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| Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi |

Identifying Gen Z Student-teachers' English Teaching Constructs through a Personal Construct Psychology Approach

Z Kuşağı Öğretmen Adaylarının İngilizce Öğretim Yapılarının Kişisel Yapı Psikolojisi Yaklaşımıyla Tespit Edilmesi

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2. Teacher education
3. Personal constructs theory
4. Repertory grid
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Abstract

Purpose: The 'apprenticeship of observation' student-teachers are exposed to could complicate teaching actions and constructs in teacher education. These teaching constructs potentially vary across generations in today's evolving society. This qualitative, exploratory study aims to elucidate the constructs of 51 first-year English student-teachers regarding the teaching of English, utilizing the repertory grid technique within the framework of personal construct theory.

Method: Data was collected individually to obtain information on specific elements and structures that form constructs for teaching English. Group discussion sessions were held to reveal the constructs possessed by the group, and whole-class discussions were employed for the final analysis. Separate data analysis was conducted for each data collection phase.

Findings: The results indicated that Gen Z student-teachers had negative perceptions of homework, writing, memorization, and traditional teaching methodologies. They conveyed favorable views on instruction via interaction, media, and games. The study has significant implications for teacher educators as it introduces the English teaching constructs that Gen Z student-teachers should enhance or modify.

Highlights: This study examined the constructs of teaching English among Gen Z student-teachers, providing insights into the evolving perceptions of future educators. It utilized the repertory grid technique within personal construct theory to analyze individual and group perceptions in depth. It combined individual interviews, group and whole-class discussions. The findings identified Gen Z student-teachers' negative attitudes toward traditional practices such as homework and memorization, highlighting a shift in educational value and revealing a strong preference for interactive and media-rich teaching strategies, suggesting a need for teacher education programs to adapt accordingly.

Öz

Amaç: Öğretmen adaylarının maruz kaldığı 'gözlem çıraklığı', öğretim davranışları ve kavram yapılarını öğretmen eğitiminde karmaşık hale getirebilmektedir. Bu öğretim yapıları, günümüzün gelişen toplumunda nesiller boyunca farklılık gösterebilir. Bu nitel çalışma, kişisel yapı teorisi çerçevesinde repertuar çizelgesi tekniğini kullanarak birinci sınıfa devam eden 51 İngilizce öğretmeni adayının İngilizce öğretimine ilişkin yapılarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem: Nitel veriler, İngilizce öğretimine yönelik yapıları oluşturan belirli öğeler ve yapılar hakkında bilgi edinmek için repertuar çizelgesi aracılığıyla ayrı ayrı toplanmıştır. Grubun sahip olduğu yapıları ortaya çıkarmak için grup tartışma oturumları düzenlenmiş ve bulguların güvenilirliğini artırmak için tüm sınıf tartışmaları yapılmıştır. Her veri toplama aşaması için ayrı tematik analiz gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Bulgular: Sonuçlar, Z kuşağı öğretmen adaylarının ev ödevi, yazma, ezberleme ve geleneksel öğretim metodolojilerine ilişkin olumsuz algılara sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Etkileşim, medya ve oyunlar yoluyla öğretime ilişkin olumlu duyguları ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bu çalışma, Z kuşağı öğretmen adaylarının geliştirmeleri veya değiştirmeleri gereken İngilizce öğretim yapılarını sunduğu için öğretmen eğitimcileri için önemlidir.

Önemli Vurgular: Bu çalışma, Z kuşağı öğrenci-öğretmenleri arasında öğretim yapılarının nasıl farklılaştığını araştırmakta ve geleceğin eğitimcilerinin gelişen algılarına dair içgörü sağlamaktadır. İngilizce öğretimine ilişkin bireysel ve grup algılarını derinlemesine analiz etmek için kişisel yapı teorisi içindeki repertuar çizelgesi tekniği kullanılmıştır. Bulguların güvenilirliğini ve geçerliğini artırmak için bireysel görüşmeler, grup tartışmaları ve tüm sınıfın katıldığı görüşmeler birleştirilmiştir. Bulgular, Z kuşağı öğretmenlerinin ev ödevi ve ezberleme gibi geleneksel uygulamalara yönelik olumsuz tutumlarını tanımlamış, eğitim değerindeki bir değişimi vurgulamış ve etkileşimli ve medya açısından zengin öğretim stratejilerine yönelik güçlü bir tercihi ortaya koymuştur; çalışma öğretmen eğitim programlarının bulgulara göre uyarlanması gerektiğine işaret etmektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

According to Piaget's constructivist theory, humans derive meaning and knowledge from their experiences. The core principle of constructivism is that 'people will make their own sense of the ideas and theories in ways that are personal to them, and each constructs his or her own reality' (Wadsworth, 1996; Williams & Burden, 1997, p.2). The American psychologist George Kelly developed a psychological theory called Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) (Kelly, 1955), which posits that an individual's decisions and actions are guided by nonverbal, unconscious knowledge derived from their worldview and lived experiences. While Piaget conceptualized constructivism as a developmental process through which individuals actively build cognitive structures, Kelly's PCP focuses on the personal meaning-making systems (constructs) that individuals use to interpret their experiences. Although both perspectives emphasize active meaning construction, they originate from different theoretical traditions and address different levels of analysis.

Professional education must begin by revealing all the constructs and aim to enhance or adapt them (Roberts, 1998). In PCP, Kelly proposed a structured interview technique, the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT), to reveal personal constructs in bipolarity. The psychologist suggested that efficacy would not be ensured without revealing personal constructs at the beginning of professional education (Winter & Reed, 2016). The suggestion might be especially valid for Teacher Education (TE), where an "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) exists, as student-teachers may have developed many preconceptions about teaching English through their previous experiences as students. Without revealing constructs and targeting a change or building on them, a TE might be in vain (Roberts, 1998).

