



World-known Preschool Education Models from the Perspectives of Pre-service Preschool Teachers^{1,2}

Research Article

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to find out how the preschool teacher candidates' reflect their experience in as regards the preschool education models on their own understanding of education. The phenomenology as a qualitative research design was used in the study. The participants of the research were the 3rd and 4th class teacher candidates attending to the Preschool Education Department. A total of 40 students participated in the study. A focus group activity was held with 14 teacher candidates in the framework of different criteria for the purpose of in-depth examination of the topic. Data were collected from the teacher candidates by means of written documents and interview records in the course of the research. It was found that the teacher candidates expressed opinions mostly based on the Reggio Emilia, Waldorf approach. The phenomenological analysis technique was used for the purpose of data analysis. It was seen that the teacher candidates provided answers under the following titles in the framework of child-centered perspective during their assessments based on the models: making use of the opportunities provided by the environment, conducting activities that enable creative expressions, ensuring social interaction of children, providing the opportunities to learn by doing and experiencing, preparing environments based on the free choice of children, being open for self-development of teachers, and supporting the development of children.

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Introduction

21st century learning for early childhood education rests on child-centered learning. Schweinhart (2017) argues that early childhood education mostly adopts child-centered approach and the role of the teacher is to motivate the student and to facilitate student's active construction of knowledge. Oktay (2003) suggests that

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early childhood education institutions of the 21st century should strive to raise individuals who can express their emotions and opinions freely, explore, produce, stay curious, solve problems, and generate new ideas as well as raising individuals with self-monitoring skills who can make their own decisions. In this respect, early childhood education models originated in different countries have become globally prevalent. Among the best known and most widely used early childhood educational models are Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, and High Scope approaches.

Montessori Approach

Maria Montessori was the first female doctor in Italy. After having examined several works on child development, she decided to implement different practices other than conventional approaches to early childhood education. As an accomplished educator, her educational methods became one of the fastest-growing approaches around the world. Montessori notes that children have different learning styles as compared to adolescents. She stresses that children should be guided with the ultimate goal being self-discipline within a safe and comfortable environment. Montessori centers on meeting children's needs. Educating the senses is an essential part of a Montessori education. Montessori highlights the need for mixed age classes. Children take part in hands-on activities. One of the distinctive features of the Montessori approach is the use of real materials in the classroom. Further, the materials that Montessori developed are designed to be self-teaching and self-correcting. Teachers develop lesson plans that fit the needs of children. The teacher avoids using rewards and punishments (Pound, 2006; Roopnarine & Johnson, 2005; Montessori, 1997).

Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia Approach originated in the town of Reggio Emilia in Italy region. Loris Malaguzzi was the founder of the Reggio Emilia approach. Such psychologists and philosophers as Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, and Bruner are cited as the theoretical and philosophical founders of the Reggio Emilia Approach. This approach uses a curriculum tailored to meet children's interests and needs. The Reggio-Emilia program promotes creative expressions and invites children into project works. Children's interests are integrated into project works. This approach values the environment as a third teacher. The parental involvement is an essential part of the Reggio Emilia Approach (New, 2007; Aslan, 2005).

High Scope Approach

Originating in the USA, The High Scope Early Children Education approach was founded by David P. Weikart and his colleagues. It bases on Piagetian theory and promotes "active learning". The active learning allows children to work at their own pace and plan their learning with a teacher's guidance. Teachers help children explore their own skills. Through the High Scope Approach, the teacher creates learning environments in which children can make free choices. The High Scope curriculum consists of a daily routine made up of a plan-do-review sequence. It is the core of the program (Weikart, 1993).

The early childhood education models involve following common elements related to the student-centered philosophy: Acceptance of a wide range of learning sites for children's education, guidance teacher and active learning methods.

