

SELF-REPORTED PROBLEMS OF PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS THROUGHOUT TEACHING PRACTICUM

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ABSTRACT

Recent literature on pre-service teacher education emphasizes the importance of student teaching in teacher education programs. For this reason, this study was designed to determine the self-reported problems of pre-service teachers' teaching and to find out whether there is any kind of change in the problems of student teachers throughout the practicum. Ninety-nine Turkish EFL teachers were chosen as the participants of the study who were told to write reflections on their each teaching experience. Data were analyzed by dividing the reflection reports into communication units. Each communication unit was named and labeled according to problems in student teachers' teaching experiences. Categories were also divided into three time periods considering the time of the communication units as stated by student teachers. The analysis of the data revealed five main categories as the sources of student teachers' problems. The analysis suggested that most of the problems of student teachers decrease in frequency whereas some of them increase towards the end of the practicum, or do not show any changes throughout the practicum. Consequently, the study stresses the need for modification in the teacher training curriculum and offers behavioral guidelines to student teachers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors.

Keywords: pre-service teacher education, teaching practicum, language teaching, reflection

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ ÖĞRETMELİK UYGULAMASI BOYUNCA YAŞADIĞI SORUNLAR

ÖZ

Hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi üzerine yapılan çalışmalar öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında öğretmenlik uygulaması ve öğrenci-öğretmenlik deneyiminin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma öğrenci-öğretmenlerin öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinde yaşadıkları olumsuz noktaların kendi ifadeleriyle belirlenmesini ve bu noktaların uygulama sürecinde herhangi bir değişiklik gösterip göstermediğini ortaya koymaktır. Bu çalışmaya Anadolu Üniversitesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği Programında öğretmenlik uygulaması yapan 99 İngilizce öğretmen adayı katılmıştır. Veri toplama amacıyla katılımcılardan her bir öğretmenlik deneyimlerini yansıtan yansıtma raporu yazmaları istenmiştir. Elde edilen veriler iletişim birimlerine bölünmüş, her bir iletişim birimi problem noktalara göre isimlendirilmiş ve etiketlenmiştir. Bu yöntemle oluşturulan kategoriler aynı zamanda iletişim birimlerinin belirlenme zamanlarına göre zaman aralıklarına bölünmüştür. Verilerin analizi öğrenci-öğretmenlerin problemlerinin kaynağı olarak beş temel kategori ortaya koymuştur: öğrenci-öğretmen kaynaklı problemler, öğrenci kaynaklı problemler, rehber öğretmen kaynaklı problemler, eğitim ortamı/sistem kaynaklı problemler ve rehber öğretim elemanı kaynaklı problemler. Yapılan karşılaştırmalar hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin problemlerinin genel anlamda öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinin sonunda azaldığını, buna karşılık bazı noktaların genel eğilimin aksine süreç içinde bir artış veya azalma göstermediği gibi bazılarının da genel eğilimin aksi yönde değişim gösterdiği saptanmıştır. Çalışma sonuçlarının hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimine nasıl yansıtılabileceği, bu programlarda nasıl iyileştirmelere yer verilebileceği ya da değişikliklere gidilirken nelerin göz önünde bulundurulması gerektiği konuları irdelenmiş ve bulgular doğrultusunda önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hizmet öncesi öğretmen yetiştirme, öğretmenlik uygulaması, dil öğretimi, yansıtma

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Practice does not necessarily make perfect: What is needed is good practice” (Richards and Crookes, 1988, p.13). However, it is not so easy to understand and realize a good practicum component in teacher education programs. The practicum component of teacher education programs is composed of mainly five aspects: a) student teachers as the active participants of the practicum, b) university supervisors as the experts to help student teachers before and after they practice teaching, c) cooperating teachers as the experts helping student teachers in their practicum schools, d) students as the receivers of knowledge that student teachers present during their practice teaching, and e) educational context and system that student teachers are required to complete their student teaching requirements in.

The teaching practice is located at the highest level of the university-school cooperation of the teacher education programs (Tang, 2002). Therefore, another essential concept in teaching practicum component is the placement of student teachers for their teaching experiences. Schick and Nelson (2001) argue that teacher educators, or whoever responsible for this job must be careful about placing student teachers into schools where cooperating and mentor teachers are the successful ideals of the target language and language teaching methodology at each level. This view is also supported in the way that schools are the places where teacher-learner interaction takes place, and schools and schooling are the indispensable parts of language teacher education due to the fact that student teachers gain the necessary school values from the places they complete their student teaching practicum (Freeman and Johnson, 1998).

It is also reported by some pre-service teachers that they are not adequately prepared by the teacher education programs to meet the requirements of teaching in a real classroom environment (Stuart and Thurlow, 2000). They report that they are not able to cope with the problems they face during teaching practice. Not being able to practice the teaching skills they have learned throughout their training in the teacher education programs causes student teachers to experience discouragement and disappointment (Stuart and Thurlow, 2000). All in all, it is possible to assume that the mostly theoretical education they receive in their teacher education programs can provide student teachers with some of the knowledge they need when they start practice teaching.

It is to be argued that the expectations of teacher trainers and mentor teachers may or may not match in a practicum environment. As Clark (2002) discusses, what student teachers and teacher educators expect from student teaching experience and the teaching practicum is ‘doing a good job’.

1.1. Teaching Practicum as a Part of Learning How to Teach

The practicum component in teacher training institutions all over the world is given great emphasis. The theory behind teaching practicum and the expected outcomes of the practicum process are quite similar in all teacher training institutions in the world and Turkey. Nevertheless, the way of putting the practicum process into operation differs from one institution to another. However, the content and the student and teacher characteristics lead the practicum to be conducted differently in different situations (Zeichner, 1990; Wu and Lee, 1999; Burant and Kirby, 2002; Hastings and Squires, 2002).

The primary purpose of teaching practicum is to give the to-be teachers a chance to prepare themselves as future teachers. Pre-service teachers see teaching practicum as the most important constituent of their teaching experience and as a vital component of their teacher education (Zeichner, 1990). Furthermore, the student teaching in the practicum stage is the 'culminating experience' in teacher education

(Koerner, Rust, and Baumgartner, 2002) which unites the teaching and non-teaching experiences to set a beneficial experience environment for student teachers to show them the integration of 'the knowledge about teaching' and 'the art of teaching' (Stoynoff, 1999). By the same token, Chapman (1999, p.14) states the mission of the practicum as follows:

It encourages the learners to think critically and to constantly redefine the content and process of the learning experience. The practicum also is expected to heighten individual awareness of community issues, motivate learners to create opportunities, embrace new ideas and give direction to positive change.

1.2. Reflective Practices in Teaching Practicum

Reflective practices in teaching practicum have gained importance in recent years. Farrell (1999) conducted a study to examine the reflective practice of three EFL teachers in Korea. The study aims to identify the topics that emerge in weekly meetings of the teachers, to find out the level of reflection, whether critical or descriptive, and to see whether the level of reflection develops with time. In conclusion, Farrell (1999, p.167) provides five suggestions for teachers in group discussions:

- 1) join a group of ESL/EFL teachers;
- 2) build in some ground rules;
- 3) make provisions for three different kinds of time;
- 4) provide external input; and
- 5) provide for a low affective state.

Liou (2001) examined the reflective practice of 20 pre-service Taiwanese English teachers following Farrell's (1999) method. Liou discusses in his study that student teachers need lower affective state, reflective training, and teacher development group meetings in order to help them change positively and to foster the reflectivity in teaching. Diary studies in teaching practicum studies have been popular among teacher educators in recent years (Barksdale-Ladd, Draper, King, Orapollo, and Radencich, 2001; Zeyrek, 2001; Bain, Mills, Ballantyne, and Packer, 2002; Maloney and Campbell-Evans, 2002).

