

Possible Effects of Practicum on Student Teachers' Beliefs About Teaching

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by

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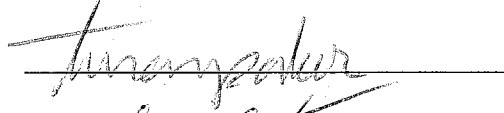
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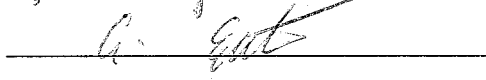


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ABSTRACT

Possible Effects of Practicum on Student Teachers' Beliefs About Teaching

by

Sibel Ergün

The present study investigates the possible effects of practice teaching experience on twenty EFL student teachers' beliefs about an ideal teacher. Specifically, the study explores whether student teaching experience affects student teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of ideal teacher and the extent to which they possess these characteristics. More specifically, the following questions are addressed: (a) Do changes occur in the student teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of an ideal teacher as measured by pre- and post-concept maps? If so, how? (b) To what extent do they believe they have the characteristics of an ideal teacher? (c) What are the student teachers' opinions about the possible effects of student teaching experience on their beliefs about an ideal teacher?

Student teachers were asked to draw a concept map on what they thought the characteristics of an ideal teacher could be, before and after their student teaching period. The student teachers were also given a semi-structured interview in which they were asked to comment on the changes they made in their concept maps after their practice teaching period. Moreover, they were asked to write self-evaluations after their presentations in the schools they did their practice teaching. The student teachers' pre- and post-concept maps were then compared and analysed. The results indicate that student teaching experience had a significant impact on student teachers' beliefs about an ideal teacher.

KISA ÖZET

Bu çalışma öğretmenlik uygulamasının İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğretecek 20 öğretmen adayının ideal öğretmen nasıl olmalıdır konusundaki görüşü üzerindeki olası etkilerini araştırmakta, özellikle de öğretmenlik uygulamasının öğretmen adaylarının ideal öğretmenin özellikleri hakkındaki görüşlerini etkileyip etkilemediğini inceler ve öğretmen adaylarının bu özelliklere ne ölçüde sahip olduklarına ilişkin düşüncelerini araştırır. Bunları yanıtlayabilmek için öncelikle şu sorulara yanıt aranmaktadır: (a) Öğretmen adaylarının ideal öğretmenin özellikleri hakkındaki görüşlerinde öğretmenlik uygulamasından önce ve sonra akıl şemalarıyla ölçüldüğünde değişiklikler oluşur mu? (b) Öğretmen adayları ideal öğretmen özelliklerine ne ölçüde sahip olduklarını düşünmektedir? (c) Öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik uygulamasının onların ideal öğretmen görüşüne olan etkisiyle ilgili görüşleri nelerdir?

Öğretmen adaylarından, öğretmenlik uygulamasından önce ve sonra, ideal öğretmenin özellikleri üzerine düşüncelerini belirten akıl şemaları çizmeleri istenmiştir. Öğretmen adaylarıyla ayrıca öğretmenlik uygulamasından sonra çizdikleri akıl şemalarındaki değişikliklerin sebebini soran yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarından öğretmenlik uygulamalarını yaptıkları okullardaki öğretmenlik uygulamasından sonra birer öz değerlendirme yapmaları istenmiştir. Öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik uygulaması öncesi ve sonrası çizdikleri akıl şemaları daha sonra karşılaştırılmış ve incelenmiştir.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction

The practice teaching experience, which is generally viewed as an opportunity for students to learn and develop teaching skills, is the most common element found in preservice teacher education programmes. Whereas educational philosophy, course content and sequence may vary from programme to programme, the extended experiences in actual classrooms, near the end of the professional sequence, are a consistent requirement in teacher preparation.

In fact, for many prospective teachers practice teaching is still their first major experience in schools as a professional. Teachers learn to teach by teaching. The prospective teacher gets something from experience in the school which is not included in formal courses. Experience provides the prospective teacher with an understanding of the social situation of the classroom and the institutional milieu in which it is embedded.

The student teaching experience usually is the culmination of the formal preparation programme and the beginning of the teacher's professional experience. For many it is a sudden confrontation with the "real world" of teaching (Gebhard, 1998). Classroom and school demands are at times in stark contrast to the ideal images of the teacher role which are often fostered during formal preparation (Beyer, 1988 ; Brimfield and Leonard, 1983; Richardson-Koehler, 1988).

Many studies have focused on practice teaching experience. Much of the pertinent literature has indicated that those involved in teacher education regarded student

teaching as the most highly valued part of a teacher's preparation (Gunstone and Northfield, 1992; Carter, 1990; Cobb, 1994; Claxton, 1996; Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997). Moreover, in his sociological study of teachers Lortie (1975) found that practice teaching experiences has an influential and long lasting effect on subsequent teaching behaviour.

The findings of the studies above have had important consequences, one of which has been an increase in the number of experiences in actual classrooms during the preservice programme. Another has been the positioning of these experiences earlier in the professional sequence. The above mentioned studies have also raised some important and fundamental questions: Does providing more practical experience in classrooms necessarily make for a better programme? What do we really know about student teaching beyond the fact that it is highly valid by the participants? It is the feeling of many involved in the field of teacher education today that there is little basis for the strong advocacy of more and earlier experiences in actual classrooms and that before emphasis is placed on creating additional field experience opportunities, attention should be focused on learning more about student teaching. Guyton and McIntyre (1990), who had long been an advocate of student teaching, recently concluded that student teaching has failed to reach the potential which it has always promised and cited the need for more research into what student teaching does and does not do. Zeichner (1980) suggested that the information that does exist regarding student teaching is contradictory and confusing and therefore does not offer a basis upon which policy may be formulated (p. 46).

It is seen that in traditional teacher education programmes, teaching is viewed as an information transfer and the passing of knowledge as one-way. Research on teacher education programmes suggests that typical teacher education programmes comprise a collection of courses, which provide students basically with theoretical knowledge (Hoy & Rees, 1988; Johnston, 1994). Most of the time, although students are required to carry out some practice in the form of peer teaching and microteaching in various skills courses, these activities are not sufficient for the students to relate theory and practice and to raise their awareness of their own beliefs and conceptions related to teaching (Karmos & Jacko, 1977; Pinnegar, 1995).

Recently, it has been argued that it is necessary to create opportunities for the growth of the student teachers through reflection and self-examination. These opportunities in general are reserved for the period of practicum (Goodwyn, 1997; Tillema & Knoll, 1997). Hence, this period is viewed as critical to the development of preservice teachers' pedagogical skills, because "practical school experience necessarily contributes to the development of teachers" (Zeichner, 1980, p. 45) and because teachers' professional life patterns are highly influenced during this period (Applegate & Lasley, 1982; Woolfolk, 1998; Zeichner, 1980).

1.2. The Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether practice teaching experience affects student teachers' beliefs about teaching.

1.2.1. Description of Method

The main population of this study included student teachers from the Department of Foreign Language in Boğaziçi University. The collection of data from participants involved obtaining student teachers' opinions before and after the student teaching experience about the attributes of an 'ideal teacher'. This information was obtained by asking the participants to draw a concept map on their conception of ideal teacher. In addition, through semi-structured interviews and self-evaluations after the presentations, the student teachers were asked to compare their pre- and post-concept maps and comment on what they perceived to affect their concept of ideal teacher if there were any changes in their concept maps.

1.2.2. Definition of Terms

Practicum / Practice teaching: The period of guided teaching when the student takes increasing responsibility for the work with a given group of learners over a period of consecutive weeks.

Student teacher: One who participates in a period of guided teaching over a period of consecutive weeks.

Cooperating teacher: One who teaches children or youth and who also supervises student teaching and/or other professional laboratory experiences.

University supervisor: The college representative who is responsible for supervising a student teacher or groups of student teachers.

1.3. Significance of the Study

In many EFL teacher education programmes, the practicum or practice teaching experience is the central component. It is through the process of teaching a class of foreign language learners and receiving feedback that the student teacher relates theory and practice and gains opportunities to raise their awareness of their own beliefs and conceptions related to teaching and to develop their own way of teaching style.

Recently, it has been strongly supported that student teachers do not enter the world of teaching as *tabula rasa*. Student teachers are believed to have their own personal theories, which should be developed and interpreted with self-awareness. It has also been suggested that teacher beliefs play an important role in teaching behaviour. If student teaching is to be a rewarding, satisfying experience for all participants and is to be a successful cooperative venture between teacher education departments and schools, it is important that the possible effects of practice teaching experience on student teachers' beliefs be clarified and delineated. Hence, this study investigates possible effects of practice teaching experience on student teachers' beliefs about ideal teacher.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature in terms of the following basic components; a) approaches to teacher learning and teacher education, b) theories of teacher learning and teacher education, c) the theoretical framework of practice teaching experience in student teacher education. Chapter 3 presents the methodology of the study; the research design, a detailed description of the participants, methods of data collection and data analysis of the study. Chapter 4

presents the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings and their implications for preservice teacher development.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1. Approaches to teacher learning and teacher education

The design of teacher education programmes reflect implicitly held views of how teachers' knowledge is obtained and how it guides teachers' actions. Teacher learning is based on learning theories derived from two opposing paradigms of knowledge; the positivist ('knowledge-centred') and phenomenological ('person-centred') paradigms (Roberts, 1998).

2.2. Theories of learning and teacher education

2.2.1. The positivist paradigm

The positivist view values knowledge which is objective and from which generalisations can be made (Roberts, 1998, p. 113). According to the positivist view, mental events are speculative and the only reliable basis for theory building is observable behaviour. (Roth, 1990). Behaviourist psychology is the classical example of the positivist approach to getting knowledge about human behaviour (Beyer, 1988; Stern, 1983; Williams & Burden, 1997). From this perspective, all social behaviour is seen as determined by some features of the context external to the person (Roberts, 1998) and it is believed that human problems can be treated in merely technical terms and resolved by using general scientific truths (Roberts, 1998; Williams & Burden, 1997). Thus, the importance of the sense that learners themselves seek to make of their worlds and the mental processes that they bring to the tasks is denied (Beyer, 1988; Roberts, 1998; Woolfolk, 1998).

A teacher education course based on positivistic principles will define teaching competence as an inventory of discrete behavioural skills. Therefore “teaching skills are defined in a list of precise behavioural competencies.” (Roberts, 1998:15)

Classical micro-teaching, competency-based teacher education and the traditional apprenticeship approach are directly based on this view. In the classical micro-teaching programme, student teachers are introduced to a model of a target behaviour. By means of observation, imitation and reinforcement by feedback student teachers’ behaviour is aimed to match the target behaviour presented to them (Roberts, 1998). In the model-based training there is no place for individual differences and since ‘imitation’ is believed to be the most essential part of learning, teaching practices are prescribed in advance. It is seen that student teachers are only prepared for the situations assumed in advance.

The notion of teacher competencies originated in the definition of behavioural skills and in this kind of education objectives are clearly defined and measurable.

Competency-based teacher education is an essentially objective-driven approach to teacher education characterised by its reliance on objectives specified in advance and known to the learner (Wallace, 1991).

Craft/apprenticeship-based teacher education shares the view of teaching as essentially imitative in process and model-based in content. In this model the student teacher works alongside a master teacher in school and follows her/his instructions, advice and personal example as does an apprentice with a craftsman. The apprenticeship approach values imitation of model behaviour, mastery of essential skills and acceptance of routine procedures as the basis of action and the novice is

expected to learn from the experts who have more experience. In this version experience is seen as a body of practical knowledge which can be transmitted to others to be practised. The craft approach to professional education sees the master teacher's past experience appropriate and applicable to the objectives of the language task in every situation. This is because it is believed that learning goals can be achieved by imitation and by giving no consideration to the learners' self-awareness, their perspective, monitoring or evaluation skills. (Wallace, 1991).

As can be seen, all these models underlie the assumption that learning is model-based, that knowledge made by natural science is most likely transmitted, and that human problems can be treated in technical terms and resolved by using general scientific truths. Hence, the practical use of the transmitted knowledge was not questioned.

Consequently, a positivist approach in teacher education is represented by curricula which assume that the presentation of generalised knowledge about teaching is an adequate form of professional preparation and which view "practical knowledge of anything as simply a matter of relating the most appropriate means to whatever objectives have been decided on" (Wallace, 1991, p. 8).

