PERSONAL VISIONS OF TEACHERS AT A VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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# ABSTRACT

PERSONAL VISIONS OF TEACHERS AT A VILLAGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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The concept of personal vision refers to teachers' ideal perception of education (teaching and learning, classroom management and educational implications for the society). Teacher's personal vision is how he or she wants these dimensions to be. This case study analyzed personal visions of teachers at a rural primary school and investigated the effects of the school context on teachers' personal visions. The data were collected from ten teachers through utilizing the semi-structured interview method. The researcher analyzed the obtained data through content analysis. The results of the study revealed that teachers' visions considered education as a lifelong process involving a student-centered, democratic classroom environment where learning differences were given importance to; and meaningful learning and process evaluation were highlighted. According to the teachers, this educational process would lead a democratic society where science, moral values and citizenship values prevailed. The results also showed that the school context was not supportive for teachers to achieve their visions.

Keywords: Personal Vision, Village Schools, Rural Schools

# ÖZ

## BİR KÖY İLKÖĞRETİM OKULUNDAKİ ÖĞRETMENLERİN KİŞİSEL VİZYONLARI

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Kişisel vizyon kavramı öğretmenlerin ideal eğitim-öğretim (öğrenme-öğretme, sınıf yönetimi ve eğitimin toplumdaki uzantıları) görüşlerini kapsamaktadır. Öğretmenin kişisel vizyonu bu boyutların nasıl olmasını istediği ile ilgilidir. Bu örnek olay çalışmasında, bir köy ilköğretim okulundaki öğretmenlerin kişisel vizyonları incelenmiş ve okul ortamının öğretmenlerin kişisel vizyonları üzerindeki etkileri araştırılmıştır. Veriler on öğretmenden yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat yöntemiyle toplanmış ve veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz etmiştir. Araştırma sonuçları öğretmenlerin vizyonlarının eğitimi; öğrenci merkezli, öğrenme farklılıklarına önem verilen, anlamlı öğrenme ve süreç değerlendirmenin vurgulandığı ve demokratik bir sınıf ortamını içeren hayat boyu bir süreç olarak algıladıklarını göstermiştir. Öğretmenlere göre, bu eğitim sürecinin sonucu bilimin, ahlaki değerlerin ve vatandaşlık değerlerinin hüküm sürdüğü bir toplumun oluşmasıdır. Diğer taraftan, sonuçlar mevcut okul ortamının öğretmenlerin vizyonlarını gerçekleştirmesini destekleyici bir ortam sağlamadığını göstermiştir.


Anahtar Kelimeler: Kişisel Vizyon, Kırsal Okullar, Köy Okulları

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the theoretical background, the purpose and the significance of the study. The chapter ends with the definition of the key terms in this study.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Though it had seemed meaningless at the beginning, I think I will never forget the first assignment given in the Political Psychology course back in my undergraduate days. Mr. Gürkaynak had asked us to write about where we would be in the future. A week later, when explaining the reason for such an assignment, he told us we could only reach our goals if we dreamt and planned about our future which, for younger brains like us, was not an idea easy to get.

Indeed the future matters. We are in a world of constant flux. Eighties have not been like seventies and nineties have been different than eighties. Not surprisingly, the new millennium has given pace to the change process. Upheaval, shift, shock, new trends are the words that symbolize our time.

Our society is, to a large extent, dominated by the information explosion. The so-called information society evokes huge changes and developments in different areas like economy, technology, social issues and so on. These changes also have tremendous influence on educational system. As Erkan posits (1998), this requires the educational system to replace its traditional structure with a new one that meets the needs of the information society. On the other hand, Hargreaves and Lo (2000) who believe that teaching is a uniquely paradoxical profession maintain that teaching is the only job charged with the formidable task of creating the human skills and

capacities that will enable societies to survive and succeed in the age of information. Especially in developing countries, it is the teachers who are expected to build learning communities, create the knowledge society and develop the capacities for innovation, flexibility and commitment to change that are essential to economic prosperity in the twenty-first century.

A fundamental problem for the educational system is its unknown capacity to change alongside a dynamic environment which demands continuous change. Stager and Fullan (1992) maintain that the educational system must become expert at dealing with the educational change as a normal part of its work, i.e. as a way of life, because education has its moral purpose, that is, to make a difference in the lives of the students regardless of background, and to help citizens who can live and work in the postmodern society. What is new in this idea is that it puts the teachers precisely in the business of continuous innovation and change. Teachers are, now, in the business of making improvements in an ever changing world.

Society expects citizens to be capable of dealing with change throughout life, both individually as well as collaboratively. Education, in this sense, is the only social institution with the potential to fundamentally contribute to this goal. Teachers who are the primary actors of the educational system need to adapt themselves to the changing world. They should be prepared for the future and be ready for the unanticipated events. More specifically, teachers have to deal with the shocks and problems emerged in the new era. The views of future, in this sense, are the driving forces to catch up with the world's dynamism. As Jay (1967) asserts, today's success has mostly arisen from yesterday's creativity and tomorrow's achievements, most probably, will emerge from today's ideas. There is no doubt; one has to care about the future. Dreaming about, foreseeing and planning the future conveys us to a very key concept: Vision.

Everybody has a vision. Hidden or apparent, positive or negative, personal or organizational, they direct our lives. Teachers also have visions. The Vision 2023 Project prepared by TUBITAK (2004) assumes the creation of a welfare society who has a good ground in science and technology. This, obviously, requires that teachers

who will build up future societies can foresee the future and design their paths accordingly. Teachers need to know who they are and how they want to see the society in the future. This is, not surprisingly, a very essential aspect of a teacher's vision.

Despite the great developments in technology, the role of the teacher never loses its importance. As the education requires the interaction of both the teacher and the student, teachers are attributed different roles than the past but their importance is still prevalent. Already too much is expected of them. Their jobs are more complex than ever before. They must respond to the needs of a diverse and changing student population, a rapidly changing technology at the workplace, and demands for excellence from all segments of society (Fullan, 1993). This changing role and the shift in contemporary educational thought are often voiced together with vision.

**Vision**

Vision is the ability to see; is an idea or picture in the imagination; is a dream or similar experience (Oxford, 2000). However, as Kozlu (1994) states, vision is beyond our organ of sight. It is rather the ability to perceive unseen objects. Vision has its usage both in personal and organizational meanings. In this study, the personal aspect of vision is referred.

When different definitions and explanations about vision are checked, it is seen that future is the locus. Vision serves as a compass that points the direction to be taken. For Waitley (1993), it is the sign of the beautiful things in the future. It is the dream, the inner flame for success, commitment and devotion. Vision is something that we see in our minds, that is kept alive in our dreams and that is turned into reality from the images. When one visualizes something in his or her mind, he or she may believe in its existence. Similarly, Covey (1998) asserts that vision is the ability to invent what does not exist. It indicates the creative power of imagination. These definitions evoke that vision is something which inspires enthusiasm and allow people to believe it.

While having the power to give hope to individuals, vision motivates people as well. Lack of vision is the primary reason for a person's blindness about the future. Mesiti (1996) claims that vision provides people with a direction. This suggests that vision inspires the individuals and makes them discipline themselves. It enables them to go beyond their existing abilities. Senge (2002), on the other hand, asserts that personal visions are the images in people's minds and hearts. He presents vision as an answer to the very question of what one wants to create.

When talking about vision, Covey (1998) refers to an unlimited energy which derives from a view depending on principles, needs and abilities. He states that vision goes down to the core of our existence; it clarifies our goal, determines our direction and leads us to perform beyond our resources. Covey calls this as "desire" because it is a big driving force that becomes like DNA. He argues that vision has a tremendous influence in our existence which affects our every decision. According to him, vision is the fire inside that makes the life adventurous.

**Personal vision in education**

The word vision evokes pictures in the mind. It suggests a future orientation and implies a standard of excellence or virtuous condition and has the quality of uniqueness (Manning & Curtis, 2003). These are the elements that give life and strength to vision. Vision is an ideal image of what could be and should be. It might be the vision of an ideal process, vision of an ideal product or vision of an ideal for a specific purpose. On a personal level, one might envision the perfect career or the perfect education. On a philosophical level, we can envision the perfect world or the perfect educational system and so on. As Cowley and Domb (1997) posit, the process does not guarantee success but it is the first step in constructing a systemic framework for meaningful objectives.

In education, teachers benefit from their personal visions to shape their professional lives (Hammerness, 1999a, 2001, 2002). Vision is the display of the ideal images of what teachers dream about any concept; what they desire about it. As Hammerness (2001) posits, having a vision is one of the most powerful foundations for reform.

"Vision consists of images of what teachers hope could be or might be in their classrooms, their schools, their community and in some cases even society as a whole," she maintains (Hammerness, 1999a, p.4).

According to Stager and Fullan (1992), teachers have their roles as change agents in the postmodern society. They claim that the personal moral purpose of the individual is a building block for educational change. This suggests that a teacher must equip him or herself with four core capacities in order to become a change agent: "Personal vision-building, inquiry, mastery and collaboration." (Stager & Fullan, 1992, p.5).

According to Fullan (1993), one has to start with personal vision-building because it connects so well with moral purpose contending with the forces of change. Fullan who focuses on coping with change gives primacy to individual teacher rather than the institution in the change process. He believes that teachers are the agents of educational change and societal improvement. He gives much emphasis on having a personal vision. According to Fullan, shared vision is important in the long run, but for it to be effective one has to have something to share. It is not a good idea to borrow someone else's vision. Working on vision means examining and reexamining, and making explicit to oneself why he or she comes into teaching. This means to ask: "What difference am I trying to make personally"? (Fullan, 1993, p.13). Vision should not be thought as something only belonging to leaders, it emerges from what is important to the educators. For Fullan, personal vision comes from within, it gives meaning to work and exists independent of the particular organization or group individual happens to be in.

