



University of Exeter

The Graduate School of Education

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

**The impacts of attending pre-school on early writing development
in Turkey through pre-school and primary school teachers' beliefs
and practices:**

A mixed methods study

September 2014

Abstract

The proposed study is an examination of early writing development through an exploration of pre-school and primary school teachers' beliefs and practices. It will adopt a mixed methods approach, mixing quantitative and qualitative methods to understand teachers' opinions about what early writing development is, how it is supported in the two contexts, how attending pre-school affects early writing skills of young children and how well children might move from pre-school setting to primary school.

In this study, multiple methods of data collection will be used over a 6-month period by following a group of children from their pre-school setting in June to their primary classroom in September. The researcher intends to gather data through questionnaires, non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis and focus group.

This study will initially sample 200 teachers (100= primary, 100= pre-school) in Turkish government schools who are actively teaching for the quantitative phase of study. The sample seeks to address variability in backgrounds of participants (i.e. age, gender) and the length of service. Then, for the qualitative part of study, five primary and five pre-school teachers will participate in interviews and observations, and four (different) pre-school and four primary school teachers will participate in focus group. Thus, the study will offer a rich understanding of the given research problem and allow quantitative and qualitative methods to complement each other for a more complete analysis of data.

By exploring teacher beliefs in the two settings the study aims to understand how pre-school provision is valued and built on and how this informs practice in relation to writing support. This could inform policy in relation to promoting pre-school provision and improving cohesion in the support of writing development as children move from one setting to the other.

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Dr Susan Jones, my research supervisor, for her patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement and useful critiques of this work.

I would also like to thank my family for their support and encouragement throughout my study.



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 Statement of problem.....	2
1.2 Purpose of the study.....	5
1.3 Research Questions	6
1.4 Significance of the study	6
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Early Writing Development.....	11
2.3 Early Writing Pedagogy.....	15
2.3.1 Pre-school	15
2.3.2 Primary school	16
2.4 The role of pre-school and primary school in early childhood.....	18
2.5 Issues with transition	20
2.6 Early writing development and its' impacts on early years practice in pre-school and primary school context.....	22
3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE.....	24
3.1 Informing Paradigm and Methodology.....	24
3.2 First phase - Questionnaires	31
3.2.1 Target Population.....	31
3.2.2 Data Collection.....	31
3.2.3 Data Analysis.....	34
3.2.4 Reliability and Validity.....	36
3.3 Qualitative phase	38
3.3.1 Second and third phase - Observations and Interviews	38
3.3.2 Fourth Phase: Focus Group.....	46
3.3.3 Data Analysis.....	50
3.3.4 Credibility	52
3.4 Ethical Considerations.....	54
3.5. The role of the researcher	56
CONCLUSION.....	56
Limitations	56
Appendices.....	59



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of problem

The aim of this study is to understand how early writing development is supported in the pre-school setting and how well this prepares young writers for the transfer to primary school. Early childhood development and early childhood education and care (ECEC) are significant for children in their early years especially in terms of physical and intellectual growth (Parker-Rees & Willan, 2006). The developments of personality, intelligence and social behaviour, which can be seen as mental growth, are developing most rapidly during the earliest years for human beings (Saracho & Spodek, 2013). It is also estimated that “half of all intelligent development potential is established by age four” (Kaytaz, 2004, p. 4). According to Mindes (2006), quality interventions in early childhood (0-6 year-olds) can help to yield high returns to family, child, economy and society such as being more successful in later school, being more competent emotionally and socially, showing higher intellectual and verbal development compared to other children who did not have this intervention; especially if children at risk are targeted. In other words, early childhood development can be seen as closely linked to human development; therefore, early childhood education and care (ECEC) is will strongly determine all their future development (Parker-Rees & Willan, 2006).

Pre-school education occupies an important place in a child’s life as they require opportunities such as satisfying their curiosity, investigating the world, exploring the environment and experiencing success (Fabian, 2007). A well-balanced curriculum can provide children with equality of opportunity; promote their social, physical, emotional and

intellectual development by ensuring that they feel secure, valued and included (Saracho & Spodek, 2013). Above all, it can promote active learning and help them begin to improve their skills and dispositions which they can need to be life-long learners (Mindes, 2006). Therefore, in children's education, the absence of preschool can be seen as a disadvantage for academic attainment (Fabian, 2007). Also, according to Borraz and Cid (2013), children who had pre-school education may do better in primary school settings than children who did not have a pre-school background, arguing strongly for the benefits of pre-school.

One of the most important aspects of pre-school education is that children begin to see and interact with print. During their education, they learn skills which are significant for the development of literacy (reading and writing). Gradually, young children combine their knowledge of speaking and listening with the knowledge of print; therefore they become ready for reading and writing (Rowe, 2003). Hence, teachers need to understand what may help children to write, what forms that children' early writing may take and how writing develops to be effective in supporting children' literacy development (Vukelich & Christie, 2004). In other words, teachers take an important part in supporting young writers in terms of early literacy skills.

This study will be undertaken in Turkey with pre-school and primary school teachers to understand how early writing is supported in pre-school and primary school settings by looking at these teachers' beliefs and practices. Compulsory education starts between 66-72 months old and pre-school education covers younger than this in this country. Turkey has one of the lowest levels of schooling rate in pre-school education with 39,72% for five-year-old children in 2012-13 among OECD countries (Kaytaz, 2004, OECD, 2013, MEB, 2013). By looking at the rate in 2004-2005 (UNESCO, 2006), which is 25.2%, it can be said that there

has been a definite improvement and the government has a policy to increase enrolment to early childhood education. ECEC programs in Turkey (centre and community based) serve parents of young children who are 0-6 year-olds in four different ways: (1) creches for 0-36 month-old children, (2) kindergartens for 36-72 months, (3) 'practical' nursery classes for 36-72 month-old children, (4) preschool classes in primary schools for 60-72 month-olds (UNESCO, 2006).

Pre-school education is optional in this country and the purposes of pre-schools have been specified in accordance with the law no. 1739, which are to improve the social awareness of children and to prepare them for the primary schools. Improving the writing skills of children is seen one of the major parts of pre-school education so that children can move to primary school with readiness in Turkey (Uyanik, 2010). The value of this study lies on the one hand, in the fact that there is little research on how pre-school literacy practices influence young writers in terms of getting ready for more academic tasks in primary schools. On the other hand, there is no clear continuity of practice between pre-school and primary school education within the wider education system and teachers in both contexts have little understanding of the typical classroom practices in the other setting (Kaytaz, 2004). This may cause problems for pre-school teachers in preparing children for the primary school stage. This study therefore may also create an opportunity to understand what pre-school and primary school teachers each do to support young writers' skills and so contribute to an understanding of transfer and continuity between the two settings.

"The most important aspects of quality in preschool education are stimulating and supportive interactions between teachers and children and effective use of curricula" (Yoshikawa, 2013, p. 1). This dissertation will add to research on early writing skills by

exploring pre-school and primary school teachers' opinions about what early writing development is and how to support it in different contexts and by understanding what children do to improve their writing skills in pre-school and primary school education, using a mixed methods design. By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, the researcher aims to provide a detailed picture of how attending pre-school influences early writing development, how practice in the two settings varies and how well children might transfer from one setting to the other.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this embedded mixed methods study will be to study teachers' opinions by statistical/ quantitative results drawn from questionnaires about what early writing development is and how to support it in different phases and then following-up with ten purposefully selected teachers (five pre-school and five primary school teachers) to explore results in more depth by observations, interviewing, documentary analysis, and focus group interviews. The first phase of the study is quantitative and will address any similarities or differences between the opinions of pre-school teachers and primary school teachers about early writing development and appropriate classroom support. In the second and third phase of the study – observations and interviews–, the findings of the first phase will be explored in-depth and in order to learn what teachers do to support children's writing skills in the classroom, observations will be made and children's works will be analysed. In addition a focus group will enable pre-school and primary school teacher to interact with each other to understand what they think about early writing development in both contexts and to understand what kind of ideas and solutions they might offer to each other to support young writers.

1.3 Research Questions

The main aim of the study is: To follow a cohort of very young writers from pre-school to primary school to explore how attending pre-school influences early writing experiences through a focus on teacher beliefs and practices in the two settings.

From the main focus a number of ***other guiding questions*** include:

1. Do preschool and primary teachers differ in their views of early writing skills?
2. How teaching practices in the two settings are similar or different? Do preschool and primary teachers engage in different classroom practices in relation to early writing skills?
3. How beliefs about early writing development in the two settings are similar or different?
4. How do preschool and primary teachers value preschool experiences in the development of early writing skills?
5. Is there a continuity between the two phases (pre-school and primary school)?
6. Are the primary school teachers aware of what happens in pre-school settings and build on it?
7. How do the children who the researcher will follow from pre-school to primary school respond to the different settings?

1.4 Significance of the study

The importance of this study lies in contributing to an area of research which is under researched. The main significance of the study is the fact that there are no studies that have explored how attending preschool influences writing skills of very young children in Turkey. In addition this study explores the impact of pre-school experience of writing support on transfer into the primary phase.

Understanding teachers' opinions and what children do in classrooms to improve their writing skills may provide additional insight into pre-school education. This may provide additional evidence regarding the value of pre-school experience thus increasing the attention to enrol to pre-school. Furthermore the study explores teacher generated solutions by providing an opportunity for interaction between pre-school and primary school education which might inform the professional need to bridge the gap between both contexts.

This kind of research is not only significant to early writers and their teachers, but also to institutions of pre-school and primary school education aiming to support children to be prepared for engaging in the writing process (Saracho & Spodek, 2013). Knowing how pre-school affects early writing development may assist these institutions to develop early childhood programs and creating young writer support systems, which may facilitate the process of learning how to write. For the primary school teachers, the findings of the study might help to further support the teaching process and better meet the needs of young writers, building on pre-school experience. Also, for the pre-school teachers, it might facilitate the preparation of activities related to the writing process that are better matched to future primary school practices.

Additionally, due to the mixed methods design of this study, it may be possible to yield results that reflect the complexity of the early years classroom. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in one study may carry this research a step forward as the importance of both approaches is clearly explained in the literature (Creswell, 2002). This integration will enable the researcher in terms of giving a deeper insight into how preschools may affect young children on the way of learning to be a 'writer', first, by taking

teachers' opinions about what early writing development may be and how to support children in classroom environment, and then, by exploring the participants' views in more depth and observing children in a natural setting. Methodologically, this study will also add to the use of mixed methods research by elaborating the procedures of the embedded design, through integrating qualitative and quantitative data in one study and combining the results of two different phases of the research.



2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

While it is significant for teachers to seek for a balance between the technical aspects of writing and the content and compositional elements, it is equally significant to understand the relationship between writing as a process and writing as a finished product. For many years, writing has been accepted as a noun or a thing which indicates the end of activity, rather than a verb. However, writing is also a process – a verb – which allows writers to develop, extend and realise their own ideas (Hillocks, 1995). Therefore it may be as beneficial to consider the act of writing as well as what is written. Comprehending writing as a process has been said to bring a greater understanding of the role of writing in the process of learning. This research has identified different components in the process such as capturing newly developed ideas and organising various items of memory (Berninger, 2009). By understanding these different components teachers are better able to match teaching to learning needs.

There are also considerable challenges for children on the way to becoming a ‘writer’ as writing is a highly cognitively demanding process. According to Negro and Chanquoy (2005), writing processes are related to the working memory, which mentally store and process the information obtained. During the process of writing, the central executive in the memory switches cognitive control as it engages in the planning and reviewing of ideas, coordinating all processes and maintaining a representation of the text as well as language generation (Myhill & Jones, 2009). For very young writers, these demands to hold information in the working memory while transcribing ideas into written forms can overload their skills and require more cognitive resources to translate their ideas into language than writers who

have more linguistic experience (Myhill & Jones, 2009). Managing cognitive overload by breaking the writing process down into the components parts is one way in which writing research has informed teaching practice.

In the period of learning how to write, “early writing is one of the best predictors of children’s later reading success” (Cabell, et al., 2013, p. 651). According to Berninger (2009), early writing which can be known as emergent writing includes the following: (a) mechanics (i.e. the manual act of producing physical marks, (b) composition (i.e. children’s interpretation of these markings), and (c) orthographic language (i.e. cognition of how written language works). Early writing can be seen as a part of a set of significant foundational literacy skills which lead to improve conventional reading (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). These skills include developing understandings of both print concept and alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness (Cabell, et al., 2013).

Children begin to apprehend the alphabetic principle which is seen as a critical achievement in early literacy after integrating their knowledge of sound and print (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982). The alphabetic principle may be explained as to understand that oral language is made up of smaller sounds and those sounds are represented as letters in a systematic way (Fox, 2010). Through experimenting in writing, children can get an opportunity to develop their understanding of the relationship between print and sound (Cabell, et al., 2013). According to Bissex (1980), writing is a type of laboratory which allows very young children to actively create and to test hypotheses about how writing works. Children can get experiences about print in their environment and they use these experiences to invent and revise ideas about the governing rules of writing (Vetter, 2011). For instance, a child may believe that big objects should be represented in big written expressions such as an

elephant. As he or she begins to understand the alphabetic principle, this hypotheses change and they represent words with the phonetic rules of the language (Cabell, et al., 2013).