The generational theory (Mannheim, 1952) suggests that generational constructs are formed when individuals share common age-locations and historical or social experiences, thereby developing generation-specific values and orientations. It is significant to assess these constructs within the groups of different generations. Individuals born between 1997 and 2012 are referred to as Generation Z (Gen Z). During the study period, most future teachers enrolled in TE programs were members of Gen Z. Therefore, the study aims to investigate whether there are differences in teaching constructs in the changing generation today. Although studies have examined student-teacher constructs (Kozikoğlu, 2017; Sendan, 1995), there appear to be no other studies investigating the constructs of first-year Gen Z student-teachers. The first year was particularly chosen so that teacher educators can build on the constructs or adapt them.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PCP explores how individuals construct unique mental framework to comprehend and navigate the world. Developed by American psychologist George Kelly in 1955, PCP emphasizes the individual's perspective, proposing that our experiences shape how we construe the world around us (Kelly,1955). 'All learning takes place when an individual constructs a mental representation of an object, event, or idea.' (Bell & Gilbert, 1995, p.44). According to Kelly (1955), people have experiences that are 'bipolar and hierarchically organized into a construct system' which helps them make sense of the universe. Everyone can change these constructs at any point, as the mental constructs are considered dynamic and subject to gradual change or reformulation (Sendan & Roberts, 1998). Kelly proposed the RGT technique, suggesting that it is an effective instrument that enables researchers to examine people's relationships, perspectives, and mental models, particularly in psychology and social sciences (Kelly, 1955). Using a grid of items, which might be people, things, or concepts, participants are shown this technique and asked to compare the elements with similarities and differences according to a set of characteristics or dimensions (constructs). According to this bipolarity, people interpret their perceptions of items or concepts with similarities and differences among categories (Rogers & Ryals, 2007). It can resemble nature in that everything exists in contrast, with both positive and negative aspects. Researchers can uncover underlying structures in cognitive processes, study interpersonal relationships, and gain a deeper understanding of how people organize their ideas and feelings by examining the associations and patterns that emerge from the grids (Björklund, 2008). The RGT offers a methodical and structured approach to understanding cognitive processes and social interactions, making it particularly useful when examining complex phenomena such as personality, attitudes, and decision-making (Jankowicz, 2004).

Constructive alternativism is an application of PCP in professional education. Pope (1993) suggested the implications of constructive alternativism theory for teacher learning as 'teachers use personal pre-existing theories to explain and plan their teaching' (pp. 20-21). It is necessary, especially in TE, where there is an 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975). The concept means that when student-teachers begin their TE, they have positive or negative images of efficient or inefficient ways of teaching because they spend approximately 10 years in teaching contexts observing many teachers. It can be an apprenticeship for the profession. Such long years of observation cannot be found in any other profession. Therefore, it is crucial to reveal the teaching or teacher constructs of student-teachers and adapt or build on them in TE programs (Ferry et al., 2022).

These implications suggest that the constructs should be revealed first, and secondly, there should be reflection on them with direct teaching experience to facilitate a change in the constructs (Roberts, 1998). The most considerable difficulty in shifting constructs can be that personal theories often exist at an implicit level; therefore, it can be challenging to uncover them (Kesen, 2009). Despite criticisms for subjectivity and the limited scope of the RGT technique (Fransella, 2005), it has provided valuable findings in social and educational psychology. According to the findings of many studies using the method in the education field, RGT can be helpful for academics who want to get a deeper understanding of how teachers and students think: 'the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (Schwandt, 1994, p.118). Sevim and Karabulut (2022) suggest that a 'certain

number of structures can be reached by evaluating the events that emerged due to people's experiences with the RGT' (p. 8). Gardiner et al. (2021) suggest that RGT could be a valuable research tool that minimizes research influence and yields valid data reflecting learners' perceptions. The RGT is most frequently used to collect data for personal constructs; however, as Kelly (1955) proposed, it can also be used in focus-group interviews to reveal group constructs (Björklund, 2008). Without elaboration, using RGT in groups can violate the individuality tenet of the PCP; however, with an elaborate plan, group constructs can be collected efficiently through the technique, as indicated in Hogan and Hornecker's (2013) study.

There seem to be few studies aiming to reveal the teaching constructs of student-teachers in the first year of TE. The first year is crucial, as the constructs learned through apprenticeship of observation are most observable during this period. A growing body of research demonstrates that the RGT has been used to illuminate how teachers, learners, and other educational stakeholders conceptualize various dimensions of teaching and learning. Much of this work focuses on the professional beliefs teachers develop over time, often shaped by experience, contextual expectations, or cultural norms. For instance, several studies explore how practising teachers make sense of effective pedagogy, whether through value-oriented constructs in primary education (Ergun & Koc, 2023) or broader cultural perceptions of good language teaching (Richter et al., 2022). Related inquiries extend this line of work to teacher autonomy (Eren, 2020), grading practices (Nowruzi & Amerian, 2020), and the qualities of effective EFL learners, particularly in gifted students' education contexts (Yıldırım & Akcayoglu, 2019). Another cluster of studies uses RGT to examine how both teachers and learners construct meaning in relation to classroom processes. Research on language task perceptions reveals notable divergences between teacher and student views (Littlejohn et al., 2022), while work on classroom ecology (Boye et al., 2021) and efficient teaching competencies (Srivastava et al., 2021) further illustrates how learners' constructs can enrich our understanding of instructional effectiveness. A smaller but influential set of studies focuses on prospective teachers, emphasizing how their early conceptualizations shape their visions of an ideal teaching approach. These include investigations into student-teachers' constructs of teacher qualifications (Kozikoğlu, 2017), comparisons to administrators' perspectives on similar constructs (Sezer, 2016), and longitudinal efforts to trace how constructs evolve (Sendan, 1995; Yaman, 2015).

Due to the dynamic nature of constructs, the generation to which an individual is born might affect them (Mannheim, 1952). Generational scholars argue that cohorts share distinctive orientations because common sociocultural and technological conditions shape them during their formative years (Seemiller & Grace, 2016; Twenge, 2023). Seemiller and Grace (2016) suggest that the following characteristics characterize Gen Z:

-Digital nativeness,

-High preference for immediacy, visual communication, and technology-mediated interaction,

-A strong emphasis on pragmatism, security, inclusiveness, and individual expression,

-Desire for personalization, interactive learning, and frequent feedback from instructors (p.162)

Similarly, Twenge (2023) suggests that the following qualities characterize this generation: high digital immersion, increased levels of anxiety, perfectionism, a strong orientation toward individualism, diversity, social justice, and a preference for structure combined with flexibility. These traits may influence the teaching constructs Gen Z student-teachers bring to their developing professional identities.

Although studies collectively demonstrate the versatility of RGT in educational research, what remains underexplored is how the teaching constructs of first-year student-teachers, particularly those shaped through the apprenticeship of observation, emerge at the very outset of teacher education. The present study addresses this gap by focusing explicitly on those early, often tacit, constructs that have yet to be systematically examined. It asks the following research question:

1. What are student-teachers' effective English teaching constructs in the first academic term of their bachelor's degree?