Temel and Dere (1999) point out that the approaches to early children education incorporate 21st Century skills into human education. Considering contemporary approaches in education, the teacher plays a fundamental and central role. According to Arı (2003), the quality of the teacher is the most fundamental component of a qualified education in preschool institutions. In preschool philosophies, the perception of the children and their roles in learning influence the aspects of the program. In this respect, preschool teacher training program models aim to raise versatile educators through related principles and approaches (Arthur,

Beecher, Death, Dockett, Farmer, 2018). Teaching from a multi-perspective approach allows teachers to develop their teaching ability and update themselves. Besides, teachers with versatile thinking will reflect their versatile thinking into education so that they will create a more qualified learning environment and practices. Bredekamp (2015) argues that it is important for teachers to define themselves with respect to early childhood discipline and to be effective. In addition to that, the teacher should be a good learner and critically evaluate and integrate multiple perspectives on early childhood education. The teacher, therefore, will incorporate his or her perspective into practice.

Upon completion of their undergraduate education, the pre-service teachers gain experiences via various courses whereby they build a new sense of education. With this in mind, it was thought vital to investigate the effects of preschool education models on pre-service teachers' sense of education. The related literature was scanned and only a few studies were found. It is believed that the investigation of pre-service teachers' opinions on preschool education models can help them shape their sense of education. The pre-service teachers can thus bring their sense of education to the practice. In this respect, the current study is expected to contribute to the literature given it will allow us to identify the pre-service teachers' sense of education before they begin teaching so that any necessary adjustments can be made.

The researcher was also assigned to instruct an elective course on early childhood education models in the 2016-2017 academic year. In the very first week of the course, a pre-service teacher (P, 23) demanded to learn these models whereby he or she was intended to develop a sense of education at the end of the academic year. The researcher then discussed it with other pre-service teachers and announced that she would carry out a research on this subject. In this respect, pre-service teachers were asked whether they wish to participate in the study voluntarily and consequently they agreed to participate in the study. Thus, the pre-service teachers' experiences on early childhood education models were evaluated.

The main objective of the study was to make a contribution to professional developments of pre-service teachers thereby minimizing their anxiety of academic achievement. She also noted that pre-service teachers would be free to choose their educational approaches at the end of the period. As to preschool education models, pre-service teachers were asked to evaluate learning environments and teaching behaviours which they observed via teaching experience and teaching practice courses. Ultimately, pre-service teachers' evaluations influence their sense of education.

The objective of the research

This study attempts to identify how pre-service preschool teachers reflect their experiences gained via early childhood education models course into their sense of education. In that vein, the study attempts to identify pre-service preschool teachers' opinions on early childhood education models. The sub-problems displayed below were sought to answer:

1. Which approaches to early childhood education are mostly adopted by pre-service preschool teachers?
2. Which aspects of the model/models are favoured by pre-service preschool teachers as to their sense of education?
3. Considering world-known preschool education models, how do pre-service preschool teachers evaluate current preschool educational practices?

Method

In the study, phenomenological research design as a qualitative approach was utilized. Phenomenology research well on the views, perceptions and experiences of individuals (Merriam, 2013; Yıldırım & Şimşek,

2006). Since the objective of the study is to investigate views of pre-service preschool teachers about the preschool educational models course, phenomenological design was preferred.

Participants

Criterion sampling, as a purposive sampling method was applied in the study. The research criteria encompasses pre-service students choosing the following courses: early childhood education models, school experience or teaching practice. The participants of the study group of the research are 3rd and senior pre-service teachers in the department of Preschool Education. A total of 40 students participated in this study. A focus group activity was conducted with 14 volunteered individuals among the teacher candidates, whose documents were reviewed, with different characteristics in terms of educational status, opinions, and class levels in order to ensure a deeper investigation and ensure validity and reliability.

Focus group is an interactive discussion and thus draws out more useful data. The experience is investigated in phenomenological studies (Ersoy, 2016).

