta-cognitive reflection. Two categories that are knowledge of both personality and teaching emerged under this theme (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10.

Meta-Cognitive Component of Reflection

| Theme: Meta-Cognitive Component of Reflection | |
|--|---|
| Categories | Codes |
| Knowledge of personality | I am always positive in lessons I am introvert-not expressing myself well |
| Knowledge of teaching | It provides us to see our teaching ability or inability We see how we are as teachers We understood we were not perfect I can ask reflective questions such as what I taught, how I can evaluate myself or how I contributed to students and to myself It helps us be aware of our weaknesses and strengths It is very helpful in determining our weaknesses, errors even if we did something wrong these are identified and then we will be able to do nice works |

Meta-cognitive element of reflection refers to teachers' reflection on their own beliefs, knowledge of their personality, the way they define learning, teaching and their

practice and their views of teaching as a profession (Hillier, 2005; Pollard et al., 2006; Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Stanley, 1998; Zeichner and Liston, 1996, Akbari, Behzadpoor and Dadavand, 2010). Under this theme, student teachers' knowledge of their personality and teaching emerged as to the analysis of the data. One of the student teachers regarded himself as being always positive in the lesson. Another interviewee expressed himself as 'being introvert' which he saw it as a weakness in his practice:

“Well, I am not so talkative- I am introvert. I cannot be relaxed even if it is a little child there. I try to express myself well but I cannot” (Interviewee 4).

As for the *knowledge of teaching*, the student teachers agree that the EPOSTL helped them see their teaching abilities or inabilities. They saw themselves as teachers. *Interviewee 4* stated that they had thought that they had done everything well in their practices as they had not reflected before. He stated this as follows:

“In the presentations or microteachings that we have done so far, we could not see ourselves; we thought everything was perfect. However, the opportunity of seeing ourselves is given to us here and it is understood that we are not perfect. And this is an important thing. There is no need to change the truth.”

The EPOSTL contributed to the knowledge of their teaching by providing them to see their both weaknesses and strengths; in other words, they were able to assess themselves. And becoming aware of the strengths and weaknesses was a way of eliminating the weaknesses and reinforcing the strengths. The extract from one of the interviewees' transcription illustrates this contribution as follows:

“When we evaluate, we identify our weaknesses and strengths as a result of evaluations. We realize our teaching, whether the method we use is appropriate or not or how it can be done. I mean if we did something wrong, it was identified and then we would be able to do nice works” (Interviewee 2).

The process that is mentioned above and also in the statements of the interviewees is the process of reflection. In this process, self-assessment is related to the meta-cognitive element of reflection whereas taking action after assessment is related to the practical element which will be dealt with in the next theme. Meta-cognitive element

requires one to think reflectively and the EPOSTL provides this as *Interviewee 8* mentions:

“I think it (the EPOSTL) reflects the things that the student teachers should learn and teach very well. Because I think there are some necessities before and after practices. We think that what we should teach and reflect to the students before the practices. And we try to give it in practice. After practice, I can ask reflective questions such as what I taught, how I can evaluate myself or how I contributed to the students and to myself.”

The most addressed component of reflection was meta-cognitive reflection in the interview. This shows that the EPOSTL contributed mostly to the meta-cognitive reflection. It helped student teachers know more about their own teaching. They became aware of how they taught; and what their weaknesses and strengths were.

Theme 2: Other Components of Reflection

Reflection consists of 6 elements which are meta-cognitive, practical, affective, cognitive, moral and critical. In this theme, the cognitive and practical reflection are dealt with (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11.

Other Components of Reflection

| Theme: Other Components of Reflection | |
|--|---|
| Categories | Codes |
| Cognitive component | I learned how I should approach in a vocabulary course I learned how a speaking course or a reading course might be done effectively I saw what I should prepare for each level I learned what I needed in reading It taught me what I should be careful on and what I did not know Now I know the order of activities |
| Practical component | Watching and evaluating ourselves were effective It is very important taking opinions from you (the researcher) as it provides taking objective views The evaluation after presentation is the milestone of the study I had the opportunity to evaluate myself in accordance with the things the students reflected on me and the things I reflected on them I watched my friends and learned what can be done in a speaking course |

Cognitive element of reflection is concerned with the conscious efforts of teachers for their professional development (Akbari, Behzadpoor and Dadvand, 2010). In this study, the student teachers' conscious efforts were mainly learning new things related to teaching a new language. *Interviewee 1* believed that he learned some new points related to teaching vocabulary and reading. And he stated this as follows:

“I did reading and vocabulary in the process of the EPOSTL. And I learnt what I needed in reading. Before we regarded it as a simple reading, but I learnt it had many procedures. Vocabulary is also the same. It was a field that I was not familiar with. I can say I learnt new things also theoretically. However, apart from this, EPOSTL generally showed me where I had weaknesses. More precisely I will say it taught me what I should be careful on and what I did not know. Well, it is useful in this respect. Now I know what I need to complete and which weaknesses I should eliminate thanks to EPOSTL.”

Apart from vocabulary and reading, the student teachers highlighted that they learned new things related to also teaching speaking and pronunciation. The following quotation exemplifies this as follows:

“It presents us a very good experience. 2 times in different skills- at least, I did presentations: taught vocabulary and pronunciation. We had not had any experience on them. I mean it was the logic that “we give grammar and get rid of it” in our past microteachings. However, this time I chose more challenging fields and I had an experience also in these fields. If I am appointed or begin to work in anywhere- I learnt how I should approach in a vocabulary course. Or I observed my classmates- what can be done in a speaking course- I watched them. At least, we have an idea about our teaching life” (Interviewee 4).

Interviewee 6 reported similar thoughts:

“The EPOSTL helped about the activities in the classroom, frankly, with how a speaking course is or how a reading course might be done more effectively or what kind of activities can be used. Well, one makes his/her best as there will be a video-tape. Hence s/he tries to be different in fact. But the important thing is of course doing this in professional life; not using this as only there is video-tape, but implementing these in real life”.

Some students thought that they also learned about planning. They learned the ordering of the activities and adjusting activities for each level. At first, they had difficulty in choosing activities that addressed to the right level of the students. For example, they planned the course for beginners but what they did was for the intermediate. Choosing the right level is crucial in teaching. When the level of activities is below the real level of the learners, they might get easily bored. On the other hand, the level of the activities that is above the real level of learners will be so challenging for them and it will scare them and there cannot emerge learning. One of the interviewees conveyed her ideas about this subject as follows:

“I did not use to think so comprehensive (before the EPOSTL). I could not know what I would prepare for whom. But thanks to this study I see what I should prepare for which level. I see what students in different levels can learn. I had the opportunity to evaluate myself in accordance with the things that the students reflect to me and the things which I reflect to them” (Interviewee 8).

In a general sense, the students became aware of and learned what they did not know. This is the contribution of the EPOSTL to cognitive reflection.

Other component of reflection on which some findings were seen is the practical component. The practical component is the actual practice of reflection by using reflective tools such as portfolios, journals, observation, video-recordings and so on (Akbari, Behzadpoor and Dadvand, 2010). The reflective tool used in this study was the EPOSTL. Video-recordings and the descriptors that are the part of the EPOSTL were used in order to provide reflection. Micro and macro teachings were evaluated not only by the student teacher who did it but also by his/her classmates and the researcher. These evaluations were very effective for the students. All of the participants regarded the EPOSTL as a chance of assessment, and 5 of them emphasized its importance in their professional development. They stated both self-assessment and instructor assessment were very effective. Two interviewees stressed the importance of self-evaluation by saying:

“I think watching and evaluating ourselves was very effective here. Because, firstly I should see and accept my faults then I can understand that

it is mistake when it is told. Hence this study was very reflective” (Interviewee 6).

