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A Qualitative Research Regarding Classroom Teacher's Ideas with Respect to Time Management in the Classroom

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Abstract. This study has been done in order to determine time management in the classroom behaviors' and ideas of teachers of third grade at primary school. The research is descriptive and it was designed in basis of qualitative research techniques. 15 teachers of third grades, who work at different primary schools in Adana /Turkey, form the study group of this research. Data for research were collected by semi-structured interview techniques. In accordance with the general aim of the research, interviews have been done with 15 classroom teacher about what they do concerning time management in the classroom. Obtained data was analysed by content analyses. In the result of the research, it was found that most of the teachers gave similar answers to the questions regarding time management as stated in the related literature. With respect to the time management dimension of classroom management, issues such as entering the classroom well prepared, grabbing attention at the beginning of the lesson, observing the students' progress and giving feedback to the students, educational tasks (giving and checking homework) and managerial tasks (attendance and classroom notebook) were especially emphasized. It was revealed that the participants of the study were aware of the supposed time management tasks in their classrooms. Dealing with managerial tasks, making use of group activities and giving additional tasks to students who finished their duties earlier than others were activities reported as the least common while the students were dealing with tasks specified by the participants. In this respect, it can be said that the teachers do not pay much attention to these during their lessons. On the other hand, the most common problem the teachers face about using time efficiently was stated as the shortness of the students' "attention span" in accordance with the age of the students, so the participants' answer about an efficient use of time in the classroom was reported as "15-20 mins or 20-25 mins".

INTRODUCTION

Dependency on time, which is a matter of all institutions, is statutory for schools. They are required to carry out their daily activities within a certain timeframe. The academic calendar, public and summer holidays, the class hours, break times, the winter break, etc. are all determined beforehand. Therefore, managers, teachers, as well as students work under an intensive pressure of time and face versatile problems about being late for school or class, preparing the syllabus, preparing for lessons, tasks to handle, organizing the start and end times of evening classes for schools providing such programs, and complaints from parents about scheduling, shortening the break times, as well as many others (Karşlı, 2004). Educational time may differ from

school to school and from teacher to teacher. The teachers' views about time may also show differences with respect to the time they spend on various subjects as well as the time they spend on education (Köktaş and Köktaş, 2007). Effective time management in school settings depends on being well-planned as in all fields of life. Since it is not possible to bring elapsed time back, teachers should organize their priorities based on a schedule if they want to use and manage their time efficiently (Durukan and Öztürk, 2004). According to Aydın (2000, 95) education can be described as "changing the focus of students and, for that purpose, maintaining their psychological and physical energy for the classes". In this respect, classroom management means managing

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the time of the class effectively and fruitfully according to the learning outcome. In this respect, time management is one of the most strategic factors of classroom management (Aydın, 2000). The purpose of time management in classrooms is to use the class time effectively and fruitfully in order to achieve the goals of education (Erkılıç, 2005). The fact that time management in class is a critical process derives from distinctive features of time and the classroom.

While efficient use of time in the classroom makes classroom management easier, it also creates opportunities for the students to better benefit from the teaching activities. The more time students spend on learning and the fewer non-academic activities and tasks they get involved in, the more they learn and the less misbehavior they show (Erden, 2001). The final judgement of Bloom (1976), Carroll (1963), as well as Harnischfeger and Wiley (1976) in their learning models is that the most decisive variable of learning is time. Research shows that employed lesson plans that consider the time more easily reach their intended goals (In Kalaycı, 1994). The in-class time of teachers is investigated in two parts; firstly, time reserved to support educational activities such as the preparation of teaching, explaining classroom rules or making announcements related to students. The second one is time allocated for the teaching activities. Teachers are required to make good use of the time during both periods (Çelik, 2002).

The main task expected from teachers in the classroom is managing the time for education. When educational time is managed appropriately, it positively influences the teaching management and the classroom coordination. While managing the educational time, teachers have to finish the lesson as planned as well as to save time required for the students to learn. The literature shows that there is a significant relation between managing the educational time and the students' success (Porter, 1993; Purkey and Smith, 1983; In Çelik, 2002). Using educational time efficiently helps students with their academic, social and daily life, encourages them to improve their talents, and provides an opportunity for the needs of the educational setting and the students (Nelsen, 2001). According to Weinstein (1993), time saved for education should be reserved and used very carefully. The reason is that the more carefully time is used; the more opportunities arise for students to learn. The time reserved for learning and the amount of learning is directly proportional. The burning question investigated here is not how much time is required to learn a subject but how much time is used efficiently (Halis, 2001).

