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Perceptions of active learning among faculty in student-centered universities

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Abstract

Higher education institutions face challenges integrating active learning (AL) as mandated by the Bologna Process. This requires engaging classroom experiences and support for student success in publications and projects. This study explored the perceptions of academics from engineering and arts and sciences faculties at one public and one private university in Türkiye. It examined their understanding of AL, whether they viewed it as deep AL, its necessity in higher education, and barriers to its implementation. Using a qualitative design with open-ended surveys, responses were analyzed thematically. Findings show most academics associate AL with instructor-led in-class activities, indicating a limited grasp of deep active learning. While they support broader AL adoption, they cited obstacles such as large class sizes, poor infrastructure, unequal resources, limited in-service training, and weak institutional commitment, which hinder effective AL practices despite institutional intentions.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions have placed recent emphasis on enhancing educational standards and instructional methods because they form the fundamental basis of the Bologna Process (European Education Area, 2023). EUA Trends Reports (Trends 2010, Trends 2015, Trends 2018) show that current European and vocational policies concentrate their efforts on educational learning and teaching innovation alongside active learning (AL) adoption. The current situation requires the implementation of AL processes according to this framework. These processes need to prioritize the development of understanding and critical thinking over traditional knowledge transfer. The report describes teachers as facilitators who give students autonomy through responsibility sharing to empower their learning. Students gain the ability to create their own understanding by participating in independent discovery-based learning activities. (Trends, 2010). The Trends 2018 report demonstrates that 64 higher education institutions frequently used terms including "excellence in teaching," "excellent education," "top level," "outstanding," "world-class," "first-class," or "high-quality teaching." Educational institutions demonstrate their competitive ambitions in the education sector through these aspirations while facing pressure to maintain their position and they demonstrate a broader understanding of worldwide educational trends which include student-centered active learning approaches.

The current highly competitive business school environment puts faculty members under pressure to demonstrate superior teaching performance. Educational institutions have come to understand that research productivity and teaching excellence provide equal opportunities to gain a competitive advantage. (Auster & Wylie, 2006). Higher education institutions have developed a culture which promotes and supports the implementation of AL methodologies through educational approaches including problem-based learning, project-based learning and challenge-based learning.

Park and Choi (2014) assert that faculty members recognize the benefits of AL yet do not show immediate adoption of AL techniques in their teaching practices. The particular risk stands as the largest obstacle for faculty members to accept new teaching methods according to Bonwell and Eison (1991). The literature supports further research on AL by studying second-generation studies which analyze the precise elements and processes that influence its success or failure. The research field requires more investigation into how instructors experience AL environments because this topic receives less attention than student-centered studies (Phillipson et al., 2018).

In the national higher education system in which this study was conducted, some universities prioritize AL practices as part of the Bologna process. Particularly, universities with Center for Teaching and Learning centers highlight the AL implementations in their Institutional Internal Evaluation Reports (IIER). Among the total of 206 universities in the country, consisting of 129 public and 77 private universities, six universities have learning-teaching centers providing pedagogical support to academics, three of which are private. Some examples from IIER reports are as follows:

Table 1. Sample universities with teaching-learning centres promoting AL.

University	Teaching-Learning Center	IIER proof on AL
Private University	Center for teaching and learning (CTL)	At the university, faculty members use active and interactive methods. Therefore, some activities are guided by the instructor (lectures, studio work, presentations, questioning, brainstorming, seminars, etc.) as well as activities that are guided by the learners (buzz groups, jigsaw, reciprocal questioning, presentations, project teams, union groups, etc.).
Public University	Center for advancing learning and teaching	Individual counseling services are provided to faculty members on how to design their courses in a learner-centered (including AL) manner. Additionally, seminars on learner-centered approaches are organized for departments or units upon request.

The current situation presents universities with the dual challenge of implementing active learning strategies in education while they face increased pressure to enhance research output and project achievements. The research examines faculty perspectives about active learning at a period when institutional rankings receive heightened attention. The study aims to establish how academics understand active learning and deep active learning through their definitions of AL. The research questions which guide this study include:

As a result of academics' opinions:
1. How can AL be defined? What are its major qualities?
2. Are AL practices necessary in higher education? Why?
3. What are the factors that make the implementation of AL practices challenging in higher education?