The results may be valuable for teacher educators because a genuine professional education should aim to develop or adapt the constructs that professionals possess (Kelly, 1963).

METHODOLOGY

The study has a qualitative exploratory research design. Qualitative studies aim to reveal participants' in-depth beliefs or perspectives on lived experiences (Creswell, 2007). Structured open-ended questionnaires were used to collect elements and constructs. Focus group discussions, conducted in two sessions, and whole-class discussions were used to collect data and reveal the connections among elements and constructs.

Participants and Setting

The participants were 51 first-year student-teachers studying at the English Language Teaching (ELT) department in one of the state universities in Türkiye. As focus group interviews were conducted in four different sessions, the number of participants in some sessions was lower due to absences. The participants were chosen using convenience and purposive sampling. The researcher had classes with the participants; therefore, convenience sampling was employed due to the participants' availability. They were born between 2003 and 2005. They were all members of Gen Z. An ELT bachelor's degree in Türkiye lasts four years, and the first year is a foundation without any theoretical or language teaching practice classes. The study was conducted during the first term of the bachelor's degree program in the Oral Communication Skills Course, which met twice a week for two hours. The course aimed to develop presentation and speaking skills in English; therefore, course aims and study objectives were well-

matched. The two reasons for choosing this course for the study were that the students could practice English speaking skills with topics related to their field, while providing data for the research, and, as they did not have any field courses, it was possible to reveal the teaching constructs they brought from their earlier learning experiences.

Researcher's Role

The researcher was the instructor of the course. To reduce the researcher bias and balance the power dynamics, he acted as a moderator in all phases of data collection. Elements were collected through a structured, open-ended questionnaire administered individually, and the ratings and discussions were conducted as focus groups and then as a whole class. The researcher moderated the sessions, answered participants' questions, and used the laddering technique when discussions stalled.

Repertory Grid Technique

Using RGT as a structured interview data collection tool starts with agreement on a topic. The topic in the study was "ways of teaching English". Elements can be defined as categories under the topic. For instance, what an individual comes up with when thinking about teaching English is the element. Elements can be generated in several ways: a list can be given to an interviewee, and he can be asked to choose some of them, or the interviewee can be asked to create their own elements in an open-ended manner. In the study, each participant filled in a form containing three efficient, typical, and inefficient ways of teaching English. The aim of structuring the items as efficient, typical, and inefficient was for triadic elicitation. Constructs are 'personal perceptions, understood as how an individual processes their environment, which will differ from one person to another' (Boye et al., 2021, p.3). Constructs in a repertory grid can be defined as bipolar perceptions of elements about a topic. Kelly (1955) proposes two methods for eliciting constructs: the 'difference method' and the 'opposite method'. The difference method is the most widely used elicitation method (Hogan & Hornecker, 2013), which is conducted through triadic elicitation. In triadic elicitation, the interviewee is presented with three random elements and asked to identify two elements that are similar in some way and how the two differ from the third. The elicitation provides the interviewee's perception of the elements. Laddering helps the interviewee further elicit elements by asking follow-up questions and encouraging them to think more can be done during the interview. The repertory grid's left side represents the similarity/emergent pole, while the right side represents the contrast pole. The similar features of the three random elements are written on the similarity/emergent pole, whereas the difference is written on the contrast pole. The constructs in the study were collected from each participant through a form with elements and further through group discussion activities. The last phase of RGT is rating. In it, the interviewee is asked to rate each construct for each element on a scale of 1 to 5. One is the emergent pole, while 5 is the contrast pole. Kelly (1955) initially used one for the emergent pole and two for the contrast pole. However, most studies in the social sciences use a Likert scale from 1 to 5. Through rating, the interviewee's perceptions of each element and construct can be revealed in bipolar terms (Fransella et al., 2003).

Research Procedure

In the second week of the term, 51 participants were informed about the study in the Oral Communication Class, and informed consent forms were collected. They were told that there would be group and whole-class discussions for 30 minutes in each class over the following eight weeks on the topic 'ways of teaching English'. They were asked to reflect on their past learning experiences and teachers' teaching of English and discuss their ideas in their groups. Element elicitation was conducted by collecting data from each participant; however, construct elicitation and grid rating were conducted in focus groups, followed by a final whole-class rating (Hogan & Hornecker, 2013).

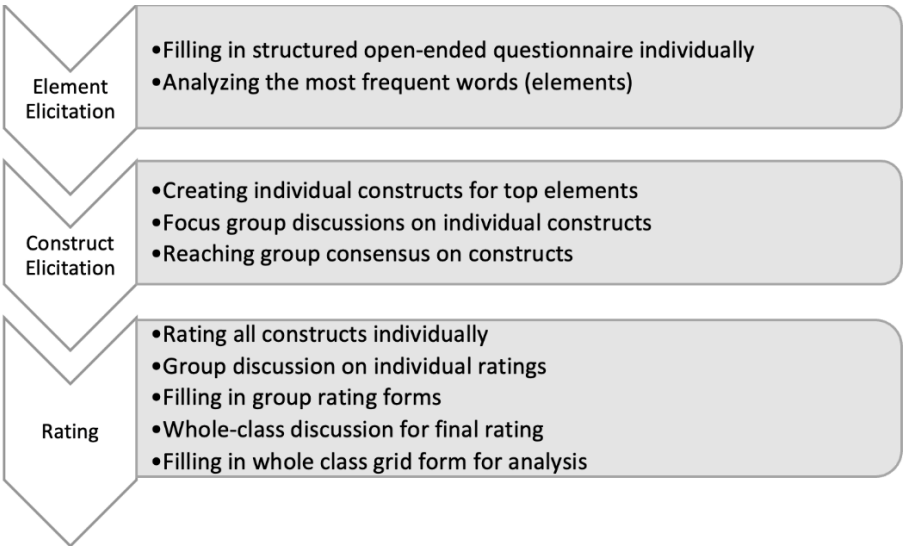

Figure 1. Research procedure

Phase 1: Element Elicitation

In the first week of the course, a structured, open-ended questionnaire with the following six items was given to each participant: three efficient, three typical, and three inefficient ways of teaching English (see Appendix 1). The participants were required to complete the form individually within twenty minutes. Individual data collection was considered more appropriate since the participants could develop various elements.