1.3. Problems of Pre-service Teachers during Their Practicum Experience

Although the purpose and the function of the practicum component in teacher education are clear and meaningful, several problems appear in the implementation stage of this process. For example, teaching practices are stress-creating experiences due to the factors such as lack of role clarification, the evaluation procedure, not knowing the expectations of the cooperating teacher and the supervisor, and lack of time to talk with the cooperating teacher (MacDonald, 1992; Murray-Harvey, Slee, Lawson, Silins, Banfield, and Russel, 2000). Moreover, several researchers have tried to identify the problems in student teaching during teaching practicum and have specified a wide range of problematic areas such as classroom management, individual learner differences, dealing with unmotivated learners, managing time, inappropriate lesson planning, etc. (Veenman, 1984; Kwo, 1996; Korukcu, 1996; Mau, 1997; Farrell, 1999; Murray-Harvey et al, 2000; Valdez, Young, and Hicks, 2000; Aydın and Bahçe, 2001; LaMaster, 2001; Liou, 2001; Zeyrek, 2001; Hertzog, 2002; Stevens, Sarıgül, and Değer, 2002; Tang, 2002).

Veenman (1984) reviewed 83 different studies from different geographical locations, different school levels, and with different research methods. The common aim of the studies was to investigate the perceived problems of beginning teachers. As documented by the researcher, classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relations with parents, organization of class work, insufficient materials and supplies, dealing with problems of individual students, and heavy teaching load resulting in insufficient preparation time were among the most cited problems of beginning teachers.

Although certain types of problems encountered by beginning teachers are classified through a wide range of research reports, Veenman (1984) defends that problems vary according to the context and culture where certain studies are conducted. Veenman (1984, p.153) states: "whether this diversity was caused by difference in educational systems and social contexts of the schools in the various countries could not be deduced from these data".

In an earlier study, Kwo (1996) identified that student teachers had problems related to learners' own culture, challenging students to higher levels of learning, and responding to unexpected student questions throughout the teaching practicum. Similarly, student teachers in Singapore were found to be suffering from personal-survival concerns such as maintaining appropriate class control, doing well when the supervisor is present, feeling more adequate as a teacher, getting a favorable teaching evaluation, being accepted/respected by professionals, and feeling under pressure too much of the time; pupil concerns such as guiding students toward intellectual and emotional growth, meeting the needs of different kinds of students, challenging unmotivated students, and diagnosing student learning problems. They were also suffering from lack of instructional materials, routine/inflexibility of teaching situation, and working with too many students a day as problems related to teaching situation (Mau, 1997). Also, Valdez et al. (2000) found that classroom management (30%), instruction and learning (48%), individual differences (12%), and other rare items (12%) were the problems of student teachers.

In addition to studies from a wide range of cultural and educational contexts, Aydın and Bahçe (2001) conducted a study with Turkish EFL student teachers who were teaching English and found that classroom management (43%), teaching process (15%), relationship with the students (9%), problems caused by student teachers' status (8%), and miscellaneous (17%) were the problem areas experienced by Turkish student EFL teachers. In another study, Korukcu (1996) found that both beginning and pre-service teachers reported the following aspects of teaching as problematic: teaching methods, classroom management, lesson planning, and motivation of students.

"The issue of change is critical to the growth process of the pre-service teachers" (Valdez et al., 2000, p.44). In other words, student teachers may not provide solutions to various problematic situations they face earlier in their teaching experience but their concerns may change throughout the practicum. For instance, Lee and Loughran (2000) found out that there was a change in the types of concerns in different stages of the practicum after their study designed to investigate the concerns of student teachers in eight themes: teachers, students, content, context, pedagogy, classroom management, supervising teachers, and assessment. Lee and Loughran (2000, p.78) claimed:

We believe that this demonstrates the importance (for teacher educators) of recognizing and responding appropriately -both through pedagogy and curriculum- to student teachers' concerns. Through the school-based context we assert that the student teachers may come to better see and understand the 'surprises', 'puzzles', and dilemmas of teaching as the time available to them allows a recognition and response to those varying issues over an extended period of time.

Brinton and Holten's (1989) study indicated that novice teachers were able to develop themselves along the practicum in certain aspects such as correction techniques, modeling, and classroom control. Also, they were gradually developing their positive attitudes towards teaching and being a teacher together with gaining a higher self awareness by reflecting on their own teaching experience. Gebhard (1990), on a parallel basis, found that teachers tended to change their teaching behavior in four teaching areas: setting up and carrying out lesson, use of classroom space, selection of content, and treatment of students' language errors. Gebhard (1990) also discusses that interaction component in teaching practicum can be designed to allow student teachers to change their teaching behavior. This might also let student teachers see different teaching techniques and classroom applications.

Other studies in terms of change and development gave similar results. For example, Pennington (1995) found that the concerns of the teachers turned to more interpersonal ones like their own and students' feelings, roles, and responsibilities from the procedural ones such as timing in classroom activities, keeping students on task, and managing pair and group work. Also, pre-service teachers in Chepyator-Thomson and Rose's (2003) study developed in classroom management and techniques of discipline concepts during their sixteen-week practicum. In the Turkish context, Eroz (1997) suggested that pre-service teacher change could be observed through reflection in demonstration of a lesson, lesson planning, instructions, vocabulary, and written homework components of the syllabus. To sum up, limited research on the 'change' issue in teaching practice suggested that a certain degree of change in the teaching behavior of student teachers could be observed throughout their teaching practice experience. However, the literature also suggests that studies visualizing and discussing the teaching practicum process from the beginning to the end would be useful to better understand the effectiveness of the practicum in different settings and to what extent pre-service teachers are able to put the theory they have into practice in real teaching environments.

1.4. Statement of Research Questions

Based on the implications from previous studies conducted on problems of student teachers and the change issue in teaching practicum, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the self-reported problems of the student teachers during their classroom teaching experience in the teaching practicum?
- 2) Do the self-reported problems of the student teachers during their classroom teaching experience change throughout the teaching practicum?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 99 (17 male and 82 female) student teachers. All participants were 4th year students at Anadolu University, Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching Department (AUELT). The participants were enrolled in the "Teaching Practicum" course as part of their graduation requirement.

After completing the 'School Experience I' and 'School Experience II' courses, which require observation and micro-teaching activities, the teacher trainees were required to practice teaching for a full class hour in their "Teaching Practicum". In the Spring Term, the teacher trainees were assigned to

public and/or private schools for 6 class hours a week in two different weekdays. They were also assigned a cooperating teacher and a university supervisor. The trainees worked in groups of three with their assigned cooperating teacher for twelve weeks. They made classroom observations during the first two weeks of the practicum. They observed their cooperating teachers in classroom teaching and submitted observation reports to their university supervisors. Following the two observation weeks, each student teacher taught 10 teaching hours throughout the teaching practicum.

During the teaching practicum, the student teachers were given feedback by their university supervisors on their lesson plans a day before each teaching experience. Their cooperating teachers also provided feedback on their teaching right after the experience. In addition to the feedback sessions, the student teachers were required to reflect on their teaching and submit a reflection report to their university supervisors. Moreover, for evaluative purposes, the student teachers were observed by the cooperating teachers each time they delivered a lesson and by the university supervisors at least twice during the practicum.

2.2. Instruments

The reflection reports of the student teachers are used to form the data base of this study. As mentioned in section 3.1.1, the student teachers wrote their reflections on their teaching experiences following the “Guided Reflection Protocol for Individual Reflection” by Hole and McEntee (1999). This protocol was proposed and was found to be helpful and practical guide for individual teacher reflection (Block, 2001). Also, Hole and McEntee (1999, p.34) pointed out the importance of guidance in reflecting on the experience as follows: “A protocol, or guide, enables teachers to refine the process of reflection, alone or with colleagues”.

The protocol offers four steps each of which asks a different question to be answered in order to reflect on a specific classroom incident:

Step 1: What happened?

Step 2: Why did it happen?

Step 3: What might it mean?

Step 4: What are the implications for my practice?

2.3. Procedure

In the first week of the 12-weeks teaching practicum –before the student teachers started to teach- the participants were introduced to Hole and McEntee’s (1999) “Guided Reflection Protocol for Individual Reflection” by the university supervisors. Each step of the protocol was clearly defined and exemplified and the questions of the student teachers related to the implementation of the reflection component of the practicum were answered. In the following weeks, they were asked to write their reflections on the day of each classroom teaching.