The personal characteristics of the surveyed pre-service teachers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Pre-service Teachers' Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics	f
Gender	
Female	38
Male	2
Age Bands	
20-21 years	19
22-24 years	18
30-32 years	3
Type of High School Graduated From	
Anatolian High School	15
Technical High School for Girls	13
Anatolian Teacher High School	6
General High School	5
Multi-Program High School	1

Data Collection Tools

Data collection methods included pre-service teachers' document analysis and focus group discussions.

The document analysis consists of the following elements:

Assignment: Pre-service teachers were asked to express their senses of education about program and practices, learning environment and the teacher's role in relation to the preschool education models.

Open-ended questions: They comprise pre-service teachers' opinions regarding the program, learning environment and the teacher's role.

Written documents were collected in during different periods. The aim here was to assess the consistency of the pre-service teachers' responses. For this reason, two different time periods were selected to collect the data regarding the pre-service teachers' favourite aspects of the approaches to early childhood education.

The responses of the pre-service teachers in two different documents were compared. Further, the responses of the pre-service teachers in the assignments and open-ended questions were reviewed in terms

of the consistency. Afterwards, focus group interviews were used to gain an in-depth of inquiry. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. The participants were asked to comment on their classroom field experiences related to the “School Experience” and “Teaching Practice” courses and the practicability of Early Childhood education models in Turkey.

Data Analysis

Phenomenological method was employed to analyze the data. An inductive method was utilized. Accordingly, following steps were followed in the analysis of the data.

1. Documents were first reviewed. Subsequently, the responses were coded.
2. The codes were thematized. The themes were periodically reviewed and finalized. The literature was used to finalize the themes and categorize them.
3. Early childhood education models were subcategorized: learning environment, program and practices and the teacher’s role.

The frequency analysis of the answers of the pre-service teachers regarding their views on their favourite education models were also presented in the study.

The pre-service teachers’ evaluations on School Experience and Teaching Practice course were thematized under the following titles:

- Evaluations based on physical environment: small classroom size, little or no regular contact with the natural world
- Evaluations based on the practice of teacher education program: not giving children responsibility, lack of activities to promote creativity, teacher-centered education
- Children’s poor self-care skills

The frequency analysis of the answers of the pre-service teachers as to their favourite approach was identified as well.

The validity and reliability process of the present study attempts to secure credibility, transmissibility, consistency and confirmability in qualitative studies (Yıldırım and Şimsek ,2006). Correspondingly, the following steps were performed:

- In-depth interview technique was used to collect data. The amount of time for focus group interviews with pre-service teachers were extended as much as possible and the interview was recorded. In addition to that, written forms were submitted to the participant at different time intervals so that their views were taken.
- The participants were also asked to evaluate whether the comments made following the collected reflected their views.
- Similar questions were directed to pre-service teachers at different time intervals through written form. The consistency between the explanations in the current form and focus group interviews were examined.
- The data collection and analysis process were elaborately explained. Additionally, purposive sample selection was preferred.
- The collected data were compared with existing literature on preschool education models in terms of consistency.
- The participants’ expressions were presented in detail. The pre-service teachers’ expressions were directly stated without any interpretation.

Findings

In attempt to seek answers to the sub-problems posed in the study, the following research findings were presented in this section.

1. Which approaches to early childhood education are mostly adopted by pre-service preschool teachers?

The frequency values regarding the pre-service teachers' views on their favourite early child education approaches were detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. The Frequency Levels Of The Pre-Service Teachers' Responses By Models

Approaches	f
Reggio Emilia	37
Waldorf	31
Montessori	25
High Scope	19

From table 2, we can observe that the highest frequencies of the pre-service teachers' views on the approaches are Reggio Emilia and Waldorf approaches. They are followed by Montessori and High Scope approaches.