Studies show that the need to study vision emerges from the dichotomy between feeling and thinking. Additionally, vision is given emphasis by some as an attempt to reconcile emotions and cognitive skills. For instance, Hargreaves (1994) states that "teaching is more than a set of technically learnable skills; rather, it is given meaning by teachers' evolving selves, within the realistic contexts and contingencies of their work environments." (p. 3). He claims that teachers' selves, their meanings and purposes are frequently overlooked or overridden in reform efforts. For most people, good teaching is a matter of teachers' mastering the skills of teaching and the

knowledge of what to teach and how to teach it. However, one cannot base teaching solely on these, as Hargreaves suggests:

> Good teaching also involves issues of moral purpose, emotional investment and political awareness, adeptness and acuity. These moral, political and emotional aspects of teacher development are less well understood and less widely practised (1994, p. 6).

Hargreaves points out a concept he calls "emotional involvement." He assumes that teachers should reflect on their technical effectiveness, moral purposes and political conditions and consequences of their work; but this reflection does not cover all there is to see in a teacher. It misses what lies deep inside teachers; what motivates them most about their work: The desire. He claims that beyond teaching and moral purpose, desire makes good teaching. Therefore, understanding the emotional life of teachers and their feelings should be central to the teacher development efforts. However, emotions are often neglected in much of the writing and practice of the teacher development programs as Hargreaves posits.

Hammerness (1999a), also, focuses on the emotion-cognition dichotomy. She asserts that these are often seen as distinct and unrelated processes. Emotions are even considered in conflict with rational thinking. This separation of feeling and thinking is reflected in educational theory and research as well. Teachers' cognition is emphasized whereas their emotions are neglected. Research and policy on leadership, educational change and teacher development ignores or minimizes the emotional significance of teachers' work. However, emotions play a more central role in the nature of teachers' work. Research has generally treated emotions as disrupting, disturbing or preventing teachers from productive, effective practice. Hammerness sees emotions as an important indicator of vision. According to her, vision provides a means to explore how emotion and cognition come together to shape teachers' learning and their decisions about their professional lives. As she reports, in many change and reform efforts personal visions are undermined whereas the organizational visions are considered as the focus of attention.

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**Educational philosophies shaping vision**

Arends (1997) claims that classroom management is possibly the most important challenge facing teachers. However, most of the times, it is regarded as simply arranging desks or designing a classroom. In fact, classroom management encompasses many practices like developing relationships, structuring classroom communities, teaching moral development and citizenship, motivating children and establishing parental involvement (LePage, Hammond & Akar, 2005). In this sense, teachers' visions and what they perceive of teaching and learning, classroom management and evaluation are interrelated as Squires and Bliss (2004) note that vision refers to a teacher's articulation of the five elements of his or her ideal classroom: the sights and sounds of the classroom, the role of the teacher, the role of the students, the curriculum and how it relates to student learning. All teachers bring to the classroom some level of beliefs that influence their critical daily decision making. The visioning process, here, provides a structure for examining and expressing existing beliefs. As Hammerness (2001) states, teachers reflect their visions in their classroom practices. Here, the roots of the visions gain importance. Lashway (1997) notes that we begin the search by looking inward in order to see where the vision comes from. According to him, "a compelling vision is not the result of a tidy intellectual exercise but is woven into the fabric of our lives." (p. 21). He asserts that purpose is at the heart of every vision, and purpose is always a product of some belief system. This system contains assumptions about living, learning, and being human. These assumptions may be so deeply rooted that they are taken for granted and not easily accessible. From this perspective, to understand the belief systems shaping the visions of the teachers and to be able to read the roots of their visions; it makes sense to look at the link between the educational philosophies and their reflections in the classroom. The educational philosophies; perrenialism, essentialism, progressivism, existentialism and reconstructionism, suggest differing perspectives with respect to teaching and learning, classroom practices and evaluation differ from each other.

**Contextual influence on vision**

According to Hammerness (2002), one cannot talk about vision and the role it plays in teachers' lives without talking about the contexts in which these teachers imagine and work. Whether these teachers feel that their contexts support them or not is important to their ability to carry out their visions. On the other hand, vision may change depending on the context. As Akar (2004) maintains, teachers' visions of classroom management may change with respect to the school culture and student population. This presents context as an important dimension in terms of vision achievement and constructing vision. On the other hand, as found by Kuitunen (2004), teaching in urban and rural schools has different characteristics since these schools differ from each other in terms of physical conditions, equipment, management, cultural conditions and so on. According to this, rural school contexts have some important implications concerning education. The social context, infrastructure and people in rural areas provide different conditions specific to themselves. Rural contexts, therefore, are environments deserving profound outlook.

**1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research is to study the personal visions of the teachers employed in a village primary school. The personal vision refers to teachers' perception of the ideal images about education (classroom management, teaching and learning and education's implications for the society). More specifically, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the personal visions of the teachers at a village primary school with regard to education (classroom management, teaching and learning and implications for the society)?

2. How are the visions of the teachers at a village primary school affected by the context in which they teach?

## 1.3 Significance of the Study

In the light of the ideas above, analyzing vision is important to reflect the connection between theory and practice; the congruence between beliefs and instructional styles. Understanding teachers' visions, therefore, helps us understand their teaching and learning perceptions, classroom practices and gives us clues about how vision shapes their decisions and thinking. Vision, in this sense, acts as a lens to discern the divergences in primary school teachers' classroom practices. Second, thinking about vision leads teachers to generate ways to cope with the problems they face and develop a personal stance. Teachers, by beginning to think about what counted for them as educators, may develop a sense of alignment which is the equilibrium of their personal values with their professional intentions for children and schooling. Analyzing vision, furthermore, is also helpful in providing clues about the reality shock teachers face when entering the profession. Besides them, this study provides us with implications concerning the teacher development programs in Turkey with respect to their approach towards vision development. A study on teachers' visions may build awareness of the concept in both pre-service and in-service training of the teachers. This may help teachers to develop their own stances under the guidance of adequate theory.

If we go back to TUBITAK's Vision 2023 Project; teachers' visions also help us portray the cohesion between that vision for our future society and visions of the primary school teachers who are to educate future generations. And finally, a study of vision requires the study of contexts where teachers work since context has a role in supporting or preventing teachers' visions (Hammerness, 1999a). This study, hence, is helpful in identifying school quality indicators. The rural school, in this sense, is an important area of study since state rural primary schools comprise approximately 68% of the all state primary schools in Turkey (Ministry of National Education, 2007). This research, therefore, gives some picture about the rural schools' influence on teachers' performance and practices.

### 1.4 Definition of the Terms

**Personal vision:** Belonging to individual, personal vision refers to images of what teachers hope "could be" or "might be" in their classrooms, their schools, their community, or in society as a whole. It is teachers' ideal perception of the education (teaching-learning, classroom management and educational implications for the society). Teacher's personal vision is how he or she wants these dimensions to be.

**Village (rural) primary schools:** State primary schools located outside of the metropolitan areas and serving based on the Turkish Ministry of Education Primary School Law for the children between the ages 6-14.

**School context**: As Boyd (1992) states, the school context consists of the ecology (resources, physical arrangements, demographic shifts, local policies). This covers inorganic elements of the school; those things that, while not living, have an impact on persons in the school. The resources available, policies and rules, and the size of the school are examples of this dimension. School context also covers the culture, that is, the informal side of the school. Observed behavioral regularities, norms, values, school's philosophy, informal rules are under this dimension of the school context.

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the theoretical background, the purpose and the significance of the study. The chapter has ended with the definitions of the key terms in this study. The next chapter presents the review of the literature relevant to this study.

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter focuses on the literature where vision is viewed as something personal, an ideal; a compass that points the direction to be taken, that inspires enthusiasm and that allows people to buy into. As Lashway (1997) posits, while we often talk about the school's vision, it is always people who have the vision. Before there is a vision, there must be people who have vision. For the purpose of this study, the personal aspect of vision is taken under consideration and it is looked for the relevant literature under this perspective. More specifically, this chapter deals with the dimensions of the vision and reflections of visions upon the classroom practices through the study of educational philosophies that underlie teachers' visions. Additionally, the chapter focuses on rural school contexts and their implications for education. Finally, the chapter ends with the prior studies that focused on personal visions of teachers.

## 2.1 Dimensions of Vision

The study conducted by Hammerness (1999a) shows that teachers have visions and that those visions are significant and concrete. For the teachers, vision comprises images of what they hope could be or might be in their classrooms, their schools, their communities, and even in society as a whole. According to Hammerness (1999a, 2001, 2002) vision can provide a sense of reach for teachers. This reach inspires and motivates them and invites them to reflect upon their work. However, visions do not always function in these beneficial ways. For some teachers, the reach seems too distant. The comparison from their current practice leads them to learn that their visions are impossible and that they and their students are powerless to reach them. Hammerness suggests that visions of people vary across three dimensions:

"Focus, range and distance" (1999a, p.4). *Focus* refers to the center, or areas, of interest of the vision. It refers to the images, ideas or aspect that vision focuses. Focus also refers to the distinctness of the vision. Whether the vision is sharply defined or is blurry may be defined by how its focus is described. *Range*, on the other hand, refers to the scope or extent of the focus. Whether the vision is broad and panoramic or narrow and specific refers to range. Finally, *distance* is about how close or how far vision is relative to the current practices. *Context*, on the other hand, is an indispensable aspect of the vision since teachers' feelings about their contexts are important to carry out their visions. Whether the contexts they work provide support for them or not has much influence on the achievement of the vision. Teachers' visions not only influence and shape their decisions but are also affected by the context where teachers perform. The social, physical and educational environments have a major role in constraining or supporting teacher's vision.

## 2.1.1 Vision Reflected on Classroom Management, Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

A point of view about teaching and learning implies a perspective on knowledge and ways of knowing. Although not always explicit, theories of knowledge inform and guide how teachers provide opportunities for children's learning. A philosophy of education provides a synthesizing framework for teaching. Underlying decisions about all aspects of curriculum is a point of view about the nature of knowledge, teaching and learning and a vision of what children should know and be able to do, what kinds of people teachers and children can become and what society is possible (Nager & Shapiro, 2007).

Educators hold certain assumptions about education, society and how young people learn. According to Oliva (2001), statements of aims of education are positions taken that are based on a set of beliefs, i.e. a philosophy of education. To do educational philosophy is to become critically conscious of what is involved in the complex business of teaching and learning (Green, 1973 as cited in Oliva, 2001). Some teachers may favor one philosophy whereas some others may be eclectic in their stand. At any rate, the educational philosophies; perrenialism, essentialism,

progressivism, existentialism and reconstructionism, suggest differing perspectives with respect to teaching and learning, classroom practices and evaluation.

