Preschool Teachers' Opinion on Active Learning
İpek ÖZBAY[a*]

a* Asst. Prof. Dr., Yozgat Bozok University, (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0996-5496) ipek.ozbay@bozok.edu.tr

ABSTRACT

The study was aimed to determined preschool teachers' opinions about active learning. The phenomenological pattern was preferred within the framework of the qualitative research methodology. The data of the study were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The study group of the study consists of 10 preschool teachers being selected through easily accessible situation. Descriptive analysis method was used in the analysis of the data. As a result of the study, it was seen that teachers defined active learning as a process in which the learner is active, that activates the senses, in which the learning skills develop, in which learner obtain learning experience by doing and living. Teachers stated that in active learning, the teacher has responsibilities to know the individual and developmental characteristics of children, to be a good observer, to plan learning processes that attract the attention and interest of children, to support children as much as necessary when they need help, and to include children in planning the learning process. Teachers stated that the prominent behavioral characteristics of children in active learning are being active in the learning process, establishing positive relationships with their peers, asking questions, being willing to research, question and learn. It was seen that they stated the small size of the class, crowded class size, classroom management problems, lack of materials and being closed to the learner as barriers to active learning. It was seen that the practices of teachers regarding active learning are asking interesting questions, encouraging children to ask questions, designing activities that stimulate the senses, creating a collaborative classroom environment, and using different teaching techniques.

Keywords: Active learning, constructivism, preschool teachers

Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Aktif Öğrenmeye Yönelik Görüşleri
Öz

Bu araştırmada okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin aktif öğrenmeye ilişkin görüşlerinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemi çerçevesinde fenomenoloji deseni tercih edilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Çalışma grubu kolay ulaşılabilir örnekleme yoluyla seçilmiş 10 okul öncesi öğretmeninden oluşmaktadır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerden elde edilmiş olan verilerin analizinde betimsel analiz yönteminden faydalanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda öğretmenlerin aktif öğrenmeyi öğrenenin aktif olduğu, duyuları harekete geçiren ve öğrenenin becerilerinin geliştiği yaparak yaşayarak öğrenme deneyimi olarak tanımladıkları görülmüştür. Öğretmenler aktif öğrenmede öğretmenin çocukların bireysel ve gelişimsel özelliklerini bilme, iyi bir gözlemci olma, çocukların dikkatini ve ilgisini çeken öğrenme süreçleri planlama, çocuklara yardıma ihtiyaç duydukları zamanda gerektiği kadar destek olma ve öğrenme sürecini planlamaya çocukları da dahil etme konularında sorumlulukları olduğunu belirtmiştir. Öğretmenler aktif öğrenmede çocukların öne çıkan davranışsal özelliklerinin ise öğrenme sürecinde aktif olma, akranlarıyla olumlu ilişkiler kurma, sorular sorma, araştırmaya, sorgulamaya ve öğrenmeye istekli olma olarak ifade etmişlerdir. Sınıf büyüklüğünün küçük olması, sınıf mevcudunun kalabalık olması, sınıf yönetimi sorunları, materyal eksikliği ve öğrenenin içine kapalı olmasını aktif öğrenmenin önündeki engeller olarak ifade ettikleri görülmüştür. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin aktif öğrenmeye ilişkin yaptıkları uygulamalar arasında ilginç sorular sorma, çocukları soru sormaya teşvik etme, duyuları harekete geçiren, araştırma yapabilecekleri, düşündüren, merak uyandırıcı ve dikkat çekici etkinlikler tasarlama, işbirlikçi çalışma ortamı yaratma ve farklı öğretim tekniklerini kullanma olduğu görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Aktif öğrenme, yapılandırmacılık, okul öncesi öğretmenleri

1 | INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, radical changes occurred in education programs due to the reforms made in the field of education in 2005 (Aksit, 2007). These reforms ensured that the constructivist approach that puts the learner in the center instead of the traditional understanding of education is taken as a basis in learning. With the adoption of the constructivist approach, the implementation of an original and more flexible education program has come to the fore and the roles and responsibilities of the teacher and learner have changed. The teacher has left behind the role of transmitting knowledge, taking a guiding and facilitating role in learning. On the other hand, the learner had the role of constructing the information instead of receiving it passively. In this context, with the adoption of the constructivist approach, active learning understanding has become dominant in learning.