Phase 2: Construct Elicitation

After two weeks of analysis, the three most frequently stated effective, typical, and inefficient ways of teaching English were identified and recorded in a repertory grid format (see Appendix 2). The emergent and contrast poles on the grid were blank. First, the grids with elements were given to each participant, and they were asked to think about an element from efficient, typical, and inefficient categories. Then, they would determine how the two were similar and different from the third (triadic elicitation). The researcher provided an example to the whole class. For example, the elements are 'teaching through games' (efficient), 'giving homework' (typical), and 'encouraging memorization' (inefficient). 'Giving homework' and 'memorization' are boring ways of teaching English, whereas teaching through games is exciting. The students write similarities in the emergent pole (1), whereas they write the difference in the contrast pole (5); therefore, 'boring' is added to the emergent pole on the left, and 'exciting' is written on the contrast pole on the right. In 30 minutes, all 51 participants wrote down the constructs they generated for each element on their forms.

Following the analysis of the individual ratings, 12 focus groups, each with four members and one with three members, were formed the following week. The participants were given 30 minutes and asked to discuss their constructs in their groups. An empty focus group construct form was given to each of the 13 groups. The participants were to discuss each construct they had written in their construct form. If everybody in the group agreed with the construct, they would have to write it in the group form; however, even if only one member did not agree or were unsure, they would leave the construct out. With this practice, it was ensured that the constructs written on the group paper were all agreed upon by the group. While the students engaged in discussions, the researcher observed each group and employed the laddering technique. The participants were free to propose new constructs, provided that the group members approved. The students actively participated in the discussions. The individual and focus group forms were collected after the discussions were completed and the participants had filled out the forms.

Phase 3: Rating

The final constructs for which all groups reached a consensus were written in the emergent and contrast poles of the repertory grid as the final form (see Appendix 3). The elements and constructs were presented on the grid, and participants rated each construct for each element on a scale of 1 to 5. First, each participant was given a repertory grid and asked to rate it individually. Twenty minutes were provided for individual rating. Four participants were absent during the rating phase. Therefore, 11 groups, each with four participants, and one group with three participants were created. A group rating grid was provided to each group, and participants were informed that they would discuss their ratings with the other group members. After the final discussion, they were to fill in the group grid by considering all members' ideas. Thirty minutes were given for the group discussions and rating. The researcher moved around and used the laddering technique if necessary. After the group rating was completed, a whole-class discussion was held to discuss the overall rating. The researcher completed a final class repertory grid form after the whole-class discussion, considering group ratings, and it was used for the final analysis.

Data Analysis

The individual elements collected in the element elicitation phase were analyzed for word frequencies, including top words, bigrams (the top two-word phrases), and trigrams (the top three-word phrases). The analysis was conducted manually by the researcher using an Excel file and by extracting frequencies from "www.wordfrequency.org" and ChatGPT. As a result of the analysis, the researcher created elements based on the most frequent words. The elements elicited were presented to the whole class (see Appendix 2), and participants were asked if all the elements they proposed were correct. The verification of elements was conducted by member checking.

In the construct elicitation phase, the constructs were first collected individually and then reached through consensus in focus groups. There were 13 repertory grid documents for focus group constructs. The constructs in these 13 documents were written as a final whole-class repertory grid document (see Appendix 3) after reaching a consensus to add each construct as a whole class. All constructs in the final form to be rated were developed after two weeks of discussion, and consensus was reached among all participants. The 47 individual, 13 focus group, and one whole-class grid were analyzed manually for the top constructs, ensuring that no construct was excluded if there was consensus among the participants. The constructs in all documents were consistent with the final repertory grid form (see Appendix 3).

The analysis of the final grid was conducted through the "Rep Plus V2.0" software (Gaines & Shaw, 2021). Three analyses were performed: eyeball, cluster, and principal component analyses. The eyeball analysis revealed variance among constructs; the cluster analyses demonstrated the tendency of the scores for each construct, element, and variance among them. The principal component analysis revealed how each construct for each aspect was rated in terms of variance and the links between elements and constructs.

Trustworthiness

The researcher served as a moderator in each phase of the research, refraining from interfering with individual or group ratings and discussions. Sometimes, he only used the laddering technique if the participants did not come up with any constructs for related elements. All individual elements were analyzed manually and using "www.wordfrequency.org". Furthermore, participant validation was done through sharing the final elements with all participants and verifying that the analysis was accurate. In the construct elicitation phase, the whole-class, focus group, and individual grids were separated, and each element and construct elicitation form was compared. A thematic content analysis was conducted for each grid to check for divergent elements, constructs, or ratings. The analysis revealed that the whole-class, group, and individual grids were consistent across all phases examined. The final grid form (see Appendix 3) was formed as a result of all these analyses.

Ethical Considerations

An official ethical approval was obtained from Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University Ethics Commission meeting dated 03.04.2023 and numbered 19 with the research code 2023-06. All participants were informed about the study using informed consent forms. The consent forms informed participants that their ideas would not influence their course performance, and participation was voluntary. They were free to withdraw from the research at any time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Firstly, the findings from the element and construct elicitation phases, and subsequently, the results from the final whole-class repertory grid, are presented in this section. The findings of the rating phase are presented with tables obtained directly from Rep Plus V2.0 software (Gaines & Shaw, 2021).

Elements

The elements for 'efficient ways of teaching English' in Table 1 below were extracted from word-frequency analysis.

Table 1. Elements for efficient ways of teaching English

	f
Games	18
Media	11
Interaction	9
Speaking	8
Group-pair work	8
Only English	7

"Games" was the most frequent word (*f*=18), followed by "media" (*f*=11) and "interaction" (*f*=9). Bigrams and trigrams indicated the same concept: pair or group work activities in which only English was used. After validating the elements through member checking, the following three elements were formed: Efficient 1 (Eff1), Teaching through games; Efficient 2 (Eff2), Teaching through media; and Efficient 3 (Eff3), Teaching through interaction. The 'teaching through interaction' element included speaking only English in group or pair work activities.