2.2 Early Writing Development

It is necessary to understand typical writing development to help young children for progression in writing, which may allow teachers and/or parents to identify what children already know and what they are ready to learn. Specifically, each child's writing provides us with an insight to what he or she knows about print and sound.

Children typically follow a specific sequence of development when learning to write in an alphabetic language (Clay, 1975, Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982, Vukelich and Christie, 2004, Schickedanz and Casbergue, 2009). Cabell, et al. (2013) describe four levels of early writing development which can be a useful framework to evaluate children's written efforts.

1. Drawing and Scribbling

In early development, children write with their drawings and they can not make any distinction between the two when they are asked to write (Clay, 1975). Later, children begin to make separate marks to represent writing rather than their drawings, which is a key developmental event for children showing that they begin to understand the functionality of writing (Cabell, et al., 2013). These marks can be accepted as early writing works and they are often directionless scribbles. Children then begin to scribble representing features of a written text that they see in their environment, moving from left to right on a page (IBID).

Children's phonological awareness skills may be accepted as the beginning points in the writing development. They usually do not grasp the relationship between the writing and

speech as they usually draw and scribble (Schickedanz & Casbergue, 2009). They might know names of a few letters like the first letter of their name.

2. Letters and Letter-Like Forms

In the next stage, young children begin to use letter-like shapes and a few letter shapes. Even though these early shapes seem like letters, they are not accepted as conventional letters (Cabell, et al., 2013). Children often produce random strings of letters as it may not be possible for them to connect letters with the sounds in spoken language when they start writing conventional letters (Bissex, 1980). It is typical for children to reproduce the letters found in their names at this level. According to Treiman et al. (2001), children usually repeat the first letter of their names in early writing and they may mix symbols and numbers with conventional letters and/or random letter-like forms. Children begin to understand that print carries meaning and they grow in phonological awareness but still need to comprehend that letters represent the sounds in spoken words (Cabell, et al., 2013).

3. Salient and Beginning Sounds

A critical point in writing development starts when children make a connection between the print and the sounds that they hear in spoken language. Through this connection, they produce logical phonetic spellings based on their knowledge, which means that they intend spellings (Clay, 1975). It is possible to see salient or prominent sounds because of the way they feel in children's mouths (Bear, et al., 2008). The most salient ones are often beginning sounds in words; therefore, children will probably have many beginning sounds in words represented. This can result in representing a letter for each salient sound that children hear, for each word or maybe for each syllable (Cabell, et al., 2013).

In this level, children begin to grasp the alphabetic principle in concurrence with writing salient and beginning sounds (IBID). For the first time, they might combine their knowledge of print with sounds they hear. However, it might not be possible for very young children to identify where spoken words begin and end in a written text (Morris, et al., 2003).

4. Beginning and Ending Sounds

Children begin to represent beginning and ending sounds in their writings with the progression of phonemic awareness, which grows to the point that children can attend to individual sounds. Children's attempts to consistently write with spaces between words show that they can understand the word boundaries and where they occur (Cabell, et al., 2013). It may also be said that children use a letter-name strategy in the beginning of spelling, by using their knowledge of letter names to create spellings (Clay, 1975). Bear et al. (2008) claim that children who begin to write with beginning and ending sounds do not have a tendency to represent the middle sounds in words, particularly vowel sounds.

According to Morris et al. (2003), children's invented spellings are closely related to their early reading abilities. In this stage, they are able to finger point to the words of a memorized rhyme and they can correct themselves if they get off track (Cabell, et al., 2013). To identify words, they actively use their knowledge of sounds; however, they often guess based on the first letter of the word and sometimes on the last letter, without attending to the vowel sounds (Ehri, 2005). To illustrate, the word 'cat' and 'cut' would mean the same thing for children they would probably read these two words in the same way. Children's spellings become more convenient over time as they learn how to represent all the sounds in words (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982).

Writing needs a degree of conscious awareness of potential alternatives as it involves choosing from a variety of possible actions. According to Pahl (1999), children can interpret things with the information and resources which they access at the time. In other words, children simply use what they already know. In this respect, it is the lack of experience which determines their skills to write conventionally, not the strategies they use when they are dealing with a written task (Bradford & Wyse, 2012). Such strategies are described by Jacobs (2004) as 'temporary scaffolds' which are to be gradually refined as children grasp more about writing.

These young children, who can interpret their own writings and who begin to understand more about writing, need a lot of support. Becoming a writer is an important skill for such very young children as it predicts the academic success, supports and extends learning, provides opportunities to participate in the community life and fulfils the expectations of workforce which is creating clear and concise documents (Vetter, 2011). The focused use of formative assessment which can be assessed by teacher with children and by children with peers make a huge difference on children's writing progress in regard to engagement, attainment and confidence (Fox, 2010). Therefore, it is necessary to consider different pedagogic approaches to support children in early classrooms and to help develop young people's writing skills.

2.3 Early Writing Pedagogy

2.3.1 Pre-school

The term 'pedagogy' has been used quite broadly in different countries especially in continental Europe, the UK and in Turkey childhood contexts (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995). From these definitions, it can be seen that the use of terms curriculum and pedagogy appear indistinguishable. However, the recent approach into early learning is quite different; 'pedagogy' or 'teaching' are seen as analytically distinct and also complementary to 'curriculum' (Siraj-Blatchford, et al., 2002). Pedagogy means the practice (the science, the craft or the art) of teaching; but especially in the early years, any conception of educative practice should include the provision of learning environments to allow children for play and exploration (Siraj-Blatchford, et al., 2002).

According to Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998), early childhood pedagogy should be instructive. Instruction can be accepted as incorporation of all processes occurring in the classroom which aim to maintain or to initiate learning processes and to be efficient means to succeed educational goals (Creemers, 1994). Considering these terms, an effective form of early-years-pedagogy must be instructive in some way.

While the literature refers to different ways that children can learn, and for practitioners a range of care and teaching strategies to support young children; 'play' based pedagogy has an important role especially in supporting the writing skills of children (Woodhead & Moss, 2007). "Practitioners need to plan learning experiences of the highest quality, considering both children's needs and achievements and the range of learning experiences that will help

them make progress. Well-planned play is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge during the foundation stage” (QCA/DfEE, 2000, p. 7).

Pre-school teachers use ‘play’ in the process of teaching writing to very young children. These ‘play’ activities can involve children’s drawings which is an effective and enjoyable way to understand the role of writing (Wood, 1988). For instance, teachers can encourage children to include their names in their drawings and they can support children in this process. According to Weikart (2000), pre-schoolers might begin to write just for ten minutes and over time, they will write for longer. However, the importance is not just on how long the writing period is, but also how often children write (Hillocks, 1995). Therefore, teachers may plan writing activities at least for three times a week.

It is also important that children advance in writing through different stages on the way to conventional writing and spelling, as it is known as scribbling and drawing (Bear, et al., 2008). Teachers follow these stages to support young writers in the learning process of how to write by understanding that it is pre-writing stage for them. This stage does not only comprise of scribbling, drawing or writing letters with a ‘pen’, but also integrating the sounds with print knowledge (Bissex, 1980). Therefore, it is important for teachers to support pre-writing processes with different activities throughout pre-school education.

[2.3.2 Primary school](#)

Pedagogy can be seen as the science of the art of teaching and the role of primary school teachers just as pre-school teachers implies a wide range of approaches which are designed to meet individual needs and a variety of contexts. There are some pedagogical approaches for primary school education aiming to increase the productivity in the classrooms. For ‘modelling’ approach, teachers are seen as experts who demonstrate both the internal

dialogue and the process that a learner might go through (Woodhead & Moss, 2007). 'Direct instruction' implies demonstrating and explaining how things work or how to perform a process through giving instructions to inform or prompt the next steps necessary in children's learning (Siraj-Blatchford, et al., 2002). If teachers develop an understanding from a child's thought processes and ideas through the use of planned opportunities for talk, it can be seen as 'dialogue and discussion' (Woodhead & Moss, 2007). Teachers also use 'problem solving approach' to create opportunities for children to apply their own learning by allowing them to develop and test hypotheses as well as posing further questions (IBID). Another approach can be named as 'apprenticeship', which suggests using planned opportunities to create a learning environment alongside another more expert learner (Saracho & Spodek, 2013). Other pedagogical approaches can be defined as practising and rehearsing, questioning, self-directed learning, use of symbols images and models, inductive learning/enquiry, tutoring and scaffolding.

'Pedagogy' is not possible to be simplified to one category since it is a combination of different factors. There are a number of themes emerge in the literature on the quality of pedagogy and academic effectiveness such as organisation (the structure of lessons and classroom routines), lesson structure, sharing learning objectives and goals, homework, the classroom environment, cooperative learning dialogic teaching and learning, spoken language and the plenary (Creemers, 1994).

Effective teachers must be aware of pedagogic strategies (i.e. assessment for learning or dialogic enquiry) which became as established knowledge (Wood, 1986). Primary school teachers may also be considered as practising artists who can select the most appropriate strategies to implement in any teaching context and given learning (Woodhead & Moss,

2007). Drawing upon their knowledge of the capabilities and interests of the children who are in their care, teachers also depend on a variety of material, intellectual and cultural sources in order to provide children with the most engaging, memorable, effective and rewarding experiences of learning on a day-to-day basis (Siraj-Blatchford, et al., 2002). Besides, the performance of teachers develops continuously as they reflect upon, critically moderate and evaluate their practice aiming to achieve excellence (IBID).

2.4 The role of pre-school and primary school in early childhood

Pre-school and primary school education can be said to have a major role in early childhood development. There is evidence within the literature that learning is an interactive event in which children actively construct their understandings in a physical and social environment (Bissex, 1980). In other words, young children need direct and immediate experiences which can allow them to derive meaning from those experiences based upon previous ones (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995). Therefore, the learning environment in a school can be seen as providing opportunities to children where they can be active and they can take the initiative to learn (Hohmann & Weikart, 1995). Also, adult support is significant to support children to learn in a participatory and active way in the case that the adult provides opportunities and experiences through organizing the physical and intellectual environment and by rigorous assessment and consistent planning so that children are given appropriate opportunities (Wood, 1988).

Pre-school and primary school education provides children with interaction, reflection, reasoning and responsibility for self-learning (Weikart, 2000). Considering that each individual (child) is unique in his or her characteristics and human development often takes place in predictable sequences; learning experience in pre-school and primary school

settings are organized to be developmentally appropriate for each child (Rowe, 2003). This appropriateness can be defined as the degree to which a learning activity: challenges and exercises the capacities of the learners, helps and encourages learners to reach their goals by developing unique patterns of interest and talents, presents experiences where the learners can generalise, master and retain knowledge, concepts, skills and which is related to their previous experiences by linking these experiences to future learning expectations (Weikart, 2000).

Children have the opportunity to be natural and active developers of their own understandings in an effective pre-school (Uyanik, 2010). As children mature, they may be able to integrate abstract structures into their understandings (Mindes, 2006). School environment offers children a range of different activities/ opportunities including action and self-directed problem solving and leading to control of the environment which can be seen at the root of development and learning (Wood, 1988).

According to Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002, p. 32), “children do not learn in a social vacuum”. On the contrary, most of the children’s earliest learning is produced from the interactions with adults and peers (Rowe, 2003). The child can learn a great deal from observations which the social experiences provide them this sort of observational learning (Siraj-Blatchford, et al., 2002). The process of social learning begins through identification, and children’s constructions are founded on behaviours of other people who are considered as significant (Bandura, 1986). Early years educators take an important place in children’s lives as they model children with appropriate behaviour, skills, language and attitudes; such modelling is possible to have consequences in terms of social, cognitive and dispositional outcomes (Siraj-Blatchford, et al., 2002).

2.5 Issues with transition

The absence of preschool in children's education can be seen as a continuing disadvantage for academic attainment (Fabian, 2007). According to Docket and Perry (2007), pre-school has a generally positive impact on developmental outcomes. It has a significant role in combating social exclusion and promoting inclusion by involving disadvantaged children, particularly, for a better start to primary school. Pre-school experience can be seen as a package of quality, effectiveness and duration for children coming from different backgrounds based on socio-economic status (Fabian, 2007). There is research on the benefits of pre-school and they showed that children who had pre-school education do better than children who did not have pre-school experiences (Borraz & Cid, 2013).

On the other hand, Magnuson, Ruhm and Waldfogel (2007) have found that while kindergarten has positive impacts on higher reading and mathematics skills at school entry, there may also be higher levels of behaviour problems. Some studies have considered the long term effects of the preschool starting age using data from Norway (Black, Devereux and Salvanes, 2008). They have found a small positive effect of starting age on IQ scores measured at age 18 which indicates that children who begin to the school earlier have higher IQ score.

All the studies mentioned above shows that pre-school and primary school are related and attending to the pre-school affects the academic attainment of children in primary school. However, very young children may have some transition problems when they move from preschools to the schools. A variety of research on starting school suggest that moving from preschool to primary school can be challenging, and maybe traumatic for children especially

for children with less than optimal circumstances such as children with special educational needs or children from dysfunctional families (Broström, 2002).