“Everything finishes in watching us. Actually, when we look with an objective view, we see our weaknesses. It is beneficial in seeing our weaknesses as it provides us to tell “this is false, my speaking is not good, I need to learn the procedures in a reading presentation better.” And besides, there are times when we say I did this well. In this respect, it is very effective as it shows us concrete things” (Interviewee 1).

Watching and evaluating themselves helped student teachers realize and understand their weaknesses and strengths. Student teachers were also of the opinion that they learned so much from the feedback given by the researcher. They found it helpful as it provided them objective views. *Interviewee 5* told about it while mentioning about the necessity of the EPOSTL as follows:

“It (the EPOSTL) is very important for evaluating ourselves and taking opinions from you (the researcher) as it provides taking objective views from somebody else. Hence, I think it should be implemented by all teachers and teacher candidates”.

As stated before, the meta-cognitive reflection was the most emphasized component in these interviews. There were findings also related to practical and cognitive component. This means that the EPOSTL helped student teachers improve both their theoretical knowledge and their practice. They reflect on their practices by thinking on them and then by taking action.

On the other hand, there were no findings for critical, moral and affective components in the interview. It can be inferred that the EPOSTL focuses on cognition and practice; it barely focuses on socio-political and moral issues and affective states of the students.

Theme 3: Methodology courses before the EPOSTL

This theme focuses on how the methodology courses normally pass. It is important as it shows the differences between student teachers’ previous course and the course with the EPOSTL. These differences are addressed with 4 categories that are

getting feedback, reflection, presentations from the views of students, and self-evaluation (see Table 4.12).

Table 4.12.

Methodology Courses before the EPOSTL

| Theme: Methodology Courses before the EPOSTL | |
|---|---|
| Categories | Codes |
| Getting feedback | We did not get feedback We made presentations but there was no evaluation It was no more than our friends' opinions We could not know what our errors were |
| Reflection | We used only observation for reflection We did not think reflectively before this study I did not think so comprehensive before the EPOSTL |
| Presentations in students' eyes | In our opinion everything was perfect We knew that it was not good but we could not face it We thought that "we give grammar and get rid of" the presentation |
| Self-evaluation | We could not see ourselves We did not have the opportunity to watch ourselves before Evaluating ourselves has not been possible so far |

The participants of this study were third grade students who took Methodology course. It was not the first time for the participants to take this course. They had this course also in the previous year. Thus, it was asked them to compare the two courses: Methodology I and Methodology II. However, the students answered it in terms of not only Methodology course but other courses that they made presentations in. In fact, they evaluated all presentations they had done until then.

The participants pointed out that they did not get enough feedback on their previous presentations. Feedback was given only by their classmates. Some of them considered peer feedback subjective, so they were of the opinion that they did not get useful feedback. And this resulted in that they were not aware of how successful they were. The stories of *Interviewee 1* and *2* are important as they reflect this point well;

“Well, as you said, we did lots of presentations in the 2nd grade. We taught grammar and continuously did reading or speaking activities. However, we did not get feedback like we got in the EPOSTL in any of them. As I said in most of these presentations even our lecturer did not give feedback to us. We could not know what our errors were. We got 60 but we did not know why. We had 70 but we did not know why. We got 95 but we did not know why it was so good. In this respect, showing us our weaknesses and strengths, EPOSTL has a much better effect on us in this subject.”

“We did presentations but these evaluations were not done. Only presentation, there was no evaluation as good or bad. As there was no feedback on what our weaknesses were, the presentations were useless for us.”

The second category is related to the reflection. The answers given to the questions if they thought reflectively for their practices and if so, which techniques they used for reflection form this category. The students agreed that they did not think reflectively before the EPOSTL. For example, *interviewee 7* and *8* stated:

“I did not use to think reflectively before that. I saw myself at the end of this process. I saw how I had done, how I had done teaching and how I should.”

“..... I did not use to think so comprehensively.....”

On the other hand, 2 students stated that they had some attempts such as asking their classmates for their opinions after they completed the presentation and observing them. However, they did not get benefit much from them because, as stated before, peer feedback was not enough. And as the students' main aim was not developing professionally but “*getting good marks*” (*Interviewee 8*), these techniques could not be helpful. This situation was expressed by *Interviewee 1* as follows:

“Well, we used to use only one technique in our presentations or practices and it was observation.It was only observation. It was no more than our friends' sayings ‘it would have been better if you had done this in that way’”.

As for the third category, one participant gave clues about their views about their own presentations. They did not see themselves and get feedback so they did not know what their errors were. One student teacher stated that they thought they did very well in their presentations but when they saw themselves they realized they did not. On the

other hand, the same participant stated they knew they did not do the presentations well, but they could not face this fact. He stated that they did not take their presentations seriously. He thought that they did not give much effort and they did only grammar presentations as they found it easier. He explained his ideas as follows:

“.... We could not see ourselves; in our opinion, everything was perfect..... We know that it was not good but we could not face it..... We thought that we give grammar and get rid of the presentation” (Interviewee 4).

The last category of this theme is concerned with how the participants used to evaluate their own practices. They agreed that they did not use to evaluate themselves and the reason of this was they could not see themselves. *Interviewee 3* stated that they evaluated more precisely, judge others easily, but they did not criticize themselves as this opportunity was not given to them. She expressed this as follows:

“Before the study- I cannot say anything for it but watching these videos is good. Because evaluating someone else- we always comment on our lecturers; for example, “s/he cannot teach, this lecturer is good”; students always comment like this. Well- there were many microteachings that we watched last year. When appropriate, we criticize in the way that “it was not necessary here, s/he did good there.” However, evaluating ourselves has not been possible so far. As I said I, wish we could have more opportunities, more presentations, studies like this. But as I said, the most important benefit is how we see ourselves as teachers from our eyes- we teach as teachers in the classroom but while teaching we do not see our mistakes- when we watch ourselves, then we can say easily that ‘mm look why did I not do this’. It is good in this respect”.

The codes of the last category are very important; the findings are striking. It can be inferred from these codes that the students thought that the only way of self-assessment is watching and then evaluating themselves. They should see themselves in order to evaluate. In fact, there are some other tools for teachers to evaluate their own teaching such as self-monitoring, students’ feedback, and group discussions. However, the participants of this study think that the only valuable tool is the video-recordings. The reason of this may be that they do not know about and use the other tools. On the other hand, they also regarded the descriptors in the Self-Assessment section of the EPOSTL important in self-assessment, which will be addressed in the next theme.

Theme 4: Scope of the descriptors

Descriptors are the ‘can-do’ statements that can be found in Self-Assessment section of the EPOSTL. The students were asked about the descriptors to determine if the descriptors were useful for reflection. The answers were collected under two themes: scope of the descriptors, and the use and the nature of the descriptors. In this theme, the scope of the descriptors is addressed with three categories (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13.