The student teachers were also told that the reflections they submit would not be used for evaluation of their teaching performance, but rather for providing them and the future trainees a better practicum process. They were also set free to write their reflections in English or Turkish in order to prevent the language barrier which might have hindered them from expressing their feelings and ideas openly and clearly.

Each student teacher submitted 8 to 11 written reflections to their supervisors by the end of the practicum. Although it was a requirement for the student teacher to complete 10 classroom teaching hours, some of them were not able to meet the requirement due to the unexpected delays or cancellations from the practicum schools they were assigned to attend (e.g. preparations for the national festivals, preparations for the end-of-year activities). In the scope of this study, reflections of the student teachers who practice taught at least eight times were taken into consideration. Furthermore, for those who had more than eight teaching experience, the reflections of the first eight classes were analyzed in order to form a unified data base. However, only the first two, middle two, and final two reflection journals of the delivered lessons were used for the analysis.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data collected for this study were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Constant Comparative Method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; cited in Lockhart and Ng, 1995; Dooley and Murphrey, 2000; Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, and Coleman, 2000; Barksdale-Ladd et al., 2001; Zepeda and Mayers, 2002) was conducted to analyze the weekly reflection reports of the student teachers. This data analysis method offers the chance of drawing categories from the relevant data of the specific study instead of using a set categorization.

Data analysis procedure started with dividing the reflection journals of the student teachers into communication units. A communication unit is defined as “a unit being a separate expression about a thought or behaviour” (Mangelsdorf, 1992, p.276). The communication units were either in forms of a phrase, or a full sentence or a paragraph, or in forms of a set of paragraphs. For example:

...I should have prepared extra examples not to repeat the same things when the students didn't understand and needed another contextual example to get the meaning./ Also, I should have been careful about time management; I couldn't finish the lesson in time./...

In this study, communication units were identified according to problem areas. The task of dividing the data into communication units was conducted by two raters individually. One rater is the researcher, and the co-rater is an experienced teacher trainer and a researcher in the field. First, 10 % of the whole data were analyzed by the two raters individually in order to come to an agreement and establish consistency on the wording of the communication units. Having reached the consistency on wording, 20 % of the whole data were analyzed again by the two raters individually. Then, the two raters conducted a meeting to compare the individual analyses. Here, the two raters discussed and decided on the existence and wording of the communication units identified. The rest of the data, then, were identified by the researcher based on the agreements on the previously analyzed data. Inter-rater reliability was calculated by using “point by point method” with a formula of the number of agreements divided by the number of agreements plus disagreements multiplied by 100 (Tawney and Gast, 1984). 30 % of the whole data were used to calculate the inter-rater reliability since the data consisted of a large amount of written document. Inter-rater reliability was found as 90 %. Having assured the inter-rater reliability, the rest of the data were analyzed by the researcher.

Once the whole data were divided into communication units by the researcher, the two raters came together and conducted a revision session in which the newly added communication units and their wordings were revised and decided. As the next step, each unit was labeled according to a) the participant, and b) reported time of the practicum. After the units appeared in labeled forms, the two raters conducted another meeting to categorize the communication units. Here, the similar units were collected under the same categories. Each communication unit was compared and contrasted with each

other, and the ones that show similar characteristics were brought under certain categories and sub-categories as Constant Comparative Method offers. After that, each category and sub-category was named given the general characteristics of each set based on the teacher education and language teaching literature.

Finally, the researcher and the co-rater consulted and conducted revision and discussion sessions to reach a final agreement on the categories drawn from student teacher reflections by comparing and contrasting the categories emerged. Here the categories drawn were collected under main headings that represent the source of the problems encountered by the student teachers. When the sub-categories, categories, and the main headings were identified, the number of communication units per category and heading was found. Frequency of the problems were identified and presented in numbers and percentages. There were 980 total communication units categorized into 178 headings, some of which with high frequency and some with low frequency.

In order to answer the second research question, previously identified communication units, categories and sub-categories, and main categories were used to present and discuss the change throughout the practicum. First, the frequency of the communication units were identified and tabled based on the findings. Each student teacher as the participant of the study was given a number from 1 to 99, and each reflection report of a particular participant was given a number from 1 to 8 based on the time of teaching, from the first teaching experience to the eighth. Then, each communication unit was presented including the number of the student teacher and the time of teaching. To give an example:

<u>Communication Unit</u>	<u>(Number of the student teacher-Time of teaching)</u>
<i>Inappropriate material selection</i>	(8-5), (11-5), (22-5)
<i>Students' reluctance in participating in the group work</i>	(22-5), (30-2)

All of the communication units were sorted as shown in the example above and listed together under sub-categories, categories and main categories. Frequency of the communication units, sub-categories and categories, and main categories were calculated by dividing the communication units into three time periods according to the time period they were reported to be experienced by the student teachers: problems in the 1st and 2nd times of teaching –the beginning, problems in the 4th and 5th times of teaching –the middle, and problems in the 7th and 8th times of teaching –the end.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Problems of Pre-service Teachers

The analysis of the data allowed us to use the five components of teaching practicum as the main categories of the categories that give the main sources of problems experienced by student teachers: student teachers, students, cooperating teacher, supervisor, and the system/educational context (Table 1).

3.1.1. Student Teacher-Based Problems

Among the five categories of problems of student teachers, student teacher-based problems consist of the most of the problems faced by student teachers (64,1 %). These problems are divided into three main categories: problems in the pre-active stage, problems in the active stage, and individual problems. The pre-active stage is related to the issues that occur before the lesson is delivered such as preparation,

planning, and anxiety. The active stage consists of the classroom events taking part during the process of delivering a lesson. A number of classroom events such as classroom management, conducting classroom activities, and applying teaching techniques are related to the active stage of the lesson. Third, post-active stage covers the issues that happen after delivering a lesson. In this study, however, no communication units were identified related to post-active stage of a lesson. Problems related to the individual states of the student teachers are the ones that can not be directly related to a specific stage of a lesson.

67,9 % of the reported problems occurred in the active stage of their teaching experience whereas 29,1 % occurred at the pre-active stage. Only 3 % of the problems were classified as individual problems. The distribution of the problems related to student teachers indicates that the active stage of the lesson, in which student teachers are facing the students in the classroom, constitutes the major problem area.

3.1.1.1. The Pre-Active Stage

Anxiety is the most experienced problem category (44,3 %) among the problems related to pre-active stage. Problems related to preparation are the second highly reported ones (30,6 %). Problems related to material selection (13,1 %) and information about students (12 %) are the other problem categories. Here are two examples from two different pre-service teachers' reflections on their problems in the pre-active stage:

[Mrs. X (the university supervisor) came to observe my lesson. The topic of the lesson was simple: "too + adj. + to/adj.+enough + to". However, I couldn't teach the topic well. The reason of this was that Mrs. X was observing us for the second time. Since her first observation was a disaster, I was a bit (in fact very much) stressed. (Anxiety)

Another incident that I came across in lesson was about organization. While doing reading activities I distributed handouts to the students. While getting answers from the students, I couldn't follow the questions because I didn't have enough photocopies. I didn't realize that I didn't have a copy of the handouts before. So I asked one students to look at the handouts together. Before beginning the lesson, I should control my materials that are used in the activities.

3.1.1.2. The Active Stage

The analysis of the reflection reports of the student teachers indicates that most of the problems related to student teachers were experienced in the active stage of the lessons (67,9 %). This portion of the problems consists of the 43,6 % of all the problems reported by the student teachers.

