**TEACHER CANDIDATES’ OPINIONS ABOUT INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND TECHNIQUES**

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| ***Abstract:*** *The aim of this research is to determine what do teacher candidates think about instructional methods and techniques covered in the “Instructional Principles and Methods” lesson. “Instructional Principles and Methods” is one of the most serious lesson of teacher training process. Because this research was aimed at determining the current conditions, a descriptive model was used. Also qualitative research methods were preferred in this research. This research was carried out with 38 teacher candidates studying at Kırklareli University Art and Science Faculty in the 2015-2016 academic year fall semester. Participants of this research were training at Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate Program. The scope of “Instructional Principles and Methods” course instructional methods and techniques such as brainstorm, case study, educational games, role playing, six thinking hats, station, concept mapping, buzz groups were taught in practice. In order to reveal the participants’ thinking about the research subject some open-ended questions such as “what do you think about instructional methods and techniques taught in the lesson?”, “which instructional methods and techniques will you prefer in the future? Why?” “What do you think about contribution to educational process of instructional methods and techniques preferred to use?” were asked to teacher candidates. The participants’ answers were analysed by researcher. In the light of answers given by teacher candidates; participants prefer to use forward thinking, providing the opportunity to express students’ thoughts instructional methods and techniques. In addition participants think that instructional methods and techniques such as brainstorm, case study, educational games, role playing, six thinking hats, station, concept mapping, buzz groups create fun and enjoyable educational environment.*  ***Keywords:*** *[Teacher* *candidates’ opinion, Instructional methods and techniques*.*]* |

# Introduction

Human being has the ability of learning from the moment of birth. Individuals always learn consciously or unconsciously by interacting the things in their environment. There are wanted and unwanted behaviors among learned behaviors. It is the main aim of teaching to make learners learn wanted behaviors. In accordance with this aim it is also important how to teach these wanted behaviors. it is accepted as an inevitable status that learning process which direct individuals to wanted behaviors should be focused on the student's interest and not be boring in the world that technical developments speed up so rapid day after day and colorfulness of stimulants attract everyone. In order to achieve effective teaching, instructional methods and techniques have important role in that process.

*Literature Review*

Teaching quality is closely related with the characteristic of preferred instructional methods and techniques. Teaching process starts with decided aims. To reach the decided aims, there is a pathway which is followed during the process: instructional methods (Taşpınar 2010; Reigeluth; 1983; Uşun 2007). Instructional methods answer how we reach to aims. (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993). Applying these methods in teaching is called techniques (Demirel, 2005). Reigeluth (1999) stresses that instructional methods and techniques always contribute to teaching. There are a lot of methods and techniques to reach aims. Teachers also can use their creativity and they can adjust new instructional methods or techniques which mean that there will be countless methods and techniques to choose. In order to be reach a successful result, teacher as practitioner of instructional curriculum has to choose instructional method very carefully (Philips, 2005; Saban, 2000). While choosing a method teachers have to take into consideration these factors; time, opportunities, number of students, property, aim of topic and target qualifications that desired to gain to students (Demirel, 2005; Fidan & Erden, 1998; Küçükahmet, 2006). If pay attention to target qualifications that desired to gain to students factor. It can be concluded that the aim of teaching process is not just teaching a topic. Developing students’ qualifications such as problem solving, commenting, expressing himself/herself, communicating, and having empathy are also included in these main aims of instructional curriculum (MEB 2005). Based on this fact, it can be said that teaching methods and techniques such as brainstorming, case study, discussion, role-playing, educational game which are useful to serve this purpose can be preferred.