Active learning: Meaning, qualities, and higher education implementations

The definition of AL by Bonwell and Eison (1991) remains one of the most recognized and used definitions in current academic literature. According to writers, AL is any form of learning where students are involved in doing something and thinking about what they are doing. Mizokami (2018) defines AL as all forms of learning that go beyond the passive reception of knowledge that is typical for lecture classes. AL requires students to be actively involved in a number of activities and goes beyond internal cognitive processes, making students express their thoughts and understanding through these activities. Matsushita (2018) in a salient study, lists the characteristics of AL and makes an addition to it calling it deep active learning. The following are the key elements of AL based on this understanding:

- Learners engage in activities beyond passive listening.
- The instructional approach moves away from basic knowledge transfer to actively develop student skills.
- The instruction promotes participants to use advanced cognitive skills which include analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating.
- The learning activities include reading, discussing and writing tasks which work together to enhance student engagement.
- The educational approach emphasizes student self-reflection and examination of their personal beliefs and values.
- The educational activities help students demonstrate their thinking processes which leads to more intense active learning experiences.

The main focus of instruction within AL environments consists of exploring essential concepts in more detail. The instructors function as facilitators who provide guidance and support to students throughout their academic progression. The educational process uses formative assessment techniques to check student learning development. These courses develop essential competencies which include teamwork abilities together with communication skills, critical thinking and presentation delivery skills (Erol & Özcan, 2016).

Educational encounters with AL experiences fall into five categories which include case-based, problem-based, inquiry-based, project-based and discovery-based learning according to Cattaneo (2017). The first research studies about AL revealed its benefits through better student results and academic achievement and analytical capability improvement (Freeman et al., 2014). Graham and Longchamps (2022) found that competency development through interactive collaborative methods leads to better results for both individual students and their groups. Hernández-de-Menéndez et al. (2019) stress that engineering students benefit from advanced technology integration with properly designed AL exercises in AL methodology-based education. The Trends 2018 survey results showed that institutions found student learning to be effective

when using small group instruction, problem-based learning, peer learning, community projects and flipped classrooms.

On the other hand, the adoption of AL faces various challenges and obstacles during its execution. AL research depends heavily on the assumption that learning activities can be properly monitored and measured through direct observation of student behaviour. The current educational trend links AL to programs that develop career-ready competencies for professional success. The emphasis on student performance and entrepreneurial voice development dominates the educational environment (Batchelor, 2008). In addition, the institutional framework creates obstacles for AL implementation acceptance by faculty staff (Eddy et al. 2017). Furthermore, the current academic promotion structure creates better rewards for faculty members to concentrate on research instead of teaching. Thus, the academic promotion structure creates an obstacle for AL strategy adoption because faculty members tend to choose research activities above new teaching approaches. (Ragus, 2020). Finally, the allocation of university resources and faculty training programs might not receive adequate attention from institutions as faculty members tend to resist adopting AL strategies when they assess that potential risks exceed potential rewards (Ragus, 2020).

Deep active learning

Matsushita (2018) recommends the implementation of a methodology known as deep active learning (DAL) which focuses on the simultaneous acquisition of knowledge and skills. The principles of DAL are based on the ideas of deep learning and a holistic educational approach as described by Matsushita (2018). The progression of AL into DAL demands careful consideration of various aspects including curriculum design, instructional materials, learning setting and assessment. The learning process needs active support from assessment which should be used strategically to strengthen it.

Matsushita (2018) explains that students who use the deep approach learn concepts independently through linking ideas to past knowledge while noticing fundamental patterns, essential concepts, evaluating evidence for conclusions and logical arguments to develop better understanding of their learning process. Students who adopt the surface approach focus on completing course requirements by treating information as separate facts which they memorize or follow instructions without thinking about purpose or methods thus creating difficulties when learning new concepts. The concept of activeness in AL exists in two dimensions which researchers can observe from inside or outside the learning environment. The two-dimensional framework which Matsushita (2018) explains through graphical representation appears in Table 2.

Table 2. Internal and external aspects of activity

		Internal aspect	
External aspect		Low	High
	Low	D	B
	High	C	A

The definition of AL which requires mental participation contrasts with the typical understanding of AL as physical engagement. The concept emphasizes an essential aspect of activity which researchers label as A or B. The term "deep engagement" precisely defines the intense inner aspect of activity.

The activity-focused teaching method delivers instruction through external student engagement without requiring internal student participation (C). The teaching approach of coverage focuses on content delivery to such an extent that it fails to activate either external or internal learning dimensions (D).

