Classroom Assessment Practices of Teachers in Turkey

Tuba Acar-Erdol
Dr., Tuba Acar-Erdol, Ordu University, Turkey, *tubaacarerdol@gmail.com*

Hülya Yıldızlı
Dr., Hülya Yıldızlı, İstanbul University- Cerrahpaşa, Turke, *hulyayildizli@istanbul.edu.tr*

Knowing assessment practices of teachers and improving in this direction is important in increasing students' learning and demonstrating their performance. In this research, the aim was to identify the classroom assessment practices used by primary, secondary and high school teachers.,. Survey and observation form were used to collect the data for the research. The study group consisted of 288 teachers. From the results of the research, it has been concluded that teachers had adopted an approach of assessment for learning for the purpose of making the assessment. Teachers have used largely traditional assessment methods in classroom assessment practices. Teachers identified the main factor influencing classroom assessment processes as student characteristics, but it was discovered that they did not reflect this situation in their practices. It is suggested that teachers use alternative assessment methods that center on student self-assessments and the diversity in the assessment methods to be increased to ensure fairness.

Keywords: assessment practice, assessment of learning, alternative assessment, traditional assessment, classroom assessment

INTRODUCTION

As a teacher we are constantly familiar with these questions about classroom assessment: *How will I check whether my students have learned today or not? What assessment tools will use? How will I use these assessment tools? When will I assess them? What kind of feedbacks will I give them? What does the assessments that I made mean in terms of my teaching process and the learning processes of my students?* In answering these questions, the assessment is seen as a process directed to the effectiveness of teaching activities once the teaching process is completed, and the teaching process is carried out within the framework of the results of this assessment (Gallavan, 2009). Sometimes an integration of the teaching process and assessment emerges under the idea that assessing is not something simply done to certify student success after teaching. For many years, the word 'assessment' was often defined as a process involving an assessment of the effectiveness of teaching activities when the

teaching process was completed. However, through the reforms that have taken place in the curriculums, the skills and behaviors expected of the students (problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, metacognition, learning to learn, cooperation, creativity, effective communication, effective social skills, responsibility, self-regulation, determination, ambition, global understanding, etc.) have changed along with the point of views held on the function of the assessment, which, as it has been stressed, is understood as a process that should be used before, during and after teaching in order to identify the weak and strong points of students and to support the learning process by making necessary adjustments in teaching (Abell & Siegel, 2011; Shepard, 2000). This new process essentially replaces traditional assessment processes with alternative assessment processes that are based on performance. Because the traditional assessment processes have generated certain teaching-related problems, including the following (1) measuring instruments used for assessment measure students' achievement in isolation from the real world and in limited time, causing students to experience problems in solving real world issues (2) inadequate to show what students can do (3) not enabling the students to access to the resources and research (4) the assessment results are not utilized effectively for the purpose of providing feedback to students, but instead are mainly used for grading purposes (Gömleksiz & Erkan, 2016). In other words, the assessment of student achievement using traditional assessment methods is usually handled in such a way that more focus is placed on the product than on the teaching process, for this purpose greater emphasis is placed on multiple choice and short-answer tests and written and oral examinations (Gelbal & Kelecioğlu, 2007). Alternative assessment methods, on the other hand, allow students to be actively involved in the assessment process, analyze their own learning styles and thoughts, learn to assess themselves and take responsibility. In this context, classroom assessments made by teachers are gaining importance. Classroom assessments, which are a powerful direct influence on learning and motivation are defined as a process that shows what is really learned, what the students know, how effective the teacher is and helps the students to show the depths of students' understanding and tendencies. Classroom assessments designed to support teachers' decision-making processes in teaching and learning in many ways allow the accurate and appropriate information to be gathered (McMillan, 2015). Research shows that the assessment methods used by teachers in the classroom significantly affect the academic achievement, motivational beliefs, classroom teaching activities, and self-regulation skills of students (Alkharusi, 2013; Bell & Cowie, 2001; Brookhart, 1997; Dorman, Fisher & Waldrip, 2006; Heritage, 2007; Yıldızlı & Saban, 2016). Therefore, the teacher factor has an important place in the classroom assessment process; that is, teachers' attitudes, tendencies, perspectives on teaching, beliefs about the teaching-learning process, and knowledge and skills about assessment (Natriello, 1987) play an important role in classroom assessment practices.