Table 2. Elements for typical ways of teaching English

	f
Writing	12
Homework	9
Asking questions	6
Using only the coursebook	5
Speaking only English	4
Repetitive vocabulary writing	3

"Writing" was the most frequent word (*f*=12), followed by "homework" (*f*=9). "Asking questions" and "speaking only English" were common in bigrams and trigrams. When the participants were presented with the results, they stated that, typically, some teachers asked English questions to each student in classes. The other common finding was "only coursebook". This bigram was also frequent in inefficient teaching methods. As the classroom discussion revealed, it was considered typical but inefficient for most participants. "Repetitive vocabulary writing" was frequent in trigram (*f*=3). The class discussion revealed that the participants referred to giving homework for repetitive vocabulary writing, as many teachers typically give vocabulary writing activities as homework. The analysis and discussion with participants revealed the following typical ways of teaching English: Typical 1 (Typ1): Teaching through writing; Typical 2 (Typ2): Giving homework; Typical 3 (Typ3): Asking questions to each student.

Table 3. Elements for inefficient ways of teaching English

	f
Structures	10
Memorization	9
Coursebook use	9
Vocabulary writing	8

As "teaching" was excluded from the analysis, the top word "structure" was actually "teaching structure". The whole-class discussion of the analysis revealed that students referred to "grammar" for structural elements. The second top word was "memorization". The participants stated that they meant encouraging memorization and repetitive vocabulary writing. Additionally, vocabulary writing in bigrams and trigrams was related to encouraging vocabulary memorization by writing the words ten times. Therefore, they were considered as a single category. The third most frequent word was "coursebook", and in bigrams such as "only coursebook", "reading from coursebook", and "only coursebook structure", the participants indicated that they meant teachers' using only the coursebook for instruction. The following elements were identified as a result of the analysis and discussion with participants: Inefficient 1 (Ineff1): Teaching structures (grammar/vocabulary); Inefficient 2 (Ineff2): Encouraging memorization; Inefficient 3 (Ineff3): Teaching using only the coursebook.

Constructs

The group constructs were collected from 13 focus-group discussions. As a result of the class discussions for triadic elicitation, 11 constructs in Table 4 below were approved by each participant and written on the final whole-class repertory grid.

Table 4. Constructs

Similarity / Emergent Pole (1)	Contrast Pole (5)
Teaching in a non-interactive way	Teaching by encouraging interaction
Teaching in a way that is boring for learners	Teaching through fun, entertaining, and exciting ways
Teaching by considering learners as passive recipients	Teaching through encouraging socialization
Teaching through encouraging memorization	Teaching by encouraging creativity
Teaching by not being able to attract the attention of learners	Teaching by drawing the attention of learners
Teaching in a way that causes stress for learners	Teaching in a way that is not stressful for learners
Teaching in a more book or teacher-oriented way	Teaching in a more student-oriented way
Teaching in a way that is temporary learning for learners	Teaching in a way that is permanent learning for students
Teaching by making learners passive	Teaching with the active participation of learners
Students can be distracted	Students can take more responsibility
It provides shallow learning	It provides more in-depth learning

The constructs in Table 4 indicate the opposite poles that the participants proposed through triadic elicitation for various elements. The constructs revealed discriminating features of efficient, typical, and inefficient teaching methods for participants. The similarity/emergent pole presents inefficient ways of teaching English. The 51 Gen Z student-teachers believe that inefficiently teaching English often involves non-interactive instruction, which can become boring for learners and treats them as passive recipients rather than active participants. Such teaching tends to encourage memorization rather than more profound understanding and frequently fails to capture students' attention, making it easy for them to become distracted. It can also create stress for learners, especially when the approach is heavily book- or teacher-oriented, resulting in temporary and shallow learning rather than lasting competence. Overall, these methods make learners passive, limit their engagement, and reduce the effectiveness of the learning experience.

The contrast pole highlights the effective ways of teaching English, and participants believe that effective English teaching emphasizes interaction, creating a fun, engaging, and exciting learning environment that keeps students motivated. It promotes socialization and encourages creativity, allowing learners to express themselves in meaningful ways. Effective instruction also draws students' attention while maintaining a low-stress environment, making learning more comfortable and enjoyable. Being student-oriented, it supports permanent learning and fosters the active participation of learners. In such classrooms, students naturally take more responsibility for their own progress, which ultimately leads to more in-depth understanding and stronger language development.

Rating

The ratings from the whole-class repertory grid in Figure 2 below indicate the poles of constructs and how they might be related to the elements (ways of teaching English).

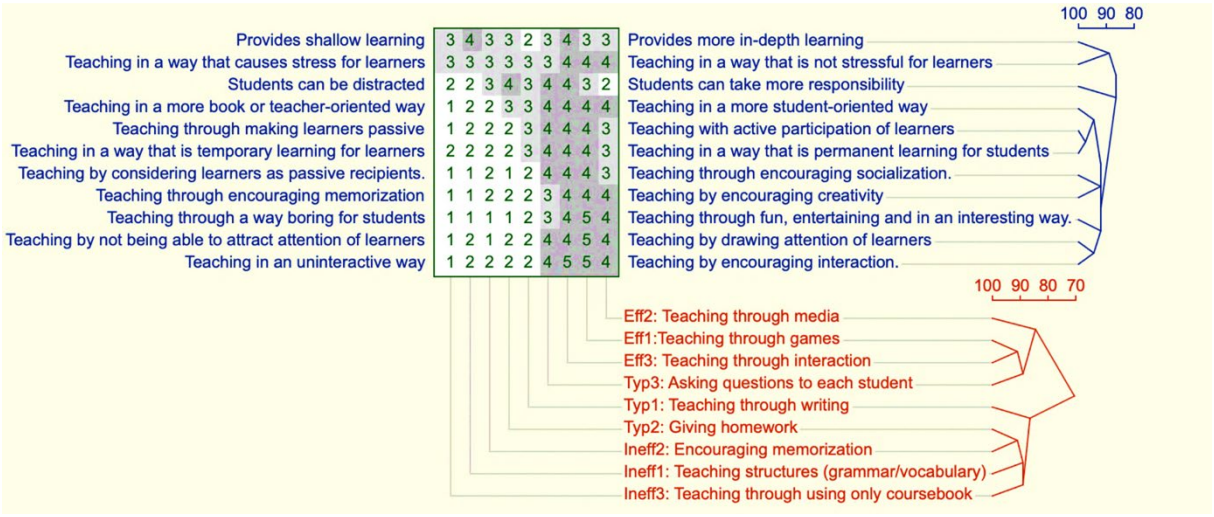

Figure 2. Focus cluster analysis

The cluster analysis in the table illustrates the construct and element trees at the 80% cut-off point.