A teacher who implements DAL methods avoids using standard teaching approaches in their practice. Teachers need to develop skills which enable them to make multiple decisions during specific learning situations for student-specific teaching method adaptation. Teachers need to continuously develop and modify their educational approaches as described by Graham and Longchamps (2022).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Phenomenology was adopted to gather academics' opinions about the implementation of AL in higher education settings. Phenomenological research centers on how individuals construct meaning, viewing this as a fundamental aspect of human existence (Patton, 2002). Its key contributions involve gaining insight into a phenomenon from the perspective of those who have directly encountered it. This methodological approach is grounded in the belief that common experiences possess a core essence or underlying structure (Patton, 2002). Broadly speaking, phenomenological studies are particularly appropriate for exploring emotional, affective, and deeply impactful dimensions of human life (Merriam, 2009). As noted by Michael Patton, the phenomenological research process is characterized by a well-defined and thorough articulation of its purpose. This approach is grounded in the premise that shared experiences contain fundamental qualities or essential structures. These foundational elements represent the central meanings collectively perceived by individuals who have lived through a common phenomenon. In this study as well, the methodological framework outlined by Patton has been employed. To do this, open-ended questions prepared by the researcher were sent to the participants, and the participants responded to these questions in written form. Thus, participants were given the opportunity to freely express their perspectives based on their own lived experiences.

Participants

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlight the importance of understanding from those who have direct experience so this study employed purposive sampling to explore one case in depth. Faculty members from two institutions which hosted teaching and learning centers that specialized in supporting staff to apply AL methods were targetted. Thus, academic staff who work as full-time faculty at the engineering and arts and sciences faculties of these two universities were included in the study. Although there are a total of around 300 academics working in these faculties at two universities, the research received voluntary participation from 40 academics who decided to join the study. The academic staff studied consisted of 12 professors alongside 10 associate professors and 18 assistant professors. The majority of research participants (n=16) had 11 or more years of experience in their field yet some participants (n=14) had 6-10 years of experience. The remaining participants (n=10) had acquired 1-5 years of experience. Participants at the state university comprised 15 academics from the faculty of engineering, and 10 from the faculty of arts and science, while at the foundation (private) university 10 from the faculty of engineering and 5 from the faculty of arts and science.

Data collection instruments

An online survey instrument with open-ended questions was used to collect data on the opinions of academics regarding AL implementations in higher education. When constructing this survey, a comprehensive review of the relevant literature was conducted and survey questions were developed based on the research questions. The survey questions have been revised through the incorporation of expert opinions. The final version of the survey included demographic information, including department affiliation, academic title, and professional experience, with questions related to opinions on AL implementations (What is your understanding of the concept of AL?', Do you think AL implementations are necessary for higher education? Why?', What are

the factors that make AL implementations in higher education difficult / challenging?', Can AL implementations be disseminated in other universities? Why?") Participants were invited to participate in the research via e-mail. The data was collected during the 2023 spring semester. The data collection process was based on voluntary participation, with each session involving the data collection tool taking around 30 minutes per respondent to complete.

Data collection and analysis

Ethical permission was granted from TED University's Human Subjects Ethics Committee before data collection. From the official websites of the two selected universities, a list of all academics holding a PhD. in various departments in the faculty of engineering and arts and sciences was made. In this study, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data since thematic analysis is flexible for identifying, characterizing, and interpreting in-depth patterns (themes) within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The procedures employed in the process of thematic analysis included: (1) familiarization with the data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) writing reports (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this regard, first, academics were coded, ranging from A1 to A40. The transcripts were then thoroughly reread, and all the data was coded. A large number of codes (n=96) emerged, with some containing only one sentence and others containing one or more. Subsequently, a summary of the generated codes was compiled and organized into clusters of themes. To refine the initially gathered themes and present them more systematically, the codes, sub-themes, and themes were subsequently grouped on purpose, and only codes and themes were left. Then the compiled data summaries for each theme was organized into coherent and consistent descriptions. Finally, direct quotations of the academics' opinions were reported.

Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) research trustworthiness means the procedures and activities that help establish reliability and make readers believe the results are correct. A thorough examination of the codes used in data analysis was conducted through peer debriefing with another researcher experienced in qualitative data analysis. The collected data underwent intercoder reliability testing to establish dependability. The reliability analysis used Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula (Reliability = Number of agreements / (Agreements + Disagreements) x 100) showed an intercoder agreement of 0.80. The dataset gained strength through the addition of extensive participant quotations which provided detailed explanations. Discrepancies were handled through dialogue to achieve consensus after comparing both data sets and resolving their differences.