The literature on classroom assessments presents various classifications of assessments, organized in terms of being carried out before teaching, during the course of teaching, and after teaching (Miller et al., 2009). These classifications are arranged according to: (1) *assessments based on purpose* (diagnostic, formative and summative assessment), (2) *assessments based on form* (traditional and alternative), (3) *assessments based on*

nature (maximum and typical 4) *assessments based on interpretation of results* (absolute and relative assessment). The diagnostic assessment, which is considered as a starting point for designing knowledge teaching (Chapman & King, 2009), is carried out (Baykul, 1999) for the purpose of determining the interests, abilities and other characteristics of the students. Such assessments enable new behaviors, content, teaching method, tools to be selected, organized and planned in accordance with student characteristics (Gömleksiz & Erkan, 2016). Formative assessment, which is an assessment to learn and teach (Keeley, Eberle & Farrin, 2005), take place during instruction and is considered as a way of deciding on the progress of students, providing feedback and deciding on future teaching activities (McMillan, 2015). Through directing teaching activities, formative assessment which is in the center of new approaches in education ensures that teaching and assessment-evaluation activities merge together (Birgin & Baki, 2012). Another form of assessment, the summative assessment, is a type of assessment that involves administering examinations, generally at the end of the unit or term, to determine whether students have reached certain predetermined achievements in the lessons and to measure, through grading, the success the students have been able to achieve in the lessons (Bulunuz & Bulunuz, 2013).

One of the contemporary classroom assessment classifications was developed by McMillan (2015), who classified classroom assessment as "assessment of learning", "assessment for learning" and "assessment as learning", depending on its purpose, method and time. While the "assessment of learning approach" is expressed as a traditional approach, "for learning" and "assessment as learning" the approaches are included among the alternative assessment approaches. The purpose of the "assessment of learning" approach is to assess the students' success or failure through a grading system; the purpose of the "assessment for learning" approach is to motivate the students, provide feedback, and define the needs for further learning; and in the "assessment as learning" approach is to incorporate assessment practices into the learning process. In the "assessment of learning" approach, the assessment is carried out after teaching, while in the "assessment for learning" and "assessment as learning" approaches are carried out before, during and after teaching. Assessments in the "assessment of learning" approach are carried out in the form of multiple choice, open-ended, and short answers examinations; in the "assessment for learning" approach, assessments are carried out via self-assessments, peer assessments, and informal anecdotal evidence gathering, in addition to the forms used in the "assessment of learning approach; and lastly, in the "assessment as learning" approach, assessment methods that organize, form, and observe the self-learning process are used. It is also emphasized that instant feedback in assessment approaches for learning and as learning is important and that these shape the learning and teaching process. Both the 'for learning' and 'as learning' approaches are particularly beneficial in terms of increasing the motivation of the learners.

If classroom assessment practices are not carried out in a manner suitable to the intended purpose, they will not provide healthy feedback about the teaching and learning process. Often, teachers tend to devote more time to teaching strategies, teaching materials, and planning materials as they focus on reflecting and teaching

content in teaching processes. This leads teachers to have more tendency to be organized and ready than to focus on their students' prior knowledge, experiences and personal information). Furthermore, because the teachers focus most of their time and energy on developing curriculum content and reaching achievements, their target is to satisfy learning expectations for the relevant subject area as opposed to focusing on the individual achievements of the students (Gallavan, 2009). Classroom assessments are helpful at this point and serve to facilitate the progression of the teaching process in a controlled way. These assessment practices are constantly seeking ways to create evidence for student learning, and the end result is that evidence is used to better adapt the learning needs of students.

A variety of assessment methods (projects, diary, peer assessments, self-assessments, portfolios, concept maps, performance assessments, exhibitions, demonstrations etc.) are used as part of the classroom assessments introduced by the new tendencies and approaches. Teachers are expected to be aware of these new approaches, the aims of which include giving more feedback to students, providing peer and group assessments, in addition to individual assessments, focusing on the learning process, implementing knowledge, and involving students in all the processes of assessments, and teachers should reflect these practices in the teaching processes. In other words, it is emphasized that assessment is used as a learning tool. However, when examining the studies that have been conducted in Turkey, it is quite clear that the teachers do not have enough knowledge and experience about the new classroom assessment processes and do not perform adequate practices in their relevant academic departments (Acar & Anıl, 2009; Çelikkaya, Karakuş & Öztürk-Demirbaş, 2010; Kabapınar & Ataman, 2010; Toptaş, 2011; Yapıcı & Demirdelen, 2007).

Measurement and assessment approaches that are put into practice in new curriculums give different tasks and responsibilities to teachers (Gelbal & Kelecioğlu, 2007). Therefore, in this research, the aim was to identify the classroom assessment practices used by teachers. Considering that the classroom assessment practices applied by teachers reflect their educational processes, the type of assessment, frequency in which it is carried out and the student feedback the assessment provides are important in terms of understanding how classroom assessment practices are progressing (Brookhart, 1997). For this reason, it is aimed to investigate how teachers are implementing their classroom assessment practices, whether these assessment practices are being carried out in accordance with the current educational paradigms and the factors that affect these practices. Also, the following situations are also important in determining what teachers do in classroom assessment practices: (1) The identification of the methods teachers use less or not in classroom assessment will be important in establishing a basis for future trainings on these methods, (2) It will be useful for improving teachers' assessment practices in the classroom, (3) It will be important to finding out whether or not student centered assessment approaches were adopted by the teachers, (4) Unlike in other studies, in this research, data were gathered using two methods; that is, the opinions of the teachers were taken and they were observed to see whether the opinions they held were reflected in their classroom assessment practices. For this research, it was important to understand if there was coherence between the opinions and practices of

the teachers.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research was to identify the classroom assessment practices implemented by teachers working at the primary, secondary and high school level. Within this framework, the following questions were developed:

1. What are the aims of classroom assessment?
2. What methods are used by the teachers for classroom assessment?
3. What factors influence the practice of classroom assessment?