Children experience a change of identity, when they move from preschool to school, from being a child in preschool to being a student in the school, where they are expected to behave in a certain way and to understand the rules, to follow these classroom rules and to read the teacher's expectations (Docket & Perry, 2007). Children often meet a larger physical environment in the school compared to preschool, when they enter school, which can lead to them feeling lost, literally and emotionally (Fabian, 2007). In preschool, the child belongs to the eldest group of children and suddenly they are the youngest and they now have to communicate with older children (Broström, 2002). In school, the social environment is also more complicated as there are a greater number of children than the number of children in preschool, which causes much more competition (Broström, 2003a). In school, there is less individual attention because of fewer adults and less interaction with adults than previously (Borraz & Cid, 2013). Moreover, in school, children have less autonomy and they often have to discipline their own body movement (Fabian, 2007). Besides, there is a shift in the academic demands of children, which leads to new, unexpected and unfamiliar challenges.

The changes mentioned above do not only challenge children with less than optimal circumstances, but also a range of children coming from different backgrounds such as socio-economic levels. Even though pre-school and primary schools teachers have been recently developing so-called transition activities such as mutual visits to school before the term starts and conferences on children's life and development, there are still too many children who are experiencing problems when they move from pre-school to primary school

(Fox, 2010). There is a case study mentioned in Broström's paper (2003a) suggesting that although there are children in pre-school who are independent, active, inquisitive and exploring persons and who are interacting well with their peers during the activities, these children can be observed to change in the first weeks of the school. They can have less positive attitudes towards the school, be less active and feel insecure. These children can be thought to have the necessary level of the school readiness; however, they may not feel well settled into school life.

On the other hand, there are also other factors affecting schools' readiness for young children such as low enrolment rates, poor attendance, grade repetitions, high drop-out rates, and widespread underachievement during the early grades (Woodhead & Moss, 2007). In other words, a school system is not always sufficient for children to adapt the new environment in their new school.

2.6 Early writing development and its' impacts on early years practice in pre-school and primary school context

Different educational philosophies and values as well as different assumptions inform different early years practices, which may shape the development of writing in pre-school and primary school education (Siraj-Blatchford, et al., 2002). On the way of becoming a writer, young children firstly understand what writing is, and then they begin to use the alphabetic system to build words leading to the formation of simple sentences. The next step is to evaluate what is written and make judgements about how to make it better. This might be seen as the shift from being a producer of text to being a communicator of ideas. Obviously, this doesn't happen in the move from pre-school to primary school stage. The move from a more play based setting to more formal instruction needs to be gradual and

matched to the child's progress and so managing this transition is an important aspect of the child's development and teachers in each setting might have much to gain from understanding each other's' practices (Wood, 1988).

This study will help to understand how early writing develops from the views of pre-school and primary school teachers and explore how these beliefs translate into their practice in early years education. This study will also make a contribution in understanding transition issues by following children from pre-school to primary school education.



3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

3.1 Informing Paradigm and Methodology

The aim of this study is to follow a cohort of very young writers from pre-school to primary school to explore how attending pre-school influences early writing experiences through a focus on teacher beliefs and practices in the two settings. For this purpose, a mixed methods design will be used, in other words, the analysis and integrating of quantitative and qualitative data within a single study in order to offer a richer understanding of a given research problem (Creswell, 2002). The rationale for mixing methods is that, to capture the trends and details of the situation, such as the complex issue of the impacts of attending preschool on early writers, neither qualitative nor quantitative methods are sufficient by themselves. Using qualitative and quantitative methods in combination can allow these methods to complement each other and a more complete analysis can be provided (Isaac & Michael, 1981, Green & Caracelli, 1997, Creswell, 2003).

Social science research has been influenced by two contrasting perspectives; positivism (or post positivism) and interpretivism. Positivism seeks to be objective while interpretivism acknowledges that all human experiences are a subjective understanding and that in seeking to remove it an essential part of human interaction and understanding is being omitted (Punch, 1998). Therefore, rather than seeking to eliminate subjectivity, interpretivism seeks for ways to work with it. (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

According to Muijs (2004), a researcher may rely upon statistical, mathematical or numerical data to investigate a social phenomenon in quantitative research. He or she might use postpositivist claims to develop knowledge such as reduction to specific variables, cause and effect thinking, use of measurement and observation, hypothesis and questions, and the

test of theories (Charles & Mertler, 2002). Isolating variables and relating them to specify the magnitude and frequency of relationships can help a quantitative researcher to yield highly reliable and valid score (Cohen, et al., 2008). In the context of my own research adopting such an approach on its' own would not be sufficient to engage with the focus because rather than studying the causes of behaviours and seeking for statistical data, the effects of those behaviours are seen more important.

On the other hand, qualitative research can be seen as an inquiry process of understanding where the researcher analyses complex and holistic pictures, words, expressions, and also reports in detail the views, beliefs and perspectives of participants by conducting the study/ research in a natural setting (Creswell, 1998). The researcher who adopts this approach generally makes knowledge claims from a constructivist or advocacy/participatory perspectives (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, Mertens, 2003). This approach is typical of the interpretivist approach where the aim is to understand the everyday life of the setting related to the study to construct an understanding of the research problem (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The approach I have taken is perhaps more typical of the interpretive approach because it enables to understand the phenomenon – early writing development – in depth and in this study, I will focus on participants' beliefs and practices. However I will also be including qualitative data in order to find out teachers' beliefs and practices, which will be a basis to build the main part of data collection.

Three issues may be taken into consideration in the process of designing a mixed methods study: priority, implementation and integration (Creswell, et al., 2003). Priority is related to the decision of where to place the emphasis in the choice of methods – qualitative or quantitative –. Implementation is related to the data collection and analysis process; and

whether it will be conducted in sequence or in chronological stages, or in parallel, i.e. one method following the other or concurrently. Integration is related to the phase in the research process; where the researcher constructs their analysis drawing on all the qualitative and quantitative data.

There have been a variety of discussions in the literature about the strengths and weaknesses of the mixed methods designs (Creswell, et al., 1996, Green & Caracelli, 1997, Creswell, 2002, Mogdahham et al., 2003). There are several reasons for the use of an embedded design to explore how attending pre-school influences the writing skills of young writers through a focus on teachers' beliefs. By the addition of supplemental data, it is possible to improve the whole design (Creswell, 2002). It is also easy to implement for a single researcher as it is planned to proceed sequentially from one stage to another – from quantitative phase to qualitative one (Mogdahham et al., 2003). As one data type is given less priority than others, it is easy for the researcher to focus on one data collection which is qualitative in this study (Creswell, et al., 1996). Besides, it enables the reporting of two types of results – quantitative and qualitative – separately since, in the case of this study the focus of each approach is on different research questions (Green & Caracelli, 1997).

On the other hand, there may be several challenges associated with this design. It may require a long time to complete the research by using an embedded design as in any mixed methods design (Creswell, 2002). However, careful timing and following the plan can solve this problem. It may also require feasibility of resources to gather and analyse the quantitative and qualitative data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Quantitative results which will be obtained in the first phase might show no differences or it could be difficult for the researcher to integrate the results as two methods can come to different conclusions

(Creswell, 2002). However, different outcomes can add to an understanding of a complex setting where there are no single conclusions to be drawn. Although it is one probability, it is more likely for researchers who use the embedded design in their studies to keep the two sets of results separately in their reports or even use these results in separate papers (IBID).

With a mixed-methods approach, the researcher will be able to learn more about the research topic. As both quantitative and qualitative methods may have their weaknesses, it is easy to eliminate them with a mixed-methods design in this study. On the other hand, combining these methods can make the design stronger since a quantitative study brings the strengths of conceptualizing variables and formalizing comparisons as well as including large and representative samples in the study and a qualitative research brings the strengths of in depth study of smaller samples by emphasizing the meaning and context as well as the methodological flexibility which can facilitate the ability to explore process and change (Punch, 1998). With a multi-method study, the researcher can use the methods determined by the questions asked and she can hold an approach underlying the logic of both qualitative and quantitative approaches which are used to investigate different areas of the study but as complementary forms of an empirical inquiry (Punch, 1998).

After choosing a mixed methods approach for a study, the researcher should decide on the specific design to address the research problem best (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010). This study will use the 'embedded design' in which "one data set provides a supportive, secondary role in a study based primarily on the other type" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010, p. 67). With this perspective, in an initial quantitative phase, numeric data will be gathered by using a questionnaire which will be implemented for a large sample of both pre-school and primary school teachers. The purpose in gathering this quantitative method will be to get a

general idea about teachers' opinions about the impacts of pre-school and primary school education on early writing practices as well as contrasting the views of the two groups of teachers to allow the researcher to see the main areas of difference and similarity. To get a deeper understanding of the phenomena and to explore what a smaller subset drawn from these two groups of teachers believe about how attending preschool influences early writing practices, follow-on phases will adopt a qualitative approach to collect further data. The data coming from individual semi-structured interviews and focus group will enable the researcher to focus on teachers' beliefs whilst observations and documents will be used for focusing on practice. The rationale for this approach is that quantitative data and results help to provide a general picture of the research problem, while the qualitative data, which is the predominant one, and its analysis will allow to explain the statistical results by exploring the participants' views and by supporting this data with other methods such as observations to provide more rich and complex results.

There are two important elements in this study: (1) there is a longitudinal element as the researcher will follow a group of children transferring from pre-school to primary school, (2) there is a comparative element as the researcher compares the way teachers in the different settings think about and support early writing development. The visual model of the procedures for the embedded design of this study can be seen in the Figure 1 (also see Appendix 1). In this design, the priority is given to the qualitative method as the major aspect of data collection and analysis in the study is represented by the qualitative research, by focusing on in-depth explanations and explorations of the phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Initially, a quantitative component will be used to show the general attitudes and opinions of teachers on young writers' skills and practices in the beginning of the writing

experiences which will also allow for a comparison between the two groups of professionals. The quantitative data coming from questionnaires (n=200) will be drawn from a much larger sample than the qualitative data. The quantitative and qualitative methods will be integrated when the qualitative phase begins, while choosing the participants for semi-structured interviews and improving the interview questions based upon the results coming from the statistical tests. In the next stage, five pre-school classrooms in primary school will be observed in June to learn what pre-school teachers do to support these skills and to learn what children do to improve their writing skills in pre-school. The same group of children will be followed from pre-school to primary school. Observations will be made with the same classrooms in the beginning of the primary school in September to understand how children are taught writing following transition. Obviously, the primary school sample will include children who were observed by the researcher in the preschool, but also both children who attended a different preschool and children who did not attend pre-school at all. Thus the researcher will be able to observe all groups of children in one classroom and learn what primary school teachers do to support children who attended and who did not to the preschool. This data will be supported by children's written works, collected from both pre-school and primary school, which will enable the researcher to understand better how children respond to different early writing practices. In the final stage, a focus group will be formed by the researcher involving both preschool and primary school teachers with two aims: a) To enable both groups of teachers to interact with each other and to explore how they view each other's' role and purpose in early writing development, b) To share their different practices in improving the writing skills of children.

Figure 1: The embedded design of the study

Phase	Method	Sample size	Purpose
1	Questionnaire	200	To explore differences and similarities in beliefs about early writing development between pre-school and post school provision within the wider profession
2 (pre-school) then 3 (primary)	Observations	5: pre-school (June) 5 primary school (Sept)	To observe in close detail the writing pedagogy and practices in each setting. The same children will be observed first in pre-school setting then later, following transition in a primary setting
2 and 3	Interviews	5: pre-school (June) 5 primary school (Sept)	To explore the beliefs and opinions of teachers from each setting
2 and 3	Writing samples	From both pre-schools and primary schools	To understand what children do to improve their writings in both pre-school and primary setting
2 and 3	Lesson plans	5: pre-school teachers' 5: primary school teachers'	To understand of teachers' practice and teaching aims

4	Focus groups	4: pre-school 4: primary school (October)	To interact both group of teachers in order to learn what they think about each other and what kind of solutions they can offer
---	--------------	---	---

3.2 First phase - Questionnaires

3.2.1 Target Population

The target sample in this study will be the pre-school and primary school teachers who are active and will be teaching the classrooms during the study. Recruiting of participants will occur with the participation of the Ministry of National Education in Turkey through the database of the available teachers. The teachers' status will vary in terms of gender, age, their major and the length of being teacher.

Criteria for choosing the participants will involve: 1) being in a school which is connected with the Ministry of National Education, 2) must have finished their internships, 3) must be active teachers. A total of 200 teachers (100= pre-school teachers and 100= primary school teachers) who meet these criteria will be chosen and the questionnaires will be conducted in May.

3.2.2 Data Collection

In the first – quantitative – phase, the research question “What do teachers believe about early writing development and how is it supported in the different phases (pre-school or primary school)” will be addressed. Teachers will either be in the pre-school setting or in the

primary school setting and this will be considered as the independent variable, and it is labelled as 'teachers' schools'.