The constructivist approach emphasizes that learners construct their own learning using their existing knowledge and experience (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). According to Piaget's learning theory, learning is an active process that learner fitting new information into existing their understanding or mentally restructuring the new information (Schaffer, 2004). In other words, the learner must establish a connection between new information and existing knowledge and expand his understanding. However, according to Vygotsky, social interaction plays a fundamental role in the learning process (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 2004). In addition to actions, cultural resources have an impact on learning.

Active learning, based on the constructivist approach, is a process that includes peer-to-peer interaction that encourages the learner to develop cognitive activity and more advanced mental models. In general, active learning can be defined as a teaching method that effectively involves the learner in the learning process in a way that requires the learner to do meaningful learning activities and to think about what they are doing (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). In short, active learning is the process of making learners the center of their own learning (Warren, 1997).

Active learning in early childhood is important for the creation of a learning environment that offers developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for the full development of the child's potential. Children learn by occurring a new understanding in interaction with objects, peers, adults, ideas and developing events (Stephen, Ellis, & Martlew, 2010). Based on this definition, active learning depends on the active use of materials (natural materials, toys, etc.) in the learning environment. Active learning begins with children manipulating objects using their bodies and senses. These experiences gained through the materials offer concrete and direct learning to children (Flavel, 1963). In addition, active learning includes physical activity, which includes interacting with objects to generate new knowledge, as well as mental activity, which includes interpreting this interaction. In this context, the existence of peer or adult support that enhances the learning experience that begins with interacting with objects is also important for learning to take place (Klein, 1991). The power that drives the child to learn comes from within. The child's interest and curiosity stimulate him to develop new knowledge and understanding. Active learners are explorers who ask questions and investigate using this interest and curiosity within them.

In active learning environments, children decide what to do based on their own interests and desires. In line with this decision, they make discoveries using all their senses by deciding what materials to use and what to do. Thus, they gain concrete learning by directly interacting with objects, ideas, peers and adults (Açıkgöz, 2011; Koç, 2000; Harminn, 1999). In such a learning environment, the teacher provides the children with a variety of materials they can work on. In addition, it creates a suitable place and sufficient time for children to use these materials. In this learning process, it follows children's own planning, listens to their thoughts and encourages them to ask questions (Açıkgöz, 2011; Öztürk, 2014; Zembat, 2012). In such a learning process, the child has an active and meaningful learning experience.

According to Demirtaş and Sucuoğlu (2009), group activities involving active learning carried out in early childhood positively affect children's individual learning and group work, their ability to produce more alternatives, and their decision-making skills. Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson (2006) stated that children should be active participants in the learning process because of learning is triggered by their life experiences. In other study, conducted by Hännikäinen, and Rasku-Puttonen (2010) investigated the contribution of primary and pre-school teachers to children's participation in learning process, and found that preschool teachers focus on active participation and interaction, whereas primary school teachers emphasized more clearly on academic learning. Also, the findings indicated that active participation and friendly relationships enrich children's curiosity,

and nourish children's motivation for and interests in academic learning (Hännikäinen, & Rasku-Puttonen, 2010). In another similar study on how first-grade primary school teachers interpret active learning in daily practice, it was determined that they adopted a teaching focused on "planned, purposeful play" instead of spontaneous play and activities based on individual interests of children (Stephen, Ellis & Martlew, 2010). Johansson and Sandberg (2010) in their study of the views of pre-service preschool teachers and preschool teachers about learning and participation revealed that the majority described learning as gathering information through interactions, experiences and play. According to another study on examining the views of preschool teachers about learning, teachers mostly emphasized the importance of active learning in children's learning by emphasizing learning processes that support children's social development and initiatives as well as play activities (Broström et al., 2015). Additionally, a study on exploring active learning practices in preschool education based on pre-service preschool teachers' views, it was indicated that pre-service preschool teachers thought that active learning practices guided and supported children learning (Pekdogan & Kanak, 2016). Also, in this study, pre-service preschool teachers stated that varied activities should carried out in a balanced and holistic way in well-equipped classrooms that provide children with an area of movement.