METHOD

Research Model

A mixed method research strategy has been adopted in the present study in order to determine and then confirm teachers' classroom evaluation practices. A survey was used to determine what teachers' classroom assessment practices were and observations were carried out to confirm the results obtained from the survey.

Study Group

The study groups of the research were composed of teachers who had at least one year of teaching experience at primary, secondary or high schools in the Nevşehir province, in Turkey. In order to make accurate comparisons, data were collected from an equal number of teachers at each school level. The study was conducted with two sets of participants. Both sets consisted of teacher participants and teachers' views were collected through the survey in the first set. Voluntary participation was the criterion for the selection of participants in this part. 96 teachers from primary schools, 96 from secondary schools, and 96 from high schools, making a total of 288 teachers, responded the survey.

Teachers in the second set of participants were observed. Those teachers were observed by pre-service teachers as part of the teaching practice course. Participants of this part of the research consisted of a total of 24 teachers (8 from primary, 8 from secondary and 8 from high schools). The number of teacher participants from each school level (i.e. primary school and high school) was the same in order to allow comparisons between different levels of school. The majority of the teachers who answered the survey and underwent observation were male. The service duration of the teachers varied between 1 and 42 years. Almost three-quarter of teachers have over 10 years of teaching experience.

Data Collection Tools

The data of the study were obtained by means of two data collection tools.

Classroom Assessment Practices Survey: This data collection tool was a survey developed by the researchers. The survey consisted of two parts. The first part included questions on the demographic information of the teachers, while the second part included questions about the *teachers' purpose for making the classroom assessment,*

the methods they used for classroom assessment and *the factors that affected classroom assessment.* Survey items were prepared as multiple choice test questions. Considering the composite nature of the new classroom assessment tools (McMillan, 2015), the teachers were allowed to mark more than one choice in responding to the questions on the survey. McMillan's book titled "*Classroom Assessment: Principles and Practice for Effective Standards-based Instruction*" (2015) was used to create survey questions. In order to ensure the validity of the data collection tool, opinions were taken from two experts in the field of measurement and assessment, four experts in the field of curriculum development and two teachers. After making some minor changes to certain expressions, the items in the data collection tools were found by the experts to be valid in terms of determining the classroom assessment practices of teachers. The survey was given to the primary schools, secondary schools and high schools located in Nevşehir province between the dates of 1 September 2016 and 15 August 2016, and the teachers were asked to voluntarily respond to the questions. Because more than the required 96 surveys (the aim was to collect data from an equal number of teachers at each level) were collected at the primary and secondary schools, seven surveys from the primary school level and eight surveys from the secondary school level were randomly excluded from the research.

Classroom Assessment Practices Observation Form: Following the analysis of the surveys, an observation form was developed in order to determine whether the responses the teachers made to the survey items were reflected in their classroom practices. The first part of the observation form included details about the date of the observation, observation period, and questions for the observed teacher as well as the observing teacher trainee. The second part of the observation forms included five questions. The classroom assessment practices that have been detailed in the Classroom Assessment Practices Survey were included in the first question as checkbox and teacher trainees were asked to put a tick on the practices that they observed the teachers to have undertaken. After that, they were supposed to explain the process in which teachers have undertaken those practices. The remaining four questions were open-ended questions and focused on topics such as providing feedback, using technology in assessment practices, asking questions during classroom assessment, and making individualized assessments. The opinions of the experts mentioned above were taken for the development of the observation form, and certain expressions on the questions were changed according to feedback from these experts. Initially, the idea was that the observations would be conducted by researchers. However, this idea was abandoned since it was considered that teachers would act differently than they normally do in the presence of researchers. The data collection procedures for the observations were carried out by 12 teacher trainees who studied at Hacı Bektaş Veli University and who had completed the "Assessment and Evaluation" course. The criterion for the selection of observers was having successfully completed the "Assessment and Evaluation" course. Pre-service teachers were provided with a three-hour training on classroom assessment practices by the researchers and then the data collection tool was introduced. Each of the teacher candidates observed two different teachers who were teaching in the same branch of study as they were being trained to teach in. These observations were

conducted for between 2 and 6 course hours. Observations were made during the 2016-2017 spring term.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used for analysing the data gathered from Classroom Assessment Practices Survey and the findings were presented via tables.