Nowadays, effective teaching requires many skills. It can be said that managing class time is the most important one among the skills that need to be used efficiently. In this respect, the main purpose of this research is to detect the view of 3rd grade teachers

about time management in the classroom. In accordance with this purpose, the answers for the following questions were investigated.

1. What is the stance of 3rd grade teachers on time management in the classroom?
2. What are the views of 3rd grade teachers on the average time used efficiently in the classrooms?

METHOD

This is a qualitative study deeply investigating the opinions of 3rd grade teachers about time management in the classroom. This study focuses on only one subject in order to prevent differences in terms of the content and the activities during the investigation of the 3rd grade teachers' views towards time management. The examined school subject is Social Studies instruction, which is a compulsory, verbal core curriculum subject, requiring students to actively participate. Thus, the 3rd grade teachers' views on time management in Social Sciences classes were analyzed. Qualitative research methods, answering 'what' and 'how' questions, were deemed adequate and more constructive, compared to quantitative research methods.

The participant group of the study consists of 15 3rd grade teachers working at 5 different primary schools. For the sake of convenience, the participant group was formed by a sampling method among the purposive sampling methods. Semi-constructed interview forms, developed by the researchers, were used to collect the data from the teachers.

A content analysis was used to evaluate the qualitative data. The conceptualization of the data gained from the content analysis, followed by organizing the data based on the emerged concepts, and afterwards forming the themes explaining the data accordingly (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006) were the subject matter.

FINDINGS

Findings about the teachers' opinions on time management in the classroom

Five categories were detected when the views of teachers involved in the study about time management in Social Sciences classes were analyzed: Planning, Maintaining the flow of Activities, Reducing the time of conveying, Delegating responsibilities to the students and Recurring tasks.

The findings about the teachers' views on Planned Time

Within the views of the teachers on "Planning", it was seen that they drew attention to the points to take into consideration and the resources needed for an efficient planning. The table below shows the views of teachers in this respect.

TABLE 1
TEACHERS' VIEWS ON PLANNING TIME

Teachers Codes	M 1	M 2	M 3	M 4	M 5	M 6	M 7	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	f
Teachers Guide Book	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	15
Preparation before class (teachers)			X	X	X				X	X		X	X	X	X	9
Preparation before class (students)		X	X		X				X	X	X	X	X	X		9
Planning about timing			X	X		X		X	X	X				X	X	8
Teaching skills						X	X								X	3
Environmental conditions					X	X										2
Flexibility													X		X	2
Social Sciences as the first hour lesson												X				1
Reading the guide book in class							X									1
Specific days and weeks					X											1

As can be seen in Table 1, all of the participating teachers stated that they used the “Teachers Guide Book” while planning Social Sciences classes. While most of the teachers (9) said they performed “preparation before lesson”, 6 teachers said they do not prepare for the lesson.

While three participants stated “professional experience and teaching skills” as effective when they prepared, 2 teachers stated that they were “flexible” when planning classes. It was reported by the teachers that other considered factors while preparing were

“Environmental conditions” (2), “Specific days and weeks” (1), “Social Sciences as the first hour lesson” (1). On the other hand, one teacher said s/he entered the lesson without preparations and “read the Teachers’ Guide Book” during the lesson.

The findings about the teachers’ views on maintaining the flow of activities in the classroom

The teachers’ views on “maintaining the flow of activities” are given in the table below.

TABLE 2
THE TEACHERS' VIEWS ON MAINTAINING THE FLOW OF ACTIVITIES

Teachers Codes	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	f
Attention grabbing				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	10
Opportunity training					X	X			X				X			4
Indicating the flow of activities	X		X						X			X				4
Using presentation technologies			X		X	X										3
The core of activities			X										X			2

As can be seen in Table 2, most of the interviewed teachers (10) stated that they started the lesson with “attention grabbing”. Four of the teachers said they gave importance to “opportunity training”. As the Table also shows, only a few teachers (4) reported that they “indicated the flow of activities”. Just three participants stated that they use “presentation technologies” within the flow of activities. Only two of the interviewed teachers

reported that they achieved the “core of the activities” as part of the flow of activities.

The findings about the teachers’ views on reducing the time of conveying

The teachers’ views on reducing the time of conveying were given in the table below.