The aim of the quantitative phase of the study is getting pre-school and primary school teachers' opinions about writing development of young children and how it should be supported in different phases (pre-school or primary school). The primary technique for collecting the quantitative data will be a self-developed questionnaire (Appendix 2) which is constructed using two different formats: asking either for one option or all that apply and open-ended questions. The questionnaire consists of twenty questions, which are organized into two sections or scales. Using the same questionnaire for both groups will enable the researcher to compare their different responses.

Questionnaires will allow the researcher to draw a picture of what teachers either in pre-school or primary school settings believe about what early writing development is and how to support it in these two settings. The researcher chose some activities which can be placed in pre-school or primary school for teachers to choose. These activities were identified through the literature review and theories about young children's writing skills (Cronbach, 1989).

Demographic characteristics involving age, gender, degrees earned and the length of being a teacher function as moderator variables.

The first section of the questionnaire will address demographic questions. They will provide information for participants' age, gender, degrees earned and incumbency (the length of their service). The second section asks for teachers' opinions about activities related to writing skills of young children. Participants should indicate where these activities are best

placed– in pre-school education, primary school education or both pre-school and primary school education. This will provide data regarding whether pre-school and primary school teachers differ in their views of early writing skills, if they are engaged in different classroom practices in relation to early writing skills and how both groups of teachers value pre-school experiences in the development of writing skills. The third and the final section, which consists of open-ended questions, will give more in-depth information of teachers' insights into early writing development by asking participants to complete sentences with their own words. It will enable the researcher to gauge more subtle differences in the opinions of participants in order to get an overview of the subject.

The survey questionnaire will be based on the web and participants will be able to access it through URL, which will be sent to all pre-school and primary school teachers identified by the researcher with the permission of Ministry of National Education. One of the advantages of choosing web-based surveys is that it allows the storage of participants' responses automatically in a database, which can easily be transformed into numeric data in SPSS or Excel formats (Asan & Ayhan, 2013). For all potential participants in the study, last known working e-mail addresses will be available. As an opening page of the questionnaire, there will be an informed consent form (Appendix 5a). To express their compliance to participate in the research, they will click on the button below to the page saying: "I agree to take part in the study" and they will be able to complete the survey.

A pilot version of the survey will be sent to 5.0% randomly selected respondents representing pre-school and primary school teachers to ensure that it is comprehensible and it can be improved in the light of feedback from this pilot. With this pilot study, the researcher aims to validate the instrument and to check its reliability. These respondents

will be chosen from eligible participants and the data will be entered into the SPSS computer analysis system. Pre-reading the questions can affect participants' opinions; and so the pilot group will be excluded from the major study (Muijs, 2004). Numerical codes will be used to identify the participants and ensure their anonymity. Based upon the results of the pilot test, the survey items may be revised if it is seen as necessary.

Participants will receive a notification from the researcher one week before the questionnaire is available on the web page about the significance of their contribution to the study. This may prevent a low response rate, seen as typical for web-based questionnaires (Rao & Pennington, 2013). To obtain a relatively high response rate and to reduce the response rate error of the survey, there will be a three phase follow-up sequence (Dillman, 2000). To those respondents who will not respond by the set date, (1) An e-mail reminder will be sent after five days after sending the survey URL, (2) The second e-mail reminder will be sent after ten days and (3) The third e-mail reminder will be sent out two weeks later to state the significance of the participation for the study.

3.2.3 Data Analysis

Before starting the statistical analysis of the questionnaires, there should be a series of checking operations on the complete data set (Oppenheim, 2003). It is important to eliminate some of the obvious errors which may have crept in during the preceding stages (IBID). In order to eliminate these errors, data screening will be conducted before the statistical analysis of the questionnaire results on the univariate and bivariate levels (Alreck & Settle, 2003). There are three steps that data screening includes: (1) checking for errors, i.e. checking each of variables for scores, (2) finding the error in the data file and (3) correcting the error in the data file. (Pallant, 2005).

After ensuring that there are no errors in the data file, descriptive statistics will be used for all the variables to get information about missing data, to assess the normality, the homogeneity, the distribution of the data, linearity and homoscedasticity, singularity and multicollinearity and to check for outliers (Oppenheim, 2003). The statistical output of questionnaire items will be explained in the text by using reports in tabular forms. To identify valid percent of items for all the questions, frequencies analysis will be conducted (Pallant, 2005).

As the aim of this phase of analysis is to investigate different views of pre-school and primary school teachers about early writing skills of children, it will predetermine the choice of statistical test and the use of analysis in the study. To determine differences and similarities in views of pre-school and primary school teachers according to the moderating effects of age, gender, degrees earned and the duration of being teacher, chi square, t tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be utilized to investigate any significant differences between groups (Pallant, 2005). SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences software), version 21.0, will be used to statistically analyse the data from the questionnaires.

To analyse the data from the second part of the questionnaire, which will be comprised of open-ended questions, there will be a couple of steps. In order to get an understanding of the data, all the responses will be read in detail in the first step. Next, categories which include themes about the sentences will be developed. After categorizing, coding will be utilized to assign each comment to one of several categories. It will enable the researcher to check that categories are appropriate for the responses of all participants. As reporting the analysis in a qualitative way will help to understand the phenomena better, the most

common responses to the questions will be mentioned in the report. ATLAS.ti will be used as the qualitative analysis software to analyse this part of the survey.

3.2.4 Reliability and Validity

According to Thorndike (1997), validity is the extent to which a study measures or accurately reflects the specific construct or concept. In this study, two types of validity measurements will be used to obtain valid results from the questionnaires: content and construct validity. The aim of using content validity is to see the extent to which questionnaire items and the scores coming from these questions represent all the possible questions about pre-school and primary school teachers' perceptions about early writing development. The wording for the questionnaire items has been checked by a doctor from the Graduate School of Education in the University of Exeter, who researches the impact of writing in early childhood development. This helped assess if the questions in the survey seem relevant to the subject which it tried to measure, what the questionnaire adds to the design, if it is a reasonable method to gather the needed information and if the survey is well-designed.

Criterion-related or predictive validity, aims to show the accuracy of the measurement/procedure by comparing it with another valid measurement/ procedure (Litwin, 1995). For this purpose, the questionnaire used in this study needs to be compared with the consistency results of existing instruments which measure the same construct – what pre-school and primary school teachers think early development is. However, as the questionnaire has been designed to meet a very particular purpose in the context of this study, it is unlikely that there are similar measures to which it can be compared so criterion validity will not be tested.

Construct validity is the extent to which a study measures an intended hypothetical construct (Litwin, 1995). A simple coding frame of emerging themes of the close-ended questions in the survey will be performed to achieve construct validity, after both the pilot and major study.

In a quantitative study, reliability of the instrument is important to decrease errors which may be caused by the measurement problems in the study. Although the meaning of 'reliability' differs in different context, it assures the probability of replication in quantitative research (Oluwatayo, 2012). In other words, when the same methods are used with the same sample in a certain limit of experimental/random error, it is expected for the results to be same (Cohen, et al., 2008). Through the pilot testing of the questionnaire, stability/replicability or test-retest reliability of the questionnaire instrument will be obtained. Test-retest reliability will demonstrate if the similar results would be obtained after carrying out the test and retest to the similar study participants (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). Pearson statistics will be used to estimate the correlation coefficient by comparing and correlating the results of the actual test with the initial results of the pilot test.

Internal consistency reliability for the homogeneity of questionnaire items measured with close-ended questions also will be used for the results of the pilot study (Litwin, 1995). This will allow the researcher to assess how the various items in the survey reflect the attribute, views of pre-school and primary school teachers, which is being measured. Inter-item correlation will be used based on the correlation matrix of all items on the scale, as well as corrected item-total correlation and alpha if an item is deleted (Muijs, 2004). With this analysis, which items need rewording and/or removal from the scale will be learned.

3.3 Qualitative phase

3.3.1 Second and third phase - Observations and Interviews

3.3.1.1 Target Population

Due to the nature of embedded sequential design, for the second phase of the study the selection of the participants will be based on the results of the quantitative phase. Based on these results, five pre-schools will be drawn from the larger sample (n=100 preschool teachers). The researcher will select these pre-schools that are themselves attached to primary school so she can follow the children from one phase to another. These participants will be included for observations of teaching in the classroom and interviews will be conducted with those teachers whose lessons the researcher will observe during June. In phase 3, the five primary school classrooms will be chosen based on the preschool settings as children in preschool will be followed from pre-school into the primary school. Observations of teaching will be made in these classrooms and interviews with the teachers who taught them will be carried out during September. The diagram below records one phase which is repeated during data collection phases in pre-school and primary school.

Figure 2: Observations and interviews schedule

Method	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	Total
Observation 1 per week	4	4	4	4	4	20
Interview After the observations	1	1	1	1	1	5

3.3.1.2 Data Collection

The second phase and third of the study (qualitative phase) will focus on exploring the subject to gain a deep understanding about the research questions. Data collection will comprise responses in interviews, observations in classrooms and documents (children's works and photography of these works, any documentary details of the teachers planning for writing activities such as lesson plans, curriculum documents, and children's records).

3.3.1.3 Observation Notes

According to Michael (1987), there are five dimensions of participant observation: (1) the role of the researcher, (2) the portrayal of the role to others, (3) the portrayal of study purpose to others, (4) the duration of observations and (5) the focus of the observations. Observations will take part in five different primary schools in two settings – firstly in preschool and then in a first year primary class. In the first phase, five pre-school classrooms situated in five different primary schools will be observed to understand what teachers do to support children in early writing tasks and what children do to improve their writing skills in this setting (Appendix 3c). Each classroom will be observed four times a week which will take place during reading and writing activities – approximately one hour. The researcher will focus on the full participant observation, which means all children in the classroom will be involved in observations based on the informed consent (Appendix 5a & 5b). The subjects will know that observations are being made and who the researcher is. A full explanation of the purpose of the study will also be given to everyone involved such as the head of the school, teachers, parents and children due to the ethical concerns (Appendix 3c). There will be four observations; each will take one hour in a week, which will take five

weeks to complete all. These observations will be made in the last five weeks of the pre-school education before children move to the primary school. Through this duration of observing, the researcher aims to follow the same children in the primary school.

In the second phase of the study, the researcher will observe the primary school classroom which will mostly consist of the students who move from the pre-school classroom that is observed. However, there will be new students who come from another pre-school classroom and who did not attend to pre-school. This will give the researcher the opportunity to observe both groups (who attended and who did not attend to pre-school) and to consider any observable similarities and differences between them. These second round of observations will take place in the first month of the school to observe how children deal with the writing tasks at a point before all children have become overly familiar with the new patterns of the primary school culture. This will give the researcher an opportunity to capture issues relating to transition as it will be more visible in this period. It will take five weeks to complete all; there will be four observations and each will take one hour in a week. Full explanation will be given to everyone same as the first phase and the full participant observation will be made. In the same way with the first phase, the researcher will explain the purpose of the study to everyone involved in the study, which can be named as overt observation (McCurdy & Uldam, February 2014).

As the classroom size, activities planned in two settings – pre-school and primary school –, and the aims of teaching how to write in these contexts are different, it may become difficult to design an observation schedule that might work in both the pre-school and primary school settings. Therefore, a floor plan can help the researcher to organize observation notes (Appendix 9). It is prepared with different colours which represents how

the space is used during different activities. Each activity will be given a set of initials such as P for painting, C for construction or WC for whole class times. When taking notes on the observation schedule (Appendix 3c), the researcher will write this initials and colours to capture the use of space as well as the activities. In the observation schedule, there is also 'duration' column to capture the use of time during activities which will include number-based activities, letter-based activities, activities related to phonological awareness, drawings and so on. This plan can be changed over time, especially after identifying the typical activities in classrooms which will take place in the study.

Observations can be time consuming and resource intensive which can be seen as a disadvantage of using this technique in a study. It may also be susceptible to observer bias which can undermine the reliability and the validity of data collected as the researcher not only records what happened but also what they wanted to see (Cohen, et al., 2008). Observer effect is also seen as another weakness which means that the presence of an observer may affect the behaviour of those being observed (Creswell, 2003).

However, the timeline for observations is carefully planned and it is important for the study to observe teachers in their natural settings to understand the practice. Also, after observations, interviews will be carried out with those teachers who are observed in the second (and later the third) phase of the study to understand their behaviours in the classroom and to reinforce the data derived from observations as well as increasing the reliability and the validity of the source. Therefore, the researcher will ask teachers through interviews to understand better what was observed in their opinions. This method is significant to explore the phenomena first and support it with interviews to fill the gaps occurred during observations. Observations also allow the researcher to record what

happens while interviews will provide a teacher account of why things happen as well as what their teaching intentions were and the extent to which they were successful by reflecting individual teacher perspectives. Teachers perspectives are not always born out in what is seen in the observations but taken together the two data sets inform each other.