Frequencies and percentages were used in the analysis of the data gathered from the first part of the first question in the Classroom Assessment Practices Observation Form and descriptive analysis was used in the analysis of the remaining parts. The following steps were taken in doing descriptive analysis: (i) the questions included in the observation forms were considered as themes and it was agreed to create categories under those themes; (ii) researchers in the present study coded the data together and discussed codes where necessary; (iii) frequencies were calculated about the codes and categories. It is possible to do classifications based on frequencies and interpret the importance and effect of codes (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001). In this study codes were compared in terms of frequencies; (iv) direct quotations were used in findings and information about the subject and class level were included in brackets at the end of a quote.

Establishing Reliability (a) and Validity (b)

ai) Data about the teachers were collected through surveys and observations. The researchers tried to increase the credibility of the study by triangulating the sources of data (data collection tools).
aii) The credibility of the study was enhanced through a member checking process in which a secondary school teacher, who both participated in the survey and was observed, was contacted to discuss results.
bi) The proximity of the researcher to the participant increased the validity of a qualitative study (Creswell, 2013). The observers in this study were participant observers. Therefore, they were present in the environment in which the research took place at certain times and with regular intervals.
bii) Observation notes were presented in the findings section as direct quotations to increase transferability.

biii) The internal reliability was enhanced by analysing the data twice at different times. The data was first analysed in August 2017 and the second analysis took place in November 2017. Different from the initial analysis, 15 new sub-categories were added in the second analysis.

FINDINGS

Findings related to purpose of the classroom assessment of teachers

It is important to know the purpose for the assessment being carried out, as the purpose of the assessment affects when and with which method the assessment will be done and how the results will be used (McMillan, 2015). Information about the assessment purposes expressed by the teachers is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Purpose of Teachers to Make Assessment

Purposes	Primary		Secondary		High School		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Providing feedbacks to students	75	78.1	76	79.2	66	68.8	217	75.3
Increasing learning	66	68.8	74	77.1	65	67.7	205	71.2
Determining the level of achievement	71	74.0	60	62.5	63	65.6	194	67.4
Monitoring students' progress	58	60.4	62	64.6	56	58.3	176	61.1
Motivating students	36	37.5	44	45.8	45	46.9	125	43.4
Being able to see his/her own strengths and weaknesses in teaching	32	33.3	35	36.5	33	34.4	100	34.7
Planning teaching	27	28.1	32	33.3	27	28.1	86	29.9
Grading	11	11.5	27	28.1	27	28.1	65	22.6
Providing feedbacks to parents	16	16.7	19	19.8	6	6.25	41	14.2

As seen from Table 1, there was no significant difference between the school levels in terms of assessment purposes. The teachers stated that they generally performed assessments to provide feedback to the students. However, in the observation results, it was found that fourteen teachers gave explanatory feedback, and that ten teachers gave no explanatory feedback. Teacher conducts that were identified as providing explanatory feedback were; highlighting important points, explaining by providing examples, explaining which topics to study, and responding to student questions by asking new questions. On the other hand, teacher conducts such as providing abstract explanations, showing time limitations as a reason for not providing feedback, stating the correct answer directly, and not providing an explanation and showing student notebooks as a source were considered reasons for not providing explanatory feedback. Teacher trainees' observation notes in relation to this point are as follows:

- *"The teacher went over the test answers during the observation hour. In going over the answers, rather than verbally providing explanatory feedback, the teacher referred the students to the notes made in their notebooks. 'Teacher, does sound propagate in space?' asked one of the students and the teacher answered, 'Don't you remember the experiment we did? Open your notebook and look at the result'". (Science, 6th grade)*
- *"The teacher does not give a clear enough feedback. S/he answers the questions asked in an abstract way. For example, s/he answered a question asked by the student stating: 'Seven plus eight equals fifteen, count with your fingers if you like."(Maths, 4th grade)*

It was observed that six teachers in primary school, three in secondary school, and one in high school levels did not provide explanatory feedback. However, the group that needs explanatory feedback the most is primary school students.

More than half of the teachers stated that they performed assessments to increase learning, to determine levels of achievements and to monitor the progress of the students. Assessing for the purposes of "grading" and "providing feedback to parents" was expressed by a fewer number of the teachers. From this finding, it can be said that the teachers generally did not have traditional preferences for assessment purposes.

Findings related to the methods the teachers use classroom assessment

Assessment methods have undergone significant changes and diversification, with the focus now being on learner-centered approaches and on fostering understanding in the students (especially in curriculum development models, such as the Backward Design). To determine whether these changes have been adopted by the teachers, the methods of classroom assessments used by the teachers were analyzed in terms of the opinions given by the teachers and the observation results. The results of these analyses are given in Table 2.

