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AN EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION NETWORK (EBA) VIA EDUCATIONAL CRITICISM MODEL

EĞİTİM BİLİŞİM AĞI'NIN (EBA) EĞİTSEL ELEŞTİRİ MODELİ İLE DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

Atilla ERGİN*



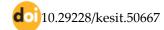
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*Doktora Öğrencisi, Yeditepe Üniversitesi, aergin@itu.edu.tr 问

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EĞİTİM BİLİŞİM AĞI'NIN (EBA) EĞİTSEL ELEŞTİRİ MODELİ İLE DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

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Abstract: It was aimed to evaluate Educational Information Network (EBA) via Educational Criticism model in this research. A case study, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the study. The study group was selected using a purposeful sampling method. A semi-structured interview form was used as a data collection tool; in the analysis of the data obtained, the content analysis method was used. The research findings were obtained by interviewing seven teachers from different disciplines who use the EBA platform in their courses. According to the findings of the study; both the problems arising from EBA content and digital infrastructure and the problems seen in the implementation negatively affect the effectiveness of the EBA platform. Although such problems occur in EBA courses, technical infrastructure arrangements and content updates will make the EBA platform applicable, usable and effective. It could be transformed into a more effective instruction platform through evaluation studies on the EBA platform.

Key Words: EBA (Educational Information Network), educational criticism model, teachers, curriculum evaluation.

Öz: Bu araştırmada Eğitim Bilişim Ağı'nın (EBA) Eğitsel Eleştiri modeli ile değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden durum çalışması kullanılmıştır. Çalışma grubu amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak seçilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu; elde edilen verilerin analizinde içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma bulguları, derslerinde EBA platformunu kullanan farklı disiplinlerden yedi öğretmen ile görüşülerek elde edilmiştir. Araştırmanın bulgularına göre; hem EBA içeriğinden hem de dijital altyapıdan kaynaklanan ve uygulamada görülen sorunlar EBA platformunun etkinliğini olumsuz etkilemektedir. EBA derslerinde bu tür sorunlar ya-

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şanmasına rağmen, teknik altyapı düzenlemeleri ve içerik güncellemeleri EBA platformunu uygulanabilir, kullanılabilir ve etkili hale getirecektir. EBA platformunda yapılacak değerlendirme çalışmaları ile daha etkili bir eğitim platformuna dönüştürülebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: EBA (Eğitim Bilişim Ağı), eğitsel eleştiri modeli, öğretmenler, program değerlendirme.

INTRODUCTION

Technology, which is one of the important developments of the 21st century, has been the focus of daily life and social structures. It has created a generation gap between digital natives who use information and communication technologies that are increasingly used day by day and young people who are identified as digital immigrants who have problems in using and adapting technology (Karabulut, 2015). As a result of this growing difference, all other social structures such as communication, education, health and transportation have had to update themselves. Especially considering that education and instruction institutions are responsible for raising the next generations, institutions have had to organize their educational activities according to the needs of this new generation. The reflection of the use of technology on real life levels also changed the individual's access to information and learning habits. Therefore, considering the needs and habits of new generations, the need to rearrange the education system and methods has emerged (Prensky, 2001). Traditional methods in the education system are replaced by platforms such as Distance Education and E-learning, which have become compatible with internet technologies. Distance Education can be defined as an institution-based formal learning in which groups of learners leave, providing the link between learners, resources and teachers through interactive telecommunication systems (Schlosser & Simonson, 2006). Elearning is defined as "conscious use of information and communication technologies in a networked learning and teaching environment" (Naidu, 2006). These globally developing platforms have created an EBA instruction platform in our country to produce e-content within the scope of the FATIH project. EBA is an online education platform that individuals can use free of charge and is run by YEGİTEK (Fatih Project, 2016). EBA is used by teachers to reinforce their lessons and add visual dimension (Türker & Güven, 2016). "EBA offers an infrastructure and content pool for continuing education activities regardless of time, place and vehicle" (Baykal, 2015, p. 19). Thanks to the EBA Project, which was launched to take advantage of technological opportunities, it was started to be implemented in schools in order to lift the borders in education and increase the quality of education (Alabay & Taşdelen, 2017). Although there are many education services in EBA, it is used by primary and secondary school students today (Aktay & Keskin, 2016). This website, which started broadcasting in 2012 under the name of EBA test, served with a trial version until 2015. The second version of EBA, which started its publishing life with its new interface in September 2015, has been replaced by the new design as of 1 December 2016 after serving for a while (Pala, Arslan & Özdinç, 2017).