2.2.2. Phenomenological paradigm

According to this paradigm, each individual's experience is crucial to understanding the nature of reality, crucial to understanding consciousness and therefore central to understanding learning (Tellez, 1996).

In contrast to a positivist view of reality, phenomenologists assert that the subjective is vitally important (Williams & Burden, 1997) and they are “concerned with understanding conscious experiences, personal meaning and the experience of what it is to be human, rather than explaining behaviours through general laws” (Roth, 1990 quoted in Roberts, 1998). Humanistic, constructivist and social-constructivist theories are within the phenomenological tradition, because they embrace the “individuality, awareness and self-determination of people” (Roth, 1990 quoted in Roberts, 1998).

2.2.3. Humanistic theory

The essence of humanistic theory is the notion of ‘self-agency’, the self determining power of persons. (Roberts, 1998). For Moskowitz (1978), there seems to be two major emphases of humanistic theory. Firstly, it is concerned with educating the whole person, that is to say, both the intellectual and the emotional dimensions are focused on. Secondly, it emphasises bringing out the uniqueness of each individual. Thus, it is possible to mention that “humanistic theory emphasises the value of every single individual, e.g. the importance of feelings, open communication, the inner world and the autonomy of the learner (Stevick, 1990; Williams & Burden, 1997).

In humanistic psychology, it is believed that “we have *self-agency*, that is we can exercise individual choice to determine our own personal growth”. (Roberts, 1998:18). As opposed to externally controlled learning suggested in model-based approaches to education, humanistic theory argues that learning must be internally determined.

In terms of humanistic theory with regards to teacher education it is recognised that the autonomy and individual needs of the person can be met by focusing on self directed development. Since then, teacher education has undergone a transformation, which could be described as a movement away from positivistic approaches with their emphasis on external evidence of learning and observable learning 'objectives', to phenomenological approaches to learning, where individuals' experiences are viewed as central to understanding learning and teaching (Tellez, 1996). Unlike the model-based approaches to teacher education, it is argued that the role of the cooperating teacher is not to dominate the student teacher but to highlight his/her development through cooperation. The role of the teacher is "to support the self-determining learner in a process of joint implementation and review and not only to transmit knowledge and control the development of the learners" (Williams & Burden, 1997; Woolfolk, 1998). Hence, the implications of the humanist approach include the personalisation of learning with student teachers' developing a sense of personal identity. (Williams and Burden, 1997)

The effects of the humanistic view on preservice and inservice teacher education can be seen in features like recognition of the student teachers' personal autonomy within the framework of supervising teacher and student teacher relationship and develop a recognition of the emotional dimension to personal change and therefore, of teachers' needs for support (Ruddock, 1988; Shaw-Baker, 1995). Hence, the implications of humanistic perspective for conventional teacher education syllabuses are highlighting the need for skills which enable self-directed development. These include, for example, self-assessment and working effectively in groups (Gebhard, 1990; Woodward, 1991).

2.2.4. Constructivist theory

Constructivism takes its roots from Piaget who suggested that there are ideas and theories in the world and individuals perceive them according to their own personal ways. Piaget postulated that human beings are systematically forming their own subjective views on life from cradle to grave influenced by their experiences and interactions with the outside world. (Youniss & Damon, 1992; Williams & Burden, 1997)

“Piaget saw cognitive *development* as essentially a process of maturation within which genetics and experience interact. The developing mind is viewed as constantly seeking *equilibration*, i.e. a balance between what is known and what is currently being experienced. This is accomplished by the complementary processes of *assimilation* and *accommodation*.”

Put simply, assimilation is the process by which incoming information is changed or modified in our minds so that we can fit in with what we already know. Accommodation, on the other hand, is the process by which we modify what we already know to take into account new information. Working in conjunction, these two processes contribute to what Piaget termed the central process of cognitive *adaptation*. (Williams & Burden, 1997)

Unlike the positivist view where teaching is considered to be a kind of simple delivery, constructivists realise that teachers' personal ideas must be accounted for in any way of teaching or the education of teachers.

According to constructivists, each person has his/her own complex schemata related to teaching. This view implies that there are personal differences between each student teacher because of the difference in their perceptions of the world. It also emphasises that feedback should not focus on student teachers' actions only but it should consider their thinking and perceptions of the world as well. In addition, it is advocated that models should not be used for imitation only, they should be presented for exemplification and analysis.

In the constructivist view the connection between theory and practice is also emphasised. Student teachers are given an opportunity to develop their own thinking. They are encouraged to integrate "experience and skill practice with observation, analysis of context, self-awareness and the analysis of links between theory and classroom events." (Roberts, 1998: 26)

The idea of pre-service teacher education based on constructivist approach asserts that learners enter their teacher education with their schema about teaching which comes from their past experience as students and the ideas they derived from their observation which Lortie termed as 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975).

Freeman (1992) argues that learners "enter formal teacher education with a fund of experience or schema about teaching" which they derive from their 'apprenticeship

of observation' (Lortie, 1975 cited in Freeman, 1992), that is to say, as students, from their experiences with schools and schooling. This 'apprenticeship' equips them with conceptions of what teaching is and how teachers behave. (Freeman, 1992, p.13). The 'apprenticeship of observation' leads to the mediation of inservice teacher education inputs by student teachers' personal theories of teaching (Lortie, 1975; Zeichner and Grant, 1981; Tabachnick and Zeichner, 1984; Zeichner et al., Calderhead and Robson, 1991; Freeman, 1992; Kagan, 1992). Student teachers enter inservice teacher education with beliefs about teaching based on images of good teachers they know, experiences as pupils and images of self as language teacher.

Shulman (1988) mentions the importance of understanding teachers' implicit theories and beliefs and suggests that one of the duties of teacher educators is to make the tacit knowledge of teachers explicit. When they are exposed to new input teachers refer to their prior personal experience by reflecting on their personal theories. Teachers, then test them out according to their personal or teaching goals. Hence, the educator's role is to facilitate the cognitive alteration necessary for learning through designing tasks and questions that create dilemmas for teachers and that make them reflect on their own experiences, thus uncovering their implicit beliefs related to teaching (Bell & Gilbert, 1994; Richardson, 1997; Wallace & Woolger, 1991).

2.2.5. The concept of reflection in teacher education

As discussed in the previous section, reflection is an important aspect of teacher education and it draws on the work of Dewey (1991). Dewey presents a picture of people undertaking most of their lives in a routinized way. The grounds for their action are based on tradition, instruction and imitation. By contrast, reflective action,

according to Dewey, is fundamentally different in character from routine action, in that it involves the active and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it. Dewey's idea of reflective thinking suggests that one should be able to solve problems one encounters by using his/her past experiences (Dewey, 1991). Identifying a problem, making the necessary observations to solve the problem, organising possible solutions, and experimenting with the alternatives are the steps which make up the reflective thinking process. Dewey's idea that reflection is something special and different from everyday routine action led him to conclude that reflection demands special skills and personal qualities on the part of the individual, e.g. develop the skills of keen observation, reasoning and analysis.

Influenced by this line of inquiry, Schön (1987) distinguishes two forms of reflection- what he describes as 'reflecton-in-action' and 'reflection-on-action'. Reflection-in-action occurs when a practitioner faces an unknown situation. In these circumstances, the experienced practitioner is able to bring certain aspects of his work to the level of consciousness and to reflect on it and reshape it without interrupting the flow. Talking about what we are doing after the event is a different process, which Schön calls reflection-on-action and it is something that many professionals find it difficult to do. This is because, Schön asserts, it is an attempt to put into language a kind of intelligence that is tacit and spontaneous (Schön, 1987, p. 25).

Schön's (1987) view of professional expertise has two general implications for teacher education: one is that reflection is inherently educative and enables further

self-development and the other is that professional learning is seen as self-discovery in the context of practical activity (Barlett, 1990; Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

Reflective approach to teacher education can be seen as a reaction to the model of teachers as technicians, in favour of a recognition of the thoughtful and professional aspects of teachers' work (Flowerdew, 1998). For this reason, varied approaches are being used to help teachers develop a critically reflective approach to their teaching, including action research, ethnography, journal writing (Bailey, 1990; Korthagen, 1985; Zeichner & Liston, 1987). Many Inservice Teacher Education courses now include reflective tasks, such as autobiographical writing and self-assessment. However, empirical evidence on student teachers' responses to reflective activities is still limited, not least because of the ambiguity over what a reflective task is (Calderhead, 1987; Valli, 1992; Griffiths and Tann, 1992). In addition, it is argued that student teachers vary considerably in their readiness to reflect on their personal theories (Roberts, 1998). Also, there is some evidence that survival concerns may militate against risk-taking and the admission of difficulties. In other words, it is pointed out that student teachers are unlikely to question their assumptions while they are still establishing routines (Calderhead, 1987). As Roberts (1998) argues, this suggests that reflection on practices and beliefs requires the student teachers to have established some secure routines to reflect on in the first place.

2.2.6. Social constructivism

As can be seen, constructivism focuses on individual meaning making processes (Griffiths & Tann, 1992; Oxford, 1997b). However, an individual's development occurs in constant exchange with his/her social circumstances and "learners make

their own sense of the world, but they do so within a social context and through social interaction” (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 28).

Social constructivism takes its roots primarily from Vygotsky (1978) who articulated that in the construction of knowledge, social interaction should be seen as the essential feature. According to Vygotsky (1978), an individual’s cognitive system develops as a result of communication in a social group and it cannot be separated from social life. For Vygotsky (1978), communication in a social group environment helps to develop an individual’s cognitive approach and this interaction whether in an entirely educational context or elsewhere cannot be distinguished from the benefits we derive from everyday social life. Within this framework, the development of an individual relies on social interactions. That is, learning always involves more than one person. Thus, his studies on the *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*, that is the realm of potential learning that each learner could reach within a given developmental span under optimal circumstances and with the best possible support from the teacher and others in the environment, are based on social interaction in a dyad where the role of the adult, teacher or more experienced peer is to assist or provide scaffolding for the child, student or less experienced peer (Cobb, 1994; Newman & Holzman, 1995; Vygotsky, 1978).

In short, the social constructivist theory, based on phenomenological paradigms of knowledge, builds on the notions of individual reflection, on individual constructivist views of learning and on social dimensions of teacher work as a means to learning and rejects the traditional approach to teaching which emphasises knowledge

transmission and behavioural change resulting from efficient shaping (Cobb, 1994; Richardson, 1997).

Social constructivists suggest that “ learning to teach is not a private journey but it involves the adoption of a social role, a process of defining oneself as a teacher informed by our images of others and the traditional view of teaching available to us. For this reason, our social landscape intimately affects the nature of our development as a teacher.” (Roberts, 1998: 36)

A social constructivist perspective for practice teacher education recognises dialogue or talk to be central about their teaching practice. According to Roberts, collaborative and task-focused talk is of special value, in that “it offers opportunities to clarify one’s own meanings and offers social relationships that support changing views of the self as teacher” (Roberts, 1998, p. 45).

Hence, it is suggested that the more teachers share and reflect on their experiences the stronger they become in coping with the problems they face in their teaching. In other words, as Vygotsky (1978) suggested collaborative talk enables student teachers to notice missing information and gain new insights through interactions as a result of which they develop a different way of understanding of their teaching. (Clinard & Ariav, 1998; Kiraz, 1997; Reich, 1995; Richards, 1998; Oxford, 1997a; Turner, 1995) In this sense, school experience has proved a great role. This means engaging student teachers in dialogue with their peers, supervising teachers in schools and the university supervisors.

The constructivist framework emphasises the growth of the prospective teachers through reflection and self-examination and typically, the opportunity to practice reflection and self-examination is reserved for the period of practicum, a common and prevalent component of all teacher education programmes (Goodwyn, 1997; Tillema & Knoll, 1997). Within the framework of preservice teacher education, practice teaching experience is believed to play a significant role in facilitating the process of teacher learning. This period is viewed as critical to the development of student teachers' pedagogical skills, because "practical school experience necessarily contributes to the development of teachers" (Zeichner, 1980, p. 45) and because teachers' professional life patterns are highly influenced during this period (Applegate & Lasley, 1982; Hoy & Rees, 1988; Johnston, 1994; Johnson, 1997; Karmos & Jacko, 1977; Pinnegar, 1995; Woolfolk, 1998; Zeichner, 1980). Thus, the theoretical knowledge gained in the university courses is believed to fuse with the practical experiences of the student teaching period.