Scope of the Descriptors

| Theme: Scope of the Descriptors | |
|--|--|
| Categories | Codes |
| Methodology section | We can see in which field we improve Descriptors give useful information and methods for both teachers and students The descriptors of vocabulary are very short Which method we will use for students is included in descriptors Descriptors are helpful in identifying the activities in reading or writing |
| Content of the descriptors | I saw what else we need to be careful with Descriptors provided me to see what I should be careful with I did not use to evaluate the things in the descriptors |
| Self-evaluation | We evaluate ourselves in descriptors We can see what our previous weaknesses were and how we eliminate them Descriptors reflect how much we knew ourselves and how well we did Useful in terms of self-evaluation Descriptors were helpful in seeing what I do before and after Descriptors are in the form of how much you can criticize yourself, how much you support, yes I did well here |

The Self-Assessment section of the EPOSTL has 7 categories, but in this study only the category of Methodology was used. Students complete the descriptors in the Methodology section. Thus, the first category of this theme is about this part. They

thought that they learned about using different methods and choosing the right method. The following quotation can be given example for this thought:

“They are necessary and useful. There are very useful information and methods for both teachers and students. Which method we use while teaching, how we can create an appropriate environment for students-these are very important and these are included in descriptors. It helps us with this point. The activities that we will do in our lessons for example reading or writing- the priority of them; it is helpful in identifying these” (Interviewee 2).

Moreover, they thought that the descriptors helped them see in which field they improved as the descriptors of the methodology are related to all skills. They were free to make presentation in the field they wanted so different fields of descriptors were completed. And they had a chance to see in which field they were more successful. The statements of *Interviewee 7* exemplify this benefit as follows:

“Descriptors provide benefits mostly in seeing- for example in which field one improves, what your previous weaknesses were and how you eliminated them. It provides benefits in these-like this”.

The second category of this theme is related to how the things in the descriptors developed the participants' teaching. The participants pointed out that the statements in the descriptors helped them realize different aspects of teaching grammar, reading, vocabulary, and so on. *Interviewee 1* emphasized that they began to think about and evaluate various aspects of teaching skills.

“Well, there is something interesting this in descriptors: I saw what else we need to be careful in a specific subject. And this is not related to watching. For example, I saw that I could give appropriate texts about content of reading. For example, I saw these there. For example I saw that we need to think these aspects also in descriptors. I saw its benefits in this respect.....I did not use to evaluate the things in descriptors. Well, they did not use to come to my mind or I did not know in that time. It provided me with what I should be careful.”

The main function of descriptors is to provide student teachers with self-evaluation. It seems that it served its aim in this study. Thus, the third category of this theme is *self-evaluation*. All the interviewees, except for one, found descriptors

beneficial in terms of self-evaluation. They agreed that descriptors enabled them to see their weaknesses and strengths and how they would eliminate their weaknesses or support their strengths. Descriptors reflected their knowledge of self. The interviewees addressed this point as follows:

“It provided me to see what our previous weaknesses were and how I could eliminate them” (Interviewee 7).

“They (descriptors) are in the form of- how much you can criticize yourself, how much you supported your strengths; yes, I did well here.They reflect how much we knew ourselves and how well we evaluated ourselves” (Interviewee 3).

As can be inferred from the statement of Interviewee 3, the descriptors gave student teachers a chance of in-time evaluation; they could see how successful they had been before the process and they were after the process. Interviewee 6 stated *“They were very helpful in seeing what I do before and after.”*

The interviewee who did not find the descriptors useful showed the reason as his learning strategy. He regarded the descriptors as a record and he stated that he did not like writing something. He summarized this situation as follows:

“I am a little negative about descriptors, because as I said I think abstractly; I don’t take great attention to record something. I don’t study like this. Are they necessary? If there are people who evaluate themselves by writing, descriptors can be necessary for them. However, I don’t think they are necessary if I talk personally” (Interviewee 5).

The findings show that the interviewees found the descriptors useful in terms of mostly self-assessment which is the main function of the descriptors. They rated themselves in descriptors. To be able to do this, they thought extensively on their own performance. They reviewed what they did and how their practices were. They saw in which skill and what they needed to improve in their teaching. They learned about the characteristics of teaching four skills and three fields. They both learned and assessed what they had learned thanks to descriptors.

Theme 5: The use and nature of descriptors

The interviewees were asked if they had any difficulty in completing the descriptors. The answer of this question formed this theme. Moreover, the ideas of student teachers on the language of descriptors are mentioned in this theme (see Table 4.14).

Table 4.14.

The use and Nature of Descriptors

| Theme: The Use and Nature of Descriptors | |
|--|---|
| Categories | Codes |
| Problems related to descriptors | It is difficult to give marks to oneself I could not be objective The descriptors of vocabulary are short Descriptors should be examined in a more detailed way My friends had some difficulties such as ‘where should I complete?’ in completing |
| Language used in descriptors | Comprehensible Easy Explanatory |

Except for three of them, all of the interviewees stated that they had no *problem* in filling in the descriptors. Each of three interviewees addressed a different problem, so there are three problems related to the use of the problems. *Interviewee 4* identified a problem with the descriptors of vocabulary on which he made his second presentation. (There are 3 items in vocabulary part of the Self-Assessment section of the EPOSTL). He stated that there were few statements. He explained:

“The descriptors of my field are very short. The vocabulary part has few statements. Some things could be examined in a more detailed way.”

Interviewee 1 stated that he had no problem in completing descriptors but his friends had. The problem was how the descriptors would be completed.

“I did not encounter much difficulty while completing the descriptors. Only my friends had some difficulties such as ‘where should we complete?’”

And the last problem is about objectivism. Students evaluate themselves and color the descriptors as light, medium-dark, or dark while completing the descriptors. It is like one's giving oneself mark as 1-2-3. Therefore, *Interviewee 5* thought that it was difficult to be objective. He stated:

“What kind of difficulties...Err, as I said it is-evaluating myself by writing which is not my learning strategy. It is difficult to give marks to oneself, because you cannot be umm..- you cannot be objective. You can select 1 by saying “I can do this”. And you can select 5 by telling ‘I do not do this’. Hence, I could not be objective in these descriptors.”

As for the nature of descriptors, the *language* in the statement was examined. This theme is a result of the question related to the difficulties of completing descriptors. Many of the interviewees were of the same opinion that completing descriptors was not difficult as descriptors were easy to understand. They highlighted that the statements were not complicated; they were comprehensible. For example, two of them stated:

“In fact they are not difficult as the language used is very comprehensible”
(Interviewee 8).

“They are not difficult. Well, I think the statements are comprehensible”
(Interviewee 6).

The findings show that the statements in the descriptors are comprehensible. There is no difficulty in understanding what is written. However, it is difficult to understand how one will evaluate himself. It was difficult for the interviewees of this study to make sense of the bars.

There is inequality in the descriptors of Methodology. Some skills are examined in a detailed way whereas others are not dealt with so. For example, as interviewee 4 stated, the descriptors of the vocabulary is too short. It has only 3 can-do statements. On the other hand, the descriptors of other skills have more statements. For example, speaking and writing have 12, listening has 8, reading has 9, and grammar has 5 statements.

Theme 6: Changes

After the implementation of the pilot study, it was tried to find out if there were any changes not only in reflective teaching skills but also in all teaching skills. In fact, there were many changes that were uttered before in other themes. Therefore, this theme may be a summary as the changes addressed here are more general (see Table 4.15).

Table 4.15.