Table 2
Methods of Teachers Used for Classroom Assessment

Methods	Primary School		Secondary School		High School		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
In teachers own statements;								
Observation	88	91.7	76	79.2	71	74	235	81.6
Multiple choice questions	75	78.1	71	74	65	67.7	211	73.3
Open-ended questions	71	74.0	68	70.8	66	68.8	205	71.2
True-False questions	76	79.2	60	62.5	50	52.1	186	64.6
Short answer questions	70	72.9	56	58.3	59	61.5	185	64.2
Matching	66	68.8	49	51.0	35	36.5	150	52.1
Performance homework	18	18.8	39	40.6	65	67.7	122	42.4
Project assignments	9	9.4	41	42.7	45	46.9	95	33.0
Concept maps	33	34.4	28	29.2	26	27.1	87	30.2
Demonstration	22	22.9	33	34.4	24	25	79	27.4
Self-assessment forms	25	26	24	25.0	9	9.4	58	20.1
Posters	14	14.6	27	28.1	7	7.3	48	16.7
Manner scales	7	7.3	16	16.7	11	11.5	34	11.8
Group assessment forms	12	12.5	9	9.4	5	5.2	26	9.0
Peer assessment forms	12	12.5	4	4.2	7	7.3	23	8.0
In observations;								
Observation	8	100	3	37.5	7	87.5	18	75
Short answer questions	7	87.5	7	87.5	4	50	18	75
Open-ended questions	5	62.5	4	50	5	62.5	14	58.3
Multiple choice questions	1	12.5	4	50	4	50	9	37.5
True false questions	1	12.5	6	75	1	12.5	8	33.3
Demonstration	2	25	2	25	-	-	4	16.7
Concept maps	-	-	1	12.5	1	12.5	2	8.3
Performance homework	-	-	-	-	2	25	2	8.3
Project assignments	-	-	-	-	1	12.5	1	4.2
Posters	-	-	-	-	1	12.5	1	4.2

In examining Table 2, it was seen that the teachers used more than one method at each school level, but observation was the most commonly used assessment method at each school level. The explanation of one of the trainees who did an observation in primary schools about a teacher's use of the observation method is provided below:

- *"There is communication in the classroom is mostly one-way. Therefore, the teacher uses the observation method more frequently" (Life Science, 3rd Grade)*

At the primary school level, the teachers, according to their survey responses, often used multiple choice questions, open-ended questions, true/false questions, short answer questions and matching methods. The results of the observations confirmed these survey responses. The least used assessment methods were manner scales, project assignments, group assessment forms, and peer assessment forms.

At the secondary school level, the teachers, according to their survey responses, mostly used multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, true/false questions, short answer questions and matching questions. The results of the observations partially confirmed the survey responses made by the teachers (Here, "partially" was used because the differences between the usage rates of methods and the method of matching were not included in the observation results. These inconsistencies between the data can be explained by the fact that the observations were made in a course that was held for limited course hour). The least used assessment methods were peer assessment forms, group assessment forms, and manner scales.

It was observed that primary and secondary school teachers used the demonstration method but did not inform the students about what criteria they would use for assessment. One of the observation notes in relation to this topic was as follows:

- *"The teacher asked two students (one boy and one girl) to go to the whiteboard. S/he asked the students to show how to pray. However, s/he did not explain how s/he would grade the students." (Culture of Religion, 4th Grade).*

In the high schools, the teachers, according to their survey responses, mostly used open-ended questions, multiple choice questions, performance assignments, short answer questions and true/false questions. The results of the observations confirm these survey responses of the teachers. The least used assessment methods were group assessment forms, peer assessment forms, posters, self-assessment forms and manner scales.

When the methods used were compared according to school levels, it was found that multiple-choice questions were used more frequently in primary school than in secondary school or in high school. However, the observation results did not confirm this data; rather they showed that multiple choice questions were used the least at the primary school level. As the level of school increased, it was found that matching questions were used less often and performance and project assignments were used more frequently. Self-assessment forms were used in primary and secondary school more than twice as often as in high school.

Peer assessment and group assessment forms, manner scales and poster methods were the least used assessment methods by the teachers.

The teachers' responses and observation results were found to be partially consistent with one another; that is, the teachers' responses indicated that they used a wide variety of assessment methods, whereas the observation results revealed that the teachers used relatively few and often traditional assessment methods.

Findings related to the factors affecting the classroom assessment practices used by the teachers

Table 3
Factors Affecting Classroom Assessment Practices of Teachers

Factors	Primary School		Secondary School		High School		Total	
	f	*%*	f	*%*	f	*%*	f	%
Characteristics of student	81	84.4	75	78.1	73	76	229	79.5
Curriculum	77	80.2	76	79.2	70	72.9	223	77.4
National examinations	28	29.2	71	74	54	56.3	153	53.1
Technology	53	55.2	53	55.2	44	45.8	150	52.1
Features of Subject	39	40.6	51	53.1	46	47.9	136	47.2

In examining Table 3, it was seen, at the primary school level, the 'characteristics of student' was the most effective factor in teachers' assessment practices in the classroom, which was followed by 'curriculum', 'technology', and 'the features of subject' respectively. The least effective factor was the 'national examinations' taken by the students in the future. At the secondary school level, the 'curriculum' was the most effective factor in the teachers' classroom assessment practices followed by the 'national examinations' and 'technology'. Though the least effective factor was 'features of subject', it indicated that more than half of the teachers were effective in their classroom assessment practices. Similar to primary school level, the most effective factor at high school level was 'characteristics of students'. This was followed by 'curriculum', 'national exminations' and 'features of subject'. The least effective factor was technology (45.8%)

The lower influence of 'the national examinations to be taken by the students in the future' in the classroom assessment practices of the teachers at the primary school level can be explained by the fact that the students do not take a national examination after the completion of primary school.