**Perennialist philosophy**

As Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) note, the curriculum of the perennialists is subject-centered. Advocates of this philosophy views the teacher as an authority in the field whose knowledge and expertise are unquestionable. The student, therefore, is considered to be master of the subject and to be able to guide discussion. For the adherents of perennialism, education is not an imitation of life, but a preparation for it. The educational focus of perennialism is returning to the past, namely, to universal truths and such absolutes as reason and faith (Demirel, 2005).

Perennialists emphasize traditional subjects of study. Teaching is primarily based on the direct instruction and Socratic method: Oral exposition, lecture and explication. Perennialists favor didactic teaching by lectures and textbook assignments. Education involves confronting the problems and questions that have challenged people over the centuries.

The perennialist teacher is a model of intellectual and rational powers. As Cohen (1999) notes, the demanding curriculum focuses on attaining cultural literacy, stressing students' growth in enduring disciplines. For a perennialist teacher, students' interests are irrelevant. Whether the students dislike the subject matter is secondary. There is only one common curriculum for all students, with little room for elective subjects, vocational or technical subject matter. It is believed that all students learn and grow in similar ways. As Henson (1995) posits, perennialists aim to prepare students for life by teaching them to think. This philosophy is characterized by traditional methods that emphasize control and students are expected to respect the teacher as educational leader.

Whalen (2006) posits that perennialist classroom is one with the traditional philosophy where a teacher answers questions and inquires from the students in order for them to gain an understanding. Teacher pours knowledge and students absorb it.

Coyle, on the other hand, maintains that perennialism is teacher-centered, as she asserts:

> The teacher takes control and provides a more structured classroom. This type of classroom can easily be stereotyped as a "Little House on the Prairie" classroom. The desks are usually placed in rows where the students have little interaction. However, this lack of student interaction is the base to the perennialist belief to a successful education (Coyle, 2000, p.2).

In relation to classroom management, discipline is important for learning (Dunn, 2005). According to perennialism, students are required to be thoughtful beings. They are to possess unique qualities, to think deeply and imagine. As Coyle (2000) states, this is how ancient philosophers Plato and Aristotle taught their students.

Perennialist understanding favors standardized, clear performance objectives and evaluation methods. Standardized testing is seen as one means to hold both teachers and students accountable for learning (Dunn, 2005).

**Essentialist philosophy**

As Cohen (1999) writes, essentialists believe that schooling should be practical, preparing students to become valuable members of society. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (1998), essentialist philosophy emphasizes the mastery of the essential skills. In essentialist teaching, it is assumed that the school curriculum should be geared to the fundamentals or essentials: the basics of life, the three R's (reading, writing and arithmetics). In essentialist perspective, teacher pours knowledge of traditional subjects, students absorb them. It is believed that knowledge comes from memorizing content and internalizing skills of traditional subjects.

Advocates of this philosophy claim that teaching of the necessary skills and subjects requires mature and well-educated teachers who know their subjects and are able to transmit them to students (Gutek, 1988). As Coyle (2000) asserts, teachers provide the students with rigorous instruction that prepare them to live life in the present and

future. However, essentialist teachers do not try to influence or set social policies. Instead they use a disciplined curriculum to teach the facts (Parkay & Stanford, 1995). Traditional academic subjects and technology, such as computer literacy, are seen as valuable. Vocational education is not encouraged by the essentialist educators. Lecture, recitation and discussion are the main teaching methods for an essentialist. As Cohen (1999) states, behaviorism is the learning theory related to essentialist philosophy.

Whalen (2006) states that an essentialist classroom is one where procedures with role skills and memorization are key aspects in learning. Students follow routines where they are repeatedly practicing and applying educational standards in order to gain mastery. Students in an essentialist classroom learn how to be productive members of society. They possess virtues such as "respect for authority, perseverance, fidelity to duty, consideration to others, and practicality," (Shaw, 2000). Students are to be taught hard work and discipline and should allow others to engage in learning. They are expected to follow the rules. Character training and moral literacy are emphasized in classes. Students attend school to learn how to participate in society.

As Shaw posits, in order to determine a student's achievement or mastery, they are given standardized tests, with the end result being a student who is "culturally literate" because they have achieved mastery in the traditional disciplines.

**Progressivist philosophy**

According to Coyle (2000), this is the philosophy emphasizing that students learn through their own interests, just as they learned their first vocabulary of words. According to this, education is the life itself rather than being a preparation for life. The progressivist idea emphasizes that democracy permits the free interplay of ideas and personalities that is a necessary condition of true growth. For the progressivists, school should encourage cooperation rather than competition (Demirel, 2005).

Progressivists view learning as educating "the whole child," including the physical, emotional, and social aspects of the individual (Cohen, 1999). Needs and experiences

of the individual, which would vary according to the situation, is important. The students are given the choice and freedom to choose what they learn. The child-centered progressive emphasis on children's needs and interests indicates that the curriculum should develop from the child and that the most effective school environment is a permissive one in which children would be free to explore and act on their own interests (Gutek, 1988).

Ryan and Cooper (2004) assert that the role of the teacher in a progressive classroom is to guide the students through their development of critical thinking skills. Teacher acts as facilitator and a resource person. One way for a teacher to do this is through questioning his or her students. In a progressive classroom, the teacher also creates practical activities that would guide the students through problem solving and show them how this is relevant to their lives outside of the classroom. The teacher's role is not to direct, but to advise. He or she helps the student to acquire the values of the democratic system.

Progressivist teaching methods include such things as guided discovery and hands-on learning. Classroom activities enhancing critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making, cooperative learning and discovery learning are examples of some of the methods that would be incorporated in the curriculum. This way, it is assumed that students not only discuss what they are learning, but they also experience it through role-playing. Real-life processes are given much importance by progressivists. As Dunn (2005) maintains, relating curriculum experiences to real-life experiences is important in progressivist thought.

The type of classroom management that would appeal to a progressivist would be an environment that stimulates or invites participation, involvement, and the democratic process. As Parkay and Stanford (1995) maintain; for progressivists, "human beings, young as well as adult, are good and may be trusted to act in their own best interests". The atmosphere of the classroom would be active. Students should learn within communities containing a more social atmosphere. Conducting the classroom as a community creates a direct correlation to the students' outside world. Group work and discussions are the characterizing activities of a progressivist environment.

As Ryan and Cooper (2004) claim, this is a relaxed and very democratic environment for the students where their assessment would be based on engaging in real world activities. The students also receive continuous feedback and the monitoring of their progress. The end result of a progressive classroom would be the creation of a student who is prepared to take the knowledge they have learned in a classroom and apply it to the real world.

According to Ryan and Cooper (2004), in a progressivist classroom, teachers plan lessons to arouse curiosity and push the student to a higher level of knowledge. The students are encouraged to learn by doing and to interact with one another. This develops social virtues such as cooperation and tolerance for different points of view. In addition, students solve problems in the classroom similar to those they will encounter outside school, which provides them with the tools needed to become flexible problem solvers in preparation for adult lives. Teachers need to recognize how people use their own experiences, prior knowledge and perceptions, as well as their physical and interpersonal environments to construct knowledge and meaning. Progressivists highlight meaningful learning which is forming viable relationships among ideas, concepts and information (Williams & Cavallo, 1995). According to this, students attempt to make connections between concepts instead of memorizing facts. As Novak (1984) asserts, meaningful understanding is the product that may result when a person with a meaningful learning orientation and sufficient prior knowledge interacts with the content that has the potential or being learned in a meaningful way.

What is most important to know in progressivism is how to learn. In progressive classrooms students learn how to learn. They test ideas by active experimentation. Through experiential learning which emphasizes the active involvement of the student in a meaningful and challenging experience, learner applies the knowledge to a new situation (Breunig, 2004) The learner, therefore, becomes a problem solver and thinker who makes meaning through his or her individual experience in the physical and cultural context. With this quality, progressives believe that students will be ready for the future ahead of them. The progressivist put emphasis on learning processes as opposed to learning products. The process by which a student

determines a particular answer is more important than retrieval of objective solutions (Johnson, 2004).

Cognitivism and constructivism which assume that learner actively constructs own understandings of reality through interaction with environment and reflection on actions are the learning theories that reflect progressivism (Cohen, 1999). These theories assume that learning is best achieved through active participation in the environment. They highlight that students who learn how to learn will learn more in school than those who are dependent on the teacher to learn (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998).

**Existentialist philosophy**

Sartre's claim indicating that we have absolute freedom over our internal nature includes the basics of what this school of education believes. Existentialism is focused on the individual student. Furthermore, it is attentive to the spiritual growth of each individual. It allows students the freedom of choice and provides them with experiences that will help them find meaning in their lives (Parkay & Stanford, 1995). Existentialism gives students options to choose from and allows them to explore their interests. The teacher's role is to help students define their own essence by exposing them to various paths they may take in life and creating an environment in which they may freely choose their own preferred way (Shaw, 2000).

The students in an existentialist classroom are allowed to question their existence and subject matter comes secondary to their questioning. The students have the responsibility of "determining for themselves what is 'true' or 'false,' 'right' or 'wrong,' 'beautiful' or 'ugly'," (Shaw, 2000). Students conduct themselves in ways mirroring many of Aristotle's pupils. They conduct their own inquiries and draw their own conclusions.

The knowledge that students inherit in an existentialist classroom is not like any other school of education. The subject matter in this type of a classroom is unique to each individual which allows them learn how to accept and appreciate themselves.

Existentialists view education and knowledge as what we learn through personal inquiries. By discovering who we are will help us grow physically, emotionally and intellectually. As Shaw (2000) maintains, in the existential classroom, subject matter takes second place to helping the students understand and appreciate themselves as unique individuals who accept complete responsibility for their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Teachers should not simply impose discipline on their students, but rather should demonstrate the value of discipline. Instead, the existentialist teacher would model valuing, decision making, and choosing. He or she would pose moral and ethical questions, as well as intellectual questions, to the students. Morover, the existentialist teacher is introspective and caring.