2. Which aspects of the model/models are favoured by pre-service preschool teachers as to their sense of education?

According to the responses of the pre-service teachers, their sense of education is mostly related to the characteristics of the Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, Montessori and High Scope approaches. Correspondingly, the results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Key Aspects of The Approaches Favoured by The Pre-service Teachers

	Program and Practices	Learning Environment	The teacher's role
Reggio Emilia	Project works	Providing children	Acting as a learning
	The environment as a 'third teacher'	with an opportunity to explore	partner
	Supporting creativity	Free environment (the opportunity to move	Observer
	Prioritizing art	freely)	
	Teaching	Open-ended materials	
	Light and shadow plays	Activities in the natural world	
	Children's exhibitions	Floor to ceiling glass windows	
	Family engagement	All classrooms open to a large central piazza	
Waldorf	Free choice activities	The use of natural materials	
	Interaction between classes	Supporting use of materials	
	Storytelling on stage	for different purposes	
	Artistic activities such as music, rhythmic games	Animal feeding	

	Gardening activities The use of natural environment as a classroom Simple classroom setting	Playing with dolls that have no faces Avoid using technological equipment	
Montessori	Prioritizing education of the senses Allowing children to self-correct and learn from their mistakes Learning-by-doing Giving children big responsibilities Promoting peer social interactions in learning environments Providing the opportunity to learn using real life experiences Creating learning environments that encourage self-discipline.	The inclusion of nature in the learning environment Layout Scaled to the child's size Offering children the "freedom of choice" The use of real materials Mixed-age grouping The use of single material	Teacher avoids the use of punishment or reward method
High Scope	Plan-Do-Review approach Giving children the freedom to choose their own play activities Creating spaces in which children can feel that what they do is meaningful		

Basing on the data shown in Table 3, it is seen that the pre-service teachers were mainly influenced by Reggio Emilia, Waldorf and Montessori approaches. The most frequently expressed opinions by pre-service teachers on their favourite approaches were shown as follows:

Reggio Emilia Approach

Given the pre-service teachers' responses related to the physical environments in the Reggio Emilia approach were evaluated, the following aspects of the approach were detected: floor to ceiling glass windows and spacious classrooms. The pre-service teachers made the following statements with respect to the Reggio Emilia approach:

"I will never forget glass windows, this is one of the most unforgettable peculiarities of the Reggio Emilia for me" (P, 27, interview)

The one thing that I cannot forget that Reggio Emilia's bright spacious classroom settings, because I mostly worked in such school. And I'm not accustomed to these small windows closed". (P, 28, interview)

From the pre-service teachers' perspectives, principle of child-directed learning in free-choice activity settings is one of the favourite aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach. In this respect, pre-service teachers' views are echoed in the following statements:

"I want to instruct within Reggio-inspired approach. I want to create a space where my students can feel free....I will definitely use shadow and light play activities. This will draw children's attention and encourage their class participation.... there will be classrooms without walls and doors so that children can participate in activities. There will be a piazza where everybody intermingles and this place is also important for adult-child interaction". (P, 21, written document)

The same participant also stated that he or she was impressed by the shadow and light activities in the Reggio Emilia.

When it comes to the characteristics of the teacher, the teacher's role as a learner and an observer was underlined by the pre-service teachers .To illustrate, one of the participants' expressions were presented below:

"I want to be a teacher who not only teaches but also learns" (P, 28, written document)

Another favourite aspect of the Reggio Emilia stressed by the pre-service teachers is the understanding and activities that spark creative thinking. In this sense, one of the pre-service teachers indicated the following statement.

"I would organize a curriculum that features exploration and creativity. I would include many music, drama...project works, shadow activities, gardening, daily activities" (P, 9, written document)

The participant here shared types of activities detailed in Table 3 above alongside the principles of the Reggio Emilia approach.

As another principle of the Reggio Emilia approach, the pre-service teachers also pointed out the importance of the environment as a 'third teacher' for children and mentioned they were impressed.

"The idea of embedding the environment into the class develop children's mental growth and experiences" (P, 10, written document)

Waldorf Approach

The pre-service teachers' responses as to the Waldorf approach indicated the following statements: the use of natural materials, nature-based education practices.