Table 1. Self-Reported Problems of Student Teachers

Problem Category	Sub-Categories		N*
<i>Student teacher-based problems</i>	<i>Problems in the pre-active stage</i>	<i>Anxiety</i>	81
		<i>Preparation</i>	56
		<i>Material selection</i>	24
		<i>Information about the students</i>	22
		<i>Sub-total</i>	183
	<i>Problems in the active stage</i>	<i>Time management</i>	120
		<i>Classroom Management</i>	86
		<i>Instruction</i>	43
		<i>Student Involvement</i>	28
		<i>Board usage</i>	26
		<i>Teaching Procedure</i>	19
		<i>Classroom language</i>	18
		<i>Error correction/Feedback</i>	16
		<i>Anxiety</i>	13
		<i>Flexibility</i>	12
		<i>Carelessness</i>	10
		<i>Linguistic incompetence</i>	8
		<i>Body language/Eye contact/Stress-Intonation</i>	8
		<i>Interaction pattern</i>	7
		<i>Classroom procedure</i>	5
		<i>Application of teaching techniques</i>	4
		<i>Relations with the students</i>	3
	<i>Decision-making</i>	1	
	<i>Sub-total</i>	427	
	<i>Individual problems</i>	<i>Student teacher's perception of his/her role</i>	11
		<i>Physical Health</i>	5
		<i>Mental State</i>	3
<i>Sub-total</i>		19	
<i>Sub-total</i>		629	
<i>Student-based problems</i>	<i>Students' motivation</i>	60	
	<i>Students' familiarity with the new teacher and new classroom procedures</i>	53	
	<i>Student participation</i>	45	
	<i>Disruptive student behavior</i>	38	
	<i>Students' negative attitudes</i>	21	
	<i>Student characteristics</i>	11	
	<i>Using L1</i>	4	
	<i>Students' pace</i>	4	
	<i>Classroom materials (resources)</i>	2	
<i>Sub-total</i>	238		
<i>Cooperating teacher-based problems</i>	<i>Lack of cooperation</i>	24	
	<i>Absence of the cooperating teacher</i>	14	
	<i>Cooperating teacher interference</i>	12	
	<i>Disruptive behavior of the cooperating teacher</i>	3	
	<i>Perception of the student teachers' role</i>	1	
	<i>Sub-total</i>	54	
<i>System/educational context-based problems</i>	<i>Technical problems</i>	12	
	<i>Course material</i>	11	
	<i>Curriculum</i>	11	
	<i>Number of students</i>	8	
	<i>Interruption of the flow of the lesson</i>	4	
	<i>Differences in the proficiency level of the students</i>	4	
	<i>Teaching partner interference</i>	2	
	<i>Lack of resources</i>	1	
<i>Sub-total</i>	53		
<i>Supervisor-based problems</i>	<i>Supervisor interference</i>	6	
<i>Total</i>		980	

* N= Number of Communication Units

Problems of the student teachers in the active stage were divided into 18 sub-categories. Since the frequency of problems is high in this category, the number of categories which represents different types of problems in more detail was also high. Time management, with 28,1 % takes its place at the top. The others are: classroom management (20,2 %), instruction (10,1 %), student involvement (6,6 %), board usage (6,1 %), teaching procedure (4,5 %), classroom language (4,2 %), error correction/feedback (3,8 %), anxiety (3 %), flexibility (2,8 %), carelessness (2,3 %), linguistic incompetence (1,9 %), body language/eye-contact/stress-intonation (1,9 %), interaction pattern (1,6 %), classroom procedure (1,1 %), application of teaching techniques (0,9 %), relations with the students (0,7 %), and decision making (0,2 %), respectively. Three examples from the most frequently stated self-reported problems of pre-service teachers in the active stage were as follows:

As the third activity I wanted them to choose a topic and talk about it in one minute. While one of the students was talking, the bell rang. At that time I let him to say his/her last sentence then I thanked the students for their participation. (Time Management)

Then I wanted to apply the last activity, which was changing passive into active, active into passive within the text. But during my instruction I had classroom management problems. Despite my efforts, they weren't silent. That's why the instruction was not understood. This was because it was the third lesson, their interest was decreased, and the subject matter was not an interesting one. (Classroom Management)

I gave incomplete instruction and when I understood I made it, it made me much more anxious and I forgot to give the complete instruction and it caused chaos among the students. Thus, they started to make noise. (Giving Instruction)

3.1.1.3. Individual Problems of Student Teachers

The analysis of the reflection reports of the student teachers suggested certain problems related to student teachers that are neither related to the pre-active nor active stage of a lesson. The third category consists of problems related to student teachers' health, their mental state on the day of teaching, and their perceptions of their roles as student teachers. Communication units in this category consist of the 3 % of the problems related to student teachers, and 1,9 % of the problems in total. Here are some examples:

As I had a bad cold I had difficulty in hearing students' answers so I sometimes raised the tone of my voice to the students. I should not have warned them too much. Instead of warning them too much, I should have stopped the activity and waited for their being silent. (Physical Health)

Although we find activities, generally I can say that there is a formal relationship between the students and us. I want to overcome this problem. Of course it doesn't mean being very intimate with the students. At least, before the lesson I'd like to talk with them about the news, sports, their problems, etc. However, it seems impossible now because no matter how hard it is objected, we only teach to pass the class, and we are trying to obey all the rules. Maybe we are trying to be good for the teachers who are observing us; therefore, we are forcing ourselves too much. (Perception of Their Roles as Student Teachers)

3.1.2. Student-Based Problems

Student teachers reported that student-based problems are the second most frequently experienced problems among the five main categories (24,3 %). Student-based problems were further divided into nine categories. The most frequently reported problems among the student-based problems are related to students' motivation (25,2 %). Other categories are: students' familiarity with the new teacher and new classroom procedures (22,2 %), student participation (19 %), disruptive student behavior (16 %),

students' negative attitudes (8,8 %), student characteristics (4,6 %), using L1 (1,7 %), students' pace (1,7 %), and classroom materials (resources) (0,8 %). In terms of student motivation as the most frequently stated aspect of the student-based problems, a student teacher explained the classroom event as follows:

I started the lesson with a warm-up activity. The topic of "warm-up" was chess. First, I asked "Do you like playing chess?" and all the students answered no. I knew that they liked playing chess because we had talked about a similar topic in the previous weeks. Their aim was to hinder my lesson because they didn't want to have a lesson.

3.1.3. Cooperating Teacher-Based Problems

Analysis of the reflection reports of the student teachers indicated that 5,5 % of the total problems were related to the cooperating teachers who they worked with. Cooperating teachers in teaching practicum are supposed to work with the student teachers and university supervisors collaboratively. They are also responsible for observing the student teachers while teaching, filling-in observation sheets, providing feedback, and grading the student teachers on their preparations and performances in teaching.

Problems related to cooperating teachers were divided into five sub-categories. According to reflections of student teachers, 44,4 % of the cooperating teacher-based problems are due to lack of cooperation between the student teachers and cooperating teachers. Other problem categories are absence of cooperating teacher (25,9 %), cooperating teacher interference (22,2 %), disruptive behavior of the cooperating teacher (5,6 %), and perception of student teacher's role (1,9 %). As an example of lack of cooperation between a student teacher and the cooperating teachers, a student teacher wrote:

Last week I would teach "provided/providing that, as long as, unless" in 9/A. I went to school after getting my exercises and activities photocopied. Mrs. X (the cooperating teacher), unfortunately, told us that it would be better not to teach that day because she had given the same topic to the other group by mistake and they had taught that topic before us. All my preparations were useless. Mrs. X wanted us again to prepare an extra lesson plan since she couldn't observe our teaching. After making that much preparation, it was really disappointing to learn that we would not teach and it was really boring to waste three hours sitting in the classroom.

3.1.4. Educational Context/System-Based Problems

When the reflections of the student teachers were analyzed, certain communication units were related to problems about the educational context and the system. Educational context refers to the schools where student teachers are assigned to complete their teaching practicum. System, on the other hand, refers to the requirements of the university and those of the National Education System. Problems in this category constitute 5,4 % of the problems encountered by student teachers. Communication units related to educational context/system were collected under eight different categories.

Technical problems are the most frequently stated problems of student teachers among the educational context/system-based problems (22,7) as well as the problems caused by the course material (20,8 %) and curriculum (20,8 %). Other problems are number of students (15 %), interruption of the flow of the lesson (7,5 %), differences in the proficiency level of the students (7,5 %), teaching partner interference (3,8 %), and lack of resources (1,9 %). A student teacher explained a technical problem in the teaching practice school as follows:

Anyway, when my lesson performance is considered, almost everything went well. I did my every activity as I planned before. But there was an activity which was not all right. Almost at the end of the lesson, since the tape-recorder was broken down, and it was almost impossible to make it work, I could not do my last activity.