FINDINGS

Academics' conceptions of AL

Research data shows that most academics (n = 31) primarily link AL to classroom activities and they understand it as an active student engagement during lessons. A30 along with multiple other participants explained Active Learning as "a teaching method which includes student involvement in the learning process." A17 explained AL as "an educational approach that enables students to actively participate more in classroom activities." The most prominent in-class teaching approaches, to A17 included group work activities, problem-solving together with asking questions, enforcing case studies and providing recent sensational examples in class. A small number of academics (n = 4) identified the development of discussion spaces as a key aspect of AL. According to A37 "AL functions as a teaching method which actively connects students to their course material through discussions and problem-solving activities and other educational approaches".

Three academics (n = 3) linked AL to experiential learning by emphasizing student contact with course material. A27 stated "AL seems to involve students learning through hands-on activities such as solving sample questions and discussing problems and preparing group project".

Two faculty members defined AL as a method where students take responsibility for their education by participating in developing course content and activities while working alongside instructors to build the teaching process. A33 defined AL stating "The student-centered educational approach of AL enables active classroom participation while allowing students to design lesson content".

Necessity of AL practices in higher education

95% of academics (n = 35) believe AL practices are essential for higher education. According to them, higher education students benefit from AL practices because these practices help them develop essential skills for academic success which include inquiry learning, higher-order thinking and critical thinking. A31 highlighted the importance of AL implementations saying "The purpose of higher education institutions is to develop students' analytical thinking abilities. The educational environment must teach students who will lead their future careers to develop solutions and understand problem-solving methods". In addition, A18 strongly defended the need for AL implementation through both theoretical and practical implementation by stating "Engineering education requires students to move away from rote memorization and focus on idea generation and question-asking".

The academics agreed on the need to implement AL practices stating that these approaches fill knowledge gaps that basic education system shortcomings created in students. The necessity of AL implementations was stressed by A22 as "The interest of students toward passive learning keeps decreasing because their basic education deficiencies continue to persist. The students lack focus during classes because they desire immediate problem resolutions and their learning approach centers on passing exams".

Challenges of AL practices in higher education

Challenges concerning AL practices can be examined under three main categories: institutional, academics-related, and student-related.

In terms of institutional challenges, many academics (n = 27) highlighted overcrowded classrooms, intense course syllabi, loaded theoretical course content, a lack of infrastructure and equipment, as well as the centralized authoritarian system. This is dominant in the expressions of academics working at the public university. The prominent factor is the overcrowding of classrooms. Regarding this, A15 stated that course capacity is the most important challenge in these implementations and added as follows: "In my master's courses, I can ensure that all of my 20 students adopt AL implementations, while in my undergraduate courses with 70–80 students, unfortunately, I cannot ensure that all my students are active."

Furthermore, a subset of the participants from the public university (n = 21) expressed that the insufficiency of equipment constituted a significant factor in their experiences. About this, A20 emphasized that the lack of equipment in AL implementations is a major problem, adding that "AL implementations frequently necessitate supplementary resources, such as technological tools, materials for hands-on activities, or access to collaborative software, which may not always be readily accessible.". In addition to this, A18 expressed his opinion about the lack of equipment and financial support for this as follows:"...also, designing an experimental set for AL is not easy or cheap. For example, if you want to show how wave mechanics work in a harbor, you need to scale down the harbor. It is an expensive investment and it cannot be provided for only one course."

It is observed that academics, especially those in the public university (n = 18), draw attention to the weak institutional adoption and ownership of AL implementations, which hinders the implementation of AL practices. A2 posited that institutions ought to assume accountability in this matter and articulated: "The successful implementation of AL strategies by individual academics

may encounter challenges if the overarching corporate culture fails to endorse or prioritize such implementations. The absence of endorsement from higher-level administrators, encompassing financial resources and acknowledgment, poses a formidable challenge for academics in their endeavor to embrace new approaches."