Changes

| Theme: Changes | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Categories | Codes |
| Professional life | <p>There have been positive changes in my reflective teaching skills after the EPOSTL</p> <p>We have now an idea about our teaching life.</p> |
| Performance | <p>I can see an obvious difference in myself after the practices</p> <p>We really see fixed things when we compare the first and the second presentations</p> <p>There is improvement in every way- both in overcoming shyness, in development, in skills</p> <p>I was more relaxed in the second presentation</p> <p>I looked at my starting and finishing points, there is really big difference in terms of both evaluating myself and the quality of my practices.</p> |

The students stated that there were positive changes in their reflective teaching skills. They learned evaluating themselves and then taking action as to the result of the evaluation. In their first practice, they watched and assessed themselves; and, in the second presentation, they tried to get rid of the weaknesses in their first presentation. They reflected on their practices. Thanks to these reflections, they gained an idea about their *teaching life*. The following extract is a good example for this change:

“Of course, there are some changes in my reflective teaching skills-the contribution of the EPOSTL. It presents us a very good experience. Two times in different skills I did presentations: taught vocabulary and

pronunciation. We had not had any experience on them. I mean it was the logic that “we give grammar and get rid of” in our past microteachings. However, this time I chose more challenging fields and I had an experience also in these fields. If I am appointed or begin to work in anywhere- I learnt how I should approach in a vocabulary course. Or I view my students- what can be done in a speaking course- I watched them. At least, we have an idea about our teaching life” (Interviewee 4).

The concrete changes were in participants’ *performance*. They stated that when they thought about the whole process, they could see the differences in their performance, which is expressed by one interviewee as follows:

“I think the EPOSTL is necessary in teacher education, because we had two teaching practices. When I evaluate myself before and after the practices, I can see an obvious difference after the practices. There is an improvement in every way-both in overcoming shyness, in development and in skills. I think this is a good thing” (Interviewee 8).

They highlighted the difference between their two practices. These differences were about both the quality of the practices and the affective conditions of student teachers. The participants thought that they were more successful in their second presentations. Furthermore, they were more relaxed in their second presentations as they overcame the stress of being in front of the camera. The story of *Interviewee 8* is in the form of a summary of these changes;

“Before the EPOSTL, I did not use to know what a warm-up phase is, what teaching practice is and how time management can be achieved and which subject the students need to learn in which level. I can say I had difficulty in these before the first practice, because I did not have any teaching practice. It would be first and with a camera. This was a little exciting and scaring but after the first practice and evaluation I got more relaxed. I said this process was like this. I evaluated myself and you evaluated me as this process functions like ‘there should be these and these shouldn’t be’. I realized that I was better in the second practice. I was more relaxed. I could give what I wanted to give to the student. When I evaluated myself at the end of the implementation, I looked at my starting and finishing points, there is really a big difference in terms of both evaluating myself and the quality of practices. There are good differences in a good way.”

The EPOSTL provided some positive changes in the practices of student teachers. It was a process of creating awareness, taking action and thinking about action and then again the same process. This circular process caused some both affective and cognitive changes. The student teachers increased their cognitive reflection level by being aware of what they knew and did not know. This awareness and also having the chance of more practice lead also some affective changes such as overcoming anxiety and shyness in presentations.

4.2. Results of the Quantitative Data Analysis

To verify the results of the qualitative study and to answer the question if the opinions of the participants of the qualitative section can be generalized to larger groups a quantitative section was added to the study. And for collecting quantitative data, it was benefited from the close-ended questions of the questionnaire. In the analysis of these questions, descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, and correlations were used. In descriptive statistics, minimum and maximum scores, means and standard deviations of the responses to each item were determined. A frequency table that shows the frequencies and percentage of each item also emerged in consequence of analysis of descriptives. A t-test was used in order to determine whether there were differences between participants in terms of a variable- gender. Finally bi-varied, correlation was used to find out the correlation among the scores of the items. The result are presented below with the tables.

4.2.1. Minimum, Maximum Scores, Means and Standard Deviations of the Questionnaire

The student teachers' responses to the each item were examined by determining the minimum, maximum and mean scores, and standard deviations of these items. The results are shown in the Table 4.16.

Table 4.16.

Minimum, Maximum Scores, Means and Standard Deviation of the Questionnaire

| | N | Min. | Max. | M. | S.D. |
|---|----|------|------|--------|---------|
| The EPOSTL made me think about different aspects of teacher education. | 24 | 4,00 | 5,00 | 4,8750 | ,33783 |
| The EPOSTL helped me understand what competences a teacher of foreign languages should have. | 24 | 4,00 | 5,00 | 4,6667 | ,48154 |
| The EPOSTL made me aware of the competences I have developed. | 24 | 3,00 | 5,00 | 4,7917 | ,50898 |
| The EPOSTL helped me to record my progress. | 24 | 4,00 | 5,00 | 4,7500 | ,44233 |
| The EPOSTL helped me to understand the relationship between underlying knowledge and practical skills in the process of teaching. | 24 | 4,00 | 5,00 | 4,5833 | ,50361 |
| The EPOSTL is a good instrument for the self-assessment of teacher competences. | 24 | 3,00 | 5,00 | 4,7917 | ,50898 |
| The EPOSTL is a useful teaching and learning device. | 24 | 3,00 | 5,00 | 4,8333 | ,48154 |
| The EPOSTL is a good way of reflecting on our teaching practices. | 24 | 3,00 | 5,00 | 4,7083 | ,62409 |
| The EPOSTL made me think about my teaching philosophy and the way it affects my teaching as a teacher. | 24 | 3,00 | 5,00 | 4,5417 | ,72106 |
| The EPOSTL helped me explore possible meanings and implications of classroom events. | 24 | 2,00 | 5,00 | 4,3333 | ,91683 |
| The EPOSTL made me aware of the competences I still need to develop. | 24 | 4,00 | 5,00 | 4,7917 | ,41485 |
| The EPOSTL made me think about my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. | 24 | 4,00 | 5,00 | 4,8750 | ,33783 |
| With the EPOSTL, I have begun to ask my peers to observe my teaching and comment on my teaching. | 24 | 1,00 | 5,00 | 4,0833 | 1,10007 |
| The EPOSTL made me ask my students whether they like a teaching task or not. | 24 | 2,00 | 5,00 | 4,1250 | ,89988 |
| The EPOSTL made me think of social events that can influence my teaching inside the class. | 24 | 1,00 | 5,00 | 4,2083 | 1,28466 |
| MEAN | 24 | 3,60 | 5,00 | 4,5972 | ,35248 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 24 | | | | |

Table 4.16 shows the mean, maximum and minimum scores of the answers for each item. It can be seen that no item has a mean score under 4. Item 1 and Item 12 have the highest and same mean score: 4.87. This shows that most of the students agree that they thought about the different aspects of teaching and strengths and weaknesses thanks to the EPOSTL. The second highest mean score can be seen in Item 7 with the mean of 4.83. It is seen that the participants believe that the EPOSTL is a useful teaching and learning device. It can be seen that the third highest mean score of the table belongs to Item 3 and Item 6 with the value of 4.79. Many student teachers are of the opinion that the EPOSTL made them aware of the competences they had developed. Moreover, they believe that the EPOSTL is a good instrument for the self-assessment of teacher competences.

On the other hand, the lowest mean score of the table can be seen in Item 12 with the value of 4.08. Although this value is not low it is lower than the other all items. Students were less positive about beginning to ask their peers to observe and comment on their teaching after the EPOSTL. The second lowest mean score of the table is 4.12 that belongs to Item 13, which is “The EPOSTL made me ask my students whether they like a teaching task or not.” And finally, it can be seen that the third lowest mean is 4.20 which is seen in Item 14. This means that the participants were not as positive as about the other 12 statements related to reflection about the role of the EPOSTL in social events that can influence their teaching.