It is crucially stressed that students must be active in teaching process. (Açıkgöz-Ün, 2003; Lunenberg & Volman, 1999). It means a student must do something, must think while doing something so that he/she could decide or comment on something which are considered as high level learning (Açıkgöz-Ün, 2003; Mattson, 2005). Individuals, as expressed in description of the learning, learn by experience. Therefore it is essential to create a good teaching atmosphere which lets students to experience. Chen, Burry, Stock & Rovegno (2000) state if education is centered on the student the role of the teacher is a counsellor. Teachers should direct students to activities and concentrate on students’ performance rather than the product. (Akınoğlu, 2004; Neo & Neo, 2009; Şaşan, 2002; Yıldız & İsrael, 2001)

It is possible with instructional methods for teachers to have active students. Brainstorming which is thought to improve creativity (Heslin, 2009; Mao & Pan, 2009; Rickards, 1999), case study which is thought to improve deciding and problem solving (Gözütok, 2007; Hartfield, 2010), role-playing which is thought to support socializing and communicating (Morris, 2001; San, 1990), educational games which are thought to contribute to motivation (Amory, 2001; Kaya & Elgül, 2015; Pivec & Kearney, 2007), concept Map which is thought to provide schemata learning (İngeç, 2008; Novak, 2010) are some instructional methods and techniques to make students active in learning process and provide learning by experiencing. As well as when the literature examined it is occurred that teachers generally prefer straight teaching in the teaching process. (Öztürk, 2004; Yıldırım & Demir, 2003). Consequently, based on this it can be said that qualification of teachers for the instructional methods and techniques is an issue that should be emphasized strongly. It is clear that using proper instructional methods and techniques increases quality of teaching (Erden 1998). The success of teacher is directly related to his/her usage of instructional methods and techniques. Teacher candidates who are the teachers of future also should be trained about instructional methods and techniques. As Önen, Mertoğlu, Saka & Gürdal (2009) stated teacher candidates should have the best qualifications before they start their career. It is thought that getting candidate teachers’ opinions about instructional methods and techniques contribute to teaching process.

*Aim of the Study*

The aim of this paper is to determine teacher candidates’ opinion about instructional methods and techniques covered in the “Instructional Principles and Methods”. Based on this aim it is to answer the following questions:

1.What do you think about instructional methods and techniques taught in the lesson of “Instructional Principles and Methods?

2.Which instructional methods and techniques will you prefer in the future? Why?

3.What do you think about contribution to educational process of instructional methods and techniques preferred to use?

**Method**

Descriptive model was used in this paper. Also this paper was designed as a case study. Therefore, this paper was conducted with qualitative research method.

*Participant (Subject) Characteristics*

This paper was carried out with 38 teacher candidates studying at Kırklareli University Art and Science Faculty in the 2015-2016 academic year fall semester. Participants of this research were training at Pedagogical Formation Education Certificate Program.

*Data Collection*

The data were collected by interviewing. In this process an interview form was prepared by researcher. This form includes the following open-ended questions.

1. What do you think about instructional methods and techniques taught in the lesson?
2. Which instructional methods and techniques will you prefer in the future? Why?
3. What do you think about contribution to educational process of instructional methods and techniques preferred to use?

*Analyzing Data*

A content analysis technique was used for the assessment of the data. Candidate teachers’ answers were grouped according to similarity and were interpreted, also important answers which were considered important as it reflects the situation, were presented. In order to increase reliability a specialist’s thoughts has been taken consideration and common points has been detected.

**Results**

This paper is mainly consists of thoughts of candidate teachers about instructional methods and techniques. To start with, first it is aimed to understand main thoughts based on candidates’ answers. In addition to this, some answers which were thought to reflect this study’s aim has presented directly.

*3.1 The teacher candidates’ answers based on the question “*What do you think about instructional methods and techniques taught in the lesson?*”* *can be summarized like that;*

Based on answers it has been understood that using different techniques and methods in the classroom has positive effect on teaching process, yet the classroom must be analyzed well. Instructional methods and techniques has been accepted as an practical and important device by teacher candidates and it has been especially stressed that instead of teacher centered teaching a “student centered” teaching should be established. Different instructional methods and techniques can increase teachers’ productivity. It has been reported by candidate teachers that students’ interests are closely related with methods and techniques. It has also been reported that inside “Instructional Principles and Methods” book there are very useful and funny instructional methods and techniques which are used in teaching process. Teacher candidates said that by learning and applying these methods and techniques lessons can be funnier.