In terms of academics' related challenges, many academics in both universities (n = 26) highlighted the tendency toward traditional teaching methods, inadequacy in using information technologies, and deficiency in teaching theoretical concepts. A19 pointed out: "Many institutions and academics are accustomed to the traditional lecture format as they have been educated in that way, and this makes them resistant to change". A16, similarly highlighted the insufficiency of academics saying: "The deficiency of academics' familiarity with pedagogical approaches beyond traditional lecturing in undergraduate instruction is a serious concern."

In terms of student-related challenges, academics in both universities (n = 23) highlighted the deficiency of the basic education system by creating exam-oriented and rote memorization-seeking students. A common obstacle stated by both rests on the ineffective curriculum structure and educational system of basic national education. Concerning this matter, it has been asserted that the existing basic education system relies heavily on rote learning, exhibiting a dearth of comprehensive institutional planning and placing the entirety of the burden on academics. A30 specifically expressed this situation as follows: "Certain behavioral patterns exhibited by students, which have been shaped by the basic education system, particularly the emphasis on high-stakes tests, pose significant challenges to the effective implementation of AL."

DISCUSSION

Academics in this study define AL as activities that take place only within the classroom while they define AL as an educational method that places teaching at the forefront. Within the framework of Matsushita's 2018 theory of DAL the analysis of internal and external aspects of activity shows academics primarily focus on teaching activities that produce learning with externally active students who lack internal engagement (group C). Most faculty members in their AL definitions fail to include student self-awareness aspects such as relating ideas to prior knowledge while searching for patterns and principles alongside evidence evaluation and logical argument assessment with growing awareness of their understanding. According to the learning activity characteristics defined by Matsushita (2018) academics failed to emphasize student exploration of attitudes and values along with higher-order thinking abilities including analysis synthesis and evaluation. The internal aspect of student learning receives insufficient attention from academics based on their limited understanding of this concept. The definitions of AL by academics also demonstrate an understanding that diverges from the learner-centered framework of AL as described by Hernandez de Menendez et al (2019) which places students at the center of education to lead their learning process through self-guided reflection and student-driven learning while teachers act as mentors and progress evaluators. The lack of proper understanding about AL and its characteristics by academics raises significant doubts regarding institutions that support learning and teaching centers while encouraging their academics to implement AL because their academics demonstrate insufficient knowledge about the concept. The importance of educating academics about what AL actually is and is not before providing them with in-service training on AL methods remains vital for higher education institutions with CTLs. CTL centers at universities require dedicated budgets to support continuous professional development for faculty members. These centers should employ academic staff alongside professionals who specialize in relevant fields. In addition, AL implementation requires institutional leaders to demonstrate their commitment towards its necessity.

The majority of academics (n = 35) believe that incorporating AL methodologies is necessary within the higher education system. In the opinion of academics, first, AL implementations can enhance inquiry, higher order thinking, and critical thinking skills in students, which are very relevant for higher education, and they can compensate for the weaknesses that students bring with

them to higher education encounters. The findings obtained from the academics' responses are also supported by literature. Scholars have argued that AL enhances and develops higher level thinking using students' prior knowledge and experiences and their direct engagement with the course content (Lea et al., 2003). However, academics stated that for a faculty member to implement AL, it is crucial that the faculty member is ready to engage in AL practices and accept this philosophy.

Academics at the public university identified overcrowded classrooms together with insufficient infrastructure and uneven economic resource distribution as the main obstacles to AL implementation. The academics at the public university maintain that AL methods remain accessible only to boutique or private universities. However, the implementation of AL methods can be adapted to teach big classes through specific methods. The following strategies serve as solutions to teach large classes using AL implementations: The instructor should first explain academic expectations before implementing small low-stakes activities while using group work and encouraging students to write in class through "One-Minute Paper" or "Half-Sheet Response" exercises and keeping activities diverse and manageable while using technology and classroom polls to check for understanding and adapting methods for bigger class sizes (CTL TED University, 2023).