Existentialism puts emphasis on the individuality of the students and the teachers. This assumes that there is a relationship of respect among all the individuals who are involved in education. Education should be related to life. A primary aim of education in the minds of most existentialists is to help individuals to understand themselves. This includes their joys, fears, frustrations, weaknesses and potentials. This changes the classroom dynamic. The teacher and the student are by necessity partners in a reciprocal relationship. They both share the responsibility for what happens in the classroom and for the interpretation of what happens in the classroom. The emphasis is on subject matters like arts and humanities that help students grow in understanding of who they are (Dunn, 2005).

"An existentialist curriculum would consist of experiences and subjects that lend themselves to philosophical dialogue and acts of choice-making." (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 37). Existentialist evaluation discounts the use of standardized tests. It rejects the notion of accountability and stresses a more subjective form of appraisal or evaluation.

Humanistic approach has its roots in existentialism. This theory bases learning on warm, friendly and democratic student-teacher interactions, it minimizes coercive and strict disciplinary measures. The learners' self-concept and self-esteem are considered as essential factors in learning (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). Humanist

educators who suggest a child-centered education, put emphasis on personal freedom, choice and responsibility (Cohen, 1999).

**(Social) Reconstructionist philosophy:** The main goal of this school of education is to change or reconstruct the current social order (Parkay & Stanford, 1995). A reconstructionist program of education is deliberately committed to bring about social and constructive change. "In such a program, teachers are considered the prime agents of social change, cultural renewal and internationalism" (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998, p. 51). Curriculum should reflect the ideals of the importance of democracy and the proposition that the school is the fundamental institution in modern society. Cultural pluralism, human relations, politics of change, global issues, social problems, analysis of language, autobiographical histories, and political/social awareness are emphasized in the curriuculum.

Teaching and learning in a social reconstructive classroom would be much like the progressive classroom: Active rather than passive. Students would analyze, research, and link the underlying issues to institutions and structures in the community. They would take action or responsibility in planning for change. Group process, problem detecting, problem solving, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, conflict resolution, cooperative learning, action research, and metaphor are the teaching methods.

For the social reconstructionists educational theories are products of particular historical periods and cultural contexts. According to this, educational theories should shape social and political policies. It is the school's task to examine the cultural heritage and critically and to emphasize elements that can be used in the reconstruction of society (Gutek, 1988).

In a social reconstructivist classroom, students learn to think effectively and to work constructively. The classroom would have a climate of inquiry that questions the assumptions of the status quo. Conflict resolution and experimentation are the teaching methods in reconstructivist classrooms. Students learn that they can make a better world to live in by giving of their talents. Much of their learning takes place on

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field trips and through community-based projects. In this approach to education, students learn appropriate methods for dealing with the significant crises that confront the world. Parkay and Stanford (1995) maintain that this philosophy is rooted in bettering the world through active involvement. It prepares the students for what lies beyond the four walls of the classroom. By bringing the community, if not the entire world, into the classroom; social reconstructive classrooms prepare students to be highly effective and constructive members of society. This philosophy gives less emphasis on management and control, and more focus on community building.

It is apparent that different philosophies have different reflections in the classroom. School context, on the other hand, stands as another dimension which has important influence on the achievement of the vision. Rural school environments, therefore, deserves to be zoomed.

## 2.1.2 Rural School Contexts

As Hammerness (2002) stresses, the context has an important influence on the achievement of the vision. This case study is conducted in a rural primary school. Therefore, characteristics specific to rural schools should be emphasized. As Kuitunen (2004) maintains, in general, the level of education in Turkish schools is regarded low in terms of international comparison study and national surveys. Teaching in urban and rural schools has different characteristics since these schools differ from each other in terms of physical conditions, equipment, management, cultural conditions and so on. According to the 2007 statistics, 69% of all the primary schools are in rural areas whereas the number of students in these schools comprises 25% of all primary school students in Turkey (M.E.B., 2007). Kuitunen's study performed for World Bank in 2004 including nineteen schools from different urban and rural regions of Turkey suggests that the socio-economic background of the student and the location of his/her school (rural or urban) are strongly related with the success in competition. It is possible to draw the following implications concerning the rural schools from his study:

**Social context**

- Rural schools play more important role for their surroundings than urban schools since there is no other institution in rural areas to take care of the needs of people.
- Gender and undermining education for girls are mostly discussed issues in rural schools.
- Schools serve as change agents in some rural villages.
- In rural schools, teachers are mostly young and they stay at the school for one to three years.
- Teachers rotate too often especially in rural areas. They want to move close to their home areas and to wealthy areas.

**Infrastructure**

- In most of the schools, there is lack of equipment and materials.
- One of the biggest problems in eastern rural areas is accommodation of teachers, missing of the central heating and the bad road conditions.
- Children in rural areas do not have the energy to learn effectively due to the nutrition problems. Moreover, there are problems of serving quality lunch for bussing students and poor students.
- One of the major questions for rural education is how to organize schooling in sparsely populated areas and isolated communities. Different strategies have been developed to overcome this problem. Establishing multigrade classrooms in small schools is one of them. Bussing schools TIOs, boarding schools PIOs and YIBOs are some other solutions.
- In rural areas, schools act as a part of the society; teachers feel like mothers and fathers of the students and villagers contribute to the practical aspects of the school like employing heater.
- While students of the urban schools fight in entering good secondary schools, rural students worry whether they can enter secondary education at all because of the poor economic conditions of their families.

**People**

- Parents in rural areas cannot participate in the school activities as much as the

parents in urban areas.

- Building community participation has positive results to secure resources for the rural schools and to educate the community members in matters like clothing, hygiene, traditions and stuff.

- Parents' expectancy of academic success from their children is higher in urban areas.

- There is organic system in many small village schools. According to this, organizations interact openly with their surroundings and can actively influence it. Concepts like rural development, parents' involvement and donors are related to this model. In order to get donations or non-material support, principals must have good relationships with their surroundings.

With respect to the visions of the teachers, it can be told that the above mentioned factors have positive or negative effects on the achievement of visions of teachers working in rural areas. The characteristics of the rural schools influence both the practice and the expectations of the teachers. These schools possess different elements in terms of students, school contexts and environment. Rural areas cannot offer the same educational opportunities as the urban areas. Conversely, as an advantage, it is claimed that rural schools have a social function and they are not only the educational but also the cultural and social center of the area (DeYoung & Kannapel, 1999).

In his study, Şeker (1998) reports a number of problems peculiar to rural primary schools. His data support that the parents of the students hardly contribute to their children's academic achievements. Moreover, they are not very educated and not eager to send their children to high schools. Teachers working in these schools complained about the students' lack of some basic knowledge. They even have difficulty to use their native language. They also mentioned inadequate materials and technology and considered indifference toward the school as a big problem. On the other hand, in a study conducted in twenty villages, Koçyılmaz (2000) stresses and reports the negative attitude in rural areas against the education of girls.

Furthermore, in rural schools, it is seen that teachers are less fortunate than urban school teachers to have access to resources that will enable them to grow professionally. A research conducted by Seferoğlu (1996) on 313 teachers reveals that rural area teachers do not have much opportunity to participate in in-service training. Aiming to analyze teachers' perceptions of professional development opportunities, Seferoğlu reports that 87% of the teachers who have never participated in any in-service training activities are recruited in rural schools. And about the third of these participants have never worked in any urban school. Seferoğlu's study also reveals that rural school teachers are likely to be new teachers. They are in more need of professional help and they feel insecure about their teaching. Seferoğlu also claims that the relationship between the rural school teachers is more informal due to the low number of teachers in rural schools.

The fact that teachers working in rural schools are new or are in their early careers brings more issues with it. The beginnings of the career are the years characterized by the idealistic enthusiasm (Edelwich, 1980). According to this, there are high expectations and energy on teacher's part. The teacher is full of motivation and is eager for self-progress. Then, after facing problems, he or she loses the motivation and idealistic beliefs. Alienation shows up. As Veenman (1998) puts it, the first years of the actual teaching is very hectic and very difficult. The transition from teacher training to the first teaching job is often portrayed as traumatic and as a source of disillusionment. This is what we call as the "reality shock".

In the light of what is said so far; as a school context which has specific characteristics, rural schools might provide us with important implications concerning their influence on teachers' visions.

## 2.2 Studies about Teachers' Personal Visions

When we look at the literature about teachers' personal visions as meant in this study, we do not see any study conducted in Turkey. However, studies conducted in other countries, especially in Unites states, has some important implications about teachers' visions.

In a study concerning the connection between teachers' beliefs and their teaching practices, Squires and Bliss (2004) focus on teachers' beliefs and find an anomaly. They realize that though some teachers share similar backgrounds, identical and compatible beliefs; their instructional styles are divergent. A so-called constructivist teacher, for instance, has incompatible practices with her beliefs. In this sense, they conclude that one has to be cautious to make inferences about a teacher's beliefs unmediated by that teacher's own vision. Their data support that the coherence between beliefs and practices becomes discernible only when the beliefs are holistically organized through the process of teacher visioning. After reorganizing their study based on the visioning approach, they claim to resolve these anomalies and finally manage to see the cohesion. Therefore, in order to understand teachers' teaching in a deeper level, the teacher visioning process provides a structure for expressing and examining existing beliefs. According to this, the vision statement consists of a teacher's articulation the following elements of his or her ideal classroom: the sights and sounds of the classroom, the role of the teacher and students, the curriculum and how it relates to student learning and the relationship between the classroom and the kind of society the teacher would like to see in the $21^{st}$ century. At the end of their research, Squires and Bliss note that the vision statements of the participant teachers reveal the connections between their practices and beliefs in a congruent and compelling manner.

On the other hand, in her study conducted on 96 teachers, Hammerness (1999a) finds that teachers' visions have varying effects on their classroom management and their thinking depending on the focus, range, distance and context of their visions. Her interviews reveal that vision could serve as a guide for practice, directing the curriculum, units, and even daily lessons. It can function as a reference point that indicates how far the current practice is from where one wants to be. Hammerness goes on to state that the feeling of efficacy is important in motivating teachers and vision is an instrument for the teachers to measure their effectiveness. Her study reveals that vision helps understand what may contribute to teachers' fulfillment, joy and satisfaction in their work. She reports that between thirty to fifty percent of beginning teachers leaves teaching within the first five years. In this sense, she notes,

being distant to vision is important to understand that reality shock as the data in her research proves it.