At all levels, it was seen that the characteristics of the students had the biggest impact on the classroom assessment practices used by the teachers. This factor was followed, respectively, by the curriculum, the national examinations to be taken by the students in the future, and technology. The features of the subject had the least impact on the classroom assessment practices of the teachers.   While the 'characteristics of the students' was mentioned as a factor affecting the classroom assessments by 79.5% of the teachers, in the observation results, it was found that 91.7% (f = 22) of the teachers implemented the same classroom assessment method to all the students. Moreover, it was observed that with the question-answer method, 75% (f = 18) of the teachers asked the same questions in the classroom. Observation notes that characterize this situation as noted by two teacher candidates were as follows:

- *"The teacher assesses all students by asking the same question." (History, 10ᵗʰ Grade).*
- *"S/he asks the same question to everyone. S/he reflects the questions on the board via the help of the computer and makes students answer the questions one by one." (Social Studies, 2ⁿᵈ Grade).*

Only 25% of the teachers asked different questions, posing simple questions to the students with a low level of academic achievement and more complex questions to the

students with a high level of academic achievement. One of the teachers who performed different assessments for the students in the classroom assessment was working at the primary school level and the other at the secondary school level. It was seen that the teacher working at the primary school level implemented a different assessment method for the inclusive students (special education students who were mainstreamed into regular classes). The following observation was taken by the teacher observing the secondary school level teacher who used different methods of classroom assessments according to the individual student.

- *"While the teacher assesses some of the students by having them imagine their dreams and enact them, s/he assesses others by making them draw figures/pictures."(Science, 5th Grade)*

'Technology' was cited as being a factor that affected classroom assessment by 52.1% of the teachers. In support of this finding, in the observation results, it was seen that 54.2% (f = 13) of the teachers used technology (computer, projectors, smart boards, and telephones) in their classroom assessment practices. The highest use of technology in classroom assessment was observed to be in high school level ($f=6$), four teachers were observed to use technology in classroom assessment in secondary schools, and three in primary schools. The observations by the teacher candidates observing the two teachers who used technology at the primary and secondary school level were as follows:

- *"Teacher opens questions on a website and asks students to answer them."(Turkish, 2nd Grade).*
- *"Asks students to answer the test projected onto a screen and performs an assessment at the end of the test, at which point the teacher gives a performance grade according to the answers submitted by the students." (Science, 6th Grade)*

Teachers highlighted the lack of technology equipment and following the course book assessment techniques as reasons for not using technology in the assessment process. One of the observer's views on this finding is as follows:

- *"There was not any use of technology during the class. Generally, a school that is extremely lacking in terms of materials and technology." (Literature, 11th grade)*

The responses given by the teachers and the observation results were determined to be inconsistent for the factor of 'characteristics of the students' but consistent with the factor of 'technology' in the classroom assessments. Considering the survey responses and observation results, it can be said that while the teachers were aware that the characteristics of the students should be taken into account for classroom assessment, they nonetheless were not successful in implementing this.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this research are discussed within the framework of five themes, namely, 'assessment purposes of teachers', 'the most used assessment methods by teachers', 'the least used assessment methods by teachers', 'differences according to school levels of used methods' and 'factors affecting classroom assessment level of teachers'. From this discussion, recommendations are made.

When the research results were examined, it was found that more than half of the teachers performed assessments to provide feedback to the students, to increase learning, to determine the level of achievement, and to monitor the progress of the students. From these findings, it is clear that the teachers adopted the "assessment for learning" approach for their assessment purposes. These finding agree with the results reported in studies conducted by Saefurrohman (2017) and Xu (2017 In assessment for learning, assessment is used to give feedback to students (McMillan, 2015). However, the results of the observations made in the present study showed that a significant number of the teachers did not give sufficient or explanatory feedback. This finding suggests that the teachers failed to fulfil the requirements of the assessment purposes or that they did not have enough awareness of the purposes of classroom assessments. Although the teachers cited the purpose of assessment as being to monitor students' learning and to increase their learning, according to the findings obtained from the observation results, the teachers seemed to carry out assessments as a duty and thereby failed to question the true purpose of assessments. It can be suggested that, teachers gain more awareness about the purpose of classroom assessments, and that in order to reflect this awareness in their classroom practices, they should receive education about the effects of classroom assessment and regularly perform self-assessments and peer assessments as part of their classroom assessment practices. Moreover, teachers should be trained in how to give instant feedback and descriptive feedback, both of which are important steps in gaining the ability to give explanatory feedback.