2.3. The practice teaching experience in student teacher education

As discussed previously, the constructivist position is clearly in contrast with the knowledge-transmission approaches which predominate in teacher education programmes (Cobb, 1994). Tillema & Knol (1997) argue that passive accretion of new knowledge is not the same as new and meaningful learning as the latter calls for constitution of a personal knowledge base and is apparent in learning by professionals. In other words, active knowledge (re)construction requires a different orientation towards the learning needs of student teachers and other forms of presentation than those to which student teachers are accustomed. It is strongly dependent on experimentation whereby the reasons and explanations for professional

solutions that are presented to student teachers can be tested and built into a personal knowledge base.

Today, pre-service teacher education requires a close relationship between higher education institutions and schools, the underlying idea of which is the development of student teaching and lifelong professional growth of in-service teachers. According to Gebhard (1998), in an attempt to move away from the dominant format in teacher education, in which theoretical course work and a teaching practicum are separated in time and space and often represent competing ideologies, many institutions preparing teachers are attempting to restructure their programmes to contextualise teacher education by forming partnerships with local schools. Over a decade ago, the Holmes Group developed the concept of professional development schools to improve the development of pre-service and in-service teachers. Since then many programmes have joined with local school districts to create Professional development schools (hereafter PDSs) where student teachers get a more coherent learning experience when organised in teams with the faculty, with one another and with the cooperating teachers, who also deepen their knowledge by assuming the role of being mentors (Dixon & Isherl, 1992; Imig & Switzer, 1996).

In PDSs, the goal is to place a greater value on teacher learning and teacher development than is typically the case. The intention is to ground the theoretical component of programmes in the practice of teaching, engaging both experienced and student teachers as well as university faculty, in the reflective analysis of their work (Anderson, 1997; Zeichner, 1992).

PDSs differ from typical student- teaching placements in that the university actively seeks out and makes a long-term commitment to a public school. The purpose of this joint venture is to create a setting that supports the theoretical and practical aspects of learning to teach, allow expert teachers to play a larger role in the development of new teachers by acting as mentors and university adjuncts (Gebhard, 1998). The movement to restructure the practice and integrate it with in-service teacher education and school reform involves major changes in the roles and responsibilities of those who work in the practicum and a significant shift in the distribution of power between schools and universities, e.g. classroom teachers having more influence on the total teacher education curriculum and university faculty playing a greater role in supporting and helping to institutionalise school reforms (Dixon & Isherl, 1992; Zeichner, 1992).

A case in point is that within the framework of a major project of YÖK ("Higher Education Council") and the World Bank aiming at the improvement of the Faculties of Education in Turkish universities, a model of faculty-school partnership has been developed. According to this model, which requires close collaboration between the faculty and the school, the traditional roles of supervising teachers are expected to change. In the handbook prepared by YÖK (1998) the responsibilities of the cooperating teachers, university supervisors and school coordinators are presented and specific standards for supervision are defined. Accordingly, in order for student teachers to develop into the self-directed and analytical professionals to meet the challenges of contemporary schools, cooperating teachers are supposed to assume the major responsibility for supervision in the classroom and for facilitating the

practicum period. They are supposed to assist the student teacher during the practicum and keep a record of the student teacher's performance.

Research suggests that the effectiveness and the quality of the practice teaching experience, especially in terms of developing the reflective capabilities of prospective teachers, is very much related to the ability of all involved in this experience, especially to the help and guidance provided by the supervising teacher (Hawkey, 1997; Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990; Shaw-Baker, 1995). Copas (1984) reports that "the value of the direct learning experience in schools seems to depend upon the quality of the teacher with whom the student is placed" (p. 49). The cooperating teacher, being the classroom teacher at the same time, potentially has the greatest influence on the development of a student teacher, because of close and ongoing interaction during the practice teaching period. Thus, the cooperating teacher, whom student teachers see as their most significant socialising agent, is the person who may assist more than anyone else in fitting all the pieces together to form a complete picture in the student teacher's professional development (Duquette, 1994; Johnson, 1997; Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990). The ability of the cooperating teacher to communicate context and specifics especially plays an important role in the practice teaching period (Karmos & Jacko, 1977; Lemlech & Kaplan, 1990; Wentz & Yarlning, 1994). Thus, student teachers are expected to be involved in a reflective conversation as they think about and attempt to understand their teaching experiences with their cooperating teachers. Helping student teachers to look at their own practice is particularly important because "the way in which they interpret school experience is often influenced and 'shaped' by their own set of attitudes, beliefs

and values; their life values in general and their educational values in particular (Maynard & Furlong, 1993, p. 75).

In the next section, studies conducted on the role of practice teaching experience on student teachers' beliefs will be presented.

2.3.1. Studies on student teacher's practicum abroad in L1 and L2 contexts

Several studies have been carried out in L1, the context where English is learned as a first language, and L2, the context where English is learned as a second language, to investigate a) the nature of the student teacher- cooperating teacher relationship, b) attitudes of supervising teachers and student teachers toward the practice teaching period, c) possible effects of practice teaching experience.

Koerner (1992) observed eight experienced cooperating teachers in L1 context and found out that they were uncomfortable having a student teacher for several reasons, e.g. interruption of instruction, displacement of the teacher from a central position in the classroom, disruption of the classroom routine, breaking the isolation of the classroom teacher and shifting of the teachers' time and energy to instruction.

Richardson-Koehler (1988) carried out a study in L1 context, which investigated norms related to learning to teach held by supervising teachers and the ways these were communicated to the student teachers. The sample consisted of fourteen elementary school student teaching triads; fourteen student teachers and their cooperating teachers and one university supervisor. The data were

collected by means of student teachers' reports of discussions with supervising teachers, the informal and formal cooperating teacher interviews and observations of the routines of cooperating teachers. The findings of the study indicated that in the feedback sessions between cooperating and student teachers, student teachers received very little evaluation of behaviour or statements of reasons for doing what was suggested; the discussions were highly situation-specific and focused on an individual student or problem in the particular classroom. The reasons for the poor quality of feedback were the cooperating teachers' lack of ability or unwillingness to engage in reflection of their or their student teachers' classroom practices.

Johnson and Landers-Macrine (1994) carried out a study in L1 to examine the changes in student teachers' thinking at the end of the practicum period. Several paper-and-pencil tasks, including a concept map and a questionnaire task, were administered at the beginning and end of the fourteen-week student teaching semester. In post-interviews, individual student teachers were asked to compare their pre- and post-student teaching conceptions. Their responses indicated that intrapersonal and interpersonal sources led to changes in their thinking. Explanations for those changes were categorised as method-centric, authority-centric, and climate-centric. Method-centric effects consisted of pedagogy. The second type of effect, as climate-centric, included setting a positive tone and structuring the class environment to ensure students' learning success. Concerning the third effect, it was noted that style of management and use of authority improved student teachers' ability to help students, which is referred to as authority-centric. The results of the study demonstrate the effects of field

experience on the thinking of new teachers and suggests that student teachers need to reflect on their teaching practice during their practice teaching experience.

Dershimer (1989) examined the development of student teachers' knowledge about teaching in the L1 context within the framework of a methods course, which had the component of practice teaching. Preconcept and postconcept maps were used to measure change in conceptions of teacher planning and of subject matter content taught during the practice teaching. The study investigated a) changes in student teachers' thinking about both content and pedagogy, b) the value of concept mapping as a measure of change in pedagogical decision making, c) the effects of teaching experience in terms of graduate and undergraduate student teaching. The findings of the study indicated that the student teachers who participated in this study changed their conceptions of both pedagogy (teacher planning) and content (unit topics), as represented in pre and postconcept maps constructed at the beginning and end of a seven-week course on generic teaching methods. Student teachers showed a marked new emphasis on decision-making in their final maps of teacher planning. The student teachers attributed the changes in their conceptions mainly to their experiences with reflection. The study also demonstrated that concept mapping is a useful procedure for measuring changes in reflective, pedagogical decision-making, and indicated that some students may demonstrate more rapid growth in this area than others. The graduate students in this study began to move toward thinking somewhat like "experts," compared with novices.

Weinstein's (1989) study examined the effects of student teaching on student teachers' conceptions of teaching in L1 context. The subjects were 113 students enrolled in sophomore-level introductory education courses required for formal admission to teacher education at Rutgers University. Students completed a questionnaire consisting of both open-ended and fixed-response questions. The first question asked students what they have in mind when they use the phrase, "a really good teacher". Next, students were asked the following question: "Compared to the other students in this teacher education programme, how well do you think you will do during student teaching and during your first year as a teacher?". When describing a really good teacher, students emphasised interpersonal/affective variables and downplayed academic dimensions of teaching. In both their explanations for their self-ratings and their descriptions of a good teacher, students tended to emphasise social and affective variables such as caring and concern for children, ability to relate to students, patience, and enthusiasm, while minimising the theoretical underpinnings of teaching. Except for reference to the ability to give clear explanations, the essence of teaching--the process of enabling a learner to acquire subject matter understandings, strategies for learning, or some other form of content--was generally omitted in subjects' descriptions of good teachers. Also omitted was reference to the need for teachers to be intelligent.

Florio-Ruane and Lensmire (1990) studied six preservice elementary teachers enrolled in a methods course in the teaching of writing, which also involved practice teaching component. The researchers were particularly interested in how the novices' ideas about writing instruction changed during the course, which

drew from developmental psychology and research on writing as a social process. The course also included field assignments that required the novices to interact with and interview small groups of children engaged in nontraditional classroom activities (e.g., cooperative learning groups, peer writing/editing). Findings revealed that the six preservice candidates entered the course with clear personal beliefs/images about teachers. They viewed the teacher as information giver, and they defined learning to write in terms of learning rules. As they began the course, the novices had only vague ideas about the characteristics of students. As the course progressed and novices engaged in extended interaction with children, their beliefs and images were reconstructed. By observing and studying how children learned to write, the novices were able to step back from their prior beliefs, acknowledge where they were inaccurate or incomplete, and reconstruct them.

In Canada, Shapiro (1991) examined changes in the perceptions of 23 preservice secondary school teachers. Participants were interviewed before, during, and after the first phase of their teacher education programme: a 7-week methods course followed by a 4-week classroom practicum. Shapiro was able to identify five kinds of conceptual change or an awareness on the part of the novices that (a) their initial beliefs/images had been incorrect (e.g., "I thought that students would be far more interested in science than they were"), (b) they had acquired new technical know-how ("I discovered how to pace a lesson and organise my questions logically"); (c) they had discovered new ways of categorising experience ("In my mind, lesson plans are not just another outline for teaching. I see them now as a guide for involving students"); (d) they had acquired new self-

knowledge (“I saw myself as a student, somewhat uninvolved. Now I see myself as a teacher”); and (e) new dilemmas had emerged (“I found that the curriculum can really tie you down. I’d like to focus on thinking, not just conveying content, next time around”).

The study of Jones and Vesilind in the L1 context (1996) investigated changes in the organisation of preservice teachers’ knowledge about teaching at the end of the practicum period. The research questions included: (a) How do student teachers’ concepts of effective teaching change through time? (b) What experiences and factors do student teachers report as influencing changes in the organisation of their concepts? Twenty-three seniors in middle-grades teacher education drew concept maps, completed card sorting tasks, and participated in structured interviews four times during the senior year. The findings indicated that student teachers reconstructed their knowledge related to teaching during the middle of student teaching and attributed these changes in knowledge organisation primarily to student teaching experiences. Flexibility and planning emerged as two key concepts that changed rapidly. Flexibility was initially associated with preparation for class; then toward the end of student teaching, this concept was related to differentiating instruction for students’ needs and taking advantage of the teachable moment. Planning was initially described as a concept related to planning lessons and obtaining materials; then by the middle of student teaching, it became associated with the unpredictability of classroom events. By the end of student teaching, planning became a complex concept that connected lesson planning, maintaining class management, and meeting students’

needs. The influence of university courses and supervising teachers gave way to the influence of students and student-teacher interactions.

Borko and Mayfield (1995) analysed the characteristics of teaching conferences between student teachers, their university supervisors and supervising mathematics teachers. They found out that conference length was related to the specificity of comments offered by the supervising teachers as well as to the supervising teachers' beliefs about learning to teach. According to Borko and Mayfield (1995),

“at their best, student teachers' relationships with
both supervising teachers and university supervisors
can provide feedback about specific lesson components,
suggestions about new ways to think about teaching
and learning and encouragement to reflect on one's own
practice (p. 515)”.