EBA;

''Offering different, rich and educational content for each course,
Expanding the field of informatics and make it more effective in education,
Responding to teacher needs,
Sharing good examples in education,
Creating an archive for lessons,
Making the learning of knowledge meaningful,
aims to help different learning styles by responding to student needs'' (Yerli, 2018).

COVID-19 outbreak, which affects all sectors and people worldwide, also affects education. During this period when face-to-face education and instruction is limited, the EBA platform in our country is an E-learning platform recommended by MEB and where teachers conduct their classes in a virtual environment. With this research, opinions of teachers about the usefulness and content of EBA lessons would be obtained. The studies reflecting the opinions of teachers and students about EBA application in the literature are as follows; (Alabay, 2015; Altın & Kalelioğlu, 2015; Banoğlu & others, 2014; Kayahan & Özduran, 2016; Öçal & Şimşek, 2017; Pamuk, & others, 2013; Tutar, 2015; Tüysüz& Çümen, 2015; Vural & Ceylan, 2014 quoted by Yerli, 2018). However, limited studies on the evaluation of the EBA platform according to a curriculum evaluation model directed the researcher to do this study. It is thought that the examination of EBA from different perspectives can contribute to the literature. In the context of the effectiveness and quality of technology and internet-based education platforms, evaluation of the Educational Information Network (EBA) in practice is important. In this current study, which takes into consideration this importance, it is aimed to evaluate the Educational Information Network (EBA) via Educational Criticism model of Eisner. For this purpose, the situation of EBA in practice, the deficiencies encountered and the innovations offered with the platform were evaluated by considering the opinions of the teachers within the framework of the themes determined based on the elements of the curriculum. For the purpose of this study, answers to the following questions were sought;

1. Under which themes is the EBA platform evaluated in terms of teachers' views?

2. Which categories are collected under the themes determined in terms of teachers' views?

3. Which codes are collected under the categories determined in terms of teachers' views?

Eisner's Educational Criticism Model

Eisner's Educational Criticism is a model developed by Elliot Eisner in 1975, the curriculum evaluator is like an art expert and the curriculum evaluation process is like an artistic criticism. In this context, the evaluator first defines what he sees when making an educational assessment of a program, class or school, and then interprets it and evaluates it last (Eisner, 1985). According to the educational criticism model, curriculum evaluation is similar to the

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criticism of a work of art in fine arts (Erden, 1998: p.14 quoted by Köse, 2011).

Teaching is an artwork and teaching has different senses that it can think of as art (Eisner, 1985). These could be explained as follows:

"Teaching is an art. Because, teachers make decisions based on the abilities that emerge during the process, such as painters, composers, actresses and dancers.

Teaching is an art. Because the activities of teachers are not limited to some patterns and routines, on the contrary, they depend on abilities and unexpected (unpredictable) creativity.

Teaching is an art. Because the gains are created in the process. Teaching is a human process. In this process, the teacher interacts with the student''.

Eisner's educational criticism model is similar to Parlett and Hamilton's Explanatory model, but Eisner identifies the evaluator as a participant and puts it into the situation. Expertise is the art of appraisal. Therefore, the education specialist is a person who can grasp and judge the events that continue in the classroom (Kumral, 2010).

According to Eisner (1985), the models developed before him focused on more quantitative and technical situations while evaluating. He named the model as educational criticism and expert opinion, and proposed a different process than product and quantitative data. In this sense, Eisner (1985) defines evaluation as a process with very wide functions and handles evaluation in four different dimensions. These can be explained as follows (Kumral, 2010).

1. Description Dimension of Educational Criticism

Description aspect of educational criticism is basically an effort to reveal, portray and determine the characteristics of educational life. These characteristics may be general characteristics of the environment or certain characteristics of the school or classroom. How is the environment of the 4th grade of Ms. Heldi? How is the mood of Mr. Marco's geometry lesson? Some features can be shown as examples (Eisner, 1985).