It is vital in early childhood education that children were directed to learning processes in line with their interests and needs and support their active participation in the learning process. Since, it is stated that the active, interactive and collaborative learning experiences that will be obtained in the preschool period will have a positive effect on the future years of children's lives (Alexander, 2009; Department for Children, Schools and Families [DCSF], 2007, 2009). Also, in Turkey, the necessity of creating an education approach based on play and active learning is emphasized in the preschool education program (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2013). In developing active learning experience for children in classrooms, teacher's ideas and experiences are also important issue. An examination of the related literature reveals that there are limited studies on the views of preschool teachers about the concepts of active learning. Therefore, there is a need for such studies. Furthermore, considering the contribution of the active learning method and the educational environments designed based on this to the development of children, it can be said that determining the opinions of preschool teachers on this subject will contribute to the progress of the education system and most importantly to the vision of how to provide a better learning experience for children. In this context, it was aimed to determine the opinions of preschool teachers on the concept of active learning. Within the framework of this main purpose, answers to the following questions:

1. How do teachers perceive the concept of active learning?
2. What are the teachers' views on the roles of teachers and learners in the active learning process?
3. What are the teachers' views on the barriers to active learning?
4. What are the practical experiences of teachers regarding active learning?

2 | METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

In the study, qualitative research design was preferred to reveal the opinions of preschool teachers about active learning. The phenomenology design was preferred within the framework of this research method. Phenomenology is a qualitative research method that allows people to express their understanding, feelings, perspectives and perceptions about a particular phenomenon or concept and is used to describe how they experience this phenomenon (Patton, 2018). In this research, it is aimed to reveal the perceptions and experiences of the participants regarding active learning by focusing on the perspectives and experiences of the participants.

STUDY GROUP

The study group of the research consists of 10 preschool teachers who were selected from the non-probabilistic sampling types through easily accessible situation sampling methods. This sampling method was preferred because it is a method that accelerates the research by choosing a situation that is close and easy to access (Creswell, 2016). Demographic information about the study group are given in the Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Study Group

Participant Code	Gender	Age	Educational Level	Professional Experience
T1	Female	38	Bachelor	12
T2	Female	32	Bachelor	10
T3	Female	31	Bachelor	8
T4	Female	47	Bachelor	24
T5	Female	38	Bachelor	9
T6	Female	29	Bachelor	6
T7	Female	41	Bachelor	16
T8	Female	35	Bachelor	14
T9	Female	40	Bachelor	17
T10	Female	35	Bachelor	12

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

The semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher was used as the data collection tool in the study. Interview is a way of collecting data with the participants for a specific purpose, revealing the participants' thoughts, perceptions and evaluations about the research subject (Greasley & Ashworth, 2007). In this study, it was preferred to obtain data through semi-structured interviews because it is a more convenient way to reveal the different perspectives of preschool teachers regarding active learning. The semi-structured interview form included six open-ended and easy-to-understand questions to reveal teachers' perceptions of active learning. The following questions were asked to the teachers: (1) How do you define active learning in preschool education period? (2) What do you think should be the responsibilities of a preschool teacher who has adopted an active learning approach? (3) What kind of responsibilities do you think a teacher who has adopted an active learning approach should expect from the children in her/his class? (4) What do you think about the barriers to learning based on active learning in schools and your own teaching? (5) What do you do to activate children in the learning process? (6) Can you describe in detail the best active learning experience you have had with children in your classroom?

While preparing the semi-structured interview form, the relevant literature was used based on the research questions. After the interview form was created, it was presented to the opinion of two field experts, one of whom has completed a master's degree and the other a doctorate in early childhood education. Thus, the suitability of the questions in the interview form for the purpose of study was evaluated troughs the experts' opinions by the researcher. At the same time, the form was sent to a language expert and it was checked whether the questions consisted of clear and understandable expressions. With the interview form created by making arrangements in line with the expert opinions received, firstly pilot interviews were made with two preschool teachers. In line with the feedback obtained from the pilot interviews, the interview form was finalized and the data of the research started to be collected.

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The data of the research were collected from the teachers who volunteered to participate in the study through online interviews due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Before starting the interview, each teacher was informed about the subject and rights of the research. After this information, the approvals of the teachers that they participated in this interview voluntarily were obtained. Then, at the beginning of the interview, after the teachers answered questions about their demographic status, they answered the semi-structured interview questions. Interviews with teachers vary between 15-20 minutes. The data collection process was completed in January of the 2020-2021 academic year.

DATA ANALYSIS

The teachers' responses to the semi-structured interview questions were analyzed via descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis is the summarization and interpretation of the obtained data based on predetermined themes and often using direct quotations to reveal the views of the interviewees in a striking way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013), descriptive analysis is mostly used in research in which

the conceptual structure of the research is clearly determined beforehand. The data can be organized according to the themes revealed by the research questions or the questions used in the interview and observation processes. In other words, the data are summarized and interpreted according to predetermined themes. In addition, direct quotations are frequently included. The purpose of descriptive analysis is to present the findings in an organized and interpreted way.