In most of instances in Borko's study this potential was not realised for most student teacher-supervising teacher dyads and conversations rarely included in-depth exploration of issues of teaching and learning. It seemed that in many cases student teachers learned not to expect much out of their relationships with the supervising teachers and university supervisors; they primarily wanted the opportunity to practice and to learn by doing and hoped for some suggestions and feedback. The major reason for such lack of impact is, it is argued, due to the beliefs among teachers and supervisors that learning to teach is mainly achieved

through experience and to the shared desire to maximise comfort and minimise risks during teaching practices.

Hawkey (1997) examined mentor pedagogy and student teacher professional development. The study elicited two mentors' conceptions of their role, along with their views about what has influenced these conceptions, before examining the pedagogical practice of the two mentors. Secondly, the study looked at how three student teachers responded to their dialogues with the cooperating teachers and attempted to understand the various ways in which the student teachers' thinking about their teaching was influenced by discussions with their cooperating teachers. The study focused on two cooperating teachers working with student teachers studying on a one year post graduate initial teacher education course. The cooperating teachers and student teachers were all history specialists working at secondary school level. The data sources were audiotaped and transcribed conversations between mentors and student teachers, as well as individual interviews with the cooperating teachers and the student teachers involved. It appeared that student teachers learnt different things according to their cooperating teachers' approach. The learning processes they went through were also different. The research here suggested that the model of learning to teach followed in cooperating teachers' own initial teacher education may be one influential factor in their practice as mentors. As Elliott and Calderhead (1993) conclude, cooperating teachers' assumptions about the mentoring task are often embedded in a network of other assumptions about the very nature of teaching and how learning occurs provide part of the rationale for the cooperating teachers' approaches.

McNally, Cope, and Inglis (1997) carried out a study, which focused on the nature of the support student teachers received in school in making the transition from student to teacher. The success of this transition in interactional terms, appeared to depend on experiencing a number of relational conditions, which were largely determined by others, but which served a crucial context for individual development. The students interviewed were in their final semester of a 3 ½ year (4 ½ year for Honours) concurrent programme of initial teacher education at the University of Stirling, in which the main subject is studied along with education, to obtain a BA or BSc in the subject, and or with Education. Before their final semester, which was essentially dedicated to a final ten week teaching practice, students studied Education over five or six semesters. Their programme of the study included practical experience of teaching, in both "microteaching" at the University and in two periods of school experience, one of which was a three week "observation practice," the other a five week "first" teaching practice. Student teachers were interviewed individually and in groups before and after their practice teaching. Transcripts of interviews for both the groups and the individuals were searched for references to interactions with colleagues. These were extracted in context from each transcript in abbreviated form. The collection of summaries was then examined for characteristics of relationships with colleagues, for common situations in which students interacted with colleagues, for common situations in which students interacted with colleagues, and for their connection with the learning experience. It was found that student teachers learned a great deal from other teachers. Student teachers met the reality of teaching as individuals in the classroom and ultimately had to

make their own sense of it. The support of colleagues was a large part of the actual classroom experience.

Gebhard (1990) conducted an ethnographic study on the practice teaching experience of seven inexperienced ESL student teachers. He described the interaction between students and the student teachers that took place during the practicum and explored the student teachers' behaviour changes while they are participating in a practicum. The course requirements included team teaching, attending seminars, being supervised, and doing assigned readings, investigating projects on teaching, and observation tasks, among other activities. Data were collected by means of participant observation. Analysis was done on an ongoing basis, and focused on making sense out of student teachers' journal notes on observations and discussions, as well as the audio recordings and corresponding transcripts. The research indicated that five of the seven teachers changed in four main areas: setting up and carrying out a lesson, use of classroom space, selection of content, and treatment of students' language errors. There was a strong evidence that five of the seven student teachers changed aspects of their teaching behaviour while participating in the sixteen-week practicum.

2.3.2. Studies on student teachers' practicum in Turkey

Ekmekçi's study (1990), conducted in Çukurova University, focused on EFL student teachers' perceptions about the effects of practicum. According to the findings of the study, 51% of the student teachers indicated that they had gained a great deal during the practice teaching period while the rest thought that they

had not gained much and that the practicum did not have much effect on their beliefs and ideas about teaching.

The study of Paker & Tuncel (1997) investigated the effects of practicum on 3rd year student teachers' beliefs. Data included questionnaire, observations and interviews about practicum. The findings of the study indicated that 84.5 % of the 71 student teachers had positive views on the benefits of practicum and believed that practicum should start from their 3rd year since practicum had enabled them to feel more secure about their profession.

Paker (1998) studied the dilemma that the student teachers had encountered during their school experience in various secondary schools as the Teaching Practice component of the preservice teacher training programme at Çukurova University, ELT Department. For this purpose, in 1997-98 academic year, 60 student teachers in the ELT Department of Çukurova University were asked to keep a diary on a daily basis and reflect what they had gained through their Teaching Practice experience. At the end of the academic year, they were also given a questionnaire to evaluate the Teaching Practice experience from various aspects. As a result of the analysis of their reports and responses given in the questionnaire, the issues raised by Teaching Practice students have been categorised as a) issues related to teaching that student teachers feel they are in dilemma which have provided evidence for two conditions. The first one is that cooperating teachers should go through an in-service programme because the teachers who work in such schools are not all graduates of ELT Departments of Faculties of Education. The second one is that the student teachers are aware of

various teaching methods and techniques. Providing such an environment has created self-awareness in student teachers and this has led them to form their own concept of an ideal teacher. b) issues related to Teaching Practice organisation which showed that student teachers should be exposed to various teachers' teaching styles and teaching atmosphere in schools. In fact, this study has proved that student teachers need to see more variety in various classes to make a decision and develop their own teaching style. c) issues related to the roles of a cooperating teacher and a supervisor in Teaching Practice which indicated that student teachers need to be observed more than two or three times and need to get detailed and constructive feedback to improve themselves professionally.

Paker & Sendan (1997) carried out a study, which focused on the problems encountered in ELT practicum courses and the causes of these problems. The study also aimed to organise the practicum courses efficiently. 80 student teachers, 14 cooperating teachers and 14 university supervisors participated in this study. Data involved questionnaires, observations and interviews and measured by a content analysis as well as comparisons and different approaches. The findings of the study indicated that there are differences in the participants' expectations and approaches to practicum and this difference should be considered natural and rather than trying to avoid these differences they should be considered as a valuable source, which can improve practicum courses.

2.3.3. Summary

The studies conducted mainly in ESL contexts, as summarised above, examine

changes in student teachers' thinking about teaching. Researchers have specifically focused on changes in knowledge organisation to gain insight into the ways student teachers perceive, understand and respond to classroom events (Jones& Vesilind, 1996). The findings of these studies suggest that student teachers do undergo attitude changes as the result of student teaching.

Some of the above mentioned studies have also investigated whether: providing more practical experience in classrooms necessarily make for a better programme and what we really know about student teaching beyond the fact that it is highly valued by the participants. The findings of these studies in relation to these points indicate that the nature of student teaching period rather than the length, i.e. providing opportunities for reflective teaching, contributes to the effectiveness of practice teaching. It is the feeling of many involved in the field of teacher education today that there is little basis for the strong advocacy of more and earlier experiences in actual classrooms and that before emphasis is placed on creating additional field experience opportunities, attention should be focused on learning more about student teaching.

To the knowledge of the researcher, there are not many EFL studies examining the possible effects of practice teaching on student teachers' conceptions of ideal teacher which is the aim of the present study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate the possible effects of practice teaching experience on a group of EFL student teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of an ideal teacher and whether they possess these characteristics. Specifically speaking, the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- a) Do changes occur in the student teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of an ideal teacher as measured by pre- and post-concept maps? If so, how?
- b) To what extent do they believe they have the characteristics of an ideal teacher?
- c) What are the student teachers' opinions about the possible effects of student teaching experience on their beliefs about an ideal teacher?

3.2. Participants

Twenty Turkish student teachers enrolled in the senior class of the Department of English Language Education at BU volunteered to participate in this study. They were all graduates of Anatolian Teacher High Schools. Seven of them were male and the rest of them were female. Their age ranged from 21 to 24 with a mean of 22.

As part of the requirements of the school experience course offered during the 7th semester and the practice teaching course offered during the 8th semester in September 2000, each student was placed in a school randomly in one of the cooperating schools with which the English Language Department had been working with for at least five years. The students who took part in the study were placed into four schools as follows: five students in school 1, four students in school 2, five

students in school 3 and six students in school 4. In these schools, student teachers were assigned to observe and teach at least two different proficiency levels.

According to the requirements of the department concerning practice teaching experience, student teachers were asked to observe as many classes as they could, taught by various teachers but they were required to perform practice teaching and engage in collaborative dialogue with at least two cooperating teachers they were assigned to, in pairs. So, in general each student teacher was assigned to two cooperating teachers.

The classes they did practice teaching in ranged from 3rd to 8th grades in the primary schools, although they had an opportunity to observe classes from 1st to 8th grade. In the secondary schools, the classes they did practice teaching ranged from prep classes to the 10th classes, although they observed classes from prep to 11th grades.

3.3. The Research Context

Cooperating Teachers: Nine cooperating teachers working in four different schools were involved in this study. They were all female native speakers of Turkish with an average of seven years experience and they had been teaching in their current institutions for at least three years. All these teachers were graduates of various teacher education institutions in Istanbul. They were all main course teachers whose working load ranged from 20 to 24 hours a week. The cooperating teachers were recognised as ‘experienced’ by the headmasters of the schools as well. These cooperating teachers were all informed about the approach and requirements of the English Language Department concerning student teacher and cooperating teacher relationship. Accordingly, it was suggested to the cooperating teachers that

they should consider practice teaching as a demanding process in which student teachers' learning cannot be left to chance. In addition, it was emphasised that in order to build a constructive working relationship with the student teachers and to be able to monitor and evaluate their progress, cooperating teachers should make sure that student teachers understand how the school worked and what was really expected of them by devoting some time to engage in dialogues with the student teachers. Accordingly, it was suggested that the cooperating teacher's role was not to provide basically a model as an 'authority figure' as in the prescriptive approach in which the role of the cooperating teacher was to direct and inform the student teacher, model teaching behaviour and evaluate the student teacher's mastery of defined behaviours. Rather, it was highlighted that the role of the cooperating teacher was to work with the student teacher and to establish a sharing relationship with the student teacher while trying to understand the student teacher's ideas, commenting on the problems he/she sees in the lesson and making suggestions and sharing his/her experience in a positive and non-judgmental way. It was suggested to the cooperating teachers that while not forgetting that student teachers from time to time do need some prescription for their survival needs they should allow the student teachers to express themselves while trying to understand their point of view (Roberts, p. 48). In order to maximise the efficiency of the observation, cooperating teachers were asked to clarify the purpose of any particular observation and how to efficiently utilise the observation. Yet, cooperating teachers were also reminded about the importance of having a discussion before and after the lesson with student teachers and student teachers' learning related to it. It was also underlined that there should be a collaborative dialogue between the student teachers and cooperating teachers based on shared experience that both parties would reflect on.

Cooperating Schools: They were all Turkish English medium schools with about 650 students each. In each class there were approximately 18 to 20 students and the number of hours of English lessons was about 6 hours for the 1st and 2nd grades, 7 hours for the 3rd grades, 10 hours for the 4th grades, 12 hours for the 5th and 6th grades and 10 hours for the 7th and 8th. The schools were similar in terms of the number of students, number of English teachers and the English programmes they were using.

The course books used in these schools in general aimed to develop both accuracy and fluency by combining conventional and communicative methods. In all these books grammar, vocabulary and all four skills were emphasised, focusing on everyday conversations. They were all accompanied by a teacher's book, workbook, audiocassettes, posters and a grammar practice book. Listening, reading and speaking activities provided the students with the target structures and lexical items to be studied at the beginning of each unit, which was then followed by grammar presentation. Next, students were provided with a variety of listening, reading, speaking and writing activities both to consolidate target linguistic items and engage in communicative activities. (See Appendix A)

University Supervisors: Two university supervisors from BU participated in this study. One of the supervisors previously worked as a language teacher for about twelve years. She had been working in the department of English Language Education for four years. She taught courses in the Teaching of Literature for EFL Purposes, School Experience, Teaching Foreign Language Skills and Freshman Composition. The other supervisor was also an experienced language teacher who

had been working in The School of Foreign Languages for ten years. She worked for the English Language Department as a university supervisor for two years.