"Nature is literally the first teacher of each child Waldorf... the one thing that I cannot forget is engagement with animals...wearing boots and jumping in muddy puddles..." (P, 30, interview)

"The sense of being natural is what I liked most. Children...engage in gardening, animal feeding, planting...they form the basis for my sense of education as well" (P, 20, written document).

Some pre-service teachers stated that they also adopted no-tech Waldorf approach.

The use of silk fabric, schools nestled in nature and low-tech approach impressed me a lot" (P, 37, interview).

"Waldorf focuses on nature without technology. The reason why the Waldorf is anti-technology is because it makes our lives easier and thus makes us lazy. We need technology in our life. To make our lives easier not lazy" (P, 24, interview).

On the contrary, some pre-service teachers disagreed with the no-tech Waldorf approach. They criticized the Waldorf educational approach arguing that technology should be part of the society.

"...I don't approve of keeping children away from technology. Because technology is today's reality and I think that technology —when it is used and introduced appropriately— is a useful material for children..." (P, 23, written document).

Montessori Approach

Considering the pre-service teachers' responses to the Montessori approach, they stated that they were influenced by the following elements of the approach: providing real-life experiences, materials that allow children to self-correct and learn from their mistakes and supporting the child's sensory development. Accordingly, the most frequently expressed opinions by the pre-service teachers are presented as follows:

My sense of education builds on real-life experiences, providing children with free choices, giving children the opportunity to self-correct and learn from their mistakes, encouraging trial and error, respecting children's rights.... So, I'm quite inspired by Montessori" (P, 19, written document).

"In this approach, I'm very familiar with prioritizing sensory education" (P, 27, written document).

Uttering that they were influenced by the self-directed feature of the approach, the pre-service teachers stressed that they reflected it on their sense of education.

"To some extent, we need to encourage children for self-directed activities in the Montessori, I mean, to raise independent individuals. This drew my attention a lot" (P, 27, interview).

High Scope Approach

The pre-service teacher shared their views on the High Scope approach expressing that they adopted the principle of plan-do-review, teachers' efforts to help children feel that what they do is meaningful except than awarding.

"Another aspect of the approach which I like is that the teacher's efforts to help children feel that what they do is valuable and meaningful rather than just awarding" (P, 20, written document).

"I would let the children be free to choose their own activities like the High Scope approach" (P, 6, written document).

3. Considering world-known preschool education models, how do pre-service preschool teachers evaluate current preschool educational practices?

The pre-service teachers' responses were sub-categorized as follows:

- Children's poor self-care skills
- Evaluations based on physical environment: small classroom size, little or no regular contact with the natural world
- Evaluations based on the practice of teacher education programme: not giving children responsibility, lack of activities to promote creativity

As a result of their classroom field experiences, pre-service teachers observed overprotective behaviours related to self-care activities of children. Stressing children's limited self-care activities, the pre-service teachers made the following remarks:

"For example, we behave over protectively to the children, likewise, in the classroom environment as well. Also, I think our classrooms are so complex. Many colours, many stimulus. I like Waldorf from this aspect. Because such a complex environment confuses even me. Can you imagine children? (P, 40, interview)

"Montessori has lots of good things about self-care skills of children but since we here take care of everything about children, like, we put their shoes. We dress their jacket. We deal with their everything. I mean, children really cannot become self-sufficient for a long time you know" (P, 8, interview).

As mentioned above, the pre-service teachers paid attention to full of various stimuli and insufficient classroom setting in terms of mobility. They also remarked that the behaviours of teachers were authoritative.

“In terms of learning environment, I think our classrooms are too narrow to move. I mean, the class should not be too narrow; even I cannot get any chance to move around. We don’t allow our children to play and run at all.I don’t believe we treat children like a child. In terms of giving love, I honestly think teachers are so despot and don’t listen children. I think we have many shortcomings” (P, 27, interview).