It can be inferred from the table that the student teachers had very positive thoughts about using EPOSTL in teacher education. They believed that EPOSTL had many benefits for developing professionally. And for them, the most important benefit of the EPOSTL was making them think about different aspects of teaching and their teaching strengths and weaknesses.

4.2.2. Percentage of the Participants’ Responses to the Questionnaire Items

In the analysis of quantitative data, it was also tried to determine the percentage of the responses to each item. The results are displayed in the Table 4.17.

Table 4.17.

Percentage of the Participants' Responses to the Questionnaire Items

| | Strongly agree | agree | undecided | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---------|----------------|-------|-----------|----------|-------------------|
| Item 01 | 87,5 | 12,5 | | | |
| Item 02 | 66,7 | 33,3 | | | |
| Item 03 | 83,3 | 12,5 | 4,2 | | |
| Item 04 | 75,0 | 25,0 | | | |
| Item 05 | 58,3 | 41,7 | | | |
| Item 06 | 83,3 | 12,5 | 4,2 | | |
| Item 07 | 87,5 | 8,3 | 4,2 | | |
| Item 08 | 79,2 | 12,5 | 8,3 | | |
| Item 09 | 66,7 | 20,8 | 12,5 | | |
| Item 10 | 58,3 | 20,8 | 16,7 | 4,2 | |
| Item 11 | 79,2 | 20,8 | | | |
| Item 12 | 87,5 | 12,5 | | | |
| Item 13 | 45,8 | 29,2 | 16,7 | 4,2 | 4,2 |
| Item 14 | 41,7 | 33,3 | 20,8 | 4,2 | |
| Item 15 | 66,7 | 8,3 | 8,3 | 12,5 | 4,2 |

Table 4.17 shows the frequency of answers for each item. When an overall evaluation is made, it can be seen that the responses to the items are generally positive. For 11 items “disagree” was not chosen. For only 6 items, undecided was chosen. For items 1, 2, 4, 5, 11 and 12 all of the participants answered positively. In three items (1, 7, 12), 21 participants chose “strongly agree.” 21 students strongly agree and 3 students agree that the EPOSTL made them think about different aspects of teacher education (Item 1). Similarly, 21 participants strongly agree, and 3 participants agree that the EPOSTL made them think about their strengths and weaknesses as teachers (Item 12). 21 students strongly agree, 2 students agree with and 1 student is undecided on the item “the EPOSTL is a useful teaching and learning device” (Item 7).

Table 4.17 shows that the answer of “strongly disagree” was chosen in only two items. One participant strongly disagrees and one participant disagrees that with EPOSTL s/he has begun to ask his/her peers to observe and comment on his/her teaching. On the other hand, 4 participants are undecided, 7 participants agree and 11 participants strongly agree with the statement in this item (Item 13). Similarly one participant strongly disagrees and 3 participants disagree that the EPOSTL made him/her think of social events that can influence his/her teaching. 2 participants are undecided, 2 participants agree, 16 participants strongly agree with beginning to think social events after the EPOSTL (Item 15).

4.2.3. Differences between the Answers of Female and Male Student Teachers

In t-test, it was determined whether there were differences between answers in terms of gender. The findings are explained by referring to the Table 4.18.

Table 4.18.

Differences between the Answers of Female and Male Students

| Group Statistics (t-test) | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|----|--------|---------|-------------|-----------------|
| | GENDER | N | M. | Std. D. | Std. Er. M. | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| ITEM01 | Female | 18 | 4,9444 | ,23570 | ,05556 | |
| | Male | 6 | 4,6667 | ,51640 | ,21082 | ,081 |
| ITEM02 | Female | 18 | 4,6667 | ,48507 | ,11433 | ,252 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,6667 | ,51640 | ,21082 | 1,000 |
| ITEM03 | Female | 18 | 4,7222 | ,57451 | ,13541 | 1,000 |
| | Male | 6 | 5,0000 | ,00000 | ,00000 | ,256 |
| ITEM04 | Female | 18 | 4,7778 | ,42779 | ,10083 | ,056 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,6667 | ,51640 | ,21082 | ,605 |
| ITEM05 | Female | 18 | 4,6667 | ,48507 | ,11433 | ,648 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,3333 | ,51640 | ,21082 | ,165 |
| ITEM06 | Female | 18 | 4,8333 | ,38348 | ,09039 | ,201 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,6667 | ,81650 | ,33333 | ,500 |
| ITEM07 | Female | 18 | 4,8889 | ,32338 | ,07622 | ,647 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,6667 | ,81650 | ,33333 | ,339 |
| ITEM08 | Female | 18 | 4,7778 | ,54832 | ,12924 | ,542 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,5000 | ,83666 | ,34157 | ,356 |
| ITEM09 | Female | 18 | 4,6667 | ,59409 | ,14003 | ,474 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,1667 | ,98319 | ,40139 | ,145 |
| ITEM10 | Female | 18 | 4,5556 | ,78382 | ,18475 | ,282 |
| | Male | 6 | 3,6667 | 1,03280 | ,42164 | ,037 |
| ITEM11 | Female | 18 | 4,7778 | ,42779 | ,10083 | ,095 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,8333 | ,40825 | ,16667 | ,783 |
| ITEM12 | Female | 18 | 4,8333 | ,38348 | ,09039 | ,782 |
| | Male | 6 | 5,0000 | ,00000 | ,00000 | ,306 |
| ITEM13 | Female | 18 | 4,3889 | ,69780 | ,16447 | ,083 |
| | Male | 6 | 3,1667 | 1,60208 | ,65405 | ,015 |
| ITEM14 | Female | 18 | 4,2778 | ,82644 | ,19479 | ,123 |
| | Male | 6 | 3,6667 | 1,03280 | ,42164 | ,154 |
| ITEM15 | Female | 18 | 4,5000 | ,92355 | ,21768 | ,228 |
| | Male | 6 | 3,3333 | 1,86190 | ,76012 | ,052 |
| MEAN | Female | 18 | 4,6852 | ,21910 | ,05164 | ,192 |
| | Male | 6 | 4,3333 | ,54488 | ,22244 | ,031 |

(Note: The last column is taken from Table of Independent Sample Test, see Appendix V).

As seen in Table 4.18, there are no significant differences ($p > 0,05$) between the scores of the participants from the questionnaire used to measure their opinions on the use of EPOSTL in English language teacher education by the variable of gender. This shows that all participants have positive opinions on EPOSTL use and they believe the necessity and benefit of it irrespective of their gender.

4.2.4. Correlations among the Items

Table 4.19 displays the correlations among the scores of the items.

Table 4.19.