3.3.1.4 Interviews

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews will be one of the main parts of the qualitative data collection. An investigation on the perceptions' of teachers about the impact of early writing tasks involvement on young writers requires an understanding of the meaning that these teachers give to certain phenomena such as writing skills of children that they learn in pre-school/primary school or how to support children in the process of writing in schools. It is possible for the researcher to interpret her own meaning with observations; however, the meaning the teachers actually have of their own experiences, concerns and perceptions may not be taken with only one method – observations. Therefore, the researcher will be both observing and interviewing in order to build a picture based both on espoused beliefs and on classroom practice. Semi-structured interview is one of the appropriate ways of collecting data on a phenomenon which is not directly observable (Minichiello, et al., 1990).

Pre-determined open-ended questions will be posed and semi-structured interviewing format will be adopted. This will give participants the opportunity to express their own opinions using their own words (Kvale, 2007). There will also be other questions which are defined as probes during the interviews emerging from the conversation between the researcher and participants (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). With the consent of participants, all the interviews will be recorded by using a tape recorder, which will give the researcher the opportunity of transcribing the recorded interviews verbatim without missing any part

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). If further information is required to clarify the questions or elaboration, further interviews will be conducted.

Two important elements of interview technique will be adopted in order to elicit the depth of response from participants. First, the length of the interviews will be determined by the nature of each conversation; each interview will be sufficiently long to establish a rapport between the two parties as well as covering the themes identified (Hardon & Hodgkin, 2004). Secondly, there will not be a standardised list of questions so that interviews can allow participants the freedom to recall and expound on events from their own views (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Instead, there will be a number of sub-questions derived from the main question which will be the basis of the enquiry and the initiation of the discussion. The interview protocols will be based on three lead off questions and there will possibly be following questions to understand what teachers think about the early writing development better (Appendix 3a & 3b).

There are two versions of the interview which are designed to mirror each other. The one for pre-school teachers covers the questions to capture the activities related to writing development which teachers do in their classrooms, writings skills that they think children learn in pre-school education, how they support children in terms of writing and their beliefs about the role of primary school teachers in enhancing children's writing skills. The other one for primary school teachers is specifically designed to understand teachers' beliefs about pre-school education and how they see the writing development. With this design of interviews, the researcher can understand what both groups of teachers think about each other's practice in supporting early writing development and she can compare different views. It also helps the researcher to supplement the data coming from

observations and she can find explanations about any issues that occurred during observations.

The researchers' attitude is one of the critical aspects of the interviewing process. It is important for the researcher to establish a relationship with the participant as they will work together on the subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Interviewing can also be seen as a complex process which requires the researcher to be aware of the problems which may arise and affect the outcomes of the process (Minichiello, et al., 1990). This technique relies on the participants' willingness to give accurate and complete answers (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It is possible for them to present the truth as they see it to their own advantage because of feelings such as embarrassment, nervousness, the lack of knowledge on the topic or inadequacy. Also, interviews are often accepted as a time consuming process due to the difficultness of analysis of data (Strauss, 1987). It includes transcribing and coding of the data which can be a huge task for the researcher after collecting the data; yet, by following the schedule, the researcher can overcome this problem.

The rationale for using this method in the study is that it gives the researcher the opportunity to address issues of perception and belief that are not visible in an observation. Interviewing also allows participants to have an unrestricted area to express themselves by leading them to explore their own thoughts and opinions. In other words, teachers can express their views and experiences by using their own words which is the main aim of qualitative research. The length of the interview can be seen as strength since it means that there may be more able to supply explanatory information. Also, interviews are seen as a way of improving systematic knowledge which is related to a subjective experience and feelings (Bryman, 1992). Understanding these experiences and feelings is based on the

thrust; therefore, it is significant for the researcher to develop empathy and understand “the meanings from the researched point of view” as each individual in the study have their past experiences and social positions which may enable to interpret a given situation in conflicting manner (Jadhav & Sarpotdar, 2012, p. 1). This knowledge is significant for the research itself to explore teachers’ beliefs and practice about early writing development and have more accurate results in analysing the data.

3.3.1.5 Documents

Children’s works (photographs or artefacts) which include the writing related activities in both pre-school and primary school will be used to inform this study on what children do as they develop their writing skills in both schools. These documents will cover examples of children’s writing relating to the play activities, emergent writing, handwriting, word building and so on, which illustrate early writing understanding and development. Teachers’ planning for writing activities –lesson plans, curriculum documents, children’s records- will also be used which can give an understanding of their practice and teaching aims in relating to the writing aspects of the curriculum. These documentary materials, which are easy to collect as they will exist in any case, will be gathered from the participating schools. They will provide an understanding of the writing in school experienced by young writers in both pre-school and primary school contexts and give an insight to the similarities and differences in the way writing is experienced by young writers. Also, it will be possible to explore how children’ written works are handled in these two contexts by looking into how teachers comment on and assess children’s written work. With this method, the data coming from observations will be enriched as it provides the conceptual density which is necessary for an authentic study (Strauss, 1987). Besides, these samples may help to understand important factors in their writing experiences, challenges they experienced,

how they solved these problems and what impacts these activities have on improving their skills.

3.3.2 Fourth Phase: Focus Group

Focus groups can be seen as small and targeted discussions led by moderators who want to create a comfortable environment to all participants (Krueger & Casey, 2009). Conducting a focus group to draw out patterns of discourse requires some skills of the moderator. First of all, the planning for including a focus group into the project involves several decisions about how to collect the data such as who will participate in the groups, how structured the groups will be, the level of moderator involvement and the further decisions about the size of group (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

In this study, there will be four pre-school teachers and four primary school teacher in one focus group as a smaller group will allow teachers to have the opportunity to open discussion and to provide feedback (Appendix 6). The focus group will take place after completing observations and interviews as the researcher can collect the data with these methods which can give the researcher to overview of the issues that she may explore more with focus group. Teachers will be chosen based on the quantitative phase of the study; interested teachers will be asked to fill out a form informing of their intention of being volunteer, their e-mail address and their major area of study. These teachers will be different from those selected for phase two and three as it can create inaccurate results because of interviewing and observation processes. In other words, teachers who are involved in phase two and three will know what the study is about and they can give answers in focus group based on their experiences in second and third phases which can result in low reliability and validity as well as not capturing the answers that the researcher

wants to understand. An e-mail will be sent to all participants informing them about the focus group and the contact address in case they are interested. Although random sampling is considered as a reliable method to reduce biases (Krueger & Casey, 2009), it is not possible in this phase of the study as representing participants with a full spectrum of opinions and experiences is important to make both pre-school and primary school teachers to share their views with each other. Also, it is unlikely for a randomly sampled group to hold a shared perspective on the topic of the study and it may not even be possible to generate meaningful discussions (Sherman & Webb, 1995). Therefore, segmented samples will be used to control the group composition and to match it with carefully chosen categories of respondents (Cohen, et al., 2008). The sample will be chosen for having a spread of opinions which will allow the researcher for more free-flowing conversations among participants in the group and facilitate the analysis process which examines differences in perspective between groups (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

Teachers who have different backgrounds such as gender and age will interact with each other through the focus group. The researcher will use flash cards on which she writes contentious statements and she will allow participants to discuss the statements they wish. Contentious statements in current version of focus group reflect my own understanding of the nature of the debate at this point; however, there might be changes or additions in response to the analysis of the quantitative data. The aim of this interaction is to understand how pre-school and primary school teachers think about each other in terms of supporting writing skills in classrooms and to understand what kind of solutions they suggest to each other to support the skills of young writers. In order to record the conversations from the discussions in the focus group, the researcher will take notes by

using a flip chart and record the conversation with a tape-recorder as the participants are speaking. During the discussion, the researcher will ask questions for clarification from the participants to avoid misinterpretation (Cohen, et al., 2008). Teachers will also be given an evaluation form to rate their overall experience in discussions (see Appendix 4). This will enable the researcher to understand how well the groups were facilitated and whether the teachers found the process worthwhile (Krueger & Casey, 2009). This evaluation might also help with future focus groups.

The notes taken during the discussions and records will then be transcribed by the researchers to interpret the findings. A report will be developed from these findings which will discuss the opinions and suggestions collected from the focus group.

There can be some limitations of this method such as the possibility for disagreements and irrelevant discussions which can be distant from the focus of the study, the discussion might be difficult to manage and control and there is the possibility that such a discussion might create discomfort as participants might feel under pressure to share the opinions of the dominant view (Cohen, et al., 2008). However, it is not uncommon for teachers to discuss their views on education and the focus group will be set up by explaining that all views are welcomed. Besides, it is one of the most useful ways to obtain detailed information about how pre-school and primary school teachers think about each other by giving them an opportunity to interact. It can also provide a broader range of information and it can highlight issues that the researcher might not be aware of. This method can also offer the opportunity to seek clarification to the questions that both groups of teachers have.

3.3.3 Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis of this data can proceed simultaneously in the interpretive approach which means ongoing findings may impact on the types of data collected and the way how they are collected (Suter, 2012). In the qualitative phase of the study, the text data obtained through the interviews, observations and focus group, documents obtained from children's work and elicitation materials will be coded and analysed through the ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software.

There will be five steps in qualitative analysis: (1) reading the transcripts and writing memos for the preliminary exploration of data, (2) coding the data through labelling and segmenting the text, (3) developing themes clustering similar codes together, (4) identifying connections and interrelations between themes and (5) the construction of a narrative that captures the meaning in the data identified through the coding process (Creswell, 2002). These steps offer a systematic approach to collect, organize and analyse the data from the participants. Written memos can be seen as a useful way of formulating research goals, making links to the literature and reflecting on the meaning being constructed through the analysis process which can help the researcher to reflect on her own goals, motives and implications for design and analysing decisions (Maxwell, 2008). Initial coding which includes categorizing pieces of data is often referred to as 'descriptive coding'. These initial codes will help the researcher to see and understand emerging themes and ideas in the data; and are important in initiating analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984). On the next stage, descriptive codes are seen in the context of the whole coding frame and help to put together propositions which are helpful for further discussion and analysis. The aim of taking this approach is creating a meaningful and coherent picture of data by integrating

what has been done (Strauss, 1987). “The systematic and constant making of comparisons is ... essential to conceptual development at all levels in the analysis of qualitative data” (Punch, 1998, p. 209).

As, I will be undertaking a multi-method approach the whole process of gathering qualitative data will create a great amount of data, the immediate focus will be on reducing the mass of raw data to manageable and meaningful themes. It is important to begin the data analysis immediately since future interviews are depending on the information coming from the first set of qualitative data. There are also more practical purposes; an unmanageable workload can be created by delaying data analysis for the researcher.

It is possible to reinforce the data about how teachers support early writing development by analysing the data emerging from texts and images of participants’ works. With this approach, it is possible to understand deeply teachers’ beliefs and practices in supporting writing development and how this might differ or generate continuity in the two settings (pre-school and primary school).

3.3.4 Credibility

The criteria for assessing qualitative research are different from quantitative research. In qualitative research, the researcher looks for believability which is based on insight, coherence, instrumental utility and trustworthiness with a process of verification instead of using traditional measures for validity and reliability (Eisner, 1991, Lincoln & Guba, 1982). Due to the uniqueness of the qualitative research within a specific context, it is not possible to exactly replicate the study in another context (Cohen, et al., 2008). However, according to Creswell (2003), the researcher’s positions such as the central assumptions, the biases

and values of her and the selection of informants increase the chance of replicating the study in another setting. Although this study is local to a few schools, it might reveal issues relating to transfer issue between pre-school and primary school settings that have wider implications. As the researcher will be observing children from pre-school to primary school, it is possible to capture how transitions affect children and how teachers cope with issues emerging from transitions. By enabling the two groups of teachers to discuss some of these issues, problems might be identified and ways forward discussed which might give the researcher a broader understanding about transitions.

Four primary forms will be used in the qualitative phase of the study to validate the findings; in other words, determination of the credibility of the information (Merriam, 1998): (1) combining different source of information – triangulation (interviews, observations, documents, focus group); (2) obtaining feedback from participants on the specific categories and themes about the accuracy – member checking; (3) using rich and thick descriptions when presenting the findings and (4) external audit, which means asking someone outside to review the research and report back (Creswell, 2003). With triangulation, the researcher will be able to understand the phenomenon with different ways and she will support the findings with the data coming from different sources, which can be significant to get a deep understanding. Besides, member checking will help to get an opportunity to assess and understand what the participants' intentions are through their actions as well as giving participants opportunity to correct any errors occurred during the data collection so that they can judge the credibility and accuracy of the account. Rich and thick descriptions will also allow readers to make decisions about transferability as the researcher describes the findings in detail (Merriam, 1998). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), to examine the

process and the product of the account, an external consultant can assess their accuracy. This procedure will enable the researcher with a sense of 'interrater reliability' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is one of the core considerations to this research. Ethical issues will be taken into consideration carefully at each phase in the study. The permission for carrying out this study will be obtained from the ethics committee of the university and from the Ethics Committee of Turkey. A form taken from the university (Appendix 8) will be filed. In parts of the study which will be completed with teachers, as the subject population will be over 22 (who are graduated from the university and started to work), the topic does not fall into any sensitive categories. An informed consent will be taken from all participants (Appendix 5a). This form will explain that participants have certain rights, their agreement to participate to the study and protection of their rights (Cohen, et al., 2008). A statement of informed consent will be also affixed to the web survey and will show the compliance of participation.