3.1.5. Supervisor-Based Problems

Supervisor interference was reported as the sources of problems by the student teachers in six communication units and was the least frequently stated problem category among the five main problem categories (0,7 %):

When I was reading aloud, I faced with the teacher's eyes. She warned me to let the students read themselves and silently. Then, I immediately told the students to go on by themselves. And then, everything changed and I lost my concentration. I didn't like being interrupted in my own teaching. Maybe there was something wrong, but - I think – it was not the correct time to warn me about it, because it ruined the rest of my practice in that lesson. (Supervisor Interference)

When I was telling the 1st group about their task, the teacher looked at me and wanted me to go near her, but I continued giving my instruction, and went near her after the students started to do their tasks. I couldn't leave that work at such a moment and go near her because - I think – that kind of behavior would show the students that I was not sure or did not know what to do and I was not a teacher but a student teacher. I believe that being observed is a really good opportunity for us to know about our teaching, but being interrupted throughout the lesson was really annoying for me. And because of this curriculum, I did not feel myself comfortable in the lesson. I wished I had heard that warning after the lesson. (Supervisor Interference)

3.2. Change in the Problems of Student Teachers throughout the Practicum

Distribution of the self-reported problems of the student teachers according to time periods is presented in Figure 1. Frequency analysis of the problem units indicates that student teachers experience most of the problems at the beginning of the practicum process (38,5 %). The problems encountered in the middle of the practicum are less frequent than the problems at the beginning of the practicum (34,5 %). Similarly, problems of student teachers are the least at the end of the practicum (27 %). It is seen in the frequency of the problems that student teachers are more likely to experience problems at the beginning of the practicum, and the frequency of the problems tend to decrease with time. The frequency of problems at the end of the practicum is noticeably lower than the problems at the beginning and in the middle of the practicum.

3.2.1. Change in the Student Teacher-Based Problems throughout the Practicum

Student teacher-based problems constitute the 64,1 % of all problems reported by the participants. In this category, 40,5 % of the problems are encountered by student teachers at the beginning of the practicum. 34,3 % of the problems were reported in the middle of the practicum. Problems at the end of the practicum indicate the lowest amount among the three time periods (25,2%). It is also clear in Figure 1 that problems related to student teachers decrease gradually when they approach to the end of their practicum.

3.2.2. Change in the Student-Based Problems

Analysis of the data showed that communication units related to student-based problems comprise the 24,3 % of the problems encountered by the student teachers, and they were collected under nine sub-categories. The communication units were also divided into three time periods considering the time that student teachers reported each problem unit in their reflections. According to Figure 1, no noticeable decrease or increase can be observed in the frequencies of student-based problems throughout the practicum, especially there is almost no change in the percentage of problems in the middle and at the end of the practicum. To present in percentages, 31,5 % of the problems take place at the beginning , 34 % in the middle, and 34,5 % at the end of the practicum.

3.2.3. Change in the Cooperating Teacher-Based Problems

Communication units related to cooperating teacher-based problems consist of the 5,5 % of the self-reported problems of student teachers. There are five sub-categories related to cooperating teacher-based problems. Problems at the beginning of the practicum are the most frequently reported problems among the three time periods (57,4 %). 22,2 % of the cooperating teacher-based problems belong to the middle of the problem. With a similar percentage, problems at the end of the practicum cover the 20,4 % of the cooperating teacher-based problems. It is understood from the frequency of problems in this category that students are experiencing problems at the beginning of the practicum with their cooperating teachers more than in the middle or at the end of the practicum.

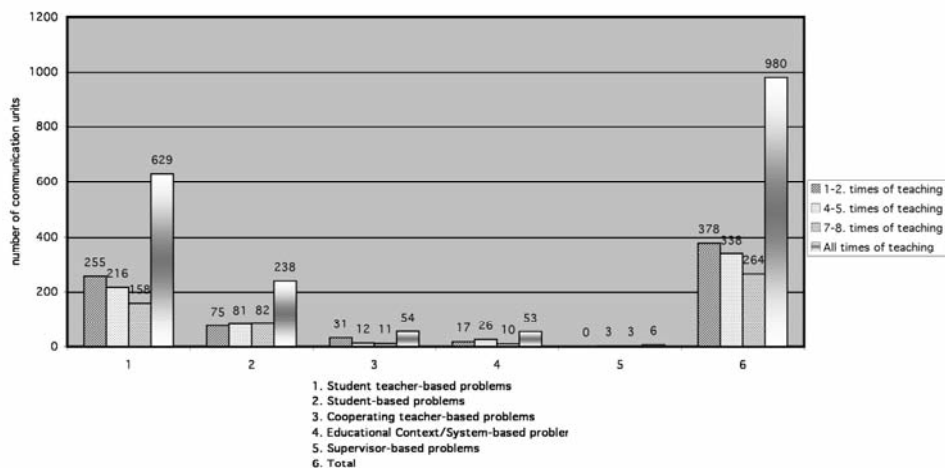


Figure 1. Distribution of the problems according to three time periods

3.2.4. Change in the Educational Context/System-Based Problems

Analysis of the data showed that communication units related to system/educational context-based problems comprise the 5,4 % of the problems encountered by the student teachers, and they were listed under eight sub-categories. The communication units were also divided into three time periods considering the time that student teachers reported each problem unit in their reflections. According to Figure 1, no gradual decrease or increase can be observed in the frequencies of student-based problems

throughout the practicum. Almost half of the communication units related to system/educational context-based problems were identified in the middle of the practicum (49 %). 32 % of the communication units, on the other hand, were found at the beginning of the practicum while only the 19 % of the communication units were specified at the end of the practicum.

3.2.5. Change in the Supervisor-Based Problems

Only six communication units were identified related to supervisor-based problems (0,7 %) in the reflections of student teachers. ‘Supervisor interference’ is the only sub-category in the supervisor-based problem category. When the dispersion of supervisor-based problems in three time periods is taken into consideration, it is seen that no problems occur at the beginning of the practicum. Three of the communication units in this category belong to the middle of the practicum (50 %), and three other communication units to the end of the practicum (50 %).

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1. Problems of Student Teachers in General

Turkish student EFL teachers reported experiencing problems related to five main components of teaching practicum: student teachers, students, cooperating teachers, educational context/system, and the supervisors. Student teacher-based problems of student teachers in their teaching practicum were related to pre-active stage of the lessons, active stage of the lessons, or student teachers’ individual problems.

Student teacher-based problems in the pre-active stage resulted from issues like anxiety, preparation, material selection, information about students, and planning. Anxiety is the most frequently stated problem type in this category. According to student teachers in MacDonald’s (1992) study, teaching practicum is the most valuable component of the teacher education program; however, it is the most stressful part as well. Similarly, student teachers in this study reported experiencing anxiety before they deliver a lesson. First day anxiety and the anxiety of being observed by expert teachers were the main sources of the anxieties student teachers experience before they deliver a lesson. Some others also indicated that they felt anxious before the lesson since they perceived themselves incompetent for teaching. Whatever the source of the anxiety the student teachers experience, it is quite a noticeable aspect of student teaching as a factor diversely influencing the success of a specific lesson.

Preparation and material selection were also the sources of problems identified by student teachers related to the pre-active stage of the lesson. Insufficient and careless preparation, preparing and selecting materials that are beyond the level of students, and inappropriate planning were among the most frequently stated problems. Although certain problems were reported by student teachers related to preparation, material selection, and planning, the frequency of problems in these categories was quite low when compared to other problem areas. It is possible to argue that student teachers were mostly well-prepared for their lessons. It might be because of the fact that the university supervisors in AUFLT emphasize the importance of the lesson plans. For example, student teachers discuss their lesson plans including the objectives of the lessons and classroom activities they prepared with the university supervisors one day before they teach in their practicum schools. Another problem area related to student teacher-based problems in the pre-active stage was information about students. Some student teachers reported that they experienced problems related to not being familiar with students’ proficiency levels or their interests. Although the problems in this category are low in frequency, they are thought to be very important by student teachers since they could cause a lesson to fail completely. Here, the

student teachers might be experiencing problems since they are not in touch with their cooperating teachers in order to learn about the students' characteristics they will be teaching soon. Moreover, the student teachers are given two weeks to observe the lessons of the classes they will be teaching. It can be inferred that student teachers do not use the time allocated for observation effectively. On the other hand, the time allocated for observation might be insufficient for student teachers to learn about the characteristics of the classes they will be teaching.