Academics from both universities emphasized that institutional adoption and ownership of AL implementations faced significant obstacles. Academics emphasized that organizational and management elements should not be dismissed as essential factors in this situation. The management must internalize and accept this conceptual framework to create an institutional culture. Ragus (2020) states that AL promotion succeeds when educational institutions develop innovative teaching methods and provide academic freedom to their staff. Through academic freedom instructors gain independence to choose educational approaches that best fit their individual teaching environments. Sukacke et al. (2022) discovered that challenge-based learning adoption as AL emerged from institutional and governmental programs instead of educator-identified knowledge gaps. Deveci and Nunn (2018) state that AL implementation needs extensive institutional support to properly assist both students and educators. A18 admitted this statement by saying: "The practices will stay at a boutique level until the national income reaches 20,000 dollars." The barriers include Law No. 2547 together with the centralized system, large student numbers, K-12 education system, university entrance exams, general country conditions and academic staff low motivation levels because of various factors. The adoption of AL implementations should move beyond written plans because it requires genuine institutional backing through proper support mechanisms. The transition to view teaching as a shared responsibility should be implemented according to Brte, Nesje, and Lillejord (2020) by establishing a comprehensive support system that includes databases and equipment and tools and feedback mechanisms.

The rising publication and project demand on academics during recent years may have caused them to avoid AL practices because private universities want to lead this competition according to organizations like Times Higher Education (2023) that try to establish university categories through specific evaluation criteria. The teaching-learning process time allocation of many academics has shifted toward writing articles in their offices because of this situation. The main objective of universities extends beyond project and publication outputs because they aim to deliver quality education. The approach of leaving AL practices to voluntary faculty members only would contradict the university websites which state their mission and vision as "excellence in education." The proposed strategy to enhance educational quality while expanding AL implementation involves incorporating demonstrated teaching effectiveness into academic staff recognition and incentive systems at the institutional level. Academics can use evidence from their AL practice-based teaching quality improvement efforts to receive encouragement and recognition through incentives that are similar to publication incentives. The reappointment and promotion criteria could include qualified AL applications as part of their assessment or promotion.

Both universities face similar obstacles which include the practice of traditional teaching methods and limited theoretical instruction especially in courses with detailed syllabi and substantial content. The scholarly investigations analyzed by Hernández-de-Menéndez et al. (2019) reveal that educators struggle to balance implementation of new learning methods with sufficient coverage of mandatory course topics and materials. Many academics who teach introductory courses with dense theoretical material state that AL implementation is not feasible because the course material cannot be adequately covered through this method. According to academics it is necessary to extend AL implementations across all courses instead of limiting them to particular courses. A number of academics believe that incorrect assumptions about the proper teaching methods for particular courses along with their content demonstrate an actual lack of understanding about appropriate teaching methods. The lack of AL understanding by numerous educators demonstrates that there is insufficient in-service training available. AL implementation resistance stems from academic staff who need to handle extensive content and require substantial preparation time according to Lea et al. (2003). The authors Halonen et al. (2002) introduce a different educational strategy which focuses on fewer subjects but provides detailed coverage of each subject. The exploration of learning analytics through monitoring student progress offers teachers a solution when designing AL lessons becomes time-consuming (Vivian et al. 2016). The PERUSALL platform of Eric Mazur demonstrates how automated assessment tools benefit academics who seek effective teaching methods while providing extra time for AL implementations. The PERUSALL platform enhances critical reading measurement and facilitates additional active learning opportunities through flipped learning methods and has been integrated by multiple major publishers into their digital platforms (Perusall, 2023).

Academics have noted that since students moving from primary education to universities are usually quite removed from AL practices and philosophy, it may be useful to introduce integration activities and make them familiar with AL during the one-year English language learning process in preparatory schools to better prepare them for their first-year courses. Universities without preparatory schools can also consider adding 1-2 courses to their first-year curriculum that include the philosophy and practices of AL.

CONCLUSION

The current research shows that academics with CTL centers at their institutions view AL practices mainly as classroom-based activities which instructors direct. The majority of academics recognize both the importance and advantages of AL practices yet identify multiple implementation obstacles which originate from institutional structures. The true institutional commitment to teaching-learning processes remains uncertain because institutions continue to emphasize "excellence in education" in their mission and vision documents despite this uncertainty. Institutions which focus on rankings and publication outputs need to stay committed to the educational process while prioritizing AL practices. The universities in certain countries award both academic publications and projects as well as teaching qualifications for promotion or contract renewal. In Turkey, universities who claim to have “teaching excellence” in their mission and vision documents also need to provide students with the education required to become qualified engineers architects or teachers and the way to do this is not just concentrate on research excellence. These universities need to promote the use of AL methodologies and make sure that students benefit from them.

LIMITATIONS

The study findings are limited to the opinions of 40 academics from two universities with teaching and learning centers. Thus, the results cannot apply to the entire population of university faculty. However, findings shed light on salient points on AL as academics’ opinions are obtained by open-ended responses.

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