Construct Links

The dendrograms indicated seven clusters among constructs with subclusters. The construct with the highest variance (97.2%) was *teaching in a way that promotes permanent learning for learners, as* well as *teaching with active learner participation*. Student-teachers might think that active involvement of learners in the learning process enhances the permanence of learning. The second construct linked with high variance (94.4%) was between *teaching by encouraging interaction* and *teaching by drawing learners' attention.* It may demonstrate that providing an interactive atmosphere can help draw learners' attention; therefore, incorporating interactive activities into classes could be beneficial. The other link with the same variance (94.4%) was between *teaching in a more student-oriented way* and *teaching with active learner participation*. Participants may think that active learner involvement can be ensured by adopting a student-oriented approach. The third construct pair link (91.7%) was between *teaching through encouraging socialization* and *teaching by encouraging creativity*. Creativity means the opportunity to produce different forms of language and unpredictability, as the opposite pole is *encouraging memorization.* As student-teachers' constructs reveal, this could be achieved *by encouraging socialization* rather than passivation of learners. Tasks that require learners to use their creativity should be integrated into courses to enhance learning outcomes. The fourth construct link (88.9%) was between *providing more in-depth learning* and *teaching in a way that is not stressful for learners*. It could indicate that learners' anxiety can negatively affect the learning process. There were two isolates with 80.6% variance. The construct that *students can take more responsibility* was loosely associated with *providing in-depth learning*. It signifies that the more responsibility there is in learning, the deeper the learning process can be. The other difference was between *teaching in a fun, entertaining, and exciting way* and *teaching in a more student-oriented way*. When considering the opposite poles, it can be said that teaching solely from a coursebook in a teacher-oriented manner can be boring, while adopting a student-oriented approach can enhance the joy of learning.

Element Links

The dendrograms uncovered five clusters with an 80% cut-off point. Efficient ways of teaching English, including *teaching through games* and *interaction,* account for 90.9% of the variance. Student-teachers thought that interaction opportunities could be provided by teaching through games. With the same variance, *giving homework* and *encouraging memorization* were found to be correlated. It could indicate that the homework teachers give encourages memorization rather than fostering creativity. The second-highest variance was 88.6%, and an inadequate way of teaching English, characterized by *teaching only structures such as grammar and vocabulary,* was the one that was most frequently associated with others. The construct of *teaching structures* was associated with *teaching through only coursebooks*, *encouraging memorization,* and *assigning homework* elements (88.6%). The finding could indicate that a typical way of teaching for teachers is to assign homework in the context of the study. It could be inefficient because it encourages memorization of teaching structures in the coursebooks. Another association with the same variance (88.6%) was between an efficient way of teaching, *teaching through interaction,* and a typical way, which involves *asking questions to each student*. The finding could be significant because asking each student questions individually is typically done as a controlled practice. However, student-teachers considered it efficient as it encourages interaction, which suggests that genuine interactive activities should be presented in TE programs. The third cluster has 86.4% variance, and *teaching through writing* was associated with *encouraging memorization* and *giving homework*. It could indicate that student-teachers had a negative image of

writing, as the homework teachers give encourages memorization by writing, such as writing vocabulary repetitively or using grammatical structures. The dendrograms indicated that the other associations were isolates with lower variance levels.

The link with the highest variance was found between "teaching through games" and "teaching through interaction". Therefore, it can be concluded that participant student-teachers might prefer games as they encourage interaction among learners. The ability to develop efficient game tasks for interaction can provide good results in TE (Bendo, 2019). The "teaching structures" element was associated with the "teaching through only coursebook", "encouraging memorization", and "giving homework", and "memorization" was associated with the "teaching by making students write" element. The finding could suggest that the participants may have developed negative constructs for each of these elements, as they frequently encountered English teachers who assigned homework using only coursebooks and exercises focused on English structure, which encouraged memorization through writing. Therefore, in TE programs, effective methods for homework and assignments should be presented, and student-teachers should be encouraged to utilize them (Vatterott, 2011). Another link between "teaching through interaction" and "asking questions to each student by the teacher" might suggest that teachers' asking questions to each student was considered efficient by the participants.

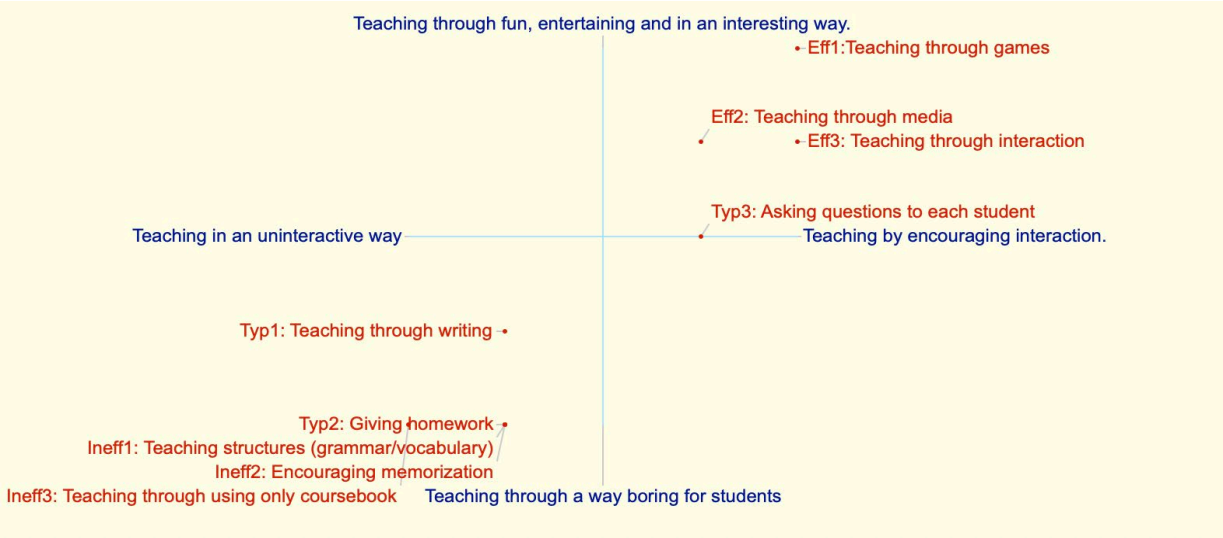

Figure 3. Cross-plot analysis

The cross-plot analysis in Figure 3 demonstrates extreme values as bipolarity. Two extreme positive constructs were *teaching by encouraging interaction* and *teaching through fun, entertaining, and exciting ways*. Negative extreme constructs were *taught in a non-interactive way* and *in a manner that was boring for students*. Elements in the extremes indicated that student-teachers valued activities such as teaching through games and media, as well as asking questions to each student, as these encourage interaction and are effective ways of teaching in an engaging manner. Teaching through games could be the most entertaining method, followed by teaching through media. Student-teachers considered asking questions to each student to be an efficient approach, as it promotes interaction and engagement. They were neutral, as they provided an entertaining way of teaching. On the other end of the line were teaching activities, including *teaching through writing, assigning homework, teaching structures, encouraging memorization,* and *relying solely on coursebooks*. Teaching through writing and assigning homework are two typical behaviors of teachers in participants' contexts, as the results suggest. Student-teachers might consider these activities as inefficient as they are teaching in a non-interactive and boring way for students.