Although the student teacher-based problems in the pre-active stage consist of the 29,1 % of all the problems, student teachers reported experiencing most of their problems while they are delivering a lesson. Most of the problems of student teachers are faced in the active stage of the lessons (67,9 %). Consistent with the findings of other studies related to the self-reported problems of student teachers, student teachers in this study consider time management and classroom management as the chief factors in student teaching. In a review of the perceived problems of beginning teachers, Veenman (1984) indicated that classroom management –as a concept including time management- was the most frequently reported and the most serious problem among beginning teachers. Also, other studies related to identifying the problems of student teachers agree on the fact that classroom management is the most concern to student teachers (Reeves-Kazelskis and King, 1994; Kwo, 1996; Mau, 1997; Valdez et al., 2000; Aydın and Bahçe, 2001; Chepyator-Thomson and Liu, 2003).

According to student teachers in this study, pacing the lesson and managing the time of the classroom activities are the most problematic aspects of their teaching. Student teachers think that they have to complete all of the classroom activities they prepared just in time. Therefore, unexpected delays for one of the classroom activities or one activity's taking less time than expected cause student teachers to experience problems related to pacing the lesson. In addition to pacing, managing the time of the activities is also problematic for student teachers. Without checking the time left, student teachers tend to start their activities although the time is not enough to complete the activity. Classroom management, on the other hand, is another frequently reported problem. Chepyator-Thomson and Liu (2003) claimed that student teachers in their study gained the ability to control the classroom after they spent most of their time in an eight-week teaching practicum. Furthermore, most student teachers in this study indicated that they lost the control of the class since they were not the actual classroom teachers of the classrooms they were teaching. As another interpretation for problems related to time management and classroom management, Murray-Harvey et al. (2000) indicate that student teachers are highly concerned with their abilities in managing the time and managing the class. Therefore, it can be assumed that student teachers might be experiencing problems related to these issues since they were highly stressful and concerned about these problems.

Giving instructions was another problem area for student teachers. They reported that they were giving either incomplete or unclear instructions for their classroom activities. Giving instruction is an important concept in language teaching since the instructions tell the students what they are supposed to do for a specific classroom activity. Scrivener (1994) states that problems related to giving instruction are due to the 'quantity' and 'over-complexity' of the language teachers use while giving instructions. Similarly, student teachers in this study reported that they were not able to paraphrase or simplify the language they used while giving instruction. Perceptions of student teachers' roles were also an important concern to student teachers. According to Brinton and Holten (1989), student teachers are concerned with defining themselves as real teachers. Similarly, many student teachers in this study reported experiencing problems related to their own perceptions of their roles as student teachers. Besides, their being the 'student' teachers caused some problems like not being respected by students and even by some cooperating teachers as well. Furthermore, a number of student teachers in this study reported that they were not able to deal with certain classroom situations since they were busy with applying their lesson plans in the classroom. According to Johnson (1992), instructional decisions of

student teachers are primarily concerned with maintaining the flow of the instructional activities. Johnson also states that student teachers mostly focus on issues like increasing student motivation and involvement, and establishing the control of the classroom. In a similar point of view, White (2000) claims that student teachers see the most important role of the teacher as being able to go with the flow of the lesson.

Student-based problems of student teachers were found to be the second main category of the problems of student teachers in their teaching practicum. Students' motivation, their attitudes, their familiarity with the new teacher and the new classroom procedures, student participation, disruptive student behavior, using L1, and sharing resources were the student-oriented problems as student teachers reported. It is inevitable for student teachers to face student-related problems, which are most of the time out of their control (Veenman, 1984; Chepyator-Thomson and Liu, 2003). Student teachers suggested that students were not motivated to participate in the lesson while they were teaching. They were also complaining about their uneasiness to identify the reasons for students' being unmotivated, so not being able to take the necessary precautions. Furthermore, students' being unfamiliar with the new teacher and the new classroom applications caused problems. Mau (1997) agrees with the idea that student teachers experience problems related to unmotivated learners and dealing with students with different levels of achievement. He argues that student teachers need to experience actual classroom teaching to develop in motivating students and dealing with less successful students.

Lack of cooperating teacher support was found to be one of the most important problems of student teachers. This finding reveals that sometimes student teachers and cooperating teachers are not able to work in cooperation although they are required to do so. Moreover, cooperating teachers are required to attend student teachers' classes to fill-in observation forms, to evaluate them, and to provide them feedback about their teaching. However, some cooperating teachers were found to be missing in the classroom while student teachers were teaching. This type of behavior indicates that they do not fulfill their responsibilities for the practical side of student teachers' education. However, according to Murray-Harvey et al. (2000), the quality of the cooperating teacher is the key element for success in the practicum. The findings showed that lack of cooperating teacher support adversely affected the student teachers. Beck and Kosnik (2002) also reached similar conclusions with this study in terms of lack of cooperating teacher support. One of the student teachers in their study states the importance of cooperating teachers' being supportive and friendly as:

You don't go to teachers college because you need a swift kick in the behind; you know what you should be doing. You might be a little lost at first, but you need someone to say, "You know what, you're doing fine." The experience I had with a warm, welcoming, collegial approach made it so much easier for me to step into the classroom with confidence. You don't want an associate who just says, "The bar has to be this high; now jump!" (Beck and Kosnik, 2002, p. 86)

Problems related to system/educational context can be defined as the ones that are out of student teachers' control. Veenman (1984) also stated that student teachers had problems such as insufficient preparation time, inadequate school equipment, and large class size as problems that were directly related to the system or the present situation of the practicum schools. It can be discussed based on the types of problems related to educational context that most problems in this category can be solved when the school administration takes the necessary measures. However, the solution of the problems related to system both in the university and in the practicum schools is more complex. For example, a problem related to interference of teaching partners to each other's subject matter is the result of assigning a high number of students per classroom and per cooperating teacher. Moreover, student teachers' concerns related to having insufficient time to complete the subjects assigned to them within a class hour is due to the fact that the curriculum is overloaded with subjects to be covered for a teaching term. The necessary measures on these issues can only be taken by the Ministry of National Education.

Supervisor interference is the only problem of student teachers related to supervisor-based problems. This does not mean that supervision component of teaching practicum is excellent. Student teachers are not in touch with their university supervisors a lot during their teaching in the practicum schools. It does appear that the only chance for student teachers and supervisors to meet with each other is when the supervisor visits the practicum school to observe student teachers while teaching.

As a general argument related to the findings of this study, it can be said that most problems encountered by student teachers can be seen as a result of a 'reality shock', which can be used to indicate "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life" (Veenman 1984, p.143). Furthermore, the results of this study matches with the study of Chan and Leung (1998) in the idea that most problems of student teachers are related to student teachers themselves, as Chan and Leung (1998) call 'self-concerns'. They discuss this finding in their article as the consequence of universal and compulsory education. The case is not different for Turkish students; groups of students with different background (different abilities, different needs, and different perceptions) cause student teachers to experience problems related to involving them in classroom activities, managing them on the work, and dealing with their various needs and expectations.

4.2. Change in the Problems of Student Teachers throughout the Practicum

Student teachers state that they experience more than the half of the problems related to anxiety at the beginning of the practicum. As student teachers in MacDonald's (1992) study report, teaching practicum is the most stressful component of the teacher education programs. Nevertheless, student teachers in this study seem to be coping with their anxieties as the time goes, especially when they have their first meetings with the students. A similar finding is with the problems of student teachers related to knowing about the characteristics of the students. Student teachers in our study reported experiencing most of their problems related to information about students at the beginning of the practicum. When they have their initial meetings with the students, they become more informative about their level and interests, so they are able to cope with the problems related to their lack of information about students.