In the research, the data were arranged according to the themes revealed by the research questions. After the transcription of the audio recordings of the interviews with the participants, the transcripts were read several times by the researcher. First of all, a framework for data analysis was created based on the research questions, and thus it was determined under which themes the data would be organized. Then, the obtained data were read and organized according to the created frame. In the next stage, the organized data were defined and supported with direct quotations. Finally, the identified findings are explained and interpreted.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

This research is a qualitative research and the data obtained were collected through interviews. Reporting in detail the data obtained in a qualitative research and explaining how the findings were obtained are important criteria for validity and reliability (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In qualitative studies in which the interview technique is used, the interview protocol should be piloted before starting the actual study (Silverman, 1993). In this study, it was tried to increase the reliability of the research by ensuring consistency in the interview protocol with the pilot study conducted before the actual study. Also, in studies in which the interview technique is used, the way the interviewer asks questions affects the content and quality of the data obtained (Silverman, 1993). In this context, the researcher asked the same question with the same words and in the same way to each participant included in the research during the interview. In addition, another way was preferred in the research to increase the reliability of the transcribe what participants say from audio recordings during the interviews. The researcher transcribed a portion of the audio recordings at two different times and calculated the consistency in both transcription processes. For this, he used the agreement percentage formula (Agreement percentage = amount of agreement x 100 / amount of agreement + amount of disagreement) (Bakeman & Gottman, 1997). According to the calculation based on this formula, it was determined that the percentage of agreement between the audio recording transcription made by the researcher at two different times was 100%. The validity of the study was tried to be ensured by participant confirmation and supporting the findings with direct quotations.

RESEARCH ETHICS

In the study several ethical principles take into account. These ethical principles were followed as: Firstly, the participants were informed about the purpose of the research and their rights in the research. Then consent of the participants that they participated in the study voluntarily was obtained. In order to protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality, the preschool teachers were coded as Tx: T: teacher and x: the order in which the interview was made. For example, T5 means the teacher who was interviewed was in the fifth rank. In addition, during the writing process of the study, ethics and quotation rules were followed by the researcher, and the collected data were analysed without making any changes.

3 | FINDINGS

The findings obtained from the interviews with the preschool teachers were gathered under the themes created within the framework of the research questions (Figure 1). These themes are concept of active learning, teacher responsibilities, learner responsibilities, obstacles to active learning, classroom practices based on active learning.
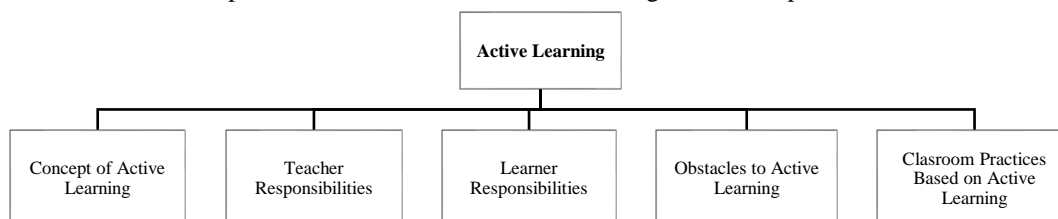

Figure 1. *Themes*

CONCEPT OF ACTIVE LEARNING

It is seen that preschool teachers define active learning as a learning process in which the children learn by experiencing (n=9), activate children (n=5) and their senses (n=5) and develops their skills (n=4). Sample expressions related to the active learning concept theme are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' Expressions Related to Active Learning Concept Theme

Theme	Codes	Teachers' Expressions
Concept of Active Learning	Learning by experiencing	*"Obviously, we can say that it is an experiential learning."* (T4) *"They learn by doing and experiencing"* (T8) *"Learn by doing and experiencing."* (T10).
	Activating the learner	*"It is an educational process in which children are active in the learning process"* (T8) *"It activates them in the learning process both affectively and intellectually."* (T4)
	Activating learning senses	*"It is a learning process that appeals to every sense of children"* (T4) *"It is a learning method in which children actively use all their sense organs through activities they participate one-on-one"* (T10)
	Developing the learner's skills	*"It is a learning process in which children are active and therefore have the opportunity to develop their various skills."* (T2) *"It is a learning where children can develop many skills such as listening, self-expression and communication."* (T7) *"In active learning, children are active in the classroom. Thus, they can learn by doing and living. In group work, children can establish positive relationships with their peers and thus their communication skills improve."* (T4) *"Since all the children in the classroom are in a collaborative way, their social skills, especially their ability to establish social positive relationships, are also supported."* (T10)