*3.2 The teacher candidates’ answers based on the question “Which instructional methods and techniques will you prefer in the future? Why?” can be summarized like that;*

Candidate teachers’ preferences about instructional methods and teachniques in their future career is shown on the Table 1 below:

Table 1. Teacher candidates’ preferences of instructional methods and techniques

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Instructional methods and techniques* | *f* |
| brainstorm | 28 |
| educational games  answer-question | 22  18 |
| six thinking hats | 17 |
| discussion | 13 |
| role playing | 8 |
| case study  concept mapping | 7  6 |

According to Table1 it has been clearly understood that “Brainstorming” is the most preferred instructional technique. The reasons why teacher candidates preferred this technique has been listed below.

*TC1 : “I think brainstorming is more efficient. Instead of looking for just a correct answer, all students should state themselves and they should share their opinions and they can learn new things.”*

*TC3: “Brainstorm leads students to state themselves about a situation and helps them to think.”*

*TC4 : “I think brainstorm technique is beneficial and suitable. There is no “wrong answer” system and it is important for everyone to say something. Shy students can share their feelings and thoughts. Also new ideas can be learned.”*

*TC5: “By using brainstorm technique students become more active and learning becomes less boring for students.”*

*TC7: “If I had to use a technique It would be brainstorming technique. We can realize students’ differences because one needs to think faster and different ideas should be stated in this technique.”*

*Based on this study, another instructional technique which candidate teachers are thinking of using in their future career is “Educational Game”. The reasons why they preferred this technique has been listed below.*

*TC10: “I think educational game should be the most preferred one. A lesson is not just teaching. It is inevitable for students to demotivate while teaching. On this basis, information + entertainment (educational game) make lessons funny. By using this technique students become more active, their motivation increases. It also enhances student cooperation.”*

*TC11: “Educational game not only teaches but also entertains. Students enjoy in the class.”*

*TC12: “Just delivering the information is not practical. If we change this information to a funny game by using nice images it will be more efficient on students.”*

*TC14: “It is important to combine teaching with a game. By doing so lesson becomes funnier.”*

*Another instructional technique which candidate teachers are thinking of using in their future career is “Question-Answer technique.” The reasons why they preferred this technique has been listed below.*

*TC15:“I would use Question –Answer technique because of reviewing and getting feedback about learning level.”*

*TC16: “Question-Answer technique increase student participation and it gives idea whether a student understood the topic or not.”*

*TC 17: “I would use Question –Answer. I can realize whether they understood well or not.*

*Another instructional technique which candidate teachers are thinking of using in their future career is “Six thinking hats technique.” The reasons why they preferred this technique has been listed below.*

*TC18: "Six thinking hats technique takes my interest because it helps me to assess different thoughts of students.”*

*TC19: “It is a good technique because six thinking hats leads students to think in different ways. Students are active and they are more motivated in the class.”*

*TC 20: “In Six thinking hats technique the situation is considered in positive and negative ways so it helps students to think wider.”*

*Another instructional technique which candidate teachers are thinking of using in their future career is “Discussion” The reasons why they preferred this technique has been listed below.*

*TC 21 : “In discussion technique students new ideas emerge. Students are more active while discussing. It has a great role in reasoning and problem solving.”*

*TC22: “I try to activate students’ judgement strategies and critical thinking abilities while using discussion technique.”*

*TC23: “In discussion technique students explores reasons of their opinions so they go beyond the discussion.”*

*TC24: “I think it is the most practical techniques of all we have learned. Students are active and explorer here. Groups can improve their communication and pronunciation skills as well as cognitive skills. From this point of view; improvements can be seen about self-confidence. Students also respect other ideas and they improve their alternative thinking skills.”*

*Another instructional technique which candidate teachers are thinking of using in their future career is “Role-Playing” The reasons why they preferred this technique has been listed below.*

*TC25: “Role-Playing technique helps to improve students’ empathy skills so I prefer this technique.”*

*TC26: “Because it is “real like” I would use Role-Playing technique.”*

*TC28: “Role-Playing technique can be applied in all subjects and it helps students to be more active so I would use it.”*

*Another instructional technique which candidate teachers are thinking of using in their future career is “Case-study” the reasons why they preferred this technique is listed below.*