2. Interpretation Dimension of Educational Criticism

Although there is no sharp distinction between description and interpretation dimensions, there is a difference in emphasis and focus. The interpretation dimension of educational criticism asks; "What does the situation mean for those concerned?", "How does a class work?" (Eisner, 1985).

3. Evaluation Dimension of Educational Criticism

Education is a rule-driven process. Unlike school, learning and socialization, education is a process that supports personal development and contributes to the development of social welfare (Eisner, 1985). In this aspect, the determination of whether the student's work or class-room activities are incorrect or correct in terms of education causes to organize the studies without knowing how healthy or unhealthy. Therefore, it is very important to evaluate the educational process as it exists (Kumral, 2010).

4. Thematics Dimension of Educational Criticism

At this stage, which is the final dimension of the educational criticism model, the task of the educational critic is to create themes by defining repetitive messages. The prominent features of the situation or person are defined as identities and form themes. In a sense, a theme is like a common quality. These common qualities penetrate by combining states or objects. A qualitative study for a class, teacher, or school can provide versatile themes. These themes emerge by filtering the situations encountered. In a way, themes provide a summary of the key features (Kumral & Saracaloğlu, 2011).

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, a qualitative research approach was adopted and it was designed as a case study. Case studies are based on the 'how' and 'why' questions, allowing an investigation of a phenomenon or event that the researcher cannot control (Yıldırım & Şimşek 2016). In addition, "case study", which is a qualitative research model, is seen as a distinctive approach used in seeking answers to scientific questions (Büyüköztürk & others, 2014). While evaluating the Educational Information Network (EBA) with the data obtained in the research, the Educational Criticism Model of Eisner, an expert program evaluation model, was taken as the basis. While collecting the research data, Eisner's Educational Criticism Model was used and the findings were presented considering the description, interpretation, evaluation and thematics dimensions included in the model.

Participants

The participants of the research consisted of seven branch teachers from different disciplines working in two high school education institutions in Beyoğlu and Kartal districts of Istanbul.

In the study, maximum diversity method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used. Purposeful sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling approach. Depending on the purpose of the research, purposeful sampling, which enables in-depth research by selecting information rich situations, is preferred when it is desired to work in one or more specific situations that meet certain criteria or have certain features. The researcher tries to understand and explain the events and phenomena of nature and society and to discover and explain the relationships between them (Büyüköztürk et al. 2012). This method, which is used within the scope of the purposeful sampling, aims to find and define the basic themes containing some differences (Patton, 2014). For example, a researcher who wants to investigate the problems related to transition to secondary school in Ankara province, choosing the sample from schools in Ankara rural area, city centre and suburbs can be evaluated within the scope of maximum diversity sampling method. The findings and results to be obtained as a result of such a research may be richer than the results obtained with a different sampling method (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Data were obtained from teachers through a semi-structured interview form. The semistructured interview form is often preferred by researchers because of its flexibility and certain standard and its ability to gather in-depth information on a particular subject, more participants

can be reached, the participants can write their thoughts as they wish, and they provide data collection and analysis convenience. In this regard, teachers were asked to reflect their true thoughts and experiences without being affected by the interviewer and to prevent the harm caused by interviewer bias and subjectivity, and to express their thoughts in writing without limiting their views (Balcı, 2006). In order to ensure maximum diversity, interviews were conducted considering criteria such as gender, professional experience and class size. In the study, the volunteer criteria of the participants were considered important and the meeting was held at the time and places determined by them. The interviews were made face-to-face via telephone and video speech in line with the permission of the participants and recorded with a voice recorder. The records obtained were edited and written right after the interviews to prevent data loss.