When presenting another report on vision involving two teachers, Hammerness (2002) reports that teachers' visions reflect their understanding of teaching and learning and the role of teacher and student. According to the interviews with the teachers, teachers give clues that they try to organize their classrooms in accordance with their visions. Hammerness' study posits that teachers' selecting methods are in parallel with what they want their students to become, which is part of their vision.

In her study on the influence of vision on individuals' thought and belief systems about ideal classroom practices; Akar (2004) finds that visions about classroom management may change with respect to the school culture and student population. Akar's study shows that teacher candidates' visions are influenced by their past experiences as well as their present ones. The study findings also suggest that asking teacher candidates and novice teachers about their visions of classroom management makes them think and overview their classroom practices. Consequently, asking them about their visions contributed to the very knowledge construction as self-directed learners.

In a study on teacher development programs; Duffy (1998) who is a teacher educator, states that he has begun to consider revising his usual approach to teacher development. He argues that the priority should be helping teachers develop their stances. In his attempts to articulate teachers' personal values and to make them drive their decisions by themselves, Duffy makes use of vision. He maintains that while thinking about their visions, teachers begin to understand that decisions about daily dilemmas of teaching have to be consistent with their values. He later finds that focusing on vision helps teachers develop a sense of alignment necessary for them to overcome problems they face. In his training programs, when teachers are asked about what they want to accomplish, what message they want to communicate and what they want their students to become; they begin to think hard about what counted for them as educators. After teachers reflect their views on their vision statements, Duffy has realized that teachers use them as moral compasses to decide

how to use pedagogical information provided in teacher education programs. He claims that the process gives teachers confidence in their professional decision making and makes it possible for them to create instruction rooted in their visions for students.

In this chapter, the researcher has presented literature relevant to the research. He has tried to focus on dimensions of vision, reflecting vision upon the classroom practices, the rural school contexts and the prior study relevant to this research. The next chapter deals with the methodology used in this study.

# CHAPTER 3

## METHOD

This chapter describes the methodology used in this research. It begins with the design of the study. Then, the rationale information related to the research design and background information to the case follow. Data collection-data analysis procedures and limitations of the study are the subsequent parts.

## 3.1 Design of the Study

This research has attempted to explore visions of the teachers at a village primary school. The researcher has used a qualitative research design to collect and analyze data. This study has been both descriptive and exploratory in nature. As Rubin and Rubin (1995) claim, such studies are more interested in the understanding, knowledge and insights of the participants rather than in categorizing people or events in terms of academic theories. It is descriptive since it seeks to describe the behaviors, practices, perceptions and meanings ascribed by the teachers. It is exploratory in its effort to identify emergent themes and patterns as teachers make sense of their experiences and ideals.

## 3.2 Rationale for the Research Design

As a research about the visions of teachers at a village primary school, this study has aimed mainly to answer questions of "how", "what" and "why". What the visions of the teachers are, how they describe it, why the context they teach is important are some of the questions this research seeks to answer. As Frankel and Wallen (2003) put it, qualitative researchers are interested in how things occur, want to know what the participants are thinking and why they think what they do. Indeed, qualitative

research refers to those studies that investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations or materials.

According to Patton (1990), approaching fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis contributes to depth, openness and detail of qualitative inquiry. Therefore, qualitative methods permit the researcher to study in depth and detail.

In relation to qualitative research, Taylor (1994) stresses the "meaning making". According to him, meaning is a central concept. It arises out of social interaction, changes over time and with context, and is both individual and shared. Creswell (1994), also, emphasizes meaning making. He argues that people hold multiple realities of the world. These realities are based on the meanings people construct from their experiences or the context of their lives. These different meanings that people form cause them to hold different perspectives on life. In order to understand and interpret these multiple realities, researchers should interact with those they study to minimize the distance between themselves and those being researched. As a research design, qualitative study is framed by people's interpretation of meaning based on interaction with other people.

Qualitative research involves capturing the subject's perspective. Therefore, qualitative researchers incorporate thick descriptive data collection by using words and illustrations to describe a topic of interest. Creswell (1994) asserts that qualitative researchers must report these realities and rely on voices and interpretations of informants. Although there are multiple realities, these different realities may narrow down to a few recurring themes. Therefore, once the data are collected, the researcher should be able to find some similar themes in the data to make some verifiable meaning about the subject in its context. Creswell (1994) asserts that categories emerge from informants, as he notes: "These categories provide rich "context-bound" information leading to patterns of theories that help explain the phenomenon" (p.7).

The focus of this study has been a village primary school. This has made our research a case study. Case studies are one of those qualitative methods to gather data. Yin (1994) defines a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." (p. 13). Stake (1995), on the other hand, suggests that the case study's best use is for adding to existing experience and humanistic understanding.  According to this, case studies are appropriate methods for studying when a "how" or "why" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control. They focus on one context or setting and deal with the interaction of factors and actors in this situation.

According to Merriam (1998), there are four main characteristics of the case study: First, the case study is particularistic which may lead to greater understanding of a more general issue. This relates to the boundaries which confines the research to the focus of the study question. Second, it is descriptive. The narrative of the participants is often the major source of the data. Third, it is heuristic in that new meaning attached to phenomena may emerge as a result of the case study. Finally, it is more concrete, more contextual, and more developed by reader interpretation (Merriam, 1998, pp. 31-32).

## 3.3 Background Information to the Case

This section gives information about the school setting, sampling and participants. It starts with the information about the village primary school where the researcher has conducted the study.

### 3.3.1 Information about the Case School

For the sake of confidentiality, the name of the school is not mentioned in this study. The school where the study is conducted is a state rural primary school (Figure 1) in a small village of Kalecik which is a town 70 km away from Ankara. This village where emigration rate is high has a population of 400 people. Though being so close

to the capital city of Turkey, the village and the school are very isolated from the city center; both the transportation and telecommunications facilities are far below standards. There is no vehicle from village to Ankara highway, the altitude makes life difficult, and transportation is dangerous especially in winter.



*Figure 1.* The village primary school where the study is conducted.

School: The case in this study is a village primary school consisting of 45 students. There are 13 teachers at the school including one principal, one vice-principal, five class teachers and six subject matter teachers with Turkish Language, Social Sciences, Math, Religious Culture and Moral, English and Science credentials. The researcher works as the English Language teacher in the school. A villager is recruited by the administration as school attendant. There is no mentor teacher at the school. The school consists of three small buildings and has got eight classrooms. There is one classroom for each grade. Table 1 shows number of students for each class.

Table 1

*Number of students in classes*

| Class (Grade) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of students | 7 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 44 |

Classrooms of the first and second grades are colorful and they are located in the same building (see Figure 2). In the first grade's classroom (Figure 3), the walls are filled with handwritings prepared by both students and the teacher that provide symbolic identification and belongingness to students. Pictures drawn by students are exhibited on the walls of the both classrooms. The second grade's classroom walls (Figure 4) have texts written by students. Exhibition of the student activities is a common thing in both classrooms.



*Figure* 2. Building where first and second grade classrooms are located.

*Figure* 3. Classroom of the first graders.



*Figure 4*. Classroom of the second graders.

The u-shaped adjustment of the desks is common in both third grade (Figure 5) and fourth grade classrooms which are located in the same building (Figure 6). The walls are again filled with student activities in both classrooms. Colored cartoons adorn the walls and there are wall clocks and calendars in all rooms. The second grade and fifth grade (Figure 7) classrooms are very small in size and it is really difficult for both the teacher and the students to move in these classrooms. All classrooms from first to fifth grade have teacher and student desks covered with table cover.



*Figure* 5. Classroom of the third graders.

*Figure* 6. Building where third, fourth and fifth grade classrooms are located.



*Figure* 7. Classroom of the fifth graders.

The main building of the school (Figure 8) includes the sixth, seventh and eight grade classrooms (see Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 11). These classrooms have, on their walls, few pictures and writings prepared by the students. These are related to English and Science lessons and identify issues for student growth. The teacher and student desks are covered by table covers except the eight grade classroom. These classrooms lack the liveliness and colors found in first scale classrooms, i.e. classrooms from the first to the fifth grade.



*Figure 8*. Main building where sixth, seventh and eighth grade classrooms are located.

*Figure* 9. Classroom of the sixth graders.



*Figure* 10. Classroom of the seventh graders.

*Figure* 11. Classroom of the eighth graders.

The school does not contain any room or area for sports activities other than the school yard which was covered with asphalt in 2006. There is a multipurpose room (Figure 12) at the school which is used as a computer lab, library and science laboratory at the same time. There are eleven computers for the student use inside the lab and there is no internet connection at the school due to the lack of digital lines. The lab also contains a TV, DVD player, OH projector and whiteboard. There is no canteen at the school.

*Figure 12*. Multipurpose room.

### 3.3.2 Sampling Information

This study utilized convenience sampling to focus on the visions of teachers at a village primary school. Sample of the study consisted of ten teachers from a village primary school. Using a sampling strategy like this allowed for two kinds of analyses. First, the individual interviews were examined to expose the unique features of each teacher's experiences. Then an across-interview analysis was done to identify themes that are shared by the diverse members of the participant group.

### 3.3.3 Participants

Except the administrators and the researcher himself; all teachers of the village primary school constituted the participants of this study upon receiving their consent. The administrators were not included in the data collection process since the study aimed to focus on teachers with classroom experience at the time of the research.

The participants were aged between the ages 20 and 31. Eight participants were female whereas two were male. Five participants were class teachers and five of them were subject matter teachers. Their graduations from university dated back to years between 1998 and 2006. Throughout this study, the researcher mentioned the female teachers under the pseudonyms K1, K2, K3, K4, K5, K6, K7, K8 and the male teachers as E1 and E2 (see Table 2).

### 3.4 Data Collection Procedures

A semi-structured interview schedule has been the instrument for collecting data in this study. The interview schedule consists of 8 pages and 16 questions (see Appendix A for the interview schedule and Appendix B for the translated version). As Isaac (1995) highlights, "semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to ask a core group of structured questions that seek to identify underlying factors or relationships which are too complex or elusive to encompass in more straight-forward questions." (Isaac, 1995, p. 147).