The most commonly used assessment methods of the teachers were observation, multiple choice questions, open-ended questions, true/false questions and short answer questions. Based on these results, it can be said that the teachers preferred to use traditional methods in their classroom assessments. This finding is similar to that reported in both domestic research (Çelikkaya, Karakuş & Öztürk-Demirbaş, 2010; Gelbal & Kelecioğlu, 2007; Yapıcı & Demirdelen, 2007) and international research (Davis & Neitzel, 2011; Duncan & Noonan, 2007; Rieg, 2007). In educational systems where summative assessments are the norm, teachers are forced to teach test logic (OECD, 2008). This could explain why the teachers used multiple choice questions in their classroom assessments 73.3% of the time.

The least used assessment methods of the teachers respectively were peer and group assessments, manner scales, posters and self-assessments. This finding is supported by the results of research conducted by Celikkaya, Karakuş and Öztürk-Demirbaş (2010), Duban and Küçükyılmaz (2008), Gelbal and Kelecioğlu (2007). It is essential that students are to be included in the assessment process in the 'assessment for learning' and the 'assessment as learning' approaches. Peer assessments, group assessments and self-assessments are used for this purpose (McMillan, 2015; OECD, 2008). As these methods constituted the least used assessment tools of the teachers in this study, this shows that the teachers had adopted an 'assessment of learning' approach in determining the assessment methods. In adopting this approach, the teachers attached more importance to the end product of learning rather than to the learning process and thereby failed to adhere to the principles of the constructivist approach. In Turkey, a constructivist approach has been in use since 2005, and the curriculums prepared

according to this approach require the use of alternative approaches for classroom assessments. Given that self-assessments and peer assessments were the least used classroom assessment methods of the teachers in this study, it can be inferred that the teachers struggled to implement the constructivist approach.

When the differences of methods that are used according to school levels are considered, it can be seen that there were no significant differences between the different levels. However, the fact that self-assessment forms were used at a higher rate in primary and secondary schools than in high school was a particularly interesting finding, and one that matches the findings of other research (Mertler, 1999; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003) showing that teachers at primary and secondary school levels use alternative assessment methods more frequently than high school teachers. As far as students' age is concerned, the awareness level of their own learning will increase, and therefore, it can be expected that these forms (self-assessments and self-observations) will be used more often at the high school level. The extensive usage of self-assessment forms at the high school level is therefore recommended.

According to the responses of the teachers, the factors most responsible for affecting classroom assessment practices were, in order of impact, "characteristics of students", "curriculum", "national examinations", "technology" and "features of subject". In contrast to these survey responses, the observation results showed that most of the teachers did not use different assessment methods according to the "characteristics of students". It is very difficult to judge one assessment method superior to another in a general sense. The important thing is to diversify assessment methods in line with the purpose used. For this, teachers must operate according to the principle of equality in education in order to provide fairness and diversify their classroom assessment methods to take into account the characteristics of the students.

The findings from this research can be generalized only to study groups similar to the one used in this study. Repetition of the study with larger samples will contribute to a broader generalization of the results.

REFERENCES

Abell, S. K., & Siegel, M. A. (2011). Assessment literacy: What science teachers need to know and be able to do? In D. Corrigan, J. Dillon, & R. Gunstone (Eds.). *The professional knowledge base of science teaching* (pp. 205–221). The Netherlands: Springer.

Acar, M., & Anıl, D. (2009). Sınıf öğretmenlerinin performans değerlendirme sürecindeki değerlendirme yöntemlerini kullanabilme yeterlikleri, karşılaştıkları sorunlar ve çözüm önerileri. *TÜBAV Bilim Dergisi*, *2*(3), 354-363.

Alkhrausi, H. (2013). Canonical correlational models of students' perceptions of assessment tasks, motivational orientations and learning strategies. *International Journal of Instruction, 6*, 21-38.

Atjonen, P. (2014). Teachers' views of their assessment practice. *Curriculum Journal*, *25*(2), 238-259. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2013.874952.

Bell, B. & Cowie, B. (2001). *Formative assessment and science education.* Dordrecht, Boston: KluwerAcademic.

Birgin, O., & Baki, A. (2012). An investigation of the purposes of the measurement and assessment practice of primary school teachers within the context of the new mathematics curriculum. *Education & Science*, *37*(165), 152-167.

Brookhart, S. M. (1997). A theoretical framework for the role of classroom assessment in motivating student effort and achievement. *Applied Measurement in Education, 10*, 161–180.