Another participant mentioned that, after two years of education at abroad, he or she worked in one of Europe’s most developed countries as a teacher for a while. The participant shared his or her teaching experiences Turkey as follows:

“.....There is nothing creative in these schools. Everything was structured based on models everything is actually done with work sheet and painting Children’s needs at that moment, whether children really like to do it are ignored. Teachers completely focus on parents, they have worries like being a good teacher in the eyes of parents, always being preferred, increasing student enrolment at the beginning of the semester, being the most favoured teacher...

The participant shared his or her teaching experiences in Europe as follows:

“ .. We were not used to engage in model drawing activities. We were reading stories. When children wanted to engage in a play activity, then we used to make play activity or art activity...We were spending more time in the garden.... No such thing as bad weather... only inappropriate clothing. When children were going outside... they were looking for nail and tracking ants. Some children even were going outside with a magnifying glass” (P, 28, interview)

The participant here pointed out that the self-expression in children is significant and, in abroad, they conducted activities that encourage children to step outside regardless of the weather conditions.

The pre-service teachers mentioned that they did not experience such activities in their home countries. They did not observe any activities that sparked children’s creative expression.

“It is opposite to what we saw here. When a raincoat is worn in a light rain, it can be taken off in fact. We used to be grateful when they even slightly opened the window. Likewise, structured art activities. When the child painted brown, I don’t want to interfere, but the teacher says it will be painted blue. I told it to the child and I contradicted myself on those days very much. I didn’t mean to tell the child to paint blue. But I had to..... (P, 35, interview)

“....In schools, it was always like sitting in a table and cutting, copying and pasting and plus our teachers were obsessed with certain days and weeks. They were always organizing exhibitions. We were designing 3-d materials for the exhibitions. No children contributed at all. Like a brainstorming, they were putting bubbles, thought bubbles. Nothing more than it. They were not exercising any skills, eye hand coordination at all. I mean always structured art activities....” (P, 36, interview).

The pre-service teachers also noted that such sort of education did not produce happy children.

“..I see it is far away from the models...I observed an education style that made children unhappy. I witnessed an unhappy and more rote-learning education style. It is like putting a picture and instructing them to paint yellow or blue” (P, 30, interview).

The pre-service teachers were asked their opinion on the practicability of the models in Turkey. On the whole, they believed that the educational models can be put into practice in Turkey.

“Definitely practicable. We live four seasons here. Instead of showing via tables or graphics, we can show one-to-one alive. If children can be taken outside in every season in any circumstances, children will understand it through observation” (P, 35, interview).

“All of them are practicable... They can be implemented in today’s conditions. Our geography is favourable in terms of contacting with nature. It can be achieved through education” (P, 21, interview).

“We are a unique country. We can take applicable aspects of those models and then mix them and also add something from us and then offer it as an education model” (P, 34, interview).

“I can implement mixed-age grouping method in Montessori education in the future. Since in future there will be children of different ages in east and south-east provinces of Turkey due to classroom and teacher shortage, we will realize how such a method in Montessori will be required in the future” (P, 22, written document).

As a result of the pre-service teachers’ explanations as to their own sense of education, it was observed that they underlined the teacher’s role as a guide and the importance of student-centered approach.

“I want to establish reign of love not fear...The classroom should be spacious. They should look at the classroom with enthusiasm.” (P, 23, interview)

“Every child and teacher is special. If teacher admits that he or she is special, I don’t have to act like my other friends. This is who I am and I want to do like this. If the teacher tells he or she can help like this, the teacher observes and identifies each children’s needs and accordingly work” (P, 28, interview).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study attempted to investigate the perceptions of the pre-service teachers about early childhood education models. Concordantly, the pre-service teachers’ responses include following aspects: benefitting from nature-based learning, activities that encourage creativity, promoting social interaction between children, creating learning opportunities by doing and experiencing, setting up environments based on free choices of children, being open to develop yourself, supporting the child’s development. According to pre-service teachers’ views about early childhood education models, they mostly adopted the Reggio Emilia approach.