		Professional Experi-	-	
		ence		
Participant	Gender	(as the year)	Branch	Class Size
P1	Female	22	Geography	27
P2	Female	18	History	32
P3	Male	16	Maths	35
P4	Male	15	Chemistry	30
P5	Female	12	Physics	33
P6	Male	8	Turkish	25
P7	Female	7	English	35

Table: 1 Distribution of participants by gender, professional experience, branch and student
size in class

When Table 1 is analysed, it is seen that among the seven (n = 7) high school branch teachers interviewed, four were female and three were male. It was determined as a result of the interviews that the teachers interviewed gave lessons in the Geography, History, Turkish, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and English branches that were in practice in the 2019-2020 academic year and used the Educational Information Network EBA. Therefore, it is seen that they have the expertise to compare EBA in terms of "content, achievements, educational status and evaluation" which are the elements of the program. The teachers participating in the interview have between 7-22 years of experience in their profession. Class size of the lessons of teachers ranges from minimum 25 students to maximum 35 students. It is thought that the student size in the classes is an important variable regarding whether the EBA is used effectively.

Data Collection and Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis has three strategies: preparing and organizing data for data analysis (text data and images-deciphering), coding the data and combining the codes, creating themes and presenting the data in shape, table or discussion (Creswell, 2014, p180). Indeed, this path was followed in this study. The data obtained from the evaluations made by the experts were analysed by grouping them under the titles determined through the expert evaluation form. Content analysis is basically gathering similar data within the framework of certain concepts and themes and organizing and interpreting them in a holistic way in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016, p.227). The main purpose in content analysis is to reach the concepts and relationships that can explain the collected data (Selçuk, Palancı, Kandemir & Dündar, 2014). Thus, it is aimed to define the data and reveal the hidden facts in the data (Gülbahar & Alper, 2009). The participants were coded as (P1 or P2) during the analysis phase. In the study, seven themes were determined: "Professional experience, EBA courses' Objectives, Content, Learning-Teaching Process, Measurement and Evaluation Dimensions, Effectiveness of EBA and Suggestions for EBA Courses". In line with the determined themes, three of the four stages of Eisner model (Description, Interpretation and Evaluation) were used and the findings part of the research was created. Thematics, the last step of the Eisner model, was included in the conclusion section of the research.

FINDINGS

In this section, Educational Information Network (EBA) is evaluated according to Eisner Educational Criticism Model and the findings are discussed under the headings of the model, "description, interpretation, evaluation". Themes created according to the codings obtained through content analysis were interpreted.

Description

The evaluation of the Educational Information Network EBA according to the participants' opinions is presented below.

Theme 1. Professional Experience

Participants are branch teachers from different disciplines who have worked in their professions for at least seven years and twenty-two years. When evaluated in this context, the participants have experience in their own fields. It was seen that the teachers participating in the research from two different secondary education institutions have sufficient knowledge and expertise at the point of assessment of the platform since they conduct their lessons through EBA (EBA TV, EBA.gov.tr).

Theme 2. Objectives Dimension of EBA Courses

Participants gave different answers as to whether the objectives reached in the courses conducted on EBA. Four of the participants (P3, P4, P5, and P7) stated that there was no interaction with the student in the classroom environment, they had difficulty in detailing the subject, that the students had difficulty in keeping the attention of the lesson, especially the numerical lessons remained abstract. For these reasons, they stated that the objectives were not translated into behaviour. Three of the participants (P1, P2, P6), especially in some courses such as English, stated that students could not actively gain lessons due to lack of materials such as resources, tests, exercises.

Theme 3. Content Dimension of EBA Courses

In the evaluation of EBA course contents; The subject agreed by the participants stated that the contents of EBA TV are mostly disrupted because not every student has internet access. Five of the participants (P1, P2, P5, P6, P7) stated that the course contents differ from lessons to lessons. For example, they stated that in socially intensive courses such as History, Geography

and Turkish, the content is suitable for the student, but the numerical courses (Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Biology) where the interaction is intense and not suitable for the fields of Language and EBA content should be enriched. Two of the participants (P3, P4) stated that EBA contents are rich, understandable and suitable for student interest.

Theme 4. Learning-Teaching Process Dimension of EBA Courses

In evaluating the learning-teaching process of EBA courses, six of the participants (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7) stated that the courses were teacher-centered and unilateral, method-technical application was troublesome, there was no communication and interaction, and that the student's passive status decreased the quality of teaching. One of the participants (P3) emphasized the importance of individual differences by expressing that some students may be bored with the method in EBA TV.