According to the teachers, a learning process based on active learning; It is understood that it is an environment based on learning by doing, where the learner is active, uses all his senses and has the opportunity to develop various skills in this process.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the findings, in the active learning process, the teacher has responsibilities to know the individual and developmental characteristics of children (n=5), to plan learning processes that attract the attention and interest of children (n=5), to be a good observer (n=4), to support children as much as necessary when they need help (n=3), and to include children in planning the learning process (n=2). Sample expressions related to teacher responsibilities theme are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers' Expressions Related to Teacher Responsibilities Theme

Theme	Codes	Teachers' Expressions
Teacher Responsibilities	Should know the individual and developmental characteristics of learners well	*"First of all, the teacher should know the developmental characteristics of the children in the classroom very well. If they know their developmental characteristics well, they can evaluate the developmental levels of children correctly and design activities suitable for their developmental level."* (T5)
	Should design learning processes that attract children's attention and interest	*"It should do activities that attract the attention of children."* (T6) *"Teachers should plan the activities according to the child's interest and apply them in a way that draws their attention."* (T9)
	Being a good observer	*"Being a good observer also helps you gain information about children's individual characteristics and developmental levels. You can also use this information to keep children active."* (T7) *"As a preschool teacher, you must be a good observer if you want to activate all children in the learning process."* (T8)
	Only should support children when they need help in learning process	*"For children to be active, the teacher needs to help children only when they need help. For example, instead of cutting and painting for the child in art activities, it is necessary to help the child to complete his / her own activity by helping the child when the child demands."* (T2)
	Should include children in the planning process	*"Teachers should include children in the planning phase in the learning process."* (T1)

According to preschool teachers, in active learning, teachers should know well the individual and developmental characteristics of the children in their class. Regarding this, one teacher expressed her views as

follows: *"Besides, teacher should know the developmental characteristics of children very well. Thus, it can organize activities suitable for the development levels of the children and easily ensure the active participation of all children in the activities."* (T1). In addition, T7 coded teacher emphasized that the teacher should be a good observer for knowing the individual and developmental characteristics of children with the statement as follows: *"Being a good observer also helps you gain information about children's individual characteristics and developmental levels. You can also use this information to keep children active. You can offer different activity options for the individual differences of the children or you can support their self-confidence by having activities that they can achieve in accordance with their developmental level."*

At the same time, preschool teachers stated that in active learning, teachers should design learning processes that attract children's attention and interest. Regarding this, the preschool teachers expressed their views as follows: *"If teacher knows the individual characteristics of the children well, for example, if teacher knows the favorite cartoon character of the group, he/she can write various activities on this character and draw the attention and attention of the children to the learning process."* (T1), *"While designing activities suitable for the developmental levels of children, they should also make plans considering the interests and needs of the children."* (T5). In addition, T5 coded teacher emphasized that it should stimulate children's curiosity in designing activities that attract children's attention with the statement as follows: *"It should design activities that will attract the attention of children. Thus, children can participate in activities actively."* On the other hand, T8 coded teacher emphasize the importance of the teacher being a good observer in planning activities that attract the attention and attention of children with the statement as follows: *"As a preschool teacher, you must be a good observer if you want to activate all children in the learning process. If you are a good observer, you can understand what children are doing in your classroom, what they like to do or what they get bored with very quickly. Thus, you can plan activities that will attract the attention and attention of children with the information you get from your observations."*

In addition, some preschool teachers stated that teachers only should support children when they need help in learning process. Regarding this, the preschool teachers expressed their views as follows: *"Instead of thinking for children, responding for them, or doing for them, we should let the kids do it. For this reason, we should not replace him in the name of helping the child."* (T4) and *"We have to let the kids do something by themselves. I'm not talking about doing everything themselves here. They will necessarily need the help of the teacher, but the help of the teacher should ensure the child do the work he is helping to do on his own."* (T6)

Finally, T1 coded teacher said that *"Teachers should include children in the planning phase in the learning process. Thus, the child is given the opportunity to make a decision about his own learning. Thus, the child can be activated at every stage of the teaching process by participating not only in the implementation phase but also in the planning phase."* and T7 coded teacher said that *"Asking children questions such as what kind of activities would you like to do tomorrow will enable them to participate more actively in the activities. Similarly, questions such as what you want to do today may be asked when starting the day."* Considering two of the teachers (T1, T7) opinions expressed, it was determined that in active learning, teachers stated that they should include children in the planning process.