Correlations among the Items

| ITEMS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | M |
|--------|-------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| ITEM01 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ITEM02 | -,267 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ITEM03 | ,095 | ,237 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ITEM04 | -,218 | ,612** | ,145 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ITEM05 | -,064 | ,120 | -,353 | ,098 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ITEM06 | -,158 | ,414* | -,007 | ,338 | ,155 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| ITEM07 | -,134 | ,313 | ,030 | ,408* | ,239 | ,739** | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| ITEM08 | -,180 | ,386 | ,074 | ,512* | ,288 | ,485* | ,410* | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| ITEM09 | ,290 | ,042 | ,084 | ,034 | ,289 | -,153 | -,230 | -,117 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| ITEM10 | ,140 | ,066 | -,124 | ,000 | ,408* | ,435* | ,427* | ,025 | ,241 | 1 | | | | | | |
| ITEM11 | ,116 | ,073 | -,009 | ,178 | -,017 | -,009 | -,181 | ,427* | ,103 | -,038 | 1 | | | | | |
| ITEM12 | -,143 | ,267 | -,158 | ,655** | -,064 | ,095 | ,134 | ,026 | -,067 | -,140 | ,116 | 1 | | | | |
| ITEM13 | ,146 | ,137 | -,045 | ,134 | ,458* | ,421* | ,520** | ,227 | ,489* | ,532** | -,151 | -,205 | 1 | | | |
| ITEM14 | ,054 | ,201 | -,225 | ,410* | ,312 | ,249 | ,251 | ,223 | ,226 | ,369 | ,422* | ,197 | ,472* | 1 | | |
| ITEM15 | ,063 | ,187 | -,197 | ,325 | ,610** | ,468* | ,480* | ,296 | ,389 | ,714** | ,003 | -,038 | ,695** | ,653** | 1 | |
| MEAN | ,094 | ,421* | -,003 | ,516** | ,548** | ,594** | ,595** | ,484* | ,428* | ,667** | ,194 | ,094 | ,778** | ,705** | ,885** | 1 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.19 shows the correlations among the items of the scale. It can be also seen from the table that Item 1 and Item 3 do not have any correlations with any other items. Apart from these two items all the items have correlations at the significance level of 0, 01 or 0, 05.

Item 2-item 4, Item 4- Item 12, Item 5- Item 15, Item 6- Item 7, Item 7- Item 13, Item 10 – Item 13, Item 10- Item 15, Item 13 – Item 15, Item 14 – Item 15 have reciprocal positive correlations at the significance level of 0,01.

Item 4- Item 7, Item 4-Item 8, Item 4- Item 14, Item 5- Item 10, Item 5 – Item 13, Item 2- Item 6, Item 6- Item 8, Item 6- Item 10, Item 6- Item 13, Item 6- Item 15, Item 7- Item 8, Item 7- Item 10, Item 7- Item 15, Item 8-Item 11, Item 9 – Item 13, Item 11- Item 14, Item 13- Item 14 have reciprocal positive correlations at the significance level of 0,05.

These findings show that the student teachers' answers are parallel with each other's answers. The student teachers have similar responses with high value of correlation. This shows that the questionnaire had a high internal consistency as many items produced similar scores.

The tables of quantitative section show that student teachers thought that the EPOSTL was very effective in providing reflection and professional development. And it was also seen that these thoughts did not differ as to the gender. Both of male and female student teachers believed in the effectiveness of the EPOSTL. Their answers were parallel with each other's.

4.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, the analysis of the data gathered through questionnaire and interview were addressed. The results were presented under two main headings: results of qualitative data analysis and results of quantitative data analysis. The results of qualitative data showed that student teachers thought that the EPOSTL should be used in pre-service teacher education as the EPOSTL had some benefits. One of these benefits was that the use of the EPOSTL in Methodology course increased the effectiveness of this course by filling the gap between theory and practice. Secondly, the EPOSTL raised the student teachers' awareness of their own teaching by providing self-assessment. Thirdly, the EPOSTL helped student teachers to improve both their pedagogical and linguistic skills. Fourthly, the EPOSTL increased the self-confidence of the student teachers. Finally, EPOSTL promoted the reflective teaching skills of the pre-service teachers. The findings of the quantitative data supported the findings of the

qualitative data. It was found that student teachers were of the opinion that the EPOSTL was an effective way of reflecting on teaching practices. It enabled student teachers to think about their teaching. They had a chance to become aware of their both teaching and linguistic strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, the student teachers regarded the EPOSTL as learning and teaching device. And quantitative data analysis showed that there was no difference between student teachers' answers in terms of gender. And it was also found that the student teachers responded to the items similarly, so the questionnaire had a high level of internal consistency.

This chapter also covered the student teachers' suggestions for improving the EPOSTL, their views on the use of descriptors, their teaching strengths and weaknesses that they realized thanks to the EPOSTL. The next chapter will summarize the study and provide pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the results of the study that was done in order to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the student teachers' views on the role of the EPOSTL in promoting reflective teaching skills? Do they believe that EPOSTL provides reflection?
- 2) What do student teachers think about using the EPOSTL in teacher education?
 - a. What kind of benefits do the EPOSTL provide for developing professionally?
 - b. What are the problems related to use of the EPOSTL in teacher education?
 - c. What is the role of the EPOSTL in teacher education?

After the answers of these questions that were found out in this study are summarized, some pedagogical implications are given in this chapter. And it ends with some suggestions for further research.

5.1. Summary

This study aimed at determining the student teachers' opinions about using the EPOSTL to enhance reflective teaching skills. And it was also tried to find if the EPOSTL contributes to teacher education. For this aim, both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. Quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire. Qualitative data were gathered via interviews and open –ended questions in the questionnaire. In order to get these data, it was needed to implement the EPOSTL. After the pilot study with 24 student teachers, the questionnaire was carried out with all of the participants of the pilot study and interviews were done with 8 of these students.

The analysis of qualitative data has shown that the student teachers are quite positive about using the EPOSTL. They believe that the EPOSTL provided them with a chance of assessing themselves and seeing their weaknesses and strengths in teaching. It helped them be aware of their teaching skills. Student teachers who were aware of

themselves and acted in their practice as to this awareness were reflecting on their practice. Reflection requires oneself to think and act on his/her own action. Student teachers think that they followed this process; they reflected on their practices thanks to the EPOSTL. The results of this study propose that the EPOSTL contributes to develop reflective teaching skills as it:

1) helps student teachers to realize both their linguistic and teaching weaknesses and strengths.

2) enables student teachers to be aware of not only their teaching but personality that may affect their teaching as well.

3) is a good way of self-assessment

EPOSTL is a good way of reflection as it gets the students to realize their weaknesses and strengths (Nihlen, 2011). The other findings of the qualitative data can be summarized as follows:

1) EPOSTL provides student teachers to feel empathy with both students and teachers.

2) EPOSTL is useful for developing linguistic and pedagogical skills.

3) EPOSTL improves self-confidence.

4) EPOSTL changes the structure of Methodology courses in a positive way.

The analysis of quantitative data supports the qualitative findings. The students thought that the EPOSTL helped them realize the teaching competences that they had developed and they should develop in order to teach English effectively. Bagaric's (2011) study supports this finding. He found out that "EPOSTL enables to log their growth and reflect on what has been and should be taught and learned as well as on how the contents of different courses are interrelated, thus contributing to the overall teacher competence" (p.81). This finding also indicates that the student teachers saw their own teaching strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the EPOSTL was regarded as a way of self-assessment, a tool for reflection and a useful learning and teaching device by the student teachers. Furthermore, EPOSTL enabled student teachers to think about the philosophy and different aspects of teaching.

These results show the effectiveness of EPOSTL in reflection. EPOSTL is a good and promising way that can be used in teacher education. It helps to train teachers that think critically, analyze and reflect on their teaching acts. It presents a good way to professional development for student teachers.

5.2. Pedagogical Implications

Büyükyavuz and Aydoslu (2005) found out in their study, which was carried out with 18 English language teachers and two instructors, the foreign language teachers in Turkey were not qualified enough in teaching methods. They suggested that there be more emphasize on teaching approaches that were taught to teacher candidates; and these approaches should be focused on with practice. Furthermore, teachers should be aware of and use new approaches. In order to be able to actualize these suggestions, reflective teaching is required. This study reveals that reflection is necessary and important for professional development. Therefore, the first suggestion of this study is providing a chance of reflection to student teachers.