However, there are some key concepts to consider by the researcher who wants to include children in the study, namely; managing the benefits and harms to the child, obtaining informed consent and how to keep safe the information given by participants (BERA, 2011). To respect for children's dignity, the informed consent form will be obtained from their parents/carers (Appendix 5b) as very young children can understand or agree in a limited way to undertake their role and it is central for this study (Cohen, et al., 2008). With this form, the researcher aims to protect children's confidentiality. Children will be informed about the research with an appropriate language, so that they can have an understanding of the study. The researcher will try to be aware of some indicators such as "say no", "show

no”, “non-response”, and “ignoring” to ensure that children are willing or unwilling to participate (Skånfors, 2009).

The researcher focuses on teachers’ beliefs and practice; therefore, it is their consent and anonymity that is paramount as it is their ideas and behaviours the researcher will be analysing. However it is important for the researcher to inform parents and children about the data collection since the researcher will be observing the relationship between teachers and children in the process of early writing development. How children respond to teachers’ methods to support young writers and understanding similarities and differences in their practice is significant for the study. Besides, explaining to the children about why the researcher looks at their writing is an important part in ethical consideration; it can give the opportunity to children to satisfy their curiosity and with this way, the researcher can ensure that children understand the principles of consent before consent is requested.

To assess and manage the risk of harm to children, the researcher will structure the activities/subjects that will be observed during the study (Linkogle & Lee-Treweek, 2000). The balance between the needs of the researcher and protection of children from any harm will be carefully assessed (Lee, 1993). Their personal information and identity will remain confidential except the case that a child is at a risk (Gregory, 2003).

The anonymity of all participants in the questionnaires will be protected by using numerical coding which can keep the responses confidential (Homan, 1991). While carrying out the interviews, fictitious names will be used in their description and reporting the results. All the data used in the study such as questionnaire files, interview tapes and transcripts, observation notes and children’s work will be kept in in locked file cabinets which state in researcher’s office and will be destroyed after a reasonable period of time.

After analysing data, the researcher will prepare and distribute a report which covers essential results. This report will be given to members of the coordinating committee and other interested parties for discussion and reviews. Participants will also be given the summary of data by ensuring that it will not be possible to trace any responses to individuals (Gregory, 2003).

3.5. The role of the researcher

In the case of this study the researcher will be involved with the collection of data from both the quantitative and qualitative phases in different ways. In the quantitative phase, the researcher will conduct the survey and gather the data using the standardized procedures which is comprised of the convenience sampling, reliability and validity measurements of the instrument and naturally existing groups. The analysis of the data will be completed with rigorous statistical analysis methods and software; and the results will be reported based upon the fixed values for the statistical significance.

In the qualitative phase of the study, the researcher will adopt a more participatory role in order to gain extensive experience by working alongside participants and by being involved in the research topic more personally (Freebody, 2003). The reflexivity of the researcher has also a significant role in this study; as it is not possible to overlook the impact of human engagement in research when the researcher and the researched are both involved in and concerned with education (Charles & Mertler, 2002). This approach will help the researcher to understand the research questions better. Also, the previous experiences of the researcher such as working as a teacher in pre-school herself and having completed courses in her master education related to research methods and different methodologies may enable her to develop supportive and cordial relations with participants.



CONCLUSION

Limitations

Limitations of the study are:

1. This study can not explain if attending pre-school means children become more confident or better writers as this would involve a much bigger study over a much longer period of time than the researcher has. What it can show however is how attending preschool affects early writing experiences through teachers' practices and beliefs and how transition is experienced by young writers.
2. The researcher can not say that the sample will represent to the population with confidence as the convenience sampling will be used for surveying in the quantitative phase of the study (Creswell, 2002).
3. There is a potential risk of non-response error in the quantitative phase; in other words, there might emerge problems related to the differences between who do not respond and who respond in a low response rate (Dillman, 2000).
4. There may be some factors that might decrease the statistical power of analysis procedure in the quantitative phase such as homogeneity of group, linearity and lack of multivariate normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2000).
5. There may be limitations to generalizability as the results coming from the analysis can only be generalizable to those populations which the sample was obtained (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2000). However, the researcher will carry out a mixed-methods research which will include both generalizable and more specific results.
6. The study will be confined only to Turkey. As the study is unique to a specific context; it is difficult to exactly replicate it in another context (Creswell, 2003).

7. Participants will respond with their reflections of and confined to their own experiences in the schools with children. This can also be seen as an advantage because it allows the researcher to build a detailed picture in a particular context. In other words, participants' experiences will give an understanding of what they think about early writing development and how they experience it.
8. Due to the time factor and deficiency of comprehensive database in Turkey, it may not be possible to locate all teachers who work in pre-school and primary school in Turkey. This may skew the results of the analysis of questionnaires in the quantitative phase of the study. However, the researcher aims to minimise the low response rate by taking a variety of steps (see: 3.2.2 data collection in the quantitative phase).

It is my belief that in the context of this study the ideal approach for the researcher is to use a mixed methods design to assess what teachers think about early writing development in pre-school and primary school education and how it can be accessed through the opinions and beliefs of teachers. The researcher can increase the validity of findings by examining the same phenomenon in different ways. In other words, this design can promote a greater understanding of the findings by providing the researcher with a general picture of what teachers think about early writing development by using a questionnaire with a large sample (n=200) and she can deeply explore this by supporting this data with observations, interviews, documentary analysis and focus groups. It allows for the comparing of responses from both groups of teachers and helps the researcher to understand the similarities and differences in the thoughts of participants. It also allows the researcher to follow children from pre-school stage to primary school education which can help understanding issues

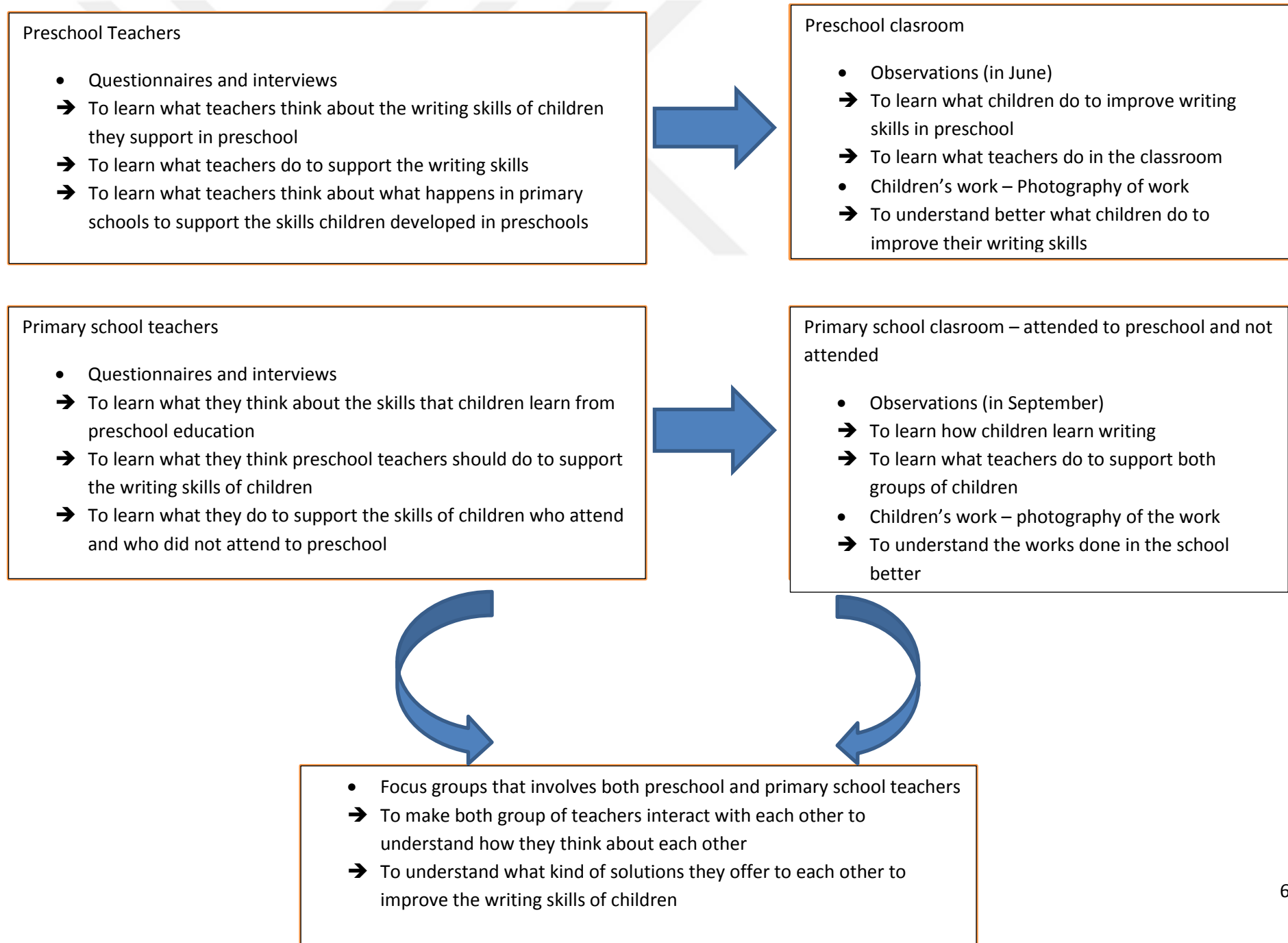
related to transition and how it affects children and teachers in the supporting the process of writing.

Although this design may increase the complexity of the evaluation, using different methods and sources at various points in the process is beneficial to build the design on the strengths of each type of data collection method and to minimize the weaknesses of any approaches. As a quantitative design may be weak in understanding the context and setting in which people behave, the qualitative approach helps to address this weakness. Also, a qualitative research may be deficient because of the difficulty in generalizing the findings from a small sample to a large group; the quantitative approach, in this case a survey of the wider teaching population, helps to achieve this. With a mixed-methods design, the researcher will be able to offset the weaknesses of both of designs by having a more comprehensive and complete understanding of the research problem than an approach alone.

Appendices



Appendix 1: The Visual Design



Appendix 2: Questionnaire

1. Please provide correct information for each item

Name (optional): _____

Age: _____

Gender: Female/ Male

The degree earned: _____

The length of being teacher: _____

2. Finishing sentences – Could you please finish the sentences below

1. Before a child is ready to learn to write they need to be able to

2. The main role of the pre-school in preparing children to be writers is to

3. Informal early writing experience might include

4. Formal early writing teaching might include.....

5. The main difference between pre –school and primary school in supporting early writing development is

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

3. Could you please put a tick to show where you think these activities are best placed?

N	Activity	Pre school only	Primary school only	Both Pre and Primary
1	Play activities that include writing			
2	Drawing and Scribbling			
3	Emergent writing – using marks on paper to infer meaning			
4	Understanding that writing represents ideas			
5	Handwriting – shaping letters			
6	Letter-sound relationship			
7	Producing salient or prominent sounds			
8	Beginning and ending sounds			
9	Word building (using the phonic system)			
10	A focus on correct forms (spelling, grammar)			
11	Sentence boundary and punctuation			
12	Writing a story – narrative			
13	Writing to inform			
14	Writing to persuade			
15	Interpreting writings			

Appendix 3a: Interview Protocol (preschool)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (Pre-school Teachers)

Topic domain: The impact of early writing tasks involvement on young writers

Lead off question 1: could you please tell me how is writing part of all the different things you do in pre-school?

[Covert categories of interest: Different activities related to writing – play based, table top activities (jigsaws, sorting activities), formal instruction]

Possible follow up questions:

1. What do children learn in pre-school in terms of writing?
2. What do you do to support young writers? How does what you do help them learn?
3. What do you think is easy about supporting young writers? What is difficult?

Lead off question 2: could you please tell me which writing skills do you think children learn in pre-school education?

[Covert categories of interest: Writing skills of children in pre-school]

Possible follow up questions:

1. Do you think there is any difference between the writing skills of children who attended and who did not attend to pre-school?

Lead off question 3: could you please tell me how do you support children in the process of writing in pre-schools?

[Covert categories of interest: What pre-school teachers do to support the writing skills, the aim of improving these skills?]

Possible follow up questions:

1. What do you think are the typical writing skills of:
 - a. A child arriving in pre-school
 - b. A child leaving pre-school
 - c. A child arriving in primary school with no pre-school experience
 - d. Children at the end of the primary phase of education
2. What do you think is the aim of improving writing skills in pre-schools? How do these skills affect children in when they go to primary school? How do you think pre-school provision might differ from primary school provision?

Appendix 3a: Interview Protocol (preschool)

3. In what way, if at all, does pre-school provision prepare young writers for primary school? What is lost if children don't have pre-school support in early writing?

Lead off question 4: could you please tell me what is the role of primary school teachers in enhancing children' writing skills?