The cross-plot analysis revealed that students had negative perceptions of "giving homework" and "teaching by making students write something" because they are not interactive and a tedious way for learners to learn English. Giving homework might have advantages for learners, as Amiryousefi (2016) suggests; therefore, efficient homework and assignment types must be presented to student-teachers so that they can adapt their teaching constructs.

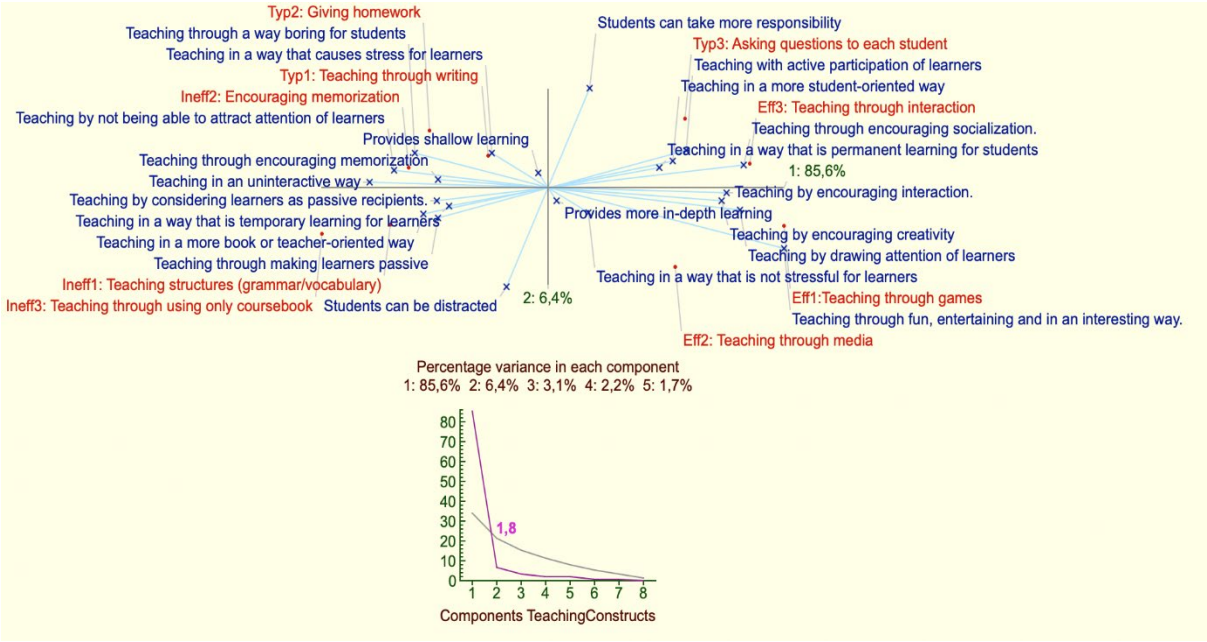

Figure 4. Principal component analysis

The findings reflected the characteristic features of Gen Z student-teachers, who are digitally native, preferring immediacy, visual communication, individual expression, and interactive learning through personalization (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). The principal component analysis in Figure 4 displays the distribution of constructs across emergent and contrast poles, as well as the relationships among elements and constructs. In the contrast pole, there were four main elements related to the topic of teaching English. These were *asking questions to each student*, *teaching through interaction*, and *teaching through games* and *media*. These teaching methods differ from those at the emergent pole in that they encourage interaction. They enable entertaining and exciting teaching, encouraging active participation from learners through a student-oriented approach, promoting socialization and creativity, drawing learners' attention, creating a non-stressful atmosphere, and providing more in-depth and lasting learning experiences in which students can take more responsibility. Media and games may suggest that student-teachers were more enthusiastic about technology-integrated language instruction, which supported the findings of studies (Ahmadi, 2018; Seemiller & Grace, 2016; Son, 2018). Because these constructs align with the contemporary developments in language education, integrating them into TE could help improve the effectiveness. The findings indicated that participants might consider integrating media and technology into classes as necessary, and they are a fun way of teaching English, as Zubaydullayeva (2023) suggests.

In the similarity/emergent pole, there were five teaching methods: *assigning homework*, *teaching through writing*, *encouraging memorization, teaching structures*, and *teaching using only a coursebook*. The constructs in the emergent pole reveal that these teaching acts might be considered undesirable as they are non-interactive, make learners passive, and encourage memorization. They might be a source of boredom and stress for learners, provide shallow and temporary learning, and distract learners. They are teacher-oriented; therefore, they cannot draw learners' attention. Teaching only grammar and vocabulary structures is undoubtedly not a good way of teaching English; however, memorization can be used as a shared learning strategy for most students, especially for vocabulary, as suggested by studies (Kiswardhani & Ayu, 2021; Ozkan & Kesen, 2008). Therefore, efficient uses of memorization as a learning strategy must be presented to Gen Z student-teachers.