Table 2

*Information about the participants*

| Participants | Graduation | | | | Year of teaching experience | Year at School | Credential | In-service training courses |
| | Faculty | | | | | | | |
| | Education | Other | Department | Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K1 | | x | Philosophy | 2000 | 4 | 1 | Class Teacher | Computer |
| K2 | x | | Class Teaching | 2002 | 5 | 2 | Class Teacher | Preparatory & Basic |
| K3 | x | | Class Teaching | 2000 | 5 | 1 | Class Teacher | New curriculum |
| K4 | x | | Science Teaching | 2001 | 4 | 3 | Science | Computer |
| K5 | x | | Class Teaching | 2005 | 1 | 1 | Class Teacher | New curriculum |
| K6 | | x | Turkish Lang. & Literature | 2001 | 5 | 1 | Turkish Language | - |
| K7 | x | | Class Teaching | 2000 | 5 | 2 | Class Teacher | - |
| K8 | | x | Religious Culture & Moral Teach. | 2006 | 1 | 1 | Religious Culture & Moral | Preparatory & Basic |
| E1 | x | | Math Teaching | 2006 | 1 | 1 | Math | - |
| E2 | x | | History Teaching | 1998 | 7 | 1 | Social Sciences | Special Education |

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In addition to the semi-structured interview, pictures related to the school environment were used to support the data about the school context and the classrooms.

### 3.4.1 Interview Schedule

As Patton (1990) claims, the primary purpose of an interview is to allow the researcher, and subsequently readers of his/her work, access to an individual's perspective. According to Maxwell (1996), qualitative research is especially suited for a research question that seeks to understand the meaning that a participant gives to the events, situations, and actions they are involved with. When the researcher seeks the perspective of a participant, he is trying to understand his or her reality. As Taylor and Bogdan (1984) posit, the interview enables us to bring out the subject's human experience. On the other hand, it allows us to achieve crucial qualitative objectives within a manageable methodological context and it lets the researcher gain access to participants without violating their privacy or testing their patience (McCracken, 1988). The purpose of interviewing is to find out what they have on their minds because observing what they think or how they feel is not possible. As Patton (1990) states, we can not observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world.

### 3.4.2 Adaptation of the Instrument

For this study, the researcher adapted a vision statement form and an interview schedule prepared by Karen Hammerness (1999b). First, the consent of the author was taken. Both the vision statement form and the interview schedule were translated into Turkish by the researcher himself and two persons in the area with educational background in ELT. During the adaptation process, the vision statement form and the interview schedule were merged and an open-ended questionnaire was formed through expert help. For cultural adaptation, changes were made in the design and content of the questions. Questions that appeared as repetition were omitted along with some changes in the ordering of a few questions. Furthermore, grouping of the

questions was also changed. The original interview schedule consisted of the following six sections:

- What is in a vision?
- How do teachers view the relationship between their vision and their practice?
- What role does vision play in teachers' professional lives?
- Where did your vision come from?
- Summary,
- Conclusion.

After having merged the vision statement form with the interview schedule; the open-ended questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

- Your vision,
- Your ideal classroom and your vision,
- Your practices and your vision,
- Thinking about your vision.

### 3.4.3 Pilot Studies

The piloting process strengthened the cultural adaptation process. First, the researcher gave questionnaires to four class teachers, each working in a different state rural primary school the conditions of which are similar to the case. The researcher asked the participants to fill in the questionnaires in the absence of the researcher. At the end of this pilot study, findings showed that teachers had difficulty to fully understand the questions; therefore intended information was not sufficiently collected. With the help of expert opinion, some questions that the participants have found ambiguous were clarified and these changes formed a structured interview schedule. Ultimately, the researcher had to perform a second pilot study.

In the second pilot study, the researcher conducted a structured interview with a class teacher working in a state village primary school similar to the case. During the pilot interview, the researcher asked the questions and clarified them at the participant's request or when necessary. Note-taking was the method for recording data. Based on the second pilot study, the interviewing method was selected. The researcher tested both timing and technique of the interview during the second pilot study.

### 3.4.4 Interview Process

After the second pilot study, the interview process started. In the interview schedule, parts A and B aimed to answer the research question; "What are the personal visions of the teachers at a village primary school with regard to education (classroom management, teaching and learning and implications for the society)?" Parts C of the interview sought to answer the research question; "How are the visions of teachers at a village primary school affected by the context in which they teach?"

Following the final revisions, the school's administrative unit gave permission to conduct the research. Next, the researcher gave information about the study to all teachers and asked for their consent. All ten teachers have agreed to participate in the research. The researcher determined the schedule for each interview with the teachers. The interviews were conducted in each teacher's classroom or in teachers' room during lunch hours. The researcher and the interviewee were alone during the interviews. Preceding each interview, the researcher informed the participants clearly about the aim of the study and explained in depth what the concept of vision is as meant in this study. For each interview, the researcher gave the following description: "Vision of a concept for an individual is the ideal image of that concept in individual's mind. It is how the individual desires that concept to be, how the individual perceives it, how the individual dreams it". The face-to-face interviews averaged one hour in duration. When interviewees wanted to have a break, the researcher stopped the interview for about ten minutes. Interviews were manually recorded through note-taking. During the interviews, the researcher clearly explained each question and sometimes opened them up when asked by the participants. For the sake of confidentiality, the names of the participants were not mentioned on interview sheets. At the end of the each interview, teachers checked the notes to review what they said. Some corrections were made if requested by the interviewees. Furthermore, for ethical purposes, the researcher took the consent of teachers and children's parents for the photographs used in this study.

### 3.4.5 Reliability and Validity

Cultural adaptation was performed on an already used instrument. Therefore, expert opinion was consulted during this process. After the interview schedule was prepared, two experts in the related field checked the questions and the overall design of the interview schedule. Based on their suggestions, the language and the organization of the interview schedule were shaped. Following the pilot studies and through expert opinion, necessary changes and arrangements were made in the interview schedule. The two pilot studies helped to increase the validity of the instrument. The piloting process was important to check whether the questions focused on issues relevant to the research questions, whether they were clear enough, whether they were relevant to the aim of the study and whether their flow was appropriate. To increase reliability of the instrument, notes taken were shown to the interviewees at the end of each interview. This way, participants were provided with the chance to correct data, or revise what they said. The fact that participants saw their answers at the end helped also to decrease internal researcher validity threat. Interviewees were provided with the chance to remove any answer they might not feel comfortable with. Confidentiality, therefore, was important to increase internal validity.

For the reliability of the data analysis procedure, the notes collected were translated to English by a person in the field as well as by the researcher. Furthermore, during the coding process a cross-check by a peer debriefer was performed. It was seen that both independent codings were parallel.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The data were analyzed through content analysis technique. According to Taylor (1994), this process involves scanning the interview transcripts for themes or categories. Indeed, as Merriam (1998) claims, when information begins to merge into a theme, data can be displayed in a visual manner facilitating further insight. He considers the coding process as assigning some short-hand designation to various aspects of the data so that specific pieces of the data can be retrieved.

The researcher read the notes to develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships. Next, coding was used to search for thematic categories that might encompass all comments and ideas raised by interviewees. During this phase, the data began to emerge into broad themes and categories (see Appendix C for the first draft). The following categories and subcategories were labeled during the final coding process:

- Teaching and learning
    o Lifelong process
    o Student-centredness
    o Meaningful learning
    o Adequate resources, materials and technology
    o Learning differences

- Classroom management
    o Democratic learning community
    o Humanistic approach

- Evaluation
    o Process evaluation
    o Enhancing meaningful learning

- Ideal classroom
    o Healthy and safe environment
    o Development and growth
    o Shelter and security
    o Belongingness
    o Reality atmosphere

- Teachers' role in the ideal classroom
    o A guide
    o Enhancing experiential learning
    o Enhancing discovery learning

- Students' activities in the classroom
    o Progressivist perspective
    o Humanistic approach

- Teachers' visions of society
    o Scientific society
    o Democratic society
    o Society with moral values
    o Society shaped by citizenship values

- Visions of teachers and current school's vision
  - School's vision confined to laws
  - Academic achievement
  - Preparing for life
  - Village school as representative of the state
  - Similarities between current school's vision and teacher's vision
  - Differences between current school's vision and teachers' vision
  - No opinion about school's vision

- Roots of vision
  - Educational experiences
  - Individual characteristics
  - Cultural influences
  - Religious influences

- To what extent school context realize teachers' visions
  - School characteristics
  - Social and cultural context
  - Legal boundaries
  - Student characteristics
  - Parents

- To what extent current classroom practices reflect teachers' visions
  - Student characteristics
  - School characteristics
  - Social and cultural context
  - Personal characteristics

- A change in vision
  - Distinct character of vision
  - Personal characteristics of the teacher
  - Contextual influence

- Achieving vision in the future
  - Expectations from future school characteristics
  - New attitude towards education
  - Personal characteristics as a means for achievement
  - School characteristics as obstacle
  - Problems peculiar to country as obstacle

- Thinking about vision
  - Remembering vision
  - Thinking of vision for the first time
  - Overview of vision
  - Leading to new thoughts

During the coding process, the frequency of subcategories was identified by counting the number of times they appeared in participants' statements. Also a cross-check is

performed by another scholar in the field to increase reliability (see Appendix D for the sample cross-check and Appendix E for the final data analysis).

## 3.6 Limitations

As a case study and with its convenience sampling, this study lacks generalizability. However, the results of the study will build awareness and have implications for further educational research. The conclusions drawn from this study will add to the literature about rural schools in general and the influence of the similar village schools on teachers' performance and visions more specifically. Furthermore, as a research study in a village school with limited resources, this study will evoke studies on school quality indicators. On the other hand, the sample size is limited and this prevents studying the relationship between gender and teachers' visions.

The fact that the researcher is a participant of the school context might also be considered as a limitation since it might be an internal validity threat for the research. By establishing confidentiality, this limitation is tried to be eliminated. On the other hand, the gathering of data by a single person is a factor that contributes to obtaining reliable data.

This chapter has described the methodology used in this study. The following chapter reports the results of the study.