TABLE 3
THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TEACHERS’ VIEWS ON REDUCING THE TIME OF CONVEYING

Teachers	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	f
Taking care of managerial work while students are busy with activities		X					X		X							3
Group activities			X					X								2
Giving extra activities for students finishing the tasks early												X				1

When the teachers’ views on reducing the time of conveying were analyzed, three categories were detected: keeping students busy by giving responsibilities to the students while saving time for managerial work, planning group activities, and providing extra activities for students who completed the activities earlier than the others.

The finding about the teachers’ views on engaging the students

The participants’ views about the “engaging the students” category in the time management in the class section are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
THE TEACHERS’ VIEWS ON ENGAGING THE STUDENTS

Teachers	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	f
Giving instructions about the tasks	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	15
Entrusting responsibility to students	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X	11
Observing the students’ progress	X		X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	11
Giving feedback		X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X	10
Doing planning with the students			X			X										2
Student presentation				X												1

As can be seen in Table 4, all participant teachers stated that they “gave instructions about the task”. Most of these teachers (11) reported that they “entrusted responsibility to the students” (student on duty, the student representative, responsibilities about organizing the classroom, academic tasks related to the lesson, checking homework, etc.) while the same number of teachers said they “observed the students’ progress” (walking around in the classroom, checking the tasks, helping students with their

problems, etc). 10 teachers, however, stated they “gave feedback” to their students.

The findings about the teachers’ views on recurring tasks

Another category retrieved from the interviews about efficient time management is the dealing with “recurring tasks”. The following covers the teachers’ views on this topic.

TABLE 5
THE TEACHERS’ VIEW ON RECURRING TASKS

Teachers Codes	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	f
Giving homework by having the students take short notes	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
Asking who is absent while checking attendance			X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Completing the class notebook off class hours			X	X			X	X	X	X	X		X		X	9
Standard attendance checking	X	X			X	X	X	X				X				7
Completing the class notebook during the Social Sciences sessions	X	X			X	X						X		X		6
Checking homework randomly		X						X		X		X				4
Only checking the homework of specific students			X	X	X									X		4
Detailed reviewing and checking of homework		X	X	X									X			4
Reading stories in the first 10 minutes of the session				X					X		X					3
Checking homework by peer-review	X														X	2

who finish their tasks early so they did not increase the time for lesson.

Regarding the findings about the teachers' engaging the students, all participating teachers stated that they "gave instructions about the activities". In teaching time management, clear instructions about the tasks are very important. The teachers' clear explanations about the tasks and instructions for the tasks would help students to know what to do in the lesson (Çelik, 2002). Giving students explanations about why they do the tasks before they start, how to get help, what they can do after finishing and how much time they should spend on the task, in other words, teachers' clear instructions for the students will result in success for the students (Köktaş and Köktaş, 2007). Not only the interview findings but also the observation findings show that all teachers did explanations about the tasks. Since the students in this study were informed about the tasks before they started, it can be concluded that no loss of teaching time occurred in this respect.

Most of the participants stated that "they follow the students' progress". Walking around the classroom to follow the students' progress while doing the task and helping them with their questions enables the students to get more interested in their tasks (Kılbaş, 2006). Many teachers involved in this study reported that "they give feedback". When the students do their tasks, the teachers' immediate feedback about their work; showing the students the expected behavior, and changing wrong behavior, in other words instructing students towards their needs to correct mistakes are important in terms of a meaningful learning for the students (Ekici, 2004; Celep, 2004).

Most of the participating teachers reported that they "give students responsibilities" (e.g. student-on-duty, student representative, some responsibilities for organizing the classroom, some academic tasks related to the lesson, checking homework, etc). Aydın (2008) stated that teachers can minimize a loss in teaching time by getting help from the students for daily routines and managerial tasks. This study reveals that most of the teachers consider providing students with responsibilities as a way to save time related to the teaching time.

As for recurring tasks, the views about attendance are in accordance with the related literature. Attendance checking is one of the routines of teachers in the classroom. For novice teachers, attendance checking might take long. The more experienced the teachers are, the more diverse techniques are used (e.g. asking the students to perform an attendance check, counting the students to find absent ones, etc) rather than checking the attendance by calling the students aloud one by one (Polat, 2001; Karlı, 2004). In a study by Sönmez (1992) about primary school teachers' in-class activities, an average of 4.2 minutes in suburban schools, 4.4 minutes in downtown schools and 4.2 minutes in private schools were spent for attendance checking. In another study by

Ceren (2008) about primary school teachers' competence about efficient time management in the classroom, half of the participants reported that teachers either did the attendance check by looking out of the corner of their eyes or asking the students to do it by themselves since they thought that attendance checking is useless. The finding that most of the participating teachers in this study stated that they asked who was absent in the classroom to perform the attendance check show similarities with the study by Ceren (2008). However, some of the teachers stated that they do the standard attendance revisal, which can be interpreted as time for teaching might be reduced in some classes.