LEARNER RESPONSIBILITIES

While preschool teachers expressing opinions about children's responsibilities in active learning, they made various statements about the positive effects of active learning on children and the behavioral characteristics that children exhibit prominently in active learning. Regarding this, sample expressions related to learner responsibilities theme are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Teachers' Expressions Related to Learner Responsibilities Theme

Theme	Codes	Teachers' Expressions
Learner Responsibilities	Should be active	*"In active learning, children are active in the classroom."* (T4)
		"In summary, children are active in all matters in active learning." (T8)
		"When it comes to active learning, the first thing that comes to mind is that learners like teachers are also active." (T10)
	Should establish positive relationships with their peers	*"Children can establish positive relationships with their peers"* (T4)

	"This learning does not only proceed through academic knowledge. Since all the children in the classroom are in a collaborative way…" (T10)
Should ask questions	*"They ask questions and work together."* (T8) *"Children who are active in the learning process constantly ask questions."* (T10)
Should research and questioning	*"They discover new information through continuous research and inquiry"* (T8) *"They are curious and learn while investigating and questioning."* (T10)
Should be willing to learn.	*"Children are more active when they are most enthusiastic. Their willingness to learn makes them more active participants."* (K5) *"The child who wonders what he does not know is more active in the learning process if he is willing to learn what he does not know."* (K2)

When table 4 was evaluated, in active learning, it was determined that children should be active (n=6), establish positive relationships with their peers (n=4), research and questioning (n=3), ask questions (n=2), and be willing to learn (n=2).

OBSTACLES TO ACTIVE LEARNING

Preschool teachers stated that there are obstacles in front of active learning, especially related to the physical characteristics of the school. From the opinions of the teachers, the obstacles depending on the physical conditions of the school were determined to be the size of the class being small (n=6), the number of children in the class being high (n=5), and the lack of material (n=1) and learner's introversion (n=1). Regarding this, sample expressions related to obstacles to active learning theme are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Teachers' Expressions Related to Obstacles to Active Learning Theme

Theme	Codes	Teachers' Expressions
Obstacles to Active Learning	Small class size	*"I think the prominent thing here is the physical conditions. For example, I think it is difficult to practice active learning with a small classroom and a large group of children."* (T1)
	High number of children in the class	*"The high number of children in the classroom prevents them from working effectively."* (T5) *"Although a process in which children are active will create an effective learning environment, it is not possible to achieve this in large class groups."* (T3)
	Lack of material	*"There is also not enough variety of materials in our classes to support the independent work of children."* (T7)
	Learner's introversion	*"Also, because some children are very reserved, it can be difficult to include them in such an active learning process"* (T3)

T3 coded teacher emphasized that the high number of children in the classroom is an important obstacle to active learning with the statement as follows: *"Although a process in which children are active will create an effective learning environment, it is not possible to achieve this in large class groups. We have a large number of children in the classroom environment and unfortunately it is not possible for us to monitor, observe, evaluate and support the independent work of each child. You know that it is not possible for you to only teach in the classroom and to reach everywhere in such an environment. Also, because some children are very reserved, it can be difficult to include them in such an active learning process."* In addition, T3 coded teacher stated that with this statement, some of the children being introvert was a child-related obstacle to active learning. Similarly, T4 coded teacher emphasized that the high number of children also brings about class management problems with the statement as follows: *"In active learning, the teacher should follow the class continuously and guide the studies. This job is challenging for the teacher in class groups with a large number of children. In the classroom, there will be loud speech sounds rising from small group work, on the other hand, the sounds of another group of children trying to carry out different activities, and a continuous movement. In this case, it can create a distracting effect. Both children will have difficulty focusing on their studies, and the teacher will have problems guiding the children's work. For this reason, it is difficult to apply active learning in groups with a large number of children."*