# CHAPTER 4


## RESULTS


Data revealed several emerging themes from the responses of the participants. Some of these themes emerged directly from the responses whereas some others were induced from the answers given. These themes answered the research questions posed and they went beyond the boundaries suggested in the questions to give a rich description of what looks like the visions of the teachers in this study.

## 4.1 Preface

This study was designed to investigate the visions of the teachers at a village primary school. The researcher conducted ten interviews in the classrooms or in teachers' room. Note-taking was the method to gather data. The researcher used analytic induction to analyze the data by scanning for themes or categories. Many themes arose from a cross-sectional analysis of the answers to all questions. The proceeding section provides descriptions of the themes that emerged.

## 4.2 Visions of Teachers

This section focused on the visions of the teachers. Participants' visions referred to how they desired the teaching and learning process, classroom management and evaluation to be.

## 4.2.1 Teachers' Visions of Teaching and Learning

For this part, teachers were asked to state their visions of teaching and learning. This was important to know since their responses might reveal what teachers perceived of

teaching and learning which made a crucial part of the instructional process. Teachers' statements about their visions showed that their desired teaching and learning process involved the following five themes: Lifelong process, student-centeredness, meaningful learning, learning differences, and adequate resources, materials and technology.

**Lifelong process:** Two teachers of the study indicated that they considered teaching and learning as a lifelong process: K1 stated that teaching and learning started from the family. According to her, the learning framework encompassed learning throughout the life cycle. Another participant, K5, argued that teaching and learning was the one where socialization occured. Hence, teachers maintained that it was a lifelong process that did not start when the school started or end when the school ended. Learning was more than just education and training. It was beyond formal schooling.

**Student-centeredness:** Teaching and learning were considered as student-centered by three of the participants. One of them, K2, said that ideal teaching and learning involved students to be active and that students drive the process. K4 and K7 claimed that student was the main focus in teaching and learning process. K2 and K4 also asserted that teacher acted as a guide for the students. Another teacher, E1, who was a recent graduate from the faculty of education, maintained that his teaching and learning vision meant to elicit latent abilities of the students and develop a high self-concept in them. Teachers emphasized learner activity rather than passivity and involvement and participation which indicated a student-centered approach in their teaching and learning visions.

**Meaningful learning:** Visions of half of the participants made reference to meaningful learning which assumed relating previously learned knowledge to the new one. Teachers' emphasis was on achieving deep understanding of complex ideas that were relevant to students' lives. According to K1, K5 and K6 knowledge was not separate from life and had to have usability in daily life. E2 and K3, on the other hand, emphasized that the knowledge had to be up-to-date and based on solving

problems. Teachers stressed here "useful knowledge" for the learner to indicate the kind of learning that supported or enabled growth for the individual.

**Learning differences:** Two of the class teachers (K3 and K5) considered learning differences as a crucial aspect of teaching and learning. According to K5, different student levels had be taken into account when dealing with teaching and learning. K3, on the other hand, maintained that considering students' differing interests and abilities were important. Thus both learning differences and students' interests were essential in teachers' visions of teaching and learning.

**Adequate resources, materials and technology:** Adequate economic resources, educational materials and technology were considered prerequisite for five of the female participants in their visions of teaching and learning. According to them, there had to be support from materials and technology in the teaching and learning process. In addition, K8 added that there ought to be adequate financial resources to realize their visions. She stated that school, families and the school environment had to possess some economic power for an efficient teaching and learning process.

### 4.2.2 Teachers' Visions of Classroom Management

This part of the interview dealt with what the ideal classroom management was for the teachers at the school. The classroom management in their visions was one with a democratic learning community and humanistic approach

**Democratic learning community:** Almost all interviewees described their classroom management visions with reference to democracy. They emphasized that learning could be enhanced through a democratic approach mainly. K6, for instance, suggested that there had to be equal power distribution in the classroom and authority would be established through the learning process. Two participants, K3 and K4 stated that freedom of expression and freedom to ask questions were important in their classroom management understanding. Explaining their ideal classroom management, participants said that students respected each other and they were in cooperation with the teacher. Besides that, trust between teacher and student was

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emphasized by E1. According to him, the teacher had to behave in parallel with what he or she taught to the students. After observing their teachers, students might believe in what the teacher imposed and behave similarly.

**Humanistic approach:** During this part of the interviews, humanism was one of the approaches characterizing visions of some female participants. In their classroom management visions, teachers were attributed certain characteristics specific to humanistic teachers. One class teacher (K2) said that teachers were friendly, considerate, mild and not forceful. K4 claimed that teacher was not like a principal; i.e. not an assertive person. In the statements of K3 and K4, teachers were described as lovable and nonassertive. E1, on the other hand, described his classroom management vision with an affective, respectful teacher caring for his students' interests. Besides, two interviewees K1 and K4 said that teacher was not one who oppressed or hurt the students. K3, one of the most experienced teachers at school, went further to suggest that students ruled in class and indicated that students had autonomy in their decisions related to classroom management.

**4.2.3 Teachers' Visions of Evaluation**

When asked about their visions of evaluation, participants gave clues about their ideal assessment and evaluation understanding. According to their visions, evaluation evolved around the following categories: Process evaluation and enhancing meaningful learning.

**Process evaluation:** Majority of the interviewees (eight participants) promoted process evaluation in their vision statements. Rather than measuring the outcomes, they were more concerned about the ongoing activity and student progress. E1 and K5, two of the least experienced teachers, said that they evaluated projects. They stated that how the student performed and reached the knowledge was more important for them which indicated that they favored performance evaluation. Additionally, K2 and K4 claimed that they gave emphasis on students' activities, classroom performances and participations in class to evaluate student learning. Students' research activity was another evaluation criterion stated by the class

teacher K5. For some teachers, exams did not have much primacy in evaluation. According to them, exams were secondary and not sufficient to measure student performance. One of them, K3, went even further to state that there were no exams and no grades in her ideal images of evaluation. On the other hand, teachers did not consider themselves as the only evaluators. The Science teacher (K4) stressed self-evaluation and said that student's evaluation him or herself was important for the student to gain consciousness and to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. She added that this would help student to gain insight which would enable him or her to understand complex situations in the future.

**Enhancing meaningful learning:** There was emphasis on meaningful learning in two of the evaluation visions. Respondents (K1 and E2) asserted that their evaluation focused on aspects enhancing meaningful learning. They said that using knowledge in real life was important. Therefore, evaluation needed to focus on whether things learned related to daily life. Solving real-life problems was important according to them.

### 4.2.4 Ideal Classrooms of Teachers

This part of the study sought to define teachers' ideal classrooms. Participants were asked to close their eyes and visualize pictures from their ideal classrooms. The images they presented portrayed a classroom characterized by the following concepts: Healthy and safe environment, development and growth, shelter and security, belongingnesss and reality atmosphere.

**Healthy and safe environment:** Four female teachers in this study (K1, K3, K5 and K6) dreamt a healthy and safe environment. Three of them claimed that their ideal classroom was clean. K1 said that students were tidy. One of the interviewees asserted that there were dustbins for each student in the classroom. Another one stressed that her ideal classroom was neat and orderly. According to her, everything in the classroom was in the correct place.

**Development and growth:** The interviews with all teachers made it clear that they dreamt of a classroom which aimed at the development and growth of their students. Five participants said that there was a library in their ideal classroom. When making a virtual tour, nine interviewees, except K5, saw computer in the classroom. K3, a class teacher, claimed that her classroom had a lab and a painting atelier. Three female participants mentioned TV and VCD sets when describing their classrooms. LCD Projector, overhead projector, maps were also mentioned by the respondents. Two subject matter teachers, E2 and K6, had internet connection available in their ideal classrooms. E2, a teacher with history credentials, stated that his classroom had classroom museum. Two teachers saw projects exhibited inside the classroom. One of them, E1 said that there was 'the project of the week' on the wall and the classroom had a newspaper. The Science teacher K4, on the other hand, said that she saw student activities displayed in the classroom. Thus, development and growth was provided through information and communication technology as well as through student products exhibited in the classrooms.

**Shelter and security:** One of the emphasized issues in teachers' ideal classrooms was the emphasis on shelter and security. Softness was a concept that was highlighted. K1 and E1 maintained that there was sun light in their classrooms. K7, a class teacher, says that her classroom is like a home. Describing the classroom she desired, K3 claimed that her students were sitting on armchairs. Three class teachers; K2, K3 and K5 pictured a classroom which was not crowded. K2 and K8 saw lively colors and heard music in their ideal classrooms.

Based upon the examination of the classroom photos, field notes indicate that the first scale classrooms (from first to fifth grade) were colorful and showed signs of softness. There were artifacts like clocks and calendars which made the first scale classrooms look like home. Pictures of student work were adorning the walls. However, the second scale classrooms (sixth, seventh and eight grade classrooms) lacked liveliness due to barren colorless walls.

**Belongingness:** Teachers' statements also made reference to the sense of belongingness on the part of the students. K5 pictured lockers for each student.

Single-student desk were highly emphasized by the teachers. Half of the participants dreamt of single-student desks in their classrooms. On the other hand, four teachers talked about spaces to exhibit student work which indicated symbolic identification on the part of the students. Such student work in classroom promoted a sense of belongingness and became an important aspect of the ideal classroom according to the teachers.

In addition, in depth examination of the pictures in the first scale classrooms provided evidence that the classrooms were filled with student activities like drawings, poems and writings whereas these were not displayed in the second scale classrooms.

**Reality atmosphere:** Two teachers (K4 and E2) wanted their classrooms to look like environments related to their subject matter. K4, a science teacher, said that her classroom was like a laboratory where there was all equipment a laboratory could contain. On the other hand, E2, a social sciences teacher, claimed his classroom to be like an ancient style study room which looked like Socrates' study room in Antic Greek or Roman style. The classroom he described was one with books, statues and pictures all around. Thus, teachers put emphasis on hands-on practice which helped students to actively experience what was to be learned.

**4.2.5 Teacher's Role in the Ideal Classrooms**

Describing their ideal classrooms, teachers were also to define their role as a teacher. Participants' statements explained what they did in the ideal classroom. As a result, the teacher in the ideal classroom was a guide, dominant, one enhancing experiential learning environments and one enhancing discovery learning.