The principal component analysis revealed that "teaching through interaction" was the most efficient way of teaching English, as it could encourage socialization and facilitate permanent learning through interaction (Wang & Castro, 2010). The constructs are appropriate to current approaches and methods of teaching English; therefore, they should be fostered in TE. As suggested by Adams and Oliver (2019), interactive tasks should be designed to enhance the teaching and learning skills of both students and teachers. "Teachers' asking questions to each student" was considered typical but efficient by student-teachers. The activity is done as controlled practice after teaching a grammar subject or a structure in the language. However, the participants think it might be efficient due to the active participation of learners; it is teaching in a more student-oriented way, and students take more responsibility for their learning. The individual and group ratings were close to "teaching through interaction", with a similar variance. Therefore, teacher educators must present the difference between controlled practice, freer practice, and real activation activities in language classes (Deng & Carless, 2009; Xalilova et al., 2021). On the opposite pole of "teaching through interaction" there were: "asking questions to each student", "teaching only structures (grammar/vocabulary)", and "teaching through using only the coursebook". These methods of teaching were considered inefficient and the opposite of teaching through interaction, as they could make learners passive recipients of knowledge instead of encouraging active participation. They were the ways of teaching in a more book- or teacher-oriented manner, rather than a student-oriented approach; teaching in a way that can be temporary learning instead of permanent learning through interaction and teaching by learners as passive recipients, rather than encouraging socialization. The findings for teaching using only coursebooks indicated that coursebook adaptation techniques and

practices should be well-presented to student-teachers to change their negative constructs. Coursebook activities should be adapted to be more interactive, as the constructs suggest. Negative constructs about "teaching only structures" can be worked on. Of course, teaching only structures is not advantageous; however, many studies indicate that teaching structures should be done in language classes (Giovanelli, 2014). Teaching grammar implicitly through interactive activities (Mapunda & Vuzo, 2024) or explicitly during the study phase of the ESA lesson sequence should be considered, and practice opportunities should be provided.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that Gen Z student-teachers considered interaction and technology (including games and media) as efficient ways of teaching English, rather than focusing solely on structures and using only coursebooks. The reasons were that through interaction, games, and media, more permanent and in-depth learning could be achieved. Through these ways of teaching, learners could be encouraged for socialization, creativity, and active participation. Learners' attention can be easily drawn to class in more entertaining, engaging, and non-stressful ways, and by letting them take on responsibility for their own learning. It may be necessary to provide authentic interaction and activation activities for student-teachers to practice and modify their constructs. Student-teachers had a negative perception of teaching English by following only the coursebook, teaching only structures, giving homework primarily for writing, and encouraging memorization due to the reasons that they make learners passive recipients of the knowledge, the teaching process is non-interactive, boring and cause stress for learners, and the activities cannot draw their attention.

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study has implications for foreign language TE in the Turkish context because it revealed teaching constructs of a sample of 51 participant Gen Z student-teachers. The positive constructs suggest that student-teachers will benefit from English teaching techniques that incorporate games, media, interaction, and creativity, with active learner participation. However, the negative constructs suggested that particular attention must be given in TE programs to coursebook adaptation for more interactive uses, efficient assignment and homework for language development, memorization techniques as a learning strategy, writing tasks for authentic audiences for actual purposes, and teaching structures for genuine interaction should be presented to student-teachers to help them adapt their negative constructs.

The study is not without limitations. Firstly, it is an exploratory qualitative study conducted in the Turkish context. Therefore, more studies should be implemented in other TE contexts worldwide, as constructs can be personal and affected by experiences. The constructs were collected individually, through group and whole-class discussions. Another study with only one teacher in a different context, with RGT and other qualitative data collection tools, can be conducted. For a more detailed examination of the subject, a longitudinal study can be conducted, in which changes in constructs from the first year are examined towards the last. The constructs for various aspects of TE can be studied using the technique in the study.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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Statements of Publication Ethics

I hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Researchers' Contribution Rate

The research process's theoretical framework, methodology, design, data collection, data analysis, evaluation of the findings, and manuscript drafting and revising were carried out by the single author of the study.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

Ethics committee approval for the study was obtained at the Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University Ethics Commission meeting dated 03.04.2023 and numbered 19 with the research code 2023-06.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

AI tool Grammarly was used to enhance language clarity of the manuscript. Moreover, for some parts, feedback was obtained from ChatGPT only for flow of the passages (coherency). The correction was done by the author according to suggestions. The data obtained from the AI tool(s) has been rigorously reviewed in accordance with accepted ethical and academic standards. The AI tools are not credited as authors; the author is solely responsible for the content of the published article.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 (STRUCTURED OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ELEMENT CONSTRUCTION)

EFFECTIVE ENGLISH TEACHING WAYS

Please reflect on your English learning experiences during your primary and high school years. Think about your teachers' three efficient, three typical (not very efficient, not inefficient), and three inefficient ways of teaching English. Fill in the blanks below with only activities for efficient English teaching and learning. **Do not write sentences, write activities only with a maximum of three words.**

Efficient English Teaching Activity 1:

Efficient English Teaching Activity 2:

Efficient English Teaching Activity 3:

Usual (Typical) English Teaching Activity 1:

Usual (Typical) English Teaching Activity 2:

Usual (Typical) English Teaching Activity 3:

Inefficient English Teaching Activity 1:

Inefficient English Teaching Activity 2:

Inefficient English Teaching Activity 3:

APPENDIX 2 (MOST FREQUENT ELEMENTS)

INDIVIDUAL Constructs	Eff1: Teaching thorugh games	Eff2:Teaching through media	Eff3: Teaching through interaction	Typ1: Teaching through writing	Typ2: Giving Homework	Typ3: Asking questions to each student	Ineff1: Teaching for structures (grammar/vocabulary)	Ineff2: Encouraging memorization	Ineff3: Teaching through using only coursebook	INDIVIDUAL Constructs
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										
8.										

APPENDIX 3 (FINAL RGT FORM FOR RATING)

GROUP Constructs (1)	Eff1: Teaching thorugh games	Eff2:Teaching through media	Eff3: Teaching through interaction	Typ1: Teaching through writing	Typ2: Giving Homework	Typ3: Asking questions to each student	Ineff1: Teaching for structures (grammar/vocabulary)	Ineff2: Encouraging memorization	Ineff3: Teaching through using only coursebook	GROUP Constructs (5)
Teaching in an uninteractive way										Teaching by encouraging interaction
Teaching throrugh a way boring for learners										Teaching thorugh fun, entertainment in an interesting way
Teaching by considering learners as passive recipients										Teaching thorough encouraging socialization
Teaching thorugh encouraging memorization										Teaching by encouraging creativity
Teaching by not being able attract attention of learners										Teaching by drawing attention of learners
Teaching in a way that is not stressful for learners										Teaching in a way that causes stress for learners
Teaching in a more book or teacher-oriented way										Teaching in a more student-oriented way
Teaching in way that is temporary learning for learners										Teaching in a way that is permanent learning for students
Teaching thorugh making learners passive										Teaching with active participation of learners
Students can be distracted										Students can take more responsibility
Provides more in-depth learning										Provides shallow learning