The Programme

The department of Foreign Language Education offers a four year undergraduate programme in English language development. The basic component of this programme consists of field-specific courses as well as Linguistics and American and English Literature. Through elective courses offered by the department, students are provided with opportunities to pursue individual interest in various cultural and professional subjects which help them explore their interests in these areas.

More specifically, during the first three semesters of the programme students are offered basic language development courses such as oral and written communication and at the same time they take courses such as Introduction to Language and Linguistics, Introduction to Education, Introduction to Psychology, Language Awareness, as well as American and English Literature and School Experience.

From the third semester on, students start taking field-specific courses such as Second Language Acquisition, Applied Linguistics, Methodology, Teaching Language Skills, Sociolinguistics and Education, Teaching Young Learners, Classroom Management, Testing, Material Evaluation and Preparation. In the methodology courses, the students are required to do peer teaching which is followed by peer and self-evaluations.

In short, the objective of the programme is to help students achieve adequate mastery of English and to provide them with theoretical knowledge and practical skills for teaching English as a foreign language. The practicum courses consist of observation and practice teaching. During the first semester of the senior year, student teachers are given the opportunity to observe primary and secondary school EFL classes. Towards the end of the first semester they start practice teaching and continue practice teaching during the second semester of the senior year. During the same semester, students also take a Teaching Seminar Course. For this purpose, during the Fall semester of the academic year they are assigned to various schools that the department has been working with for at least five years. During this phase, students are expected to do focused observation tasks in collaboration with their peers and sheltered individual teaching. Towards the end of the Fall semester their responsibilities gradually increase focusing on lesson planning and teaching whole lessons. The seminar course offered during the 8th semester together with the practice teaching course gives student teachers an opportunity to share their teaching experience with their peers as well. Hence, they are engaged in task-focused talk with their peers and others, i.e. university supervisors and cooperating teachers in the cooperating schools.

The classes student teachers observe are officially scheduled and determined by the department in the Fall semester. Student teachers observe classes at least 50 hours and are required to write observation reports on given observation tasks for each week. In the Spring semester, student teachers observe classes up to 20 hours and do as many presentations as possible. During this period of student teaching, students are encouraged to reflect on their teaching and to write journals and engage in

dialogues with the cooperating teacher and the university supervisor. Three of these are called official presentations and they are observed and evaluated by the university supervisor and the cooperating teacher. The rest of the teaching instances are evaluated solely by the cooperating teacher. Student teachers are required to write self-evaluations for their official presentations and give a copy of each to their university supervisor as they go along.

The programme focuses explicitly on the evolution of personal theories over the year and awareness of these theories with a view towards encouraging student teachers to gradually develop their own individual teaching style. The social dimension, that is, attention to context and conceptual development by interaction with peers, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors is central to the programme's design. Thus, providing extensive opportunities to learn more about learners' perspectives in the regularity of a supervised programme is essential for the evolution and clarification of each student teacher's value set. The major focus and the basic aim of this programme is to offer the student teachers developmental experiences such as better understandings of learners' perceptions and relationships with peers and mentors who inform student teachers' sense of 'the teacher I want to be' (Roberts, P:196)

In general, it can be said that the social constructivist view is implicit in the department's view of student learning. In line with this view, the department emphasises the following activities:

1. Access to theoretical knowledge by reading and lectures

2. Activities to raise the student teachers' self-awareness of past experiences and current beliefs, practice and knowledge
3. Indirect experience of teaching by structured observations
4. Direct personal experience through micro teaching and teaching practice
5. Opportunities to reflect privately on these inputs by means of reflective writing, i.e. journals
6. Opportunities for dialogue with peers, university supervisors and cooperating teachers addressing their practice, beliefs and social pressures affecting their work.
7. Development of skills and attitudes which enable them to get the most from the activities mentioned above such as study skills, observation skills, working in pairs and /or groups.

Through these activities it is believed that student teachers will eventually develop their own beliefs about teaching and a personal teaching style, based on critical reflection on several information sources: their own experiences, their mentor's practical knowledge theory and practice.

3.4. Data Collection

Data for this study came from four sources:

- a) **Questionnaire:** Student teachers were given a questionnaire at the very beginning of their practice teaching experience. The questionnaire consisted of a set of questions which aimed to tap the personal and educational background of student teachers as well as their ideas on 'efficient language teaching, the most important

aspect of language teaching and the description of an 'ideal teacher'. (See Appendix B).

b) Concept maps: Concept mapping, a technique of graphically representing concepts and their interrelationships, is an approach developed to trace conceptual change and has been used widely in previous studies of teacher education. (e.g. Beyerbach 1988, Morine-Dersheimer 1989, 1993, Michelsen, 1988). It requires students to structure concepts and identify their interrelationships from recall, and thus from the learner's perspective rather than the researcher's. (Novak & Gowin, 1984). In constructing a concept map, student teachers generate terms they associate with the topic, thereby revealing the terms contained within their perception of ideal teacher. However, this approach is not without its critics. For example, Kagan (1990) stated that the results could be misleading because of the small number of subject groups, emphasis on short-term changes, influence of a 'target map' on students' beliefs system and inefficiency of data collection and analysis.

However, a number of studies have shown that concept mapping is a powerful and psychometrically sound method for assessing conceptual change (Markham, Mintzes, & Jones, 1994; Novak & Musonda, 1991; Trowbridge & Wandersee, 1994). Concept mapping has been described as particularly useful for constructivist teachers and researchers who seek insight into how individuals construct their own idiosyncratic concepts (Trowbridge & Wandersee, 1994). Cary (1986) suggested that "by comparing successive concept maps produced as the student gains mastery of the domain, the researcher can see how knowledge is restructured in the course of acquisition" (p. 1126).

In the present study, criticisms on the concept mapping as mentioned above are taken into consideration. First of all this study was conducted on a group of 20 participants. There was also no “target map” to be judged against because the subjects were given a standard set of guidelines and allowed to produce their own pre- and post-concept maps. The participants then answered the questions in the semi-structured interview about the differences in their pre- and post-concept maps. Because the guidelines were standard and simple to follow, the subjects found the production of the data required to be speedy, which aided the quality of responses and in turn simplified the analysis phase.

During the beginning of the first semester, which was prior to their first practical experience of teaching, the subjects were provided with a standard set of instructions and an example of a concept map on a different subject, farm animals, to familiarise them with the idea of writing concept maps. Then the researcher clarified the questions students asked to make sure that they understood what concept mapping is. Next, the researcher asked student teachers to produce concept maps defining their concept of an ideal teacher. Then they were asked to express how much they possessed the attributes they included in their concept maps. In other words, they rated themselves in terms of the attributes in their concept maps as 0, 1 and 2. “0” stood for “I do not have that quality”, “1” stood for “I am working on that quality” and “2” stood for “I think I have that quality” (see Appendix G for percentages of student teachers’ self-ratings). The resultant concept maps were gathered and kept by the researcher. At the end of June, when student teachers finished their practicum they were again asked to produce another concept map to define their concept of

ideal teacher. Then they were again asked to rate themselves in terms of the attributes in their concept maps. When all the subjects had completed their post-concept maps, their pre-concept maps were returned to them for procedures described below. (See Appendix C).

c) Semi-structured interview: The questions in the semi-structured interview were adapted from Jones and Vesilind (1996) according to the needs of the present study. (See Appendix D) Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather student teachers' comments on the sources of changes, if there were any changes in their concept maps. The semi-structured interview served to provide information on student teachers' interpretations of their own thinking.

d) Self-evaluations: Student teachers were asked to comment on their three official presentations and the factors that affected their teaching, presentations and their definition of an 'ideal teacher'. The findings of both the semi-structured interview, self-evaluations and the second part of the questionnaire were used for purposes of triangulations of the results of the concept map analysis.

3.5. Data Analysis

For the purposes of the study, data collected from the above mentioned sources were analysed by means of a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques. Lynch (1996) calls this combination a mixed study design and claims that it provides the most thorough information possible as data is validated by means of a triangulation of various types of qualitative and quantitative instrumentation.

In this study, data coming from the concept maps were analysed quantitatively. In doing so, the researcher aimed at reaching objective results based on statistical analyses and validating the findings from questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and self-evaluations.

To answer the major research question, namely whether student teaching experience affect student teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of an ideal teacher, the data were analysed by using the following procedures for the analysis:

3.5.1. Concept maps

To see, whether changes occurred in the student teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of an ideal teacher, student teachers' pre- and post- concept maps were compared in terms of main categories and elements included in each category, paying attention to the structural organisation as well as the specific content. The elements contained in pre- and post- maps were first examined and grouped according to similar themes. While classifying the main categories and the elements in each category, the researcher used Dershimer's (1989) classification scheme.

Another category, 'Personality', which emerged from the data was also added to this scheme and no further modifications were made. Appendix E presents the resultant category system, together with examples of elements within each category.

Quantitative analyses of concept maps were conducted to see whether there were any changes between the pre- and post-concept maps in terms of the average number of categories and elements within each category. The average number of main categories and elements of categories was calculated for the pre- and post-concept maps and they were compared using paired samples t-tests.

To cross validate the findings of the concept map analysis as well as to answer the second and third major research questions, namely to what extent do they believe they have the characteristics of an ideal teacher and what are the student teachers' opinions about the possible effects of practice teaching experience on their beliefs about an ideal teacher, semi-structured interviews and self-evaluations were analysed using the content analysis method of Miles & Huberman (1994). As suggested by Miles and Huberman model (1994) of qualitative analysis, the data analysis starts with data reduction, which includes various methods to simplify and transform the raw data in the notes. In this study, pattern coding was used to reduce the "large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units" (p. 72). First, the questions in the questionnaire and the comments on the semi-structured interviews and self-evaluations were categorised according to the content. Then, the frequency percentage of each response was measured. According to these data, student teachers' comments on ideal teacher were compared and evaluated in terms of common themes and arguments in student teachers' responses. The analyses also focused on the concepts that were added, dropped or remained similar in the pre- and post-concept maps.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of student teachers' pre- and post-concept maps revealed the following categories: Personality, Instructional Materials and Resources, Social Context Student Characteristics and Background, Professional Knowledge and Development, Classroom Management, Instructional Process, Evaluation and Feedback, Time and Timing, Curriculum, Lesson and Unit Plans, Professional Relationships, Attitudes to Profession. In an attempt to answer the first part of the question, namely whether there were any changes in the student teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of an ideal teacher as measured by pre and post concept maps, the number of main categories in the pre and post concept maps were compared using t-tests. As presented in Table 1 (Appendix F), the results of the t-test indicated that the average number of main categories indicated by student teachers in their pre-concept maps ($m=3.6$, $sd=.59$) significantly increased in their post-concept maps ($m=5.9$, $sd=.85$), $p<.001$. In other words, the number of main categories that each student teacher used to define an ideal teacher increased significantly in the post-maps. For example, there were three main categories in student 18's pre-map and the number of main categories increased to seven in the post-map.

The number of elements in the pre- and post- concept maps were also compared using a t-test in order to see whether there were any changes in the student teachers' beliefs about the characteristics of an ideal teacher. As Table 1 (Appendix F) presents, the results of the t-test indicated that the average

number of elements indicated by student teachers in their pre-concept maps ($m=5.8$, $sd=1.1$) significantly increased in the post-concept maps ($m=32.65$, $sd= 6.15$), $p<.001$. As Table 2 (Appendix F) presents, when each category in the pre- and post-concept maps was compared, it was seen that the number of elements included in the following categories increased significantly: Personality ($mpre=2.4$, $sd=1.19$; $mpost=8.3$, $sd=1.87$), Instructional Materials and Resources ($mpre=.2$, $sd=.61$; $mpost=2.25$, $sd=2.63$), Lesson and Unit Plans ($mpre=.25$, $sd=.44$; $mpost=2$, $sd=2.12$), Classroom Management ($mpre=.2$, $sd=.41$; $mpost=2.35$, $sd=2.27$), Instructional Process ($mpre=.35$, $sd=.58$; $mpost=2.65$, $sd=2.2$), Time and Timing ($mpre=.05$, $sd=.22$; $mpost=1.3$, $sd=1.83$), Social Context Student Characteristics and Background ($mpre=.6$, $sd=.68$; $mpost=5.35$, $sd=9.88$) and Professional Knowledge and Development ($mpre=1.5$, $sd=.82$; $mpost=7.5$, $sd=1.7$). This increase in the number of elements may be explained by students' having more opportunities to deal with the realities of teaching, which involve planning and preparing different kinds of materials and activities to be covered in a given time according to the students' level.