Of the many ways of promoting reflection, the EPOSTL was used in this study. It has been found that the EPOSTL is effective in developing not only reflective teaching skills but also other teaching skills and even linguistic skills. Hence, it is suggested that the EPOSTL be used in teacher education. In this study, it was used in Methodology courses. The participants were in favor of using the EPOSTL in Methodology courses as these courses became more enjoyable and effective with the EPOSTL. Hence, it is suggested that the EPOSTL be incorporated into these courses. Apart from Methodology courses, the EPOSTL can be used in also teaching practicum.

Although the EPOSTL got so many positive reactions, there was an important point that student teachers criticized. It was some descriptors of Self-Assessment section. Descriptors of some fields in the Self-Assessment part do not examine the target skills in a detailed way. Some sections have only a few descriptors, which is not sufficient for student teachers to evaluate themselves in that area. Hence, it is suggested that the Self-Assessment part be reviewed.

5.3. Further Research

This study was carried out with 24 student teachers for a semester. This study can be repeated with more participants with a longer duration of time. There are two Methodology courses at the ELT Department of Atatürk University: Methodology I and Methodology II. In this study, the EPOSTL was applied only in Methodology II. A research that involves these two courses can be conducted to measure the effectiveness of the EPOSTL or to identify the student teachers' opinions. In this study, only the student teachers' opinions were tried to be determined. The teachers' trainers' opinions were not targeted. This can be a subject of another research. The question if teachers' trainers are also positive about using the EPOSTL in teacher education might be answered.

In this study, the EPOSTL were incorporated into Methodology courses. As stated before, some students suggested that the EPOSTL be used with real students. A research that involves the use of the EPOSTL in teaching practicum can be conducted to eliminate the differences between the university courses and real life. It can also help to see the EPOSTL from the perspective of students that participated in the course of student teachers if these students are included in data collection procedure.

This research can be repeated also with in-service teachers. Teachers should improve themselves continuously and to be able to do this they should reflect on their teaching. Being a tool for reflection, the EPOSTL can be implemented with in-service teachers and the effectiveness can be determined. Besides, the reactions of the teachers to the EPOSTL can be found out.

To conclude, as the EPOSTL is new there is an important gap in literature. Hence, much research that can be conducted with the participants with different profiles can be carried out. Furthermore, different aspects of this portfolio such as autonomy, self-evaluation, and didactic skills could be studied.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire on the use of EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages)

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire is devised with the aim of looking into your views about using EPOSTL to improve your reflective teaching skills. Please write your opinions for each question except question 8. For this question, please read the statements and circle the number on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. The information will be kept confidential and will be used just for research purposes. Thank you very much in advance for your time and cooperation.

Age:

Gender: F M

- 1) What was your first impression of the EPOSTL?

- 2) How useful did you find the EPOSTL as a whole?

- 3) Did the EPOSTL help you in any way to reflect your own teaching practice? If so, in what ways did it help?

- 4) To what extent and in what respects did the EPOSTL contribute to your professional development?

- 5) What are your suggestions to improve the EPOSTL?

6) What were the difficulties that you encountered while using the EPOSTL?

7) What are your strengths and weaknesses in your teaching that the EPOSTL helped you realize?

8) Do you agree with the following statements? (Please circle the number on a scale ranging from 1-strongly agree – to 5 –strongly disagree)

| Statement | Strongly agree | | | | | Strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| The EPOSTL made me think about different aspects of teacher education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL helped me understand what competences a teacher of foreign languages should have. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL made me aware of the competences I have developed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL helped me to record my progress. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL helped me to understand the relationship between underlying knowledge and practical skills in the process of teaching. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL is a good instrument for the self-assessment of teacher competences. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL is a useful teaching and learning device. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL is a good way of reflecting on our teaching practices. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL made me think about my teaching philosophy and the way it affects my teaching as a teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL helped me explore possible meanings and implications of classroom events. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL made me aware of the competences I still need to develop. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL made me think about my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| With EPOSTL, I have begun to ask my peers to observe my teaching and comment on my teaching performance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL made me ask my students whether they like a teaching task or not. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| The EPOSTL made me think of social events that can influence my teaching inside the class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

APPENDIX II – CONSENT FORM FOR THE INTERVIEW

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title: Using EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) to Foster Reflective Teaching Skills of Pre-Service Teachers in Turkey

As a participant in this study, I know this study is about the use of the EPOSTL in pre-service teacher education.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

I understand that I have the full right to withdraw my consent and end my participation in the study at any time.

I understand the procedures in the study and I understand what will be required of me as a participant.

I understand that all my oral responses will be completely anonymous.

I hereby wish to give my consent for participation in this study. I acknowledge that I received a copy of the information consent form.

For further questions, please contact Kübra OKUMUŞ by telephone (0554 *****) or via email (okumus-kubra@hotmail.com)

.....

.....

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

APPENDIX III- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you think about the necessity of the EPOSTL in teacher education?
- 2) Do you generally think reflectively about your teaching practice? Which techniques do you use? (Observation, lesson reports, video-tapes, journals etc.)
- 3) What do you think about the role of the EPOSTL in reflection?
- 4) How did the EPOSTL help you reflect on your teaching practices?
- 5) Do you think descriptors are useful for reflection? In which aspects are they useful?
- 6) What kind of difficulties have you encountered in completing descriptors?
- 7) What kind of changes in your reflective teaching skills occurred after the use of the EPOSTL?

APPENDIX IV – SAMPLE TRANSCRIPTION

DATE: 20.01.2014

R (The researcher): Hello, Mr., welcome.

I 1 (Interviewee 1): Hi, thanks

R: You know the EPOSTL study. We have been together for months. Now, I would like to learn your opinions about this study.

I 1: Alright.

R: Firstly, what do you think about the necessity of EPOSTL in teacher education?

I 1: Errr, miss... When I saw this question I remembered thing –one of our lecturers said something when we were at 2nd grade. She said that “I do teaching practices with seniors. I saw that they knew little about teaching”. This results from our weaknesses in practice. EPOSTL gives us this opportunity in 1st and 2nd grade when before being a teacher. And it presents the chance of seeing our weaknesses immediately and eliminate them. Thus, I think the more we use the EPOSTL until we become 4th grade the more we will have benefits.

R: Alright. Do you generally think reflectively on your teaching practices?

I 1: Yes, now of course. I have not done such a study before. And our feedback was no more than simple statements such as “it was good and nice, it would have been better if it had been like this” after presentation. However, I watched myself here. I evaluate my every deeds ranging from my position to my teaching style and tone of voice. I saw my weaknesses in this respect. I realized my problems in speaking. I realized the problems in the content of subject, from these points-as reflectively- it was very helpful.

R: I am also asking concerning before this study. Did you use any technique such as observation or writing journals for reflection?

I 1: Well, we used to use only one technique in our presentations or practices and it was observation. I used to observe myself. “How did I make the presentation, was it good, was it suitable?” I used to say I did well but I saw that I hadn’t done well. Our lecturers have been saying that “watch yourself in front of mirror, study in front of mirror.” This study is like this. It is sort of seeing myself in mirror. I didn’t use to use anything before this. It was only observation. It was no more than our friends’ sayings “it would have been better if you had done this in that way”

R: You mean you used peer feedback mostly.