Likewise, problems about giving instruction were mostly reported in the 1st and 2nd turns of student teachers' teaching. It might be the result of the experience of student teachers for paraphrasing and simplifying the language they use after they gain experience in teaching as well as giving instructions for the classroom activities they conduct. Board usage, students' being unfamiliar with the new teacher and the new classroom procedures, lack of cooperation between the student teachers and the cooperating teachers, cooperating teacher interference in the pre-active and active stages of the lesson were the other problem areas reported at the beginning of the practicum process.

Some of the problems were reported at all stages of the practicum. For example, problems related to student teachers' being insufficiently or carelessly prepared emerged in all stages of the practicum. These findings are not enough for us to claim that students were better-prepared for their lessons towards the end of their teaching practice when compared to the beginning of the practicum. Based on the findings, one can not interpret that student teachers were learning to get prepared according to the students' needs when they gained more experience. Moreover, problems related to classroom management of student teachers tend to appear at all time periods of the teaching practicum. It might be because of the fact that student teachers are not equipped with the necessary skills and experience to deal with classroom management issues like noise, keeping the control of the classroom in teacher-fronted stages of the lessons, nominating students, etc. Therefore, the expectations that student teachers will improve themselves on certain classroom skills and strategies are not met by the participants of this

study. Whatever the reason for problems related to classroom management, Veenman (1984) states in his review of the studies related to problems of teachers that classroom management remains as the top concern for teachers who were observed from their student teaching to their fifth year of teaching.

Problems resulting from student characteristics such as disruptive student behavior, students' negative attitudes towards student teachers, students' using L1 in the class, students' pace, and students' reluctance to share classroom resources did not change over time. This might be interpreted as student teachers did not develop themselves as teachers who can deal with students with different characteristics, different abilities, and different proficiency levels. Absence of cooperating teacher in the classroom during student teaching was another problem category that was reported at all stages of the practicum. Neither at the beginning of the practicum nor towards the end or at the end of practicum do some cooperating teachers meet the requirements of teaching practice component of teacher education programs.

In response to student teachers' problems that cannot be solved throughout the practicum, White (2000) defends the importance of student teachers' skills in coping strategies. White claims that student teachers are not competent enough to cope with the problems since the problematic classroom situation –no matter what type of a problem it is- is changing in nature; therefore, student teachers feel uneasy to take the necessary measures. Also, since they cannot adopt one strategy to a new situation, they tend to experience the same type of problem again.

Some other problems, on the other hand, were reported more frequently at/towards the end of the practicum. Problems related to material selection are in the lowest frequency at the beginning of the practicum whereas they increase noticeably in the middle, and continue in the same frequency at the end of the practicum. It can be inferred that student teachers are more careful and enthusiastic about selecting classroom materials when they start their teaching practicum; however, when the time passes, they tend to be more reluctant to choose appropriate and attractive classroom materials for their lessons. According to Brinton and Holten (1989), student teachers are not satisfied with the course books from which they are required to prepare their lesson plans. This concern appears whenever they are asked to prepare their own lesson plans based on the assigned course books.

Likewise, most of the problems related to flexibility of student teachers are seen in the middle and at the end of the practicum whereas the beginning holds only one communication unit. Interestingly, half of the problems related to lack of student motivation were experienced by student teachers at the end of the practicum. Moreover, a gradual increase in this category can be observed throughout the practicum. As many student teachers suggested, students' motivation to participate in the lessons decreased since the time was towards the end of the school year, it was almost summer time, and students were busy with getting prepared for either their year-end activities or the national festivals. Some students were also preoccupied with the upcoming general proficiency exams for entering high schools or universities. Therefore, student teachers experienced problems related to unwillingness of the students towards the end of the practicum.

In addition to above mentioned problem categories, time management, as the most problematic teaching skill for student teachers tends to be lower at the end of the practicum when compared to other two time periods. Although no gradual decrease can be observed in the problems related to time management, the lower percentage of problems at the end of the practicum is quite noticeable. The findings of this study suggest that student teachers are successful at pacing their lessons and managing the time of the classroom activities they conduct in their lessons. Similarly, problems related to student involvement were found to be lessened by student teachers at the end of the practicum. They are also better at involving students at the end of the practicum process. It can be argued that student teachers are

improving themselves to deal with the students who are reluctant to participate in the lesson and/or unmotivated to do so through time. One can also interpret that student teachers are exploring the ways of dealing with unmotivated learners with the experience they have in the classroom. This might be the result of their familiarity with the students after they had some time with the students. Also, it might be inferred that student teachers were developing their skills at 'student 'involvement' after they learned something about their characters.

As for the problems of student teachers on classroom language, no problems were identified at the end of the practicum although 18 communication units were reported at the beginning and in the middle of the practicum. It can be inferred from this finding that student teachers improved and/or adjusted their language according to the needs of the students, used the target language and the native language appropriately in the classroom as they spent more and more time in practice teaching. Moreover, student teachers were better in applying error correction techniques and providing better feedback to the students at the end of the practicum. Furthermore, problems related to course materials and curricular issues were found to have decreased at the end of the practicum. This might be the consequence of student teachers' learning how to deal with the deficiencies of the course books that they were supposed to use in their teaching. Besides, student teachers were able to pace their lessons more efficiently in accord with time allocated to them for covering several subjects. According to Brinton and Holten (1989, p.345), the focus of student teachers' teaching is primarily "on the mechanisms of presentation and on engineering students' language learning and practice". They found in their study that student teachers spent most of their time observing and discussing successful and unsuccessful teaching techniques, classroom activities, and lesson organization. One of the student teachers reflects in Brinton and Holten's (1989, p.345) study as follows: "You have to learn to play the scales before you can play the sonatas". Moreover, according to Lee and Loughran (2000), the decrease in the problems of student teachers, especially related to pedagogical aspects indicate the importance of practice for developing student teachers' learning about teaching through practice.

4.3. Implications for Pre-Service Teacher Education

This study was a preliminary attempt to understand what student teachers experience throughout their teaching practicum, and how they perceive themselves and the practicum as a component of education in teaching. A number of implications for pre-service teacher education can be drawn based on the descriptive findings of this study.

Primarily, the findings of this study indicated that affective factors influence the success of student teaching. According to MacDonald (1992), when the concerns of student teachers are taken into consideration in a teacher education program, it is quite probable to reach a more meaningful and relevant practicum experience for student teachers. Therefore, student teachers' emotional and affective state of mind should be taken into consideration in student teacher placement in the teaching practicum. Furthermore, Murray-Harvey et al. (2000) suggest that supervisors might reduce their pressure on student teachers since student teachers take supervisors as the major reference for their teaching behavior.

In response to the need for a better teaching practicum placement, Lee and Loughran (2000) suggest that a school-based program can facilitate reflection and help student teachers develop their professional knowledge and pedagogical experience. They argue that school-based programs cover a wider range of activities and interactions through different aspects of a school, so the student teaching is not only a classroom experience, rather a school experience. According to Lee and Loughran (2000, pp. 86-87), a lengthened practicum can allow student teachers the necessary time to complete reflective processes and certain pedagogical issues rather than only recognizing problems but not having enough time to cope with those problems.

More teaching practice does not necessarily mean more reflection (and development). Rather, we suggest, appropriate support and planning is crucial in helping these opportunities for learning about teaching to be grasped by the student teachers and to be used to help them begin to reconsider and reshape their practice through reflection on practice.

Another implication for pre-service teacher education programs can be the addition of a reflection component to the teaching practicum in order to provide teacher trainees with opportunities to discuss their teaching experience. Accordingly, the importance of reflection as a part of teaching practicum is emphasized by some researchers. Gebhard (1990) claims that when student teachers are given the opportunity to reflect on their teaching behavior, they are also given the chance to evaluate their teaching and develop their decision making skills.