Theme 5. Measurement-Evaluation Dimension of EBA Courses

The issue that the participants emphasize most about the measurement-evaluation dimension of EBA courses; it is that measurement and evaluation cannot be done effectively in EBA courses. The reasons for this situation are; Studies and assignments sent from EBA are not taken seriously by the student. Participants express students' problems in providing student participation, checking the assignments given, in-class evaluation, student evaluation as there is no effective feedback and correction and face-to-face interaction. In addition, the participants emphasize the difficulty of measuring what the student learns in the documents and exam activities sent via EBA.

Theme 6. Opinions about the Effectiveness of EBA Courses

In evaluating the effectiveness of EBA courses, the subjects that all participants agreed on, they stated that they had problems with connection problems related to internet access in live lessons, computer deficiencies, not being able to participate effectively in lessons, and technical difficulties while uploading videos to the content of the EBA system. They emphasized that teaching could not be done effectively due to such problems. In addition, the participants stated that parent-student and teacher communication would increase the effectiveness of EBA lessons.

Theme 7. Participant suggestions for EBA Courses

Participants made the following suggestions regarding EBA courses;

1. In order to increase the attendance (from TV or computer) to EBA courses, all parents can be informed by means of messages, mail, etc., and participation in courses can be made mandatory (P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P7).

2. The digital infrastructure problems in the EBA platform and technical problems caused by internet access could be eliminated as soon as possible and the quality of education can be increased (P2, P3, P5 and P6).

3. In order for the EBA system to function effectively, disadvantaged students with socio-economic and geographical deficiencies could also be considered and education can be reached anywhere (P1, P3, P5, P6, and P7).

4. A system to control the student's assignment follow-up could be provided to eliminate the problems experienced in the evaluation (P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6).

5. For EBA lessons to be effective, enrichment of content that will consider the individual differences of students could be provided (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P7).

Interpretation

When the teacher responses given in the description phase are examined, the majority of teachers who have experience in different disciplines expressed critical views about the EBA platform and its courses.

In the evaluation of the objectives of the participants; they stated that the interaction in the EBA courses was weak, there were problems in the elaboration of the subject and the attention of the students, and especially the digital courses were processed abstractly due to the system. The participants stressed that the objectives could not be transformed into behaviour due to the problems mentioned.

In EBA platform content evaluation; All of the participants stated that the content could not be presented effectively in EBA TV lessons because of the student's internet access problems. Five of the participants stated that the content of the lessons was presented effectively in verbal lessons, but that there was no effective and appropriate content presentation in the numerical and language areas that require more concentration, application and interaction.

While evaluating the EBA platform learning-teaching process; the majority of the participants stated that the lessons were not effective due to reasons such as being teacher-centered, unilateral, difficulties in method-technical application, being disconnected from communication and interaction and not being student-centered.

In the measurement-evaluation of EBA courses; All of the participants are in the direction that measurement-evaluation cannot be done effectively in EBA courses. The fact that the homework given in the courses carried out on EBA is not taken seriously by the student, the student participation is low, the control of the homework is not effective, there are problems such as feedback and correction and no face-to-face interaction reduces the quality of the evaluation.

Practitioner participants about the effectiveness of the EBA platform; They stated that they faced problems such as internet access problems in live lessons, teachers and students, technical, lack of equipment, lesson participation, and troubles in the EBA system.

Participants who follow EBA courses and become practitioners; They suggested that the system-based infrastructure, internet access, technical problems should be corrected, the system should be adjusted according to the geographical and socio-economic problems of the disadvantaged students, and the individual differences should be taken into consideration.

Research findings; It shows that the publications and courses in the EBA platform are qualified but not sufficient due to both application-related and system related problems. Therefore, in order to implement the EBA platform effectively, it is useful to continue the program evaluation studies related to EBA and to eliminate the existing deficiencies.