CLASSROOM PRACTICE BASED ON ACTIVE LEARNING

Preschool teachers expressed that asking interesting questions (n=5), encouraging children to ask questions (n=3), designing activities that stimulate the senses (n=3), designing intriguing activities (n=3), designing research-based activities (n=3), create a collaborative environment (n=2) and use different teaching techniques (n=1) as examples of their experiences based on active learning. Sample expressions related to classroom practice based on active learning theme are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Teachers' Expressions Related to Classroom Practice Based on Active Learning Theme

Theme	Codes	Teachers' Expressions
Classroom Practice Based on Active Learning	Asking interesting questions	*"In short, it is very important to ask interesting questions, to have children ask questions and do research in this period."* (T5)
	Encouraging children to ask questions	*"By the way, let me add that I would try to encourage children to ask interesting, maybe sometimes absurd questions"* (T5)
	Create a collaborative environment	*"I have planned and implemented various activities throughout my teaching life. However, I have observed that children are most active when interacting with each other."* (T9)
	Use different teaching techniques	*"Besides, I use different techniques. For example, I use the scamper technique."* (T3)
	Designing activities that stimulate the senses	*"I observe that activities that appeal to the senses, especially hearing and visual, activate children in the learning process."* (T7)
	Designing intriguing activities	*"I always start activities with an interesting, attention-grabbing stimulus"* (T5) *"In order to ensure the active participation of children, the activity should attract the attention of children and arouse curiosity."* (T3) *"Therefore, in my activities, I plan activities that attract the attention of children, arouse their curiosity and especially appeal to their hearing and visual senses."* (T7)
	Designing research-based activities	*"In short, it is very important to ask interesting questions, to have children ask questions and do research in this period."* (T5) *"For example, by designing various science activities, I design activities that allow children to do one-on-one experiments and researches, especially with science activities in which children are active."* (T3)

4 | DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In this study focuses on the perceptions and experiences of pre-school teachers towards active learning, it was determined that most of the preschool teachers emphasize that the learner is active in the learning process in active learning. In addition, preschool teachers stated that the learning process based on active learning appealed to the senses of the learners, and that they gained learning experiences by doing. Preschool teachers emphasized the principle of "learning by doing and living" in the active learning process. Johansson and Sandberg (2010) in their study of the views of pre-service preschool teachers and preschool teachers about learning and participation concluded that the majority described learning as gathering information through interactions, experiences and play. Similarly, Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson (2006) stated that children should be active participants in the learning process because of learning is triggered by their life experiences. The emphasis that preschool teachers placed "learning by doing and living" in the active learning process is parallel to these studies results in the literature. Also, when the definitions of active learning are examined in the literature, active learning is primarily defined as the learning process in which learners are active (Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Hohmann & Weikart, 1995; Levine & Munsch, 2010). In addition, active learning is defined as a process in which the learner learns by interacting with his environment and learning by doing (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995). In active learning, learners continue their own learning by taking an active role in their own learning (Lim-Ratnam, Atencio, & Lee, 2016). In summary, active learning is defined as everything that involves learners doing something and thinking about what they do in the learning process (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). In this study, it is seen that the perception of

preschool teachers regarding active learning are similar to the definitions of active learning in the literature. The fact that the perception of the preschool teachers in the study group of the study are similar to the relevant literature may indicate that these teachers' level of knowledge about active learning is sufficient.

Preschool teachers emphasized that teachers should be good observers and facilitator in active learning approach. In addition, preschool teachers stated that they have the responsibility to design learning processes that attract the attention and interest of learners and to include learners in this planning process. In a study conducted with pre-school teacher candidates by Pekdoğan and Kanak (2016), it is seen that pre-service teachers stated that teacher should be a guide and a good observer in the active learning process. In another study conducted by Akay and Kocabaş (2013) with primary school teachers, it is seen that teachers express the role of being a guide in active learning as a teacher's role. When active learning practices for preschool and child care programs are examined, it is emphasized that teachers should observe and interact with children in order to discover how each child thinks and behaves (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995). In addition, Hohmann and Weikart (1995) state that in the active learning process preschool teachers should design activities that take into account children's abilities and interests, and include materials suitable for children's age and interests in the learning process. Similarly, Açıkgöz (2011) states that, in the active learning process, teachers should guide learners, offer learners opportunities to learn by doing and experience, and observe their development. In this study, when the perceptions of teachers towards teachers' role in active learning are examined, it is seen that they are similar to the behaviors expected from the teacher in the active learning process in the relevant literature.