While most of the teachers in the study stated that they filled out the class notebook during off class time (e.g. break time, at the end of the lesson, other classes, etc), some teachers reported that they filled out the classroom notebook during the class. According to Aydın (2008), some daily routines and managerial tasks by the teacher might cause important loss of time. Teachers might plan the activities beforehand and therefor minimize the loss of time. Almost all of the participants in the study stated that they gave homework through making the students take short notes. Giving clear instructions about homework is very important. Giving verbal instructions about homework is not as safe as written instructions because verbal instructions might be a good excuse for a student who says that s/he did not hear about the homework. Therefore, giving written instructions is a safer method (Özkılıç, 2000). Based on the views of the teachers about giving homework by making the students to take some notes, it can be concluded that most of the teachers' giving homework through making students take some notes is a safe method for the students to remember the homework but it is also a more time consuming method than giving written homework (photocopied).

The teachers in the study reported that they check the homework by checking homework of specific students, checking homework from time to time, asking students to perform a peer-check, checking homework while students are busy with tasks, or by checking homework in detail. In the related literature, homework which is not checked regularly does not have an instructional value and students consider it as just a workload given by teachers. For teachers who do not give homework and who do not check homework, homework might become a time pitfall in the classroom (Polat, 2001). A few teachers stated that they check homework while students were busy with tasks related to an efficient time management. It can be concluded that teachers do not see checking homework as a decoy for the teaching time. Most of the teachers' checking homework from time to time or checking homework of specific students could result from teachers' seeing homework checking as time consuming.

When the views of teachers about the average efficient time management in Social Sciences lessons were considered, most of the teachers reported that the efficient time they spent during the

lesson was 15-20 minutes or 20-25 minutes. In a study by Sönmez (1992) about primary school teachers' in-class activities, it was found that 61 teachers from three suburban schools spent 18.4 minutes of the class hour talking and 9.3 minutes were used by students talking while 65 teachers from downtown schools spent 19.4 minutes talking with 6 minutes of students talking, and 61 teachers in private schools spent 22.1 minutes talking and 7.3 minutes of students talking. According to these findings, 68% of the 40-minute class time is spent on talking by the teachers and the students. It can be concluded that the results of this study show similarities with the findings of Sönmez.

When the teachers were asked about an explanation for this time, most of them related the average efficient time with the attention span of the students according to their age. The teachers stated that increasing the attention span will also increase the efficient time for learning. This result shows that teachers believe that they could step up efforts to increase the efficient time in the class.

RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

It was found that most of the teachers gave similar answers to the questions regarding time management as stated in the related literature. With respect to the time management dimension of classroom management, issues such as entering the classroom well prepared, grabbing attention at the beginning of the lesson, observing the students' progress and giving feedback to the students, educational tasks (giving and checking homework) and managerial tasks (attendance and classroom notebook) were especially emphasized. It was revealed that the participants of the study were aware of the supposed time management tasks in their classrooms. Dealing with managerial tasks, making use of group

activities and giving additional tasks to students who finished their duties earlier than others were activities reported as the least common while the students were dealing with tasks specified by the participants. In this respect, it can be said that the teachers do not pay much attention to these during their lessons. On the other hand, the most common problem the teachers face about using time efficiently was stated as the shortness of the students' "attention span" in accordance with the age of the students, so the participants' answer about an efficient use of time in the classroom was reported as "15-20 mins or 20-25 mins".

The participants of this study should be trained to improve their skills regarding "keeping the flow of activities "reducing the time of conveying", and "increasing the average time used efficiently" with respect to time management in the classroom. In-service training programs about "teaching methods and techniques" as well as "establishing rules and procedures" should be employed for teachers in primary schools to improve and diversify these skills.

In this study, the teachers' views about time management in the classroom were detected. The results are limited by the statements of the teachers about their behavior with regard to time management. Further research could be performed on whether these statements would result in corresponding behavior or not.

This study aimed to analyze the views of teachers in Social Sciences lessons, which is a verbal core subject, requiring students to get actively involved. With a similar study, different subjects in different grades could be covered. Likewise research could be done using quantitative methods as well.

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