*TC27: “I use Case-study technique. I want to improve my students’ creative-thinking abilities. They can record information on their mind and when I ask a question about this in the exam they can easily answer.”*

*TC28: “It is not easy to write in all topics but some topics can be written. In literature lesson, a story about an author’s life can be written and this technique can be used.”*

*TC29: “I liked case study technique and I think it can be used in all topics. One can learn with stories. A teacher cannot teach a rule in Turkish lesson just by giving the grammar rules but he or she can teach this with the help of a story. Case study makes the education permanent.*

*TC30: “I think Case-study technique should be used. I have seen how a story has been assessed.”*

*Another instructional technique which candidate teachers are thinking of using in their future career is “Concept-mapping” the reasons why they preferred this technique has been listed below.*

*TC31: “I can use schema to make it more understandable so I can do it with concept-mapping technique.”*

*TC32: “I think concept-mapping is important to see the relationship between information which has been taught.”*

*Techniques which candidate teachers are thinking of using in their future career have been mentioned above. In addition to these techniques; candidate teachers told us that they would prefer buzzing groups and paper bag techniques in the future.*

*TC33: “In paper bag technique; without saying students’ name and giving them opportunity to speak freely makes this technique really interesting.”*

*TC34: “Buzzing groups makes communication more active between teacher student and also student & student so it helps students to speak about the related topic. Therefore I would use this technique.”*

3.2 The teacher candidates’ answers based on the question “What do you think about contribution to educational process of instructional methods and techniques preferred to use?” can be summarized like that;

Candidate teachers have stated that because of the fact that brainstorming technique improves effective thinking skills and leads to express different point of views, it also enables to respect other ideas, to be open new ideas. Furthermore candidate teachers have stated that it enables students to enjoy the topic and to participate actively. Also, It has been stressed that it has positive effects on shy students. Candidate teachers all agree that educational games technique brings fun to the class and lessons become more attractive for students. According to candidate teachers’ expressions question-answer technique helps students to participate actively and it enables teachers to get feedback about students’ success. Candidate teachers all agree that six-thinking hats technique helps students to think deeper and to take into consideration different point of views. It also makes learning funnier, helps students to participate actively. Candidate teachers have all agreed that discussion technique is a student centered technique which enables students to express themselves in the society and to respect other ideas. It also improves students’ multiple thinking and judgement skills. Consequently students’ communication skills improve. Candidate teachers have stated that case study and role playing techniques make class funnier and learning easier. Using these techniques also enables students to learn permanently. Also candidate teachers think that concept mapping has a function to schemata information which has been learned.

**Discussion**

Candidate teachers stated that different instructional methods and techniques can be used in teaching process. Teachers candidates emphasize that instructional methods and techniques such as brainstorm, case study, educational games, role playing, six thinking hats, station, concept mapping, buzz groups taught in their book “Instructional Principles and Methods” are very practical and useful. it concluded that teacher candidates think Instructional methods and techniques such as brainstorm, case study, educational games, role playing, six thinking hats, station, concept mapping, buzz groups motivate students and make students more active so that students learn by experiencing. Also the results were obtained candidate teachers stated that instructional methods and techniques such as brainstorm, case study, educational games, role playing, six thinking hats, station, concept mapping, and buzz groups make lessons tasteful and create enjoyable learning process. From the research carried out by Böyük, Demir and Erol (2010) it can be concluded that science and technology teachers are willing to use laboratory method in which students are active in the class. Similar to Böyük, Demir and Erol’s study (2010), there are some findings which support the idea that instructional methods and techniques such as educational game, brainstorming, role playing and case study that make students active more preferable by teachers because teachers think that these techniques contribute to learning process in point of learning easily and funny. (Garris, Ahlers & Driskell, 2002; Kaptan & Kuşakçı, 2002; Karamustafaoğlu & Kaya, 2013; Ören & Avcı, 2004; Yılmaz, 2013). According to findings about this paper, brainstorming will be the most preferred instructional technique by candidate teachers. Candidate teachers will prefer this instructional technique because it helps students to think deeply, to state themselves, to assess ideas and to comment about this idea. Furthermore it encourages shy students to participate activities. Yaman and Karaarslan (2012) stated that brainstorming helps students to increase their motivoation and their speaking abilities as it supports candidate teachers’ statements. In Isaksen, & Gaulin’s (2005) study it has been pointed out that brainstorming improves creativity which supports the research carried out by Yaman & Karaarslan (2012) and this paper findings.