Another important finding obtained from the research is teachers' opinions on learner responsibilities in active learning. Preschool teachers stated that learners in active learning should be active, establish positive relationships with their peers, ask questions, acquire learning based on research and inquiry and are willing to learn. When the literature is examined, the learner has an active role in constructing the information, not a passive recipient (Anthony, 1996). When the findings of the study conducted by Akay and Kocabaş (2013) with primary school teachers are examined, it is stated that the student's active participation in active learning, learning by doing and experiencing, being the researcher, taking responsibility, and being willing to learn are among the learner's roles in active learning. Basically, in active learning, it is emphasized that the learner is active in the learning process (Kalem & Fer, 2003). In addition, in the study conducted by Sivan, Leung, Woon and Kember (2000) on the effect of active learning on learners' learning, it was observed that learners learn by actively participating in the research and problem-solving process in the active learning process. In another experimental study conducted by Aydede and Kesercioğlu (2012), which examines the effect of active learning practices on students' self-learning skills, it has been determined that learners learn with interaction with each other and with establishing positive relationships in a collaborative way. Learners are people who plan their own learning and are responsible for their own learning (Saban, 2000). The responsibilities of the learner in active learning in the literature are similar to the findings obtained from the research.

When the obstacles to active learning according to preschool teachers were examined, it was seen that the teachers mostly stated that the class size was small and the class size was crowded. In addition, material deficiencies, and being introverted learners were also stated as obstacles to active learning-based teaching. As a result of the research conducted by Akay and Kocabaş (2013) on how teachers perceive active learning, it has been determined that teachers see crowded classrooms, insufficient equipment, and the physical structure of the classroom or school as obstacles to active learning practice. In addition, in this study, it is seen that the learners' difficulty in expressing themselves, shyness problems are expressed by the teachers as barriers to active learning due to the learners. In another study conducted by Niemi (2002), it was stated that the size of student groups, and poor learning conditions and materials the important obstacles to educators' use of active learning methods. Also, in the study of Bulut (2005), it was stated that the implementation of active learning was negatively affected due to problems such as the inadequacy of the physical structure of the schools, the lack of equipment and guide resources. In addition, when the relevant literature is examined, it is stated that there are various obstacles to active learning. While especially large classes make it difficult to use active learning, it has been stated that the lack of necessary materials, equipment, or resources is an important obstacle to active learning (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995; Michael, 2007). The findings obtained from the opinions of teachers about the obstacles in front of active learning show parallelism with the results of this research in the literature.

In addition, it was determined that preschool teachers' practice experiences based on active learning include asking interesting questions, encouraging children to ask questions, create a collaborative environment, use different teaching techniques, designing activities that stimulate the senses, designing intriguing activities, and designing research-based activities. According to the results of a study conducted by Akay and Kocabaş (2013), it was determined that the teachers preferred the discovery learning strategy and mostly used the question-answer technique as an active learning strategy-technique. In Hohmann and Weikart's (1995) study on active learning practices for preschool education programs, to support active learning, teachers should organize learning environments and activities, should support positive social communication in the learning environment, should encourage problem solving and verbal thinking by observing children, and should design activities based on children' interest. In the light of these principles, it is suggested that the teacher guides children to plan their days in a daily routine, support positive communication, make daily observations, enable children to interact with materials by using all their senses, and make children think and talk about their experiences by asking questions (Bean, 2011; Saylor & Ganea, 2018; Scottish Executive, 2007; Levine & Munsch, 2010).

In conclusion, in this study, it is seen that active learning in preschool education is expressed as a process based on learning experiences by doing, where the teacher guides the learning of the children, and in which children are active in an equipped learning environment that includes rich and diverse materials. In addition, in preschool education, especially the crowd classroom and lack of materials are seen as obstacles to active learning. Applications based on active learning in preschool education are considered possible by designing learning processes based on research and inquiry by using different teaching techniques that activate the child.

Considering these results of the research, studies can be conducted to increase the equipment features of preschool education classes. However, in order to balance the size of the classes and the number of children, arrangements should be made in accordance with the instructions. In addition, by conducting qualitative research based on active learning practices in preschool education, the research subject can be examined in more detail. In addition, experimental studies based on active learning practices for preschool children can also be conducted.

STATEMENTS OF PUBLICATION ETHICS

Ethical compliance approval was obtained for this research in accordance with the decision of Yozgat Bozok University Ethics Committee dated 03.12.2020 and numbered 28571837-604-E.30649.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in the study.

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