The results of the quantitative analyses were probed into and supported by qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews and self-evaluations. The findings are discussed in detail below.

In the main category of *Personality*, the traits 'friendly' and 'kind' were the only personality traits of ideal teacher mentioned in the majority of the pre-concept maps whereas in their post-concept maps they added the attributes like

the ability to be understanding, patient, concerned, smiling, self-confident, creative, dedicated, objective, hard-working, amiable and helpful. In addition to quantitative analysis, the pre- and post-concept maps were compared again in order to see whether there were differences in student teachers' opinions about to what extent they possessed these attributes of Personality. Student teachers' self-ratings indicated that the majority of student teachers felt that they were working to improve the attributes friendly and kind at the beginning of the practicum. However, at the end of the practicum there was an increase in the category of Personality and the majority of the student teachers felt that they possessed each of these attributes. These changes may be attributed to student teachers' being involved in issues directly related to these categories, i.e. they saw the importance of a teacher's personality as well as his/her subject matter knowledge. This may be because student teachers had the opportunity to observe their cooperating teachers not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom while dealing with students' problems as well. Moreover, during the interviews the student teachers mentioned that they saw how much the class teacher's personality contributed to their instruction with his/her personality revealed by mimics, gestures, tone and approach to the students.

As for the category of *Instructional Materials and Resources*, it is seen that the majority of student teachers mentioned the attributes like benefiting from course books and visual aids in their pre-concept maps and rated themselves with the lowest value in relation to these attributes. This may be because the student teachers had not yet the opportunity to experience a real classroom atmosphere and use instructional materials before practice teaching. However,

in the post-concept maps the attributes like benefiting from audial aids, benefiting from materials with current issues, using authentic materials and using a variety of games, songs and jokes were added. In addition, the student teachers felt that they possessed all these attributes. This may be because the student teachers were exposed to different classroom situations with their observations and presentations. Moreover, they had a chance to use a variety of appropriate materials to keep students' interest in the lesson. During the interviews one of the student teachers noted:

“Before going into the classroom and observing teachers, I thought that following the course book and choosing some pictures would be enough but after the classes I observed and did my practice teaching, my views changed completely. I realised that the attention span of students is very limited and using correct instructional materials is an essential part of being a really good teacher.”

In their post-concept maps, the student teachers felt that they possessed the attributes of Instructional Materials and Resources. This may be because they had a chance to use different kinds of materials and resources during their presentations and saw themselves as efficient users of instructional materials.

In their pre-concept maps student teachers mentioned ‘well-planned’ and ‘well-organised’ as the only elements of the main category of *Lesson and Unit Plans* whereas in the post-concept maps the following attributes were added: ‘makes daily plans’, ‘makes weekly plans’, ‘makes monthly plans’, ‘well-prepared’ and

'integrates the plans according to needs'. The student teachers felt that they possessed the attributes of Lesson and Unit Plans in their pre-concept maps but in their post-concept maps they felt that they were trying to improve themselves on planning. The reason for this may be because although the student teachers theoretically knew how to make a good lesson plan, they were not aware of the practical implications of lesson planning. After being exposed to different classroom situations with observations and presentations, they noted the importance of efficient planning and integrating plans according to students' needs rather than just following it. One of the student teachers noted:

"I knew all about planning before doing my practice teaching but the problem was that it was all very abstract. I saw that you really need to see the class you are teaching and prepare everything in detail according to your goals and even depart from it when necessary."

The student teachers did not mention making an annual plan in their post-concept maps. This may be because they were not the regular teachers of the classes they did practice teaching and therefore they were not exposed to issues directly related to making annual plans as the annual plans are made at the beginning of the year and followed by the class teachers through monthly plans or weekly pacing schedules.

In terms of the *Classroom Management*, the student teachers mentioned establishing authority and discipline as the only attributes in their pre-concept maps and rated themselves with the lowest value whereas in the post-concept

maps they added the following attributes: having a good classroom management, letting students express themselves freely in the class, identifying problems at the beginning, establishing rules for the classroom, and having a preventive approach. The student teachers were not very pessimistic in their post-concept maps compared to their pre-concept maps in their ratings. The majority of the student teachers felt that they were working on these attributes to improve themselves. Their self-evaluations seem to confirm the findings of their maps and interviews. One of the student teachers expressed the reasons for these changes:

“At the beginning classroom management meant only keeping the students quiet and getting on with the lesson plan but I now know that classroom management is not having a quiet atmosphere with the teacher talking and the students listening. I am really working on it”

In their pre-concept maps, student teachers mentioned performing enjoyable lessons and using communicative activities as the attributes of the main category of *Instructional Process* whereas in their post-concept maps they added the following attributes: using mimes, postures, gestures and eye-contact, giving detailed information, having good communication skills, using appropriate instructional methods, using modern techniques, focusing on Communicative Method, focusing on transmitting meaning, integrating methods according to students' needs, focusing on four skills, organising pair and group works, preparing projects, encouraging students to use the target language and having student-centred lessons. The student teachers rated themselves with the lowest value in the pre-concept maps and the highest value in the post-concept maps. The

significant change in their views may be attributed to students' being directly involved in the process of lessons during their observations and presentations. Their comments on their self-evaluations seem to confirm these views. One student teacher wrote:

“While teaching in the classes, I realised
the importance of the process of the lesson. It
changed my views in that I didn't use to think about
the process of a lesson itself. I just believed that it
has to be enjoyable. Now, I know a lot more than
that because I know 'how'.”

Time and Timing is another category, which showed a significant increase in the post-concept maps. There was only one student who mentioned Time and Timing in her pre-concept map and it had only one element: being on time. Moreover, the student teacher rated herself with the lowest value in relation to this attribute. This may be because she did not have the opportunity to consider her timing before practice teaching. At the end of the practice teaching period the majority of student teachers added Time and Timing category to their post-concept maps and the following elements were included: using the time efficiently and organising the timing well. The student teachers felt that they were working on their timing to improve it because they considered timing as one of the most important aspect of teaching. During the interview one student teacher noted:

“I didn't really think about timing before. I thought
you go into the classroom and just try to achieve your
target. I think that time is an important factor in teaching.

If you don't consider timing, you are bound to lose."

In their pre-concept maps student teachers mentioned 'communicating well with children' as the essential trait of an ideal teacher in relation to the main category of *Social Context, Student Characteristics and Background*. The student teachers rated themselves with the lowest value in relation to this trait. This may be because they did not have the opportunity to communicate with children in the classroom before the practice teaching period whereas in the post-concept map more elements were added to this main category and the student teachers rated themselves with the highest value in relation to these elements: appealing to students' age, considering individual needs of students, considering students' emotional needs, being approachable by students, considering students' interests, valuing students, respecting individual differences, considering students' expectations, knowing students' personality, considering students as individuals, having good relations with students and motivating students. During the interviews one of the student teachers noted:

"I saw my cooperating teacher trying to deal with everything that concerned her students. She knew how to appeal to children well. The forty year old teacher could suddenly be a twelve year old kid in the classroom. I think this is amazing because she was very successful in her instruction and was performing great lessons."

Another student teacher wrote in his self-evaluation:

“I know that being a good teacher involves having good rapport with students and appealing to their emotional needs as well as aiming a target language form or whatever in the classroom. An ideal teacher should consider the students as individuals regardless of their age and status.”

The majority of student teachers mentioned having a good subject matter knowledge and pedagogic education as the essential traits of an ideal teacher as part of the *Professional Knowledge and Development* category in their pre-concept maps. They rated themselves with the highest value. In the post-concept maps, student teachers added more elements: following the current research on the area, improving oneself constantly, having connections with professional organisations, having good pronunciation, being fluent in English following and adopting the new developments, discovering new techniques, knowing efficient teaching techniques, believing in ongoing education, knowing how to transmit knowledge, attending conferences, reading a lot, opening new horizons for students, being open to new ideas and techniques, competencies, being knowledgeable, having linguistic accuracy and having good grammar knowledge. In relation to these new attributes the student teachers felt that they were working on these attributes to improve themselves. These changes in the views may be attributed to students' growing awareness that teaching is a rather complex issue in which there is more than meets the eye.

One of the student teachers noted in the interview:

“I thought subject matter was everything in teaching and believed that I knew more than I needed. However, when I went into the classroom I saw that teaching is a long journey that would never end in which you constantly search for new things.”

On the other hand there was no significant increase in the number of elements included in the following categories: *Evaluation and Feedback*, *Curriculum Goals*, *Professional Relationships* and *Attitudes Towards Profession*. This may be because the student teachers were not exposed to situations related to these categories during their practice teaching experience for example they did not set the goals for the curriculum or evaluate students' work or assignments because they were not the regular teachers of the class. Hence, the elements in Evaluation and Feedback and Curriculum Goals did not show any increase in student teachers' post-concept maps. Because student teachers were not the regular teachers, they did not have to have any relationships with other teachers or parents in the schools they did their practice teaching. There was not any increase in the number of elements in the category of Professional Relationships in the post-concept maps. By the same token, there was no reference to Attitudes Towards Profession. One of the student teachers wrote:

“Evaluation meant everything to me before and I thought that an ideal teacher should first think about evaluating students' work well so that students would trust him/her.

After the practice teaching, I saw that the process of teaching itself is more important than anything else.”

The results of the qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interview and self-evaluations seem to confirm the findings of the quantitative analysis. The impact of the student teaching experience on student teachers’ beliefs about an ideal teacher was particularly revealing in the student teachers’ interviews and self-evaluations. In an answer to the first question of the interview, namely whether they changed their map from the one they drew last time and whether they could comment on these changes in detail, the majority of students pointed out that their concept of an ideal teacher was enriched by the student teaching experience. In an answer to the second question, namely whether they could identify where these changes came from, in general, the student teachers attributed these changes in their post-concept maps mostly to their observations of the cooperative teachers, practice teaching and interactions with their peers during the seminar course which focused on analysis of their experiences and giving feedback. Their comments on their self-evaluations seem to confirm these views. One student teacher wrote:

“The key is personal experience. I observed many classes, but to really learn how to teach students, you have to get in there and do the job. It’s not something you can stand back and read out of a book or just observe. Experience is the greatest teacher and reflection is its essential part.”

Another student teacher commented as follows:

“My student teaching experience changed my opinions about teaching and teachers. Before going into the real classroom, teaching and teachers were only a part of ‘theory’ in my mind. Now, I know that it is more than a theory because practice teaching taught me how to reflect on my views. There were lots of reflection activities in the courses I took at the university. Reflecting on my practice teaching in the classroom situation with my cooperating teacher really contributed to my sense of teaching”.

The student teachers expressed their beliefs in their self-evaluations that a person learns to teach by doing-- through experience, practice, making mistakes and by being reflective. Student teachers also cited observing the cooperating teacher and holding conferences with him/her as other factors that caused the changes in their views. The student teachers, in general, reported gaining more confidence in themselves at the end of the practicum and feeling more comfortable with their roles as teachers after reflective sessions both with their peers and cooperative teachers. One of the student teachers noted:

“I have a lot more confidence in my teaching abilities and I just feel more comfortable with what I am going to be doing when I start the profession”.

In short, the factor mentioned most consistently was their classroom experience. One of the students reported in her self-evaluation:

“Basically, getting out there and doing it
myself, seeing the problems, working
with the cooperating teacher changed
my views. The practice teaching was
like a magic stick, I’ve learnt more than
I thought I would. ”

The student teachers felt that they benefited more from the cooperating teachers than the university supervisors. They expressed the reason as having more time with their cooperating teachers and having more opportunities to discuss the issues they were concerned with in detail, compared to the university supervisor. The student teachers’ responses indicated that university supervisor was not as effective as the cooperating teacher in the changes in their concept of teaching. They mentioned that their cooperating teachers played a major role in their learning. The responses to the interviews indicated that student teachers’ perception of ideal teacher was affected by the cooperating teacher in the following areas: their roles as teachers, their appeal to students as individuals and their personality traits. The student teachers also expressed being influenced by other teachers, other student teachers, and to a lesser extent the university supervisor. The student teachers in general felt that the cooperating teachers served as role models, sources of new ideas, and sounding boards for the student teachers’ ideas as a result of the observations and the dialogues they were engaged in.