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Evaluation

The EBA platform, which is evaluated according to the opinions of the teachers during the description and interpretation stages, is not considered sufficient by the participants in the context of educational criticism. It has been determined that there are problems in the general evaluation of EBA courses in the context of the curriculum elements. While the participants stated that their course acquisitions could not be transformed into behaviour due to system, application, student-related problems, they stated that there were technical difficulties in the transfer of the content, that the content was effective in the verbal areas, and it was not effective in the numerical and language areas. Participants stated that the methods and technical reasons were not used effectively due to the fact that the lessons were teacher-centered and systembased unilateral interaction, and the student had difficulties in concentrating on the lesson. Participants are that measurement and evaluation cannot be done effectively in EBA courses due to homework control, interaction, communication, student participation and system related problems. The most criticisms made by the participants; EBA courses include internet access, lack of technical equipment, course participation problems, and technical troubles in the EBA platform.

Thematics (Conclusion)

In this study, it was aimed to evaluate the Education Information Network (EBA) according to the Educational Criticism model of Eisner, which is an expert evaluation model. The findings obtained from the interviews with teachers from two different secondary educational institutions actively using the EBA platform was analysed with " Description, Interpretation, Evaluation and Thematics" sub-steps of the Educational Criticism model.

When the EBA platform is evaluated in general, it can be said that the objectives, content, learning-teaching process and measurement and evaluation dimensions of the curriculum carried out are prepared in accordance with the age and technological developments. However, the problems such as digital infrastructure problems arising from the EBA platform, differences in course contents and technical defects, and technical hardware deficiencies and internet access problems of teachers who are the implementers of the curriculum, inadequate student participation, the difficulty of evaluation follow-up, and the limitation of the method and technical application have shown that the platform did not achieve its purpose. According to the findings obtained from the interviews with the participants, it is important to enrich the EBA content, to strengthen the technical infrastructure and to provide a student-centered approach in a unilateral teacher-centered course to include the student in the process. Recent studies such as Erkoca, (2021); Kavuk and Demirtaş, (2021); (Batdal Karaduman, Akşak Ertaş, and Duran Baytar, 2021) have reached similar results with the research.

As a result, "Thematics", which is the last stage of the Educational Criticism Model, is the step of making decisions regarding the effectiveness and applicability of the program within the framework of the positive and negative findings obtained in the thoughts of teachers who are experts in conducting the courses in the EBA platform. Considering the "objectives, content, learning-teaching process, measurement-evaluation" stages of EBA Curriculums, some technical infrastructure, content arrangements and updates make EBA platform applicable / usable despite some problems in practice. Through the evaluations about the EBA platform, problems in

practice could be overcome; the platform can be developed and transformed into a more effective teaching platform in the long term.

SUGGESTIONS

In the light of the findings obtained from the research, the following suggestions are included in order to develop the EBA platform (Eba Tv, EBA.gov.tr) and to be more functional:

1. The system should be strengthened by eliminating the technical problems experienced in the courses conducted on the EBA platform.

2. In-service training should be provided to teachers in order to promote and inform the EBA platform. In-service trainings could be also being organized to improve the digital literacy of teachers and administrators.

3. The content of the EBA platform could be enriched in the fields of verbal and language as well as in the verbal field.

4. The curriculum evaluation studies of the courses in the EBA platform would be done regularly and consideration of the opinions of all stakeholders would increase the effectiveness of the platform.

5. Problems arising from communication, interaction and student participation frequently seen in EBA courses are essential to resolve with school management, teacher, student and parent cooperation.

6. Assessment and evaluation problems experienced in EBA courses could be solved and an effective task tracking and control system could be created.

7. In order to increase the effectiveness of EBA courses, student-centered activities in which students will actively participate in teaching should be organized instead of teacher-centered and one-way interaction.

8. The effectiveness of the EBA platform could be tested using via Eisner Educational Criticism model or other curriculum evaluation models (Stufflebeam's CIPP, Stake's countenance model, natural evaluation, Provus, Scriven, Tyler, Patton, comparative analyses model etc.)

9. EBA courses need to be developed to take account of students' individual differences.

10. Completing the digital materials / internet access of schools, teachers and students will increase the quality of education by providing effective use of EBA courses.

11. The research was conducted by taking the opinions of high school teachers. The effectiveness of the EBA platform can be tested by taking the opinions of stakeholders (administrators, teachers, students and parents) at different levels.

12. The current research, which has been designed qualitatively, could be carried out with quantitative, experimental and mixed patterns and with a higher number of participants.

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