[Covert categories of interest: Primary school teachers]

Possible follow up questions:

1. Which writing tasks do you think primary school teachers employ to support the skills children developed in pre-schools? How might these differ from pre-school tasks?
2. Which skills do you think should be acquire in early childhood education so that children learn writing easily / comfortably?



Appendix 3b: Interview Protocol (primary school)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (Primary School Teachers)

Topic domain: The impact of early writing tasks involvement on learning writing in primary school

Lead off question 1: could you please tell me how is writing part of all the different things you do in primary school?

[Covert categories of interest: Different activities related to writing – play based, table top activities (jigsaws, sorting activities), formal instruction]

Possible follow up questions:

1. What do children learn in primary school in terms of writing?
2. What do you do to support young writers? How does what you do help them learn?
3. What do you think is easy about supporting young writers? What is difficult?

Lead off question 2: could you please tell me which writing skills do you think children learn in pre-school education?

[Covert categories of interest: Writing skills in pre-school]

Possible follow up questions:

1. Is there any difference between the writing skills of children who attended and who did not attend to pre-school?

Lead off question 3: could you please tell me how do you support children in the process of writing in primary schools?

[Covert categories of interest: Writing skills in primary school]

Possible follow up questions:

1. What do you think are the typical writing skills of:
 - a. A child arriving in pre-school
 - b. A child leaving pre-school
 - c. A child arriving in primary school with no pre-school experience
 - d. Children at the end of the primary phase of education

Appendix 3b: Interview Protocol (primary school)

2. Do you notice any differences in the leading needs of children with or without pre-school experience? Do you notice any differences in relation to the teaching children with or without pre-school experience?
3. How do you support children with different backgrounds in the process of learning how to write?

Lead off question 4: could you please tell me what is the role of pre-school teachers in enhancing children' writing skills?

[Covert categories of interest:]

Possible follow up questions:

1. Which writing (pre-writing) tasks do you think pre-school teachers should employ so that they make children learn writing much more easily late in primary schools?
2. Which skills do you think should be acquire in early childhood education so that children learn writing easily / comfortably?

Appendix 4: Evaluation of focus group

Early Writing Development: Pre-school and Primary School Teachers Focus Group

Date _____

Let us know how we did!

Thank you for your participation in today's conversations, it is greatly appreciated and helps to understand how early writing skills can be developed with interaction of pre-school and primary school teachers better for all young writers! Please select the number that best represents how you feel about your recent participation in the teacher focus group.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The focus groups were well facilitated	1	2	3	4	5
2. Conversations were meaningful and pertinent	1	2	3	4	5
3. Focus groups encouraged the expression of varying opinions	1	2	3	4	5
4. There was opportunity to voice my opinion	1	2	3	4	5
5. I feel these focus groups are useful	1	2	3	4	5

Are there any topics you feel were not properly addressed?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about today's focus groups?

Thank you!

Appendix 5a: Informed Consent

Questionnaire on the Teachers' Beliefs on Young Writers' Skills

Dear participant,

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire about the safety of children.

I am a currently studying for an My name is Vahide YIGIT and I can be contacted at

As a researcher, I am working on a study whereby I need to gather information on what you think about young writers' skills. I am therefore asking if you would agree to participate in my study by completing a questionnaire.

The questionnaire has 25 questions and should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Purpose of the Study

This study intends to provide a better understanding of teachers' beliefs on early writing skills of children. This study will focus on this main question: *How attending pre-school influences early writing practices?* The data collected from this study will be used to help educational researchers to understand better the impact of pre-schools on very young children' writing skills.

Subjects' Understanding

- I agree to participate in this study that I understand will be submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of .. at the University of ...
- I understand that my participation is voluntary.
- I understand that all data collected will be limited to this use or other research-related usage as authorized by ...
- I understand that I will not be identified by name in the final product.
- I am aware that all records will be kept confidential in the secure possession of the researcher.
- I acknowledge that the contact information of the researcher and her advisor have been made available to me along with a duplicate copy of this consent form.
- I understand that the data I will provide are not be used to evaluate my performance as a teacher in any way.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time with no adverse repercussions.

Subject's Full Name: _____

Subject's Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

Appendix 5b: Parental Informed Consent Form

Project title: The influences of attending pre-school on early writing development

Parent/Guardian Informed Consent

The purpose of the study

Your child is being asked to participate in a study conducted by Vahide YIGIT from the University of ... The aim of this study is to understand how attending pre-school impact on writing skills of young children. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of her PhD thesis.

Research procedures

Should you decide to allow your child to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of an observation that will be administered to individual participants in... Audio or video tapes will not take place in this study due to ethical considerations to the dignity of life.

Time required

Participation in this study will require ____ minutes/hours of your child's time once a week and it will totally complete in one month.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive more than minimal risks from your child's involvement in this study (that is, no risks beyond the risks associated with everyday life).

Benefits

Potential benefits from participation in this study include learning about how to improve writing skills of young children. With this information, it will be learned if attending pre-school affects the writing skills or not. The activities that teachers do in the classroom to support these skills will be explored and the results will be used to understand how it can be used for the sake of children. Therefore, it will be beneficial for future study as well.

Confidentiality

The results of this research may be presented at classroom, conference or as a research paper. The results of this project will be coded in such a way that the respondent's identity will not be attached to the final form of this study. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. While individual responses are confidential, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information that matches up individual respondents with their answers will be destroyed.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your child's participation is entirely voluntary. He/she is free to choose not to participate. Should you and your child choose to participate, he/she can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Appendix 5b: Parental Informed Consent Form

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your child's participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Researcher's Name

Advisor's Name

Vahide YIGIT

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of my child as a participant in this study. I freely consent for my child to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

Name of Child (Printed)

Name of Parent/Guardian (Printed)

Name of Parent/Guardian (Signed)

Date

Name of Researcher (Signed)

Date

Appendix 5b: Parental Informed Consent Form

1. The template will be used from the website: www.jmu.edu/sponsprog/irb/irb_Consent_Parent-Guardian.doc.



Appendix 6: Focus group interview schedule

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Procedure:

1. The researcher will introduce herself and explain the significance and the purpose of the focus group with how the discussion will process
2. The researcher will make sure that all participants involved in the study understand that the focus group is confidential. Teachers will be asked not to reveal any comments made by and individuals after the session. They will be explained their rights and an informed consent will be taken. There will be a report written for the faculty to review; however, any identities, names or identifying details will not be involved in the report.
3. Teachers will be in one group consisted of four pre-school and four primary school teachers.
4. These participants will be asked to introduce themselves to the group and take part in a short ice breaker activity.
5. The researcher will write contentious statements on cards and allow those participating in the focus group to select the ones they wish to discuss.
6. An evaluation form will be given to each participant to complete at the end of the session.

Contentious statements:

- Children in pre-school are too young to be thinking about learning to write.
- Children who have had a pre-school experience will always be better prepared as writers.
- Writing support in pre-school and primary school should be very different from each other.
- In order to support young writers you need to be an expert in writing development.
- In order to support young writers you need to be an expert in childhood development.
- Teaching writing is no different from teaching anything else.
- It is better to keep support in writing as informal and playful as possible for as long as possible.
- Children are pushed on too quickly in writing in the primary school.

Appendix 7: Ethical Concerns

Ethical Concerns

- The primary concern of the research is the safety of the participants. In this research, there are not any physical risks created by the researcher to any participants. However, physical discomfort is one of the most important problems within social sciences (Farrimond, 2013). The researcher will treat participants in a careful way and she will carry out the study with high ethical responsibility to avoid physical discomfort. This will be accomplished by considering the risk/benefit ratio and she will use all available information about teachers and children to make an appropriate assessment and continue to monitor the research during the process.
- Psychological risks will be assessed to ensure the importance and relevance of the research study and that the level of risk is minimized.
- The researcher will obtain informed consent from all participants – teachers and parents of children – and she will try to explain the research to children as it is not possible to take an informed consent from 5-7 year-old children (see Appendix ..). These informed consents will be obtained in a written paper after explaining to participants all the risks and benefits of the research and giving the opportunity to ask any pertinent questions. Informed consent will be seen as an ongoing process as it can evolve during the study to make sure that participants are fully aware of the risks and benefits before they agree to take part in the study freely.
- The researcher will enumerate how confidentiality and privacy will be approach to everyone involved in the study and ethical committees. The researcher will be sensitive to not only the protection of information coming from unauthorized observation, but also notification of any unforeseen findings of the research to participants.

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses.



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

MSc, PhD, EdD & DEdPsych theses

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications> and view the School's Policy online.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name:

Your student no:

Return address for this certificate:

Degree/Programme of Study:

Project Supervisor(s):

Your email address:

Tel:

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my thesis to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:.....date:.....

Certificate of ethical research approval

TITLE OF YOUR PROJECT:

1. Brief description of your research project:

2. Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

Give details (with special reference to any children or those with special needs) regarding the ethical issues of:

3. **informed consent**: Where children in schools are involved this includes both headteachers and parents). Copy(ies) of your consent form(s) you will be using must accompany this document. a blank consent form can be downloaded from the GSE student access on-line documents: Each consent form **MUST** be personalised with your contact details.

4. **anonymity and confidentiality**

5. Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

6. Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project - e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires, or

7. special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.

8. Give details of any exceptional factors, which may raise ethical issues (e.g. potential political or ideological conflicts which may pose danger or harm to participants):

Appendix 8: Ethical Approval Form

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: _____ **until:** _____

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): **date:**.....

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occur a further form is completed.

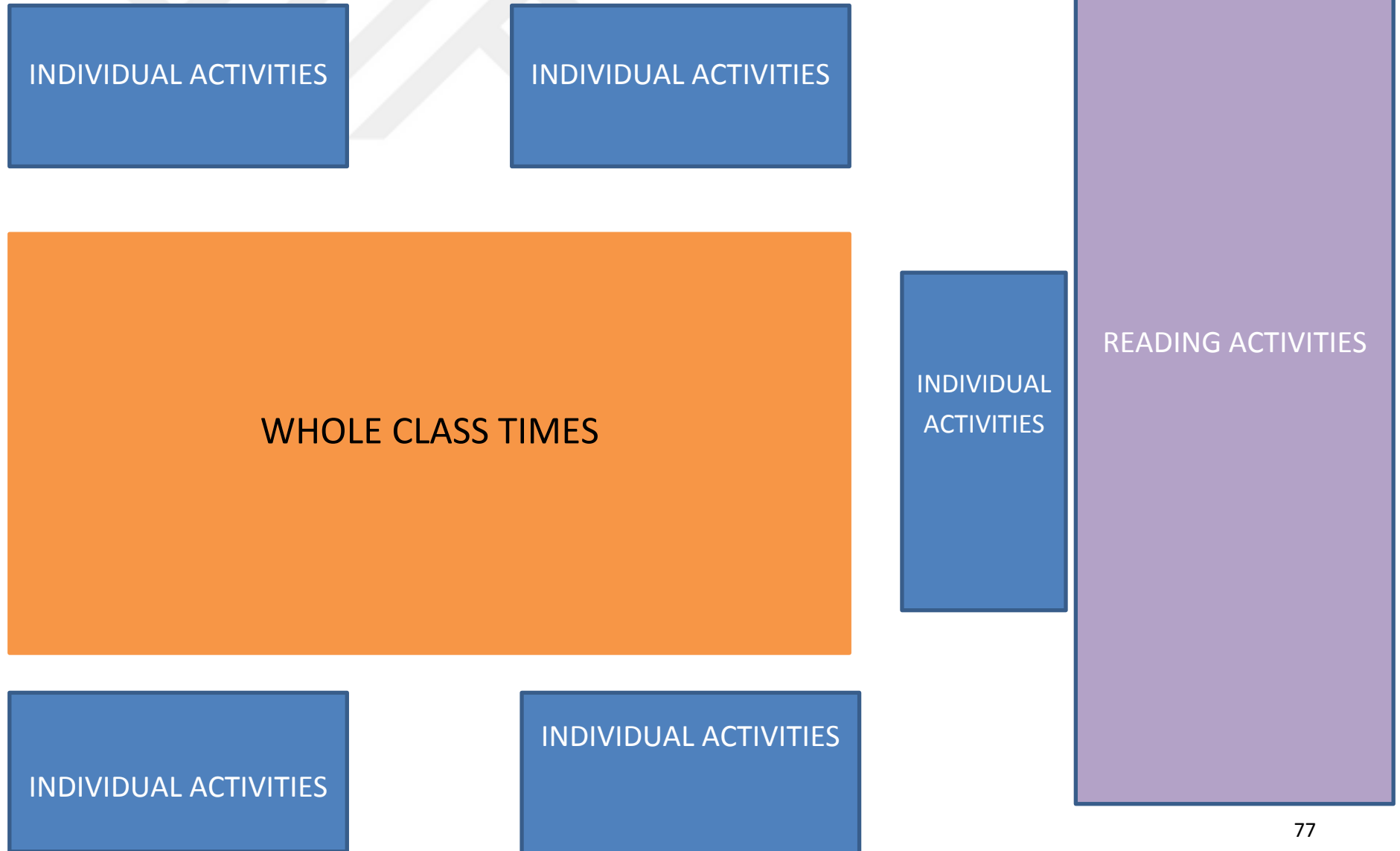
GSE unique approval reference:.....