One of the student teachers explained:

“Sometimes I would bounce things off my cooperating teachers or other student teachers and see what they thought about it and my performance in the class, and if they had maybe used that approach before and how it worked out made me combine a new idea of ideal teacher and how he/she should be.”

Similarly, another student teacher noted,

“Most or all of the ideas about the characteristics of an ideal teacher came from my classroom experience and observing the cooperating teacher”.

Hence, the results of both quantitative and qualitative analysis indicated that there was a considerable impact of student teaching experience on student teachers' beliefs about an ideal teacher. The interviews and self-evaluations revealed that during this period student teachers discussed concepts and educational processes in a more global and reflective way that included the concerns about the characteristics of an ideal teacher and how an ideal teacher should be. As Jones put it (1996), it was as if they began student teaching holding all the pieces of a puzzle, but through their successive experiences they were able to organise these pieces into meaningful units.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study investigated the possible effects of practice teaching experience on twenty EFL student teachers beliefs about the characteristics of an ideal teacher. The findings of the study indicate that there was a strong influence of student teaching experience on student teachers' beliefs about an ideal teacher and student teachers' concept of ideal teacher changed to a great extent. There was a significant increase at the end of the practice teaching period both in the number of main categories and elements included in these categories utilised to describe an ideal teacher. At the end of the practice teaching period, student teachers' concept of ideal teacher has become more complex and they started to see all their practice teaching experiences as contributions to the complex and multifaceted task of learning to teach. These findings concur with the findings of Johnson and Landers-Macrine (1994), Dersheimer (1989), Weinstein (1989), Florio-Ruane and Lensmire (1990), Shapiro (1991), Jones and Vesilind (1996), Hawkey (1997), McNally, Cope, and Inglis (1997) in L1 contexts and Gebhard (1990) and Paker (1998) in L2 contexts. The findings of the present study also support Zeichner's (1989) argument that practical school experience necessarily contributes to the development of student teachers.

Another finding of the study is that student teachers attributed the changes in their concept of ideal teacher basically to the effects of their dialogues with the cooperating teacher. According to student teachers, university supervisors did not have as much effect on their conceptual change as the cooperating teacher. These findings support previous findings in both L1 and L2 contexts as cited above that student teachers reconstruct their knowledge related to teaching during the student

teaching experience and attribute these changes in their understanding of ideal teacher primarily to student teaching experiences with an emphasis on the special influence of the cooperating teacher. The picture of student teaching that emerges from this study is of several processes by which student teachers used experience to reconstruct prior beliefs and definitions.

The findings of the present study have some pedagogical implications for pre-service EFL teacher education programmes. First, identifying student teachers' beliefs about teaching and how they expect to express them through their classroom practices may provide the most appropriate support for pre-service teacher development programmes. Understanding the relationship between student teachers' beliefs about teaching and the way they affect their classroom practices would provide valuable insights into the nature of professional growth. In terms of pre-service teacher education, this would help future teachers to realise how important it is for them to develop their own personal beliefs about language teaching and utilise them when necessary.

Second, teacher education programmes need to focus on processes of constructing pedagogical knowledge. Opportunities to reflect on experience and sources of change can help student teachers to organise their knowledge. In approach, teacher education programmes should be highly consistent with social constructivist principles of student teacher learning, which appeals to learning by means of reflection on a broad base of experiences. Hence, the social dimension (attention to context and conceptual development by interaction with others) should be central to the design. This dimension includes awareness-raising about school contexts, provision of extensive

opportunities for awareness of individual perspectives, regularity of supervisory support and establishment of dialogue with the cooperating teachers, university supervisors and the peers.

Third, the findings of the study also suggest that student teachers should be given full responsibility during the practice teaching period. In this way they can be engaged in planning and implementing the full day's activities, assessing student progress and having discussions with parents if necessary. Moreover, student teachers should be given an opportunity to reflect on their individual teaching behaviour. For this purpose, student teachers can be engaged in 'block school experience' as Wallace calls it. According to this model, the student teacher spends an uninterrupted block of time in a school from five weeks to whole term. During this period, student teachers could be engaged in team teaching with the class teacher and assume the full responsibility of the class they are assigned to after a partial responsibility of the same class where they do their practice teaching. In this way, the cooperating teacher and university supervisor might help them to see their student teaching experiences as contributions to the complex and multifaceted task of learning. This may give them an opportunity to compare their perceptions and their actual teaching behaviour. In this regard, they may be encouraged to compare their conceptions about teaching and what they need to do to meet the demands of a particular classroom situation. Hence, as Akyel (1997) pointed out, this understanding may yield a willingness to consider modifying their own teaching behaviours when needed as their own teaching style evolves.

Teacher education programmes have an important role in developing student teachers' perceptions of good teaching; these images may well contain elements which stress creativity and the need for teachers to respond to individual student needs by developing innovative programmes and materials. Furthermore, frequent discussions with student teachers before, during and after their student teaching experience are necessary to help them ascertain what can be or has been learned from their experiences. In fact, most second language teacher preparation programmes simply assume that once pre service teachers have completed their required coursework, they will be able to transfer their knowledge into effective classroom practices. As Freeman and Johnson point out (1989, 1992), without a better understanding of how pre-service teachers conceptualise their initial teaching experiences, and what impact these experiences have on their professional development as teachers, the field of second language teacher education will continue to operate without a grounded theoretical framework of how to teach second language teachers to teach. Hence, a better understanding of student teachers' perceptions of the practicum may enable the field of teacher education to better understand how second language teachers learn to teach and how teacher preparation programmes can effectively enhance this development process.

The results of this study should be interpreted in the light of its major limitations. The study unfortunately focused on a small number of subjects involved in a limited amount of teaching time. In addition, there was only one interview conducted at the end of the practice teaching period. Further research sampling greater number of EFL/ESL teachers involved in more intensive practice teaching experience in various

cultural contexts may yield further information about the possible effects of practice teaching on student teachers' conceptions of teaching.

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APPENDIX A

Course books used in the cooperating schools

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Grade 1	Pingu Loves English	Pingu Loves English	Super Me	Playway to English
Grade 2	I-Spy 1	I-Spy 1	I-Spy 1	I-Spy 1
Grade 3	I-Spy 2	I-Spy 2	I-Spy 2	I-Spy 2
Grade 4	Project 1	Project 1	World Club	Go1, Go2
Grade 5	Project 2, 3	Project 2,3	Livewires Starters	Livewires Starters
Grade 6	Twist 2	Livewires 1	Livewires 1	Livewires 1
Grade 7	<i>New Streetwise Int</i>	<i>New Streetwise Int</i>	<i>Livewires 2</i>	<i>Livewires 2</i>
Grade 8	<i>New Streetwise Up.Int</i>	<i>New Streetwise Up.Int</i>	<i>Livewires 3</i>	<i>Livewires 3</i>
Lycee Prep	<i>New Hotline Starter</i>	<i>New Hotline Starter</i>	<i>New Hotline Starter</i>	<i>New Hotline Starter</i>
	<i>New Hotline Em</i>	<i>New Hotline Elm</i>	<i>New Hotline Elm</i>	<i>New Hotline Elm</i>
	<i>New Hotline Pre-Int</i>	<i>New Hotline Pre-Int</i>	<i>New Hotline Pre-Int</i>	<i>New Hotline Pre-Int</i>
	<i>New Hotline Int</i>	<i>New Hotline Int</i>	<i>New Hotline Int</i>	<i>New Hotline Int</i>
Grade 9	<i>FCKnockout</i>	<i>Shining Star Up. Int</i>	<i>Shining Star Up. Int</i>	<i>New Hotline Up.Int</i>
Grade 10	<i>Fast Track to CAE</i>	<i>North Star High Int</i>	<i>North Star High Int</i>	<i>Fast Track to CAE</i>
	<i>Focus on Reading</i>	<i>Focus on Reading</i>	<i>Focus on Reading</i>	<i>Focus on Reading</i>
	<i>Focus on Writing</i>	<i>Focus on Writing</i>	<i>Focus on Writing</i>	<i>Focus on Writing</i>
	<i>Focus on Listening</i>	<i>Focus on Listening</i>	<i>Focus on Listening</i>	<i>Focus on Listening</i>
	<i>Focus on Speaking</i>	<i>Focus on Speaking</i>	<i>Focus on Speaking</i>	<i>Focus on Speaking</i>
Grade 11	<i>Lon.Prep.TOEFL B</i>	<i>Lon.Prep.TOEFL B</i>	<i>Lon.Prep.TOEFL B</i>	<i>Lon.Prep.TOEFL B</i>

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire given to the student teachers before the practicum.

Personal Information

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Sex:

Educational Background

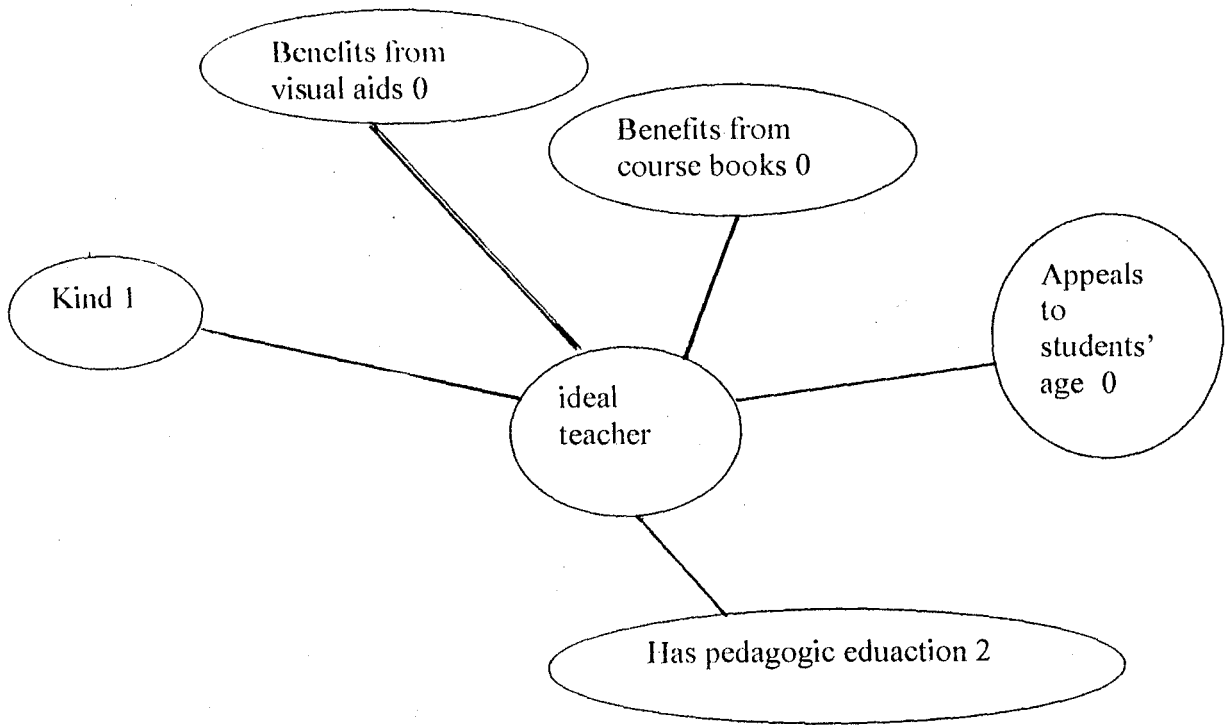
High School:

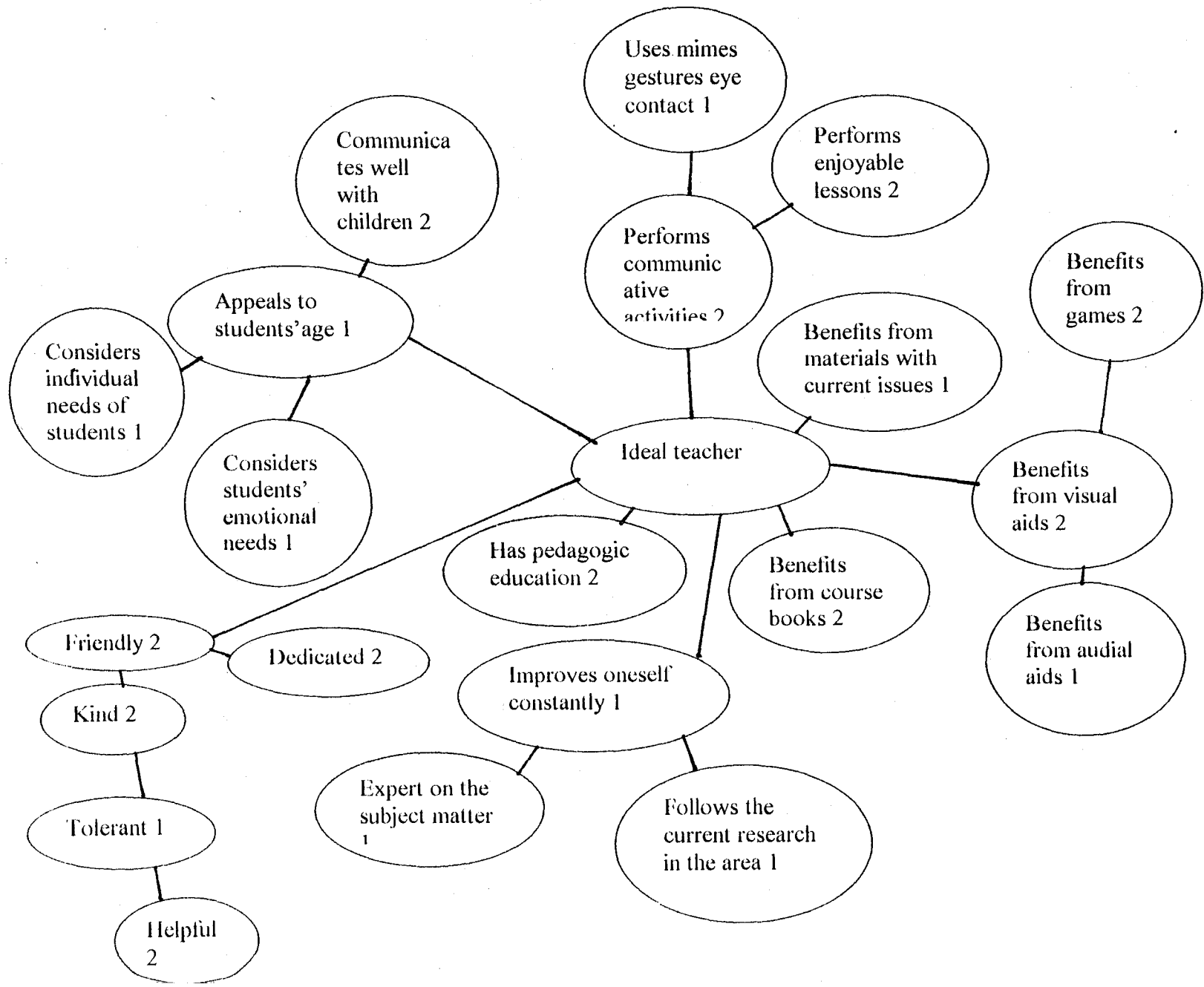
Questions

1. How would you define 'teaching'?
2. In your opinion, What is the most important aspect of language teaching?
3. In your opinion, What may be the traits of an 'ideal teacher'?

APPENDIX C

Sample pre-concept map





APPENDIX D

Questions for semi-structured interview conducted at the end of the practicum

1. Did you change your map from the one you drew last time? Can you comment on these changes in detail?
2. Can you identify where this (these) changes came from?

APPENDIX E

Main Categories	Elements in pre-concept maps	Elements in post-concept maps
Personality	Friendly, Kind, Respectful Exemplary, Flexible	Understanding, Patient, Concerned Creative, Dedicated, Smiling, Self-confident, Objective, Hard-working, Amiable, Helpful, Active, Determined, Open-minded Motivated, Humanistic, Logical Skilled, Honest, Friendly, Kind Caring, Respectful, Exemplary Flexible
Instructional Materials & Resources	Benefits from course books, Benefits from visual aids	Benefits from audial aids, materials with current issues, authentic mats. games, songs, jokes, visual aids, course books
Lesson and Unit Plans	well-planned, well organised	Makes daily plans, weekly plans, monthly plans, well-prepared, well-organised, integrates the plans according to needs, well-planned
Classroom Management	Establishing authority, Discipline	Has a good class management, Lets Ss express themselves freely Identifies problems at the beginning Establishes authority, discipline
Instructional Process	Performs enjoyable lessons Uses communicative activities	Uses mimes and postures, Uses gestures and eye-contact, Gives detailed information, Has good communication skills, Uses appropriate instructional mthd Uses modern techniques, Focuses on Communicative Method Focuses on transmitting meaning Integrates methods acc.to needs Focuses on four skills Organises pair and group works Prepares projects, Encourages Ss use the target lang Has student-centred lessons
Time and Timing	Being on time	Uses the time efficiently, Organises the timing well, Cares about timing

Main Categories	Elements in pre-concept maps	Elements in post-concept maps
Social Context, Student Character, and Background	Communicates well with children, Values students	Appeals to students' age, considers individual needs of Ss, considers Ss emotional needs, values Ss, motivates Ss, approachable by Ss, respects individual differences, considers Ss interests, considers Ss expectations, knows Ss persnl. considers Ss as individuals, has good relations with Ss
Professional Knowledge&Developm.	Good subject matter knowl., Has pedagogic education, Has good pronunciation	Follows the current research, improves oneself constantly, has connections with professional organisations, fluent in English, has good pronunciation, adopts the new developments, reads a lot, discovers new techniques, learns efficient teaching techniques, believes in ongoing education, knows how to transmit information, attends conferences, opens new horizons for Ss, knowledgeable, has linguistic accuracy, has good grammar knowledge, competencies
Evaluation and Feedback	Fair in grading, grades are not the criteria in everything, awards Ss in their correct responses	Encourages Ss in their responses,
Curriculum Goals	Considers the curriculum	
Professional Relationships	Cooperates with administra. Cooperates with parents	Cooperates with administration
Attitudes Towards Profession	Loves the profession Loves the students	

APPENDIX F

Table 1

Differences between pre-concept maps and post-concept maps regarding the total number of main categories and elements for each category

Variable	pre		post		t	df	p
	mean	sd	mean	sd			
Main Categories	3.6	.59	5.9	.85	-7.9	19	<.001
Elements	5.8	1.1	32.65	6.15	-20.81	19	<.001

Table 2

Differences between pre-concept maps and post-concept maps regarding the number of elements for each category

Category	pre		post		t	df	p
	mean	sd	mean	sd			
Personality	2.4	1.19	8.3	1.87	-18.23	19	<.001
Instructional Materials and Resources	.2	.61	2.25	2.63	-3.7	19	.002
Social Context Student Charac.&Background.	.6	.68	5.35	9.88	-19.85	19	<.001
Professional Knowledge and Development.	1.55	.82	7.5	1.7	-19.08	19	<.001
Class Management	.2	.41	2.35	2.27	-4.35	19	<.001
Instructional Process	.35	.58	2.65	2.2	-5.27	19	<.001
Evaluation and Feedback	.05	.22	.55	1.35	-1.6	19	.126
Time and Timing	.05	.22	1.3	1.83	-3.15	19	.005
Curriculum Goals	.1	.30	.0	.0	1.45	19	.163
Lesson and Unit Plans	.25	.44	2	2.12	-4.14	19	<.001
Professional Relationships	.05	.22	.35	.74	-1.67	19	.110
Attitudes to Profession	.0	.0	.1	.44	-1	19	.330

APPENDIX G

Percentages of the student teachers' self-ratings in the pre- and post-concept maps*

Categories	Elements	Pre-concept maps			Post-concept maps		
		0	1	2	0	1	2
Personality	Kind	0	75	25	5	25	70
	Respectful	2	78	20	6	12	82
	Exemplary	0	65	35	0	28	72
	Flexible	10	75	15	0	35	65
	Friendly	0	80	20	0	25	75
	Patient				12	37	51
	Concerned				5	10	85
	Hard-working				56	12	32
	Creative				34	16	50
	Dedicated				5	15	80
	Smiling				0	15	85
	Self-confident				22	43	35
	Objective				5	15	80
	Amiable				0	18	82
	Helpful				2	24	74
	Active				5	12	83
	Determined				0	26	74
	Open-minded				0	10	90
	Motivated				5	11	84
	Humanistic				0	14	86
	Logical				21	25	54
	Skilled				5	20	75
	Honest				21	45	34
	Caring				0	21	79
	Understanding				12	46	42
Instructional Mat and Resources	Benefits from course books	72	8	20	12	6	82
	Benefits from visual aids	76	12	12	15	8	77
	Benefits from audial aids				0	22	88
	Materials with current iss.				10	15	75
	Authentic materials				0	16	84
	Benefits from games				10	17	73
	Benefits from songs				8	18	74
	Benefits from jokes				24	43	33
Lesson and Unit Plans	Well-planned	12	14	74	15	75	10
	Well-organised	8	12	80	10	72	18
	Makes daily plans				23	70	7
	Makes weekly plans				20	71	9
	Makes monthly plans				32	34	34
	Well-prepared				8	75	17
	Integrates the plans						
	according to needs				10	78	12

Categories	Elements	Pre-concept maps			Post-concept maps		
		0	1	2	0	1	2
Classroom	Establishing authority	76	16	8	12	74	14
Management	Dicipline	82	11	7	16	73	11
	Has a good class management				24	72	4
	Lets Ss express theselves freely				20	75	5
	Identifies problems at the beginning				35	32	33
Instructional Process	Performs enjoyable lessons	76	12	12	12	8	80
	Uses communicative activities	78	10	12	11	14	75
	Uses mimes and postures				8	17	75
	Uses gestures and eye-contact				16	8	76
	Gives detailed information				20	8	72
	Has good communicat. skills				28	46	26
	Uses appropriate instruct. mthd				17	12	71
	Uses modern techniques				10	6	84
	Focuses on Communica. Mthd				14	8	78
	Focuses on transmitting meaning				8	20	72
	Integrates mthds. acc. to needs				11	7	82
	Focuses on four skills				44	28	28
	Organises pair and group works				14	10	76
	Prepares projects				8	22	70
	Encourages Ss use target lang				4	18	78
	Has student-centred lessons				0	24	76
Time and Timing	Being on time	77	11	12	16	70	14
	Uses the time efficiently				17	71	12
	Organises the timing well				6	83	11
	Cares about timing				26	33	41
Social Context, Student Chrct. & Background	Communicates well with Ss	71	13	16	12	13	75
	Values students	76	15	9	6	17	77
	Appeals to Ss' age				13	8	79
	Considers individual needs of Ss				10	6	84
	Considers Ss' emotional needs				22	2	76
	Motivates students				28	42	30
	Approachable by students				14	7	79
	Respects individual differences				9	11	80
	Considers Ss' interests				16	11	73
	Considers Ss' expectations				8	16	76
	Knows Ss' personality				37	46	17
	Considers Ss as individuals				25	36	39
	Has good relations with Ss				7	14	79

Elements	Categories	Pre-concept maps			Post-concept maps		
		0	1	2	0	1	2
Prof.Knowledge	Good subj.matter knowledge	10	8	82	6	73	21
&Development	Has pedagogic education	8	12	80	12	80	8
	Has good pronunciation	0	13	87	0	78	12
	Follows the current research				8	72	20
	Improves oneself constantly				16	82	2
	Has connections with prof.orgs.				10	90	0
	Fluent in English				8	88	4
	Adopts the new developments				12	78	10
	Reads a lot				32	41	27
	Discovers new techniques				65	27	8
	Believes in ongoing education				8	46	46
	Learns efficient teaching techn.				12	74	14
	Knows how to transmit inform.				8	65	28
	Attends conferences				12	36	52
	Opens new horizons for Ss				46	42	12
	Knowledgeable				6	78	16
	Has linguistic accuracy				8	56	36
	Has good grammar knowledge				12	75	13
	Competencies				42	36	22

* 0: I do not have that quality
1: I am working on that quality
2: I think I have that quality