Dubbins (1996) claims that a reflective practicum has supportive effects on student teachers, supervisors, and the students. According to Dubbins, student teachers' reflecting on their practicum experiences enhances their learning since it gives them the opportunity to identify what is significant to them about their classroom experiences. Also, the supervisory personnel benefit from the learning aspect of the reflective practicum by thinking and being more aware of the facts in the practicum. Last, students get the most benefit from a reflective practicum since the student teachers are better teachers as a result of a reflective process, and students are given the better education.

Dinkelman (2000) suggests in his article that reflection can be taken as an aim of the pre-service teacher education. When student teachers are encouraged to reflect on their classroom practices, they will be reflective teachers, who have the ability to thoroughly consider their strengths and weaknesses, and take the necessary measures for their future teaching.

A further implication for teacher education programs is about the teacher education programs' perception of the role and goals of the teaching practicum. According to Spezzini and Oxford (1998), the urgent goal of the teacher education programs must be to establish policy for meeting the needs of future EFL teachers since their students do not feel themselves competent enough in the target language they would be teaching.

Freeman and Richards (1998) argued that teacher education programs failed to have a 'developmental view'. Within this consideration, Bourke (2001) suggests a 'developmental model' for teacher education, which means giving student teachers opportunities to learn by observing, doing, and reflecting. In this model, there is less emphasis for prescribed practices, but more emphasis on what student teachers do for the learning to happen. Bourke (2001, p.71) explains his developmental model as:

The 'developmental' model of TESL supervision accords well with current views on second language acquisition and communicative language learning. The second language teacher's role is to bring acquisition into the classroom. And since acquisition is a developmental process, the most important factor in the L2 classroom is not what the teacher does but what learners do themselves. Hence, the need for teachers and supervisors to have a clear view of the task-based approach and the many interactive techniques by which it is implemented is paramount. We know that pupils grow in language wherever the optimal conditions are provided. Language development implies less intervention by the teacher and more active participation, exploration, and collaboration by learners in pairs or groups. The model of learning is organic and inductive; the emphasis is on learning by doing rather than learning by being told. The teacher is often 'invisible'. Only in a developmental model of teaching and supervision would such a quality be seen as 'good practice'.

Some researchers, on the other hand, suggest providing programs for teacher educators to solve the particular problems related to student teaching. Hertzog (2002) offers support programs for novice teachers, which include themes such as emotional, pedagogical, administrative assistance to the first-year teachers. A similar program might be added to teaching practicum components of teacher education programs. Based on the findings of this study and some other studies in the literature, student teachers might be provided with teacher education seminars in which student teachers, university supervisors, and experts in psychological, educational, and administrative sciences take part. Student teachers can be informed about what they are supposed to do in the practicum and how they can cope with certain problems they face during their student teaching experience. Such support programs may also help student teachers in their future teaching experience –when they graduate and become officially practicing teachers.

In response to problems resulting from cooperating teachers, Bourke (2001) suggests that the university can organize a mentoring course for supervisors and cooperating teachers to make sure that their theoretical and methodological backgrounds are in a common point.

Another implication for pre-service teacher education is related to the expectations of the teacher education programs for a good practicum component. George, Worrel, and Rampersad (2002) reach a conclusion about the elements of a ‘good teaching’ after their analysis of student teachers’ views on good teaching. The propositional statements provided are also applicable to this study as implications for teacher education programs.

- Good teaching is not overtly connected to educational theory learnt at the teachers’ colleges; it is more effectively linked to messages learnt from practical experience rather than theory.
- Good teaching results when the various components of a lesson have been well executed by a trainee, as determined by the supervisor.
- Good teaching is a product that must be certified by an acknowledged expert.
- Good teaching, however, is not easily defined –definitions vary among supervisors, cooperating teachers and primary school principals.
- Good teaching would be better learnt through a more thorough in-college preparation.
- Good teaching is facilitated by nurturing support from significant others in the school environment. (George et al. 2002, p.301)

Teacher education programs should also consider Darling’s (2001) distinction between external and internal ‘goods’ in teaching practicum. As Darling (2001) states in his article, external goods like high grades from university supervisors and cooperating teachers, being praised by experts will not be enough to reflect the real goods about student teaching. According to Darling (2001, p.110), “too much emphasis on these will interrupt the acquisition of other goods, ones that will ultimately have more value over an entire teaching career”. Other goods in Darling’s words, in fact, refer to the internal goods of student teachers. What student teachers do and did in a particular practice, how these experiences helped them to learn about their teaching, and how they coped with several obstacles in their teaching are more important issues for a student teacher’s way on becoming a good teacher. Darling (2001) also states that teachers who are only motivated externally such as for being praised will not be able to achieve the excellence in learning. Similarly, student teachers who are externally motivated to take part in the practicum will not be able to benefit from the teaching practicum’s most vital aim: preparing student teachers for their teaching careers and showing them the practical side of teaching.

Stones (1984, cited in Zeichner 1990, p.115) points out: “good teaching is supposed to be caught and

not taught". Therefore, student teachers should be given the best opportunities to practice as much as possible, reflect on their practices, and evaluate themselves in terms of what they did good or wrong in previous experiences. As Darling (2001) agrees, this type of an understanding will take student teachers to the good product of their practices as well as concerning the process of practice teaching.

Another implication based on the findings of this study is for the pre-practicum courses in teacher education programs. As Aydın and Bahçe (2001) identify, student teachers experience most of their problems related to practice of what they learned in their education; therefore, it is vital for teacher education programs to make connections between theoretical and methodological issues. The best place for this type of education is the methodology courses where student teachers are introduced to language teaching methodologies, several teaching and classroom techniques. More practical applications are needed for teacher trainees to deal with the problems of real life when they are teaching such as more school experience hours and practicum teaching. Furthermore, Halbach (2000) states that it is quite important to find an appropriate teaching methodology in teacher education courses since student teachers are likely to take teacher trainers' teaching behaviors as models for their own teaching.

Finally, a suggestion for teacher education programs can be the use of student teachers' reflection reports as a learning tool. These reflections are not different from the student teacher cases in Aydın and Bahçe's (2001) study, the well-remembered events (WREs) of the study by Valdez et al. (2000), group reflection reports of Farrell (1999) and Liou (2001), and teaching diaries in Zeyrek's (2001) study.

Aydın and Bahçe (2001) defend the use of student teacher cases as the examples from real world in teacher education classrooms. Barksdale-Ladd et al. (2001) also conclude in their study that bringing cases to teacher trainees about different unsolved problems from teacher trainers' own experiences help a lot to make teacher trainees see certain obstacles to teaching from different angles. The study of Valdez et al. (2000) with WREs is also worth considering. They, indeed, argue that bringing the real stories of student teachers to the classroom and using them as an instructional tool assist student teachers in a number of ways. Student teachers are able to make connections between the stories from outsiders and their own experiences, which provide them with the opportunity to discuss the formal and personal theories more clearly. Besides, Zeyrek's (2001) suggestion for using teaching diaries as a part of teaching practicum is also beneficial for making student teachers aware of different classroom methods and techniques. Diaries also help student teachers to keep up with the changing needs of young generation as the potential students of today's student teachers. Furthermore, Brinton and Holten (1989) suggest that writing journals helps student teachers to honestly share and discuss their problems related to teaching practicum with their supervisors.

Considering the classroom language problems, it can be argued that spoken English classes particularly related to classroom language can be included in the 4th year curriculum. It is of particular importance since all of our students are non-native speakers of English.

Based on the suggestions above, we can conclude that real examples from student teachers' self-reported problems can be taken to the classrooms of teacher training programs. Supervisor-guided discussions can be conducted by elaborating the incidents and by finding possible solutions to the problems student teachers report to have faced during their student teaching.

Furthermore, teacher reflection groups (Farrell, 1999; Liou, 2001) can also be formed, in which student teachers are given the opportunity to discuss several types of classroom situations from different perspectives together with providing different solutions to the problems. In this respect, Hole and McEntee's (1999) "guided reflection protocol for individual reflection" and "critical incidents protocol for shared reflection" can be helpful for teacher educators as a starting point to make their trainees reflective practitioners.

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