The results of the study conducted by Şahin Sak (2014) indicated that pre-service teachers had positive and negative attitudes towards Reggio Emilia and Montessori approaches. In this respect, they highlighted following considerations as to the Montessori approach: the use of real materials in the classroom, developing self-discipline in children, classroom layout, allowing freedom of choice, child-centered approach to education, mixed-age classroom; on the other hand, they pointed out following aspects of the Reggio Emilia :family engagement, supporting creative thinking, artistic activities, designing the physical environment, student-centered approach, promoting project works. These findings are also consistent with the present study.

The findings of the present study yielded similar results with the researches regarding teachers’ views on developmentally appropriate practices. The concept of developmentally appropriate practices was described by National Association for the Education of Young Children. Meanwhile, the description of the concept is based on studies examining how children learn and develop themselves. The concept also includes creating effective learning environments based on children’s age, experience, skill and interest (Bredenkamp, 2015).

The concept of developmentally appropriate practices has same principles with the preschool education models. Therefore, the research findings of the concept were discussed and compared with the present study. Similar findings were also reported in a study conducted in Turkey, China, Taiwan and Korea by McMullen, *et al.* (2005). In this respect, teachers underlined the importance of supporting children's development, allowing children to make choices, considering individual differences. A similar finding also emerged from the study of Erdiller & McMullen's study (2003). In this respect, teachers expressed similar views such as learning by-doing-experiencing, activities tailored to children and their individual interests and needs. Furthermore, Rentzou & Sakellariou's (2011) study with pre-service teachers yielded similar results with the current study in terms of the pre-service teachers' responses such as student-centered instruction, providing effective learning environments and creating active learning environments.

Similar results were also seen in a study conducted by Chang-Kredl & Kingsley (2014) on past experiences of pre-service teachers as to their families and school life. Accordingly, pre-service teachers demonstrated supportive behaviours in terms of motivating, supporting and encouraging students, creating positive learning opportunities for all students.

The pre-service teachers in this study also highlighted that they paid attention to benefit from environmental opportunities as much as possible. This finding is consistent with the literature. In terms of qualified learning environment, it is important to benefit from environment and consider the environment as a learning space (Evans, Myers, and Ilfeld, 2000).

The results also revealed that pre-service teachers adopted student-centered instruction and acted as a guide teacher activating children in educational environments. Similar findings were also found in the literature (Dağlıoğlu, 2008; Oktay, 1999; Sevinç, 2003; Senemoğlu, 1994). In the same vein, these aspects were also identified as the objectives of Turkish 2013 Preschool Education Program of The Ministry of National Education. Given the definitions of effective learning environment, effective learning environments are described as the places where the needs and requirements of all children are considered, children are active and learn by doing and experiencing. Hightower, *et al.* (2011) reviewed substantial researches on the quality of teaching and student learning. As a result, they found out that a qualified teacher is aware of the importance of knowing how to best promote children's social and emotional needs and accordingly design the learning environment.

It is suggested to repeat the present study after pre-service teachers are appointed as a teacher so that a comparative study can be realized. The content of the development, learning and program have been changing and evolving rapidly. In this respect, educators should stay up to date on the latest cutting-edge educational developments. Vocational education cannot just be restricted to university education. Teachers should dedicate themselves to continuous development and lifelong learning. (Bredenkamp, 2015). For this reason, preschool education models can be incorporated into the curriculum as a required course which covers both theory and practice.

The teacher should create a continuous professional development and benefit from it. During the professional development process, the teacher should interrogate himself or herself, assess learning and teaching processes. It is important for teachers to closely monitor the latest developments in their fields and correspondingly design themselves (Bredenkamp, 2015). A teacher who seeks out new knowledge is crucially significant in terms of personal and institutional development. A teacher is required to acquire various information from different sources to improve himself or herself in terms of vocational needs (Çelik, 2017). Attending professional trainings increase teachers' confidence as well (Nolan and Molla, 2017). Preschool teachers can be consulted to share their views on educational models. Additionally, the widespread use of theoretical and practical studies can be ensured in the context of in-service education.

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