It can be concluded that another most preferred instructional technique is educational games by candidate teachers. The reason why candidate teachers prefer this instructional technique insistently is educational game brings entertainment to education atmosphere. It is a point strongly emphasized by teachers candidates that entertainment make students active and motive students for learning. There is a lot of supportive essays result of this paper about educational games technique (Bakar, Tüzün & Çağıltay, 2008; Randel et al, 1992; Saracaloğlu & Karademir, 2009; Tortop & Ocak, 2010; Yurt, 2007).

Another instructional technique which candidate teachers will prefer in the future is question-answer technique. Candidate teachers stressed that question-answer technique gives feedback about students and lets students to be more active in classroom activities. Nazlıçiçek, & Akarsu (2008) stated that teachers generally use question-answer technique as an assessment tool which is similar to candidate teachers’ statements that question-answer technique gives feedback about students.

Another instructional technique which candidate teachers will prefer in the future is six thinking hats technique. Candidate teachers stated their reason of prefer six thinking hats technique because of six thinking hats technique directs students to think different perspectives. So that thinking hats technique enables to improve students’ perspectives. Geçit & Ölmez (2016) pointed out that the group which was taught by six-hats thinking technique is more successful academically than traditional group. It has been understood that this group is also more willing to learn. Geçit & Ölmez (2016) interpreted this is the result of cooperative learning. There are scientific studies which proof these findings (Altıkulaç & Akhan, 2010; Can, 2005). In addition to them Bezir and Baran (2014) state that this technique lets students think actively which supports this paper result.

Another instructional technique which candidate teachers will prefer in the future is discussion technique. The reason why candidate teachers prefer this technique is that it helps students to think, to express themselves and interact with other students. Demirel (2005) stated that discussion technique creates the atmosphere in which students share their opinions. Furthermore in Yeşilyurt’s study (2013) it has been stated that according to teachers, discussion technique gives students an opportunity to express their opinions and lets students participate.

Another instructional technique which candidate teachers will prefer in the future is role-playing (drama) technique. The reason why candidate teachers prefer role-play technique is that students actively take part in learning process. Başçı & Gündoğdu (2011) stated that candidate teachers have a positive attitude towards drama, they think it helps to improve creativity it also provides learning with fun. Besides, Yılmaz (2013) has found out that candidate teachers will frequently use this technique in their career.

Because candidate teachers think that it is easier, more effective and more enjoyable to teach, chancing a topic to a story which means case study is another Instructional technique preferable one. As supported this paper finding Güccük (2013) stated that students who were taught by case study technique have a more effective teaching process rather than other techniques. There are other studies which support the research carried out by Güccük (2013) and this paper finding. (Çakır, Berberoğlu, Alpsan & Uysal, 2002; Adalı, 2005; Horzum & Alper, 2006; Flynn & Klein, 2001; Şahin, Atasoy & Somyürek, 2010).

Since it has an image function and lets students create schemata on their mind, candidate teachers will also prefer concept-mapping technique. Yağdıran (2005) stated that concept-mapping technique contribute student participation and enable students learn by experiencing. Also Kaya (2003) emphasize that concept-mapping technique enable to meaningful learning.

Candidate teachers have really good comments on instructional methods and techniques covered in the “Instructional Principles and Methods” book. Candidate teachers stated that they will use instructional methods and techniques which support student participation and active learning. Candidate teachers will also use instructional methods and techniques which help students to improve their high level thinking abilities such as commenting, empathy because of these instructional techniques makes learning funnier and easier. Views of inservice teachers working at different school about instructional methods and techniques should be investigated. Why candidate teachers think to prefer mostly brainstorming technique their future career should be investigated.

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