I 1: Yes, certainly.

R: Alright. What do you think about the role of EPOSTL in reflection?

I 1: Well, as you said, we did lots of presentation in the 2nd grade. We taught grammar and continuously did reading or speaking activities. However, we didn’t get feedback like the EPOSTL in any of them. As I said in most of these presentations our lecturer

even did not give feedback to us. We couldn't know what our errors were. We got 60 but we did not know why. We had 70 but we did not why. We got 95 but we did not know why it was so good. In this respect, showing us our weaknesses and strengths, EPOSTL has a much better effect on us in this subject.

R: How did EPOSTL help you reflect on your teaching practices?

I 1: How did EPOSTL help to think? Well, everything finishes in watching oneself. Actually, when we look with an objective view we see our weaknesses. It is beneficial for seeing our weaknesses as it provides us to tell "this is false, my speaking is not good, I need to learn the procedures in a reading presentation better." And besides, there are times when we say I did this well. In this respect, it is more effective as it shows us concrete things.

R: Well, you mention about observing and watching ourselves. We have also descriptors section in the EPOSTL.

I 1: Yes

R: What do you think about them? Do you think they are useful for reflection?

I 1: Well, there is something interesting in descriptors: I saw what else we need to be careful in a specific subject. And this is not related to watching. For example, I saw that I could give appropriate texts about content of reading. For example, I saw these there. For example I saw that we need to think these aspects also in descriptors. I saw its benefits in this respect.

R: What about in terms of self-evaluation?

I 1: It is useful also in terms of self-evaluation because I did not use to evaluate the things in the descriptors. Well, they did not use to come to my mind or I did not know them in that time. It provided for me to see something. It provided me with what I should be careful. Well it is useful from this point in terms of self-evaluation.

R: What kind of difficulties have you encountered while completing descriptors?

I 1: I did not encounter much difficulty while completing descriptors. Only my friends had difficulties in this completing thing such as "where should we complete?"

R: Alright. When you compare before and after the EPOSTL, what kind of changes occurred in your reflective teaching skills?

I 1: In my reflective teaching skills... Well, I did reading and vocabulary in the process of the EPOSTL. And I learnt what I needed in reading. Before we regarded it as a simple reading, but I learnt it had many procedures.

R: Hmm

I 1: Vocabulary is also the same. It was a field that I was not familiar with. I can say I learnt new things also theoretically. However, apart from this, EPOSTL generally showed me where I had weaknesses. More precisely, I will say it taught me what I should be careful on and what I did not know. Well, it is useful in this respect. Now I

know what I need to complete and which weaknesses I should eliminate thanks to EPOSTL.

R: OK. Will you think reflectively on your presentations after this process?

I 1: Of course, certainly. Even I may think –well...- I may even think video-taping myself and then watching. It was different and bothering for me to watch myself and listening to my own voice tape in the past. However, after seeing its benefits I think using even this.

R: Ok. Is there anything that you would like to add?

I 1: I can say I learned many things from this study. Therefore, I want to thank you for including me in this study. Apart from this, there is nothing I will say.

R: Thanks for your participation.

I 1: I thank you.

APPENDIX V – TABLE OF INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST

| Independent Samples Test | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|-------|------------------------------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|---------|
| | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| VAR00001 | 12,759 | ,002 | 1,831 | 22 | ,081 | ,27778 | ,15168 | -,03679 | ,59235 |
| | | | 1,274 | 5,710 | ,252 | ,27778 | ,21802 | -,26231 | ,81787 |
| VAR00002 | ,000 | 1,000 | ,000 | 22 | 1,000 | ,00000 | ,23210 | -,48135 | ,48135 |
| | | | ,000 | 8,166 | 1,000 | ,00000 | ,23983 | -,55109 | ,55109 |
| VAR00003 | 8,214 | ,009 | -1,167E0 | 22 | ,256 | -,27778 | ,23807 | -,77151 | ,21595 |
| | | | -2,051E0 | 1,700E1 | ,056 | -,27778 | ,13541 | -,56348 | ,00792 |
| VAR00004 | ,871 | ,361 | ,524 | 22 | ,605 | ,11111 | ,21188 | -,32830 | ,55052 |
| | | | ,475 | 7,435 | ,648 | ,11111 | ,23369 | -,43500 | ,65722 |
| VAR00005 | ,000 | 1,000 | 1,436 | 22 | ,165 | ,33333 | ,23210 | -,14802 | ,81469 |
| | | | 1,390 | 8,166 | ,201 | ,33333 | ,23983 | -,21776 | ,88442 |
| VAR00006 | 2,946 | ,100 | ,687 | 22 | ,500 | ,16667 | ,24274 | -,33674 | ,67008 |
| | | | ,483 | 5,753 | ,647 | ,16667 | ,34537 | -,68729 | 1,02063 |
| VAR00007 | 4,963 | ,036 | ,978 | 22 | ,339 | ,22222 | ,22722 | -,24900 | ,69344 |
| | | | ,650 | 5,532 | ,542 | ,22222 | ,34194 | -,63192 | 1,07637 |
| VAR00008 | 2,501 | ,128 | ,942 | 22 | ,356 | ,27778 | ,29493 | -,33386 | ,88942 |
| | | | ,761 | 6,495 | ,474 | ,27778 | ,36520 | -,59958 | 1,15513 |
| VAR00009 | 4,915 | ,037 | 1,511 | 22 | ,145 | ,50000 | ,33080 | -,18603 | 1,18603 |
| | | | 1,176 | 6,264 | ,282 | ,50000 | ,42511 | -,52968 | 1,52968 |
| VAR00010 | ,386 | ,541 | 2,227 | 22 | ,037 | ,88889 | ,39921 | ,06097 | 1,71681 |
| | | | 1,931 | 7,028 | ,095 | ,88889 | ,46034 | -,19875 | 1,97653 |
| VAR00011 | ,343 | ,564 | -,278 | 22 | ,783 | -,05556 | ,19961 | -,46951 | ,35840 |
| | | | -,285 | 8,976 | ,782 | -,05556 | ,19479 | -,49639 | ,38528 |
| VAR00012 | 6,875 | ,016 | -1,049E0 | 22 | ,306 | -,16667 | ,15891 | -,49623 | ,16289 |
| | | | -1,844E0 | 1,700E1 | ,083 | -,16667 | ,09039 | -,35737 | ,02403 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|------|-------|-------|------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| VAR00013 | 6,814 | ,016 | 2,647 | 22 | ,015 | 1,22222 | ,46178 | ,26454 | 2,17990 |
| | | | 1,812 | 5,646 | ,123 | 1,22222 | ,67441 | -,45343 | 2,89787 |
| VAR00014 | ,078 | ,783 | 1,477 | 22 | ,154 | ,61111 | ,41371 | -,24687 | 1,46909 |
| | | | 1,316 | 7,265 | ,228 | ,61111 | ,46446 | -,47910 | 1,70132 |
| VAR00015 | 15,284 | ,001 | 2,057 | 22 | ,052 | 1,16667 | ,56705 | -,00933 | 2,34266 |
| | | | 1,476 | 5,842 | ,192 | 1,16667 | ,79067 | -,78078 | 3,11411 |
| meannn | 20,080 | ,000 | 2,308 | 22 | ,031 | ,35185 | ,15244 | ,03572 | ,66799 |
| | | | 1,541 | 5,549 | ,178 | ,35185 | ,22836 | -,21813 | ,92183 |

CURRICULUM VITAE

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