Signed:..... **date:**.....

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

Appendix 9: A floor plan

A floor plan of pre-school/primary school classroom



REFERENCES

- Alreck, P. L. & Settle, R. B., 2003. *The Survey Research Handbook*. 3rd ed. the USA: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- Asan, Z. & Ayhan, H., 2013. Sampling frame coverage and domain adjustment procedures for internet surveys. *Quality and Quantity*, 47(6), pp. p3031-3042.
- Bandura, 1986. *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Bear, D. R., Invernizzi, M., Templeton, S. & Johnston, F., 2008. *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction*. 4th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/ Prentice Hall.
- Bennett, J., 2006. *'Schoolifying' Early Childhood Education and Care: Accompanying pre-school into education*. London, University of London.
- BERA, 2011. *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*. .
- Berninger, V. W., 2009. Highlights of programmatic, interdisciplinary research on writing. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 24(2), pp. 69-80.
- Bissex, G. L., 1980. *Gnys at work: A child learns to write and read*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Borraz, F. & Cid, A., 2013. Preschool attendance and school-age profiles: A revision. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 35(5), pp. 816-825.
- Bradford, H. & Wyse, D., 2012. Writing and writers: the perceptions of young children and their parents. *Early Years: An International Research Journal*, 33(3), pp. 252-265.
- Broström, S., 2002. Transitions in the early years. Debating continuity and progression for children in early education. In H. Fabian & A. W. Dunlop, ed. *Communication and continuity in the transition from kindergarten to school*. London: Falmer, pp. 52-63.
- Broström, S., 2003a. *Problems and barriers in children's learning when they transit from kindergarten to kindergarten class in school*. European Early Childhood Research Journal, Research Monograph Series 1.
- Bryman, A., 1992. *Quantity and Quality in Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Cabell, S. Q., Tortorelli, L. S. & Gerde, H. K., 2013. How Do I Write...? Scaffolding Preschoolers' Early Writing Skills. *The Reading Teacher*, 66 (8), pp. 650-659.
- Charles, C. M. & Mertler, C. A., 2002. *Introduction to educational research*. 4th ed. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Clay, M. M., 1975. *What did I write? Beginning writing behaviour*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K., 2008. *Research methods in education*. 6th ed. London & New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Cooper, D. C. & Schindler, P. S., 2001. *Business research methods*. 7th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Creemers, B. P. M., 1994. *The Effective Classroom*. London: Cassell.
- Creswell, J. W., 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., 2002. *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative approaches to research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. W., 2003. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., Goodchild, L. F. & Turner, P. P., 1996. Integrated Qualitative and Quantitative Research: Epistemology, History, and Designs. In *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, 11. New York, NY: Agathon Press, pp. 90-136.
- Creswell, J. W. & Plano Clark, V. L., 2010. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Guttman, M. & Hanson, W., 2003. Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie, ed. *Handbook on mixed methods in the behavioral and social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 209-240.
- Cronbach, L. J., 1989. Construct validity after thirty years. In R. Linn, ed. *Intelligence measurement, theory and public policy*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S., 2011. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. the USA: SAGE.
- Dillman, D. A., 2000. *Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored design method*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: John Wiley.
- Docket, S. & Perry, B., 2007. *Transitions to School. Perceptions, expectations, experiences..* Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Ehri, L., 2005. Learning to read: Theory, findings and issues. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 9(2), pp. 167-188.
- Einarsdottir, J., 2003a. Charting a smooth course: Transition from playschool to primary school in Iceland. In S. Broström & J. T. Wagner, ed. *Early childhood education in five Nordic countries: Perspectives on the transition from preschool to school*. Århus: Systime Academic.
- Einarsdottir, J., 2003. *Towards a smooth transition from preschool to primary school in Iceland*. Edinburgh, the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference.
- Eisner, E. W., 1991. *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

- EU, 1996. *Council for cultural co-operation*. Strasbourg: Education committee.
- Fabian, H., 2007. Informing transitions in the early years. In H. Fabian & A. W. Dunlop, ed. *Informing transitions*. London: MdGraw Hill, pp. 3-17.
- Ferreiro, E. & Teberosky, A., 1982. *Literacy before schooling*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Fox, R., 2010. Helping Young Writers at the Point of Writing. *Language and Education*, 15(1), pp. 1-13.
- Freebody, P. R., 2003. *Qualitative Research in Education: Interaction and Practice*. London: Sage Publications.
- Green, J. C. & Caracelli, V. J., 1997. Advances in mixed-method evaluation: The challenges and benefits of integrating diverse programs. In *New Directions for Evaluation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Green, J. C. & Caracelli, V. J., 1997. Advances in mixed-method evaluation: The challenges and benefits of integrating diverse programs. In *New Directions for Evaluation (74)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gregory, I., 2003. *Ethics and research*. London: Continuum.
- Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y., 1982, Winter. Epistemological and methodological bases of naturalistic inquiry. *Educational Communications and Technology Journal*, pp. 232-252.
- Hardon, A. & Hodgkin, C. a. F. D., 2004. *How to investigate the use of medicines by consumers*. Geneva: WHO and the University of Amsterdam.
- Harrell, M. C. & Bradley, M. A., 2009. *Data Collection Methods: Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Group*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- Hillocks, G., 1995. *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hohmann, M. & Weikart, D. P., 1995. *Educating Young Children*. Michigan: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.
- Homan, R., 1991. *The Ethics of Social Research*. London: Longman.
- Howe, K. R., 1988. Against the quantitative-qualitative incompatibility thesis or dogmas die hard. *Educational Researcher*, vol. 17, pp. 10-16.
- Isaac, S. & Michael, W. B., 1981. *Handbook in research and evaluation: A collection of principles, methods, and strategies useful in the planning, design, and evaluation of studies in education and the behavioral sciences*. 2nd ed. San Diego, CA: EdITS.
- Isaac, S. & Michael, W. B., 1981. *Handbook in research and evaluation: A collection of principles, methods, and strategies useful in the planning, design, and evaluation of studies in education and the behavioral sciences*. 2nd ed. San Diego, CA: EdITS.

- Jacobs, G. M., 2004. A Classroom Investigation of the Growth of Metacognitive Awareness in Kindergarten Children through the Writing Process. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 32(1), pp. 17-23.
- Jacobs, S. A. & Furgerson, S. P., 2012. Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, vol. 17, pp. 1-10.
- Kaytaz, M., 2004. *A Cost Benefit Analysis of Preschool Education in Turkey*, Istanbul: ACEV.
- Kim, J. O. & Mueller, C. W., 1978. *Factor analysis: Statistical methods and practical issues*. Thousand Oaks,, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Kline, R. B., 1998. *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Krueger, R. A. & Casey, M. A., 2009. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. 4th ed. the USA: Sage Publications.
- Kvale, S., 2007. *Doing Interviews*. London: Sage Publications.
- Lee, R. M., 1993. *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics*. London: Sage Publications.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G., 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park; CA: Sage Publications.
- Linkogle, S. & Lee-Treweek, H., 2000. *Danger in the field: ethics and risk in social research*. London: Routledge.
- Litwin, M. S., 1995. *How to measure survey reliability and validity*. the USA: Sage Publications.
- Magnuson, K., Ruhm, C. & Waldfogel, J., 2007. Does prekindergarten improve school preparation and performance?. *Economics of Education Review*, vol. 26, p. 33–51.
- Maxcy, S. J., 2003. Pragmatic threads in mixed methods research in the social sciences: The search for multiple modes of inquiry and the end of the philosophy of formalism. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie, ed. *Handbook on mixed methods in the behavioral and social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 51-89.
- Maxwell, J. A., 2008. Designing a qualitative study. %1 içindeL. Bickman & D. Rog, düz. *The handbook of applied social research methods, second edition*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.
- McCurdy, P. & Uldam, J., February 2014. Connecting Participant Observation Positions. *Field Methods*, 26(1), pp. 40-55.
- Merriam, S. B., 1998. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education: Revised and expanded from case study research in education*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Mertens, D. M., 2003. Mixed methods and the politics of human research: The transformative-emancipatory perspective. %1 içindeA. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie, düz. *Handbook on mixed methods in the behavioral and social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 135-164.
- Michael, Q. P., 1987. *How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation*. the USA: Sage Publications.

- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M., 1984. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.
- Mindes, G., 2006. *Assessing Young Children*. 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, NY: Prentice Hall.
- Minichiello, V., Aroni, R., Timewell, E. & Alexander, L., 1990. *In-depth interviewing: Researching people*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire.
- Morris, D., Bloodgood, J. W., Lomax, R. G. & Perney, J., 2003. Developmental steps in learning to read: A longitudinal study in kindergarten and first grade. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(3), p. 302–328.
- Muijs, D., 2004. *Doing Quantitative Research in Education*. London: Sage Publications.
- Myhill, D. & Jones, S., 2009. How Talk Becomes Text: Investigating the Concept of Oral Rehearsal in Early Years' Writers. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 57(3), pp. 265-284.
- Negro, I. & Chanquoy, L., 2005. The effect of psycholinguistic research on teach of writing. *L1 Studies in Language and Literature*, 5(2), pp. 105-111.
- Oluwatayo, J. A., 2012. Validity and Reliability Issues in Educational Research. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 2(2), pp. 391-400.
- Oppenheim, A. N., 2003. *Questionnaire Desing, Interviewing and attitude Measurement*. London: Continuum.
- Pahl, K., 1999. *Transformations: Meaning Making in a Nursery*. London: Trentham.
- Pallant, J., 2005. *SPSS Survival Manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS for Windows*. 2nd dü. s.l.:Open University Press.
- Parker-Rees, R. & Willan, J., 2006. *Early Years Education: Major Themes in Education, Volume 3*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Punch, 1998. *Introduction to Social Research. Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Rao, K. & Pennington, J., 2013. Should the third reminder be sent? The role of survey response timing on web survey results. *International Journal of Market Research*, 55(5), pp. 651-674.
- Rowe, D. W., 2003. The Nature of Young Children's Authoring. In N. Hall, J. Larson & J. Marsch, ed. *Handbook of Early Childhood Litearcy*. London: Sage Publications, pp. 258-270.
- Samuelson, I. P., Sheridan, S. & Williams, P., 2006. Five Preschool Curricula - Comparative Perspective. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 38(1), pp. 11-30.
- Saracho, O. N. & Spodek, B., 2013. *Handbook of research on the education of young children*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schickedanz, J. & Casbergue, R., 2009. *Writing in preschool: Learning to orchestrate meaning and marks*. 2nd ed. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

- Sherman, R. R. & Webb, R. B., 1995. *Qualitative Research in Education Focus and Methods*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Siraj-Blatchford, I. et al., 2002. *Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years*, Oxford: Department of Educational Studies, University of Oxford.
- Skånfors, L., 2009. Ethics in child research: children's agency and researchers' 'ethical radar'. *Childhoods Today*, 3(1), pp. 1-22.
- Strauss, A., 1987. *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientist*. Cambridge: Cambridge.
- Suter, W. N., 2012. *Introduction to Educational Research: A Critical Thinking Approach*. 2nd ed. the USA: Sage Publications.
- Tabachnick, B. G. & Fidell, L. S., 2000. *Using multivariate statistics*. New York, NY: Allyn & Bacon.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C., 1998. *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C., 2003. *Handbook on mixed methods in the behavioral and social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Thorndike, R. M., 1997. *Measurement and evaluation in psychology and education*. 6th dü. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Treiman, R., Kessler, B. & Bourassa, D., 2001. Children's own names influence their spelling. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 22(4), p. 555-570.
- UNESCO, 2006. *Turkey Early Care and Childhood Education (ECCE) Programmes*, Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education (IBE).
- Uyanik, O., 2010. Early Academic Skills in Preschool Period. *Kuramsal Eđitimilim*, 3(2), pp. 118-134.
- Vetter, A., 2011. A Writing Assesment Extended: An Occasion for Young People to Construct Writer Identities. *Changing English: Studies in Culture & Education*, 18(2), pp. 187-197.
- Vukelich, C. & Christie, J., 2004. *Building a Foundation for Preschool Literacy: Effective Instruction for Children's Reading and Writing Development*. U.S: International Reading Association.
- Weikart, D., 2000. *Early Childhood Education: Needs and Opportunity*. Paris: UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Whitehurst, G. J. & Lonigan, C. J., 1998. Child development and emergent literacy. *Child Development*, 69(3), pp. 848-872.
- Wood, D., 1986. Aspects of teaching and learning. In M. Richards & P. Light, ed. *Children of Social Worlds*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Wood, D., 1988. *How Children Think and Learn*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Woodhead, M. & Moss, P., 2007. *Early Childhood and Primary Education*. The UK: The Open University.

Wray, D., 1994. *Literacy and Awareness*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Yoshikawa, H., 2013. *Investing in Our Future: The Evidence Base on Preschool Education*. [Online] Available at: <http://fcd-us.org/sites/default/files/Evidence%20Base%20on%20Preschool%20Education%20FINAL.pdf> [Accessed on: 29 July 2014].