Bulunuz, M., & Bulunuz, N. (2013). Fen öğretiminde biçimlendirici değerlendirme ve etkili uygulama örneklerinin tanıtılması. *Türk Fen Eğitimi Dergisi*, *10*(4), 119-135.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Nitel araştırma yöntemleri; beş yaklaşıma göre nitel araştırma ve araştırma deseni (M. Bütün & S. B. Demir, Trans.). Ankara: Siyasal Kitapevi.

Çelikkaya, T., Karakuş, U., & Öztürk-Demirbaş, Ç. (2010). Sosyal Bilgiler öğretmenlerinin ölçme-değerlendirme araçlarını kullanma düzeyleri ve karşılaştıkları sorunlar. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 11*(1), 57-76.

Chapman, C., & King, R. S. (2009). *Test success in the brain-compatible classroom.* Corwin Press.

Davies, D., & Neitzel, C. (2011). A self-regulated learning perspective on middle grades classroom assessment. The Journal of Educational Research, *104*(3), 202–215.

Dorman, J. P., & Knightley, W. M. (2006). Development and validation of an instrument to assess secondary school students' perceptions of assessment tasks. *Educational Studies, 32*, 47–58.

Duban, N., & Küçükyılmaz, E.A. (2008). Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının alternatif ölçme değerlendirme yöntem ve tekniklerinin uygulama okullarında kullanımına ilişkin görüşleri. *İlköğretim Online, 7*(3), 769-784.

Duncan, C. R., & Noonan, B. (2007). Factors affecting teachers' grading and assessment practices. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *53*(1), 1-21.

Gallavan, N. P. (2009). *Developing performance-based assessments, grades K-5.* California: Corwin press.

Gelbal, S., & Kelecioğlu, H. (2007). Öğretmenlerin ölçme ve değerlendirme yöntemleri hakkındaki yeterlik algıları ve karşılaştıkları sorunlar. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, *33*, 135-145.

Gömleksiz, M., & Erkan, S. (2016). *Eğitimde ölçme ve değerlendirme*. Ankara. Nobel Yayıncılık.

Heritage, M. (2007). Formative assessment. *EED Winter Confererence: Informing Instruction, Improving Achivement*. Anchorage, AK.

Kabapınar, Y., & Ataman, M. (2010). İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler (4-5. Sınıf) Programları'ndaki ölçme ve değerlendirme yöntemlerine ilişkin öğretmen görüşleri. *İlköğretim Online*, *9*(2), 776-791.

Keeley, P., Eberle, F., & Farrin, L.(2005). *Uncovering student ideas in science:25 formative assessment probes.* California: Corwin & NSTA Press.

McMillan, J. (2015). *Sınıf içi değerlendirme, etkili ölçütlere dayalı etkili bir öğretim için ilke ve uygulamalar* (A. Arı, Trans. Ed.). Konya: Eğitim Yayınevi.

Mertler, C. A. (1999). Assessing student performance: A descriptive study of the classroom assessment practices of Ohio teachers. *Education*, *120*(2), 285-297.

Miller, M., Linn, R., & Gronlund, N. (2009).*Measurement and assessment in teaching.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Natriello, G. (1987). The impact of evaluation processes on students. *Educational Psychologist, 22*, 155-175.

OECD. (2008). Assesment for Learning Formative Assessment. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/site/educeri21st/40600533.pdf 10.06.2017

Rieg, S. A. (2007). Classroom assessment strategies: What do students at-risk and teachers perceive as effective and useful? *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, *34*(4), 214-226.

Saefurrohman. (2015). Classroom assessment preference of Indonesian Junior High School Teachers in English as foreign language classes. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *6*(36). 104-110.

Shepard, L. A. (2000). The role of assessment in a learning culture. *Educational Researcher*, *29*(7), 4-14.

Tavşancıl, E., & Aslan, E. (2001). *Sözel, yazılı ve diğer materyaller için içerik analizi ve uygulama örnekleri.* İstanbul:Epsilon Yayınları.

Toptaş, V. (2011). Classroom teachers' perceptions about the use of alternative assessment and evaluation methods in mathematics courses. *Education & Science*, *36*(159), 205-219.

Xu, H. (2017). Exploring novice EFL teachers' classroom assessment literacy development: A three-year longitudinal study. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, *26*(3-4), 219-226. DOI 10.1007/s40299-017-0342-5

Yapıcı, M., & Demirdelen, C. (2007). İlköğretim 4. Sınıf Sosyal Bilgiler Programına ilişkin öğretmen görüşleri. *İlköğretim-Online, 6*(2), 204-212.

Yıldızlı, H., & Saban, A. (2016). The effect of self-regulated learning on sixth-grade Turkish students' mathematics achievements and motivational beliefs. *Cogent Education*, *3*(1), 1-17.

Zhang, Z., & Burry-Stock, J. A. (2003). Classroom assessment practices and teachers' self-perceived assessment skills. *Applied Measurement in Education*, *16*(4), 323-342.