**A guide:** In the ideal classrooms of the half of the participants, the teacher acted as a guide. Six teachers; K2, K3, K4, K6, K7 and K8 maintained that they were not directly giving knowledge to students or directing them, but assisting and advising students to reach the knowledge. K8 said that the teacher was a facilitator. One participant stated that teacher helped students to find resources. E1, a recent graduate

from faculty of education, defined the teacher as a motivator. K6 and K8, said that teacher in their ideal classrooms was the one that directed the student

**Teacher enhancing experiential learning environments:** Looking at the visions of four participants, one could see promotion of experiential learning. K2 said that she enhanced practice and favored visual learning. She and K4 emphasized learning by experiencing and doing. According to E2, the most experienced teacher at school, the teacher engaged students into the learning process. Thus teachers, by actively involving their students in experiences assumed that this would lead to meaningful learning.

**Teacher enhancing discovery learning:** Almost all participants described their ideal teachers in a way that defined one who favored discovery learning. E1 said he gave clues to students to reach the answers rather than providing them with the correct answers. He also added that he promoted imagination. He praised and rewarded those works produced out of imagination and creativity. For him and for two other teachers, provoking in-depth thinking was important. Two female participants, K3 and K8, maintained that they wanted their students to discover. Two other interviewees asserted that they wanted their students to make inquiries. One of them, K1 who was a philosophy graduate, saw herself as an activator and she stressed the importance of abstract thinking. Additionally, the science teacher K4 said that she made her students realize the reason behind any event. Arousing interest in student was given emphasis by another interviewee. Finally, E2 claimed that he helped his students to make synthesis.

### 4.2.6 Students' Activities in the Ideal Classrooms

Teachers' descriptions of their ideal classrooms revealed what type of activities students did, what they learned and why they learned. According to the interview data, findings indicated that student activities in participants' ideal classrooms were based on progressivist perspective and humanistic approach.

**Progressivist perspective:** What was extracted from the data revealed that all participants pictured their students in activities based on progressivist perspective. Mostly humanistic in their stand, teachers often addressed to progressivist ideas in their statements. Participants K1, K3, K6, K7 and K8 said that their students did research. According to them, students sought knowledge this way. K3 and K7 also claimed that they pictured their students doing experiments. "This is more concrete, they can visualize, feel what they learn," K3 said. The two male teachers of the school stated that their students were learning by doing and experiencing. E1 added that his students were reaching the knowledge by themselves. Activities enhancing creativity were also highlighted by one participant.

**Humanistic approach:** Four female class teachers (K1, K2, K3 and K5) stated humanistic views in their visions. K1, a philosophy graduate, considered students' opinion as important, whereas K5 gave emphasis to learning differences. K3, another teacher emphasizing learning differences, said that some of her students were playing musical instruments, some of them were using computers. Stressing that her students were active in the classroom, K2 maintained that students' interests and abilities were important for her. E1, the most recent educational sciences graduate, asserted that the activities that students were doing tried to elicit their latent abilities and to develop feeling of self-concept in them.

### 4.2.7 Teachers' Visions of Society

This section aimed to elicit teachers' visions about the society they wanted to see in the twenty-first century. Teachers were asked to state their visions for the society and their practices in their ideal classroom to reach the society they desired. Here, the link between their visionary practices and their desired society was sought. Therefore, teachers' responses helped to discover their educational implications for the society. Data revealed that teachers' visions evoked a society which was scientific; democratic, giving primacy to moral values and shaped by citizenship values.

**Scientific society:** Responses of six interviewees made it clear that they wanted the society to be science-oriented. K1, K4 and E1 said that research was important in their ideal society. To reach this goal, K1 said: "I urge my students in my ideal classroom to do research and to find solutions for the problems around." K4 claimed that in her ideal classroom, she got her students curious and they wanted to reach the knowledge by themselves. E1, on the other hand, asserted that he was trying his students to be productive through projects. On the other hand, K1 and K6 stated that they wanted to see a society where scientists had privilege. K6, for instance, maintained that in her ideal classroom, she was frequently imposing her students the importance of science and the role of scientists in a developed society. K7 asserted that her ideal society consisted of educated people. To achieve this, she was encouraging her students to read in her ideal classroom. E2, on other hand, dreamt a society where knowledge prevailed and was widespread.

**Democratic society:** The interview data about teachers' visions of society supported that teachers made reference to a democratic society. Freedom was a concept stated by four participants. K1 and K5, two class teachers, claimed that there was freedom of expression in their ideal society. K5 argued that her students in her ideal classroom were conscious about their rights and responsibilities and they respected for the rights of others. She added that students could freely express themselves in the classroom she desired. Respect for others was emphasized by four of the participants. One of them, E2, said that his students in his vision were learning not to seek solutions through violence. Another one, K3, described her ideal classroom as democratic and asserted that her students learned these values in this classroom environment. She also said that the society members in her vision had empathy with others. K7 wanted a society where there was no fight. To achieve this, she did not use violence in her ideal classroom. Two interviewees, on the other hand, suggested a society where justice prevailed. E2, here, stated that his students in his ideal classroom were learning their own cultural values which led to concepts like justice or respect for others.

**Society with moral values:** Morality was a concept highlighted in participants' statements. Four teachers described their society as one where moral values were

dominant. One of them, K2, asserted that she was imposing moral values to her students in her ideal classroom to reach that kind of society. Meritocracy, on the other hand, was important. According to K5 and E2, in the twenty-first century's society, people would get status or rewards because of what they achieved, rather than because of their wealth or social status. K5 said that in her ideal classroom, students were conscious enough to reject anything they did not deserve; thus effort was rewarded. E2, on the other hand, argued that his ideal classroom was an environment where students learned these qualities. Another teacher, E1, asserted that in his society, private interests were not dominant. About his ideal classroom, he said: "I try to teach that individuals can not develop before the society develops."

**Society shaped by citizenship values:** Participants attributed citizenship qualities to the individuals in their ideal society. As the data supported, three teachers (K2, K5 and K7) wanted to see conscious individuals. To illustrate, K2 portrayed her society consisting of individuals who were making inquiry. She said her ideal classroom consisted of students who were making inquiry and doing research. A society consisting of innovative people was also emphasized in two of the statements. K3, on the other hand, described her society as one with goal-oriented individuals. Two interviewees, on the other hand, wanted the society to be productive. E1, one of them, said that he was trying to elicit latent abilities of his students to make them productive in their areas instead of memorizing. Finally, two female teachers K5 and K7 stressed an environmentalist society in the twenty-first century. K5 said that in her ideal classroom, students were organizing campaigns to draw attention to environmental problems.

**4.2.8 Visions of Teachers Compared to School's Vision**

This part of the interview asked the teachers to define their current school's vision. When doing that, they were also supposed to make a comparison between their personal visions and the vision of their current school. According to the data, their current school's vision and its comparison to their own vision were labeled under the following categories: School vision confined to laws, academic achievement, preparing for life, village school as representative of the state, similarities and

differences between school's vision and teacher's vision, no opinion about current school's vision.

**School's vision confined to laws:** Some participants argued that their current school's vision depended on the Ministry of National Education's goals. Four interviewees (K1, K5, E1 and E2) described their current school's vision as one confined to the aims and visions of the ministry. E1 stated that school's vision was restricted to the legal procedures.

**Academic achievement:** Some teachers in this study thought that school's vision was only about academic achievement. K3, for instance, said that school's only aim was to graduate literate students. K6, teaching in the second scale, claimed that his school's vision was to have students who succeeded in high-stake exams.

**Preparing for life:** Two participants stated that school's vision was to prepare students for life. The Science teacher K4 said that her school's vision was to establish a place for socialization. On the other hand, K3 saw her school's vision as educating students who could solve problems in real life.

**Village school as representative of the state:** The interview data also supported that teachers considered their school as the representative of the state. According to K4, their school's vision was to improve the school neighborhood through education. For K8, school represented the state in the village. According to this, since governments could not bring every institution and service to the remote villages and areas, school served not only the students but also people living there.

**Similarities between school's vision and teacher's vision:** Three of the participants found similarities between their personal visions and the vision of their current school. According to K1, she and the school were giving importance to science and research. Additionally, K3 asserted that school's vision about preparing for life was similar to her vision since both were giving emphasis to problem-solving. Finally, K4 claimed that both she and the school were focusing on literacy as she was working in a rural school and had to be realistic.

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**Differences between school's vision and teacher's vision:** Five of the participants thought there were differences between their visions and the vision of the school. K1, for instance, said that the school's vision meant routine to her. Two other participants, K3 and E1, claimed that the school disregarded students' differing interests and abilities. According to K3, school's vision was not directed towards job attainment. K6, the Turkish language teacher, believed that school's vision was short-termed. On the other hand, E2 maintained that school's vision was confined to local dimensions. He stated that his own vision went beyond Turkey and that he was thinking on the global level. According to him, his vision aimed to disseminate our nation's cultural values to the whole world.

**No opinion about current school's vision:** Two of the participants, who were both class teachers and in their fifth teaching years, said that they had no idea about their current school's vision. Therefore, they did not make any comparisons either.

**4.2.9 The Roots of Teachers' Visions**

This part of the study aimed to reveal where the visions of the teachers came from. When they were asked about the origins and roots of their visions, teachers stated the following factors: Educational experiences, individual characteristics, cultural influences, religious influences.

**Educational experiences:** All teachers in this study considered their educational experiences as one of the main factors behind their visions. Seven of the participants said that their visions were shaped by the education taken at university whereas two interviewees claimed that their education starting from childhood was the root of their visions.  K1 said that her education in philosophy department was an important factor behind her vision. She claimed that this changed her life view and influenced her advocacy of freedom of expression. K2 stressed the books she read during her educational past and the classroom management course she took at university. K3, on the other hand, asserted that her university education opened her eyes in relation to different interests and abilities. K5, another class teacher, maintained that she had learned empathy in her high-school and university days. Seven of the participants, on

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the other hand, saw their school life experiences as the origin of their visions: Class teacher K1, for instance, said that weak model teachers in her student days had been important in shaping her vision. According to her, the teacher she envisioned needed to be far from the models she had encountered. "They had bias against some of their students and were not tolerating different ideas," she recalled. When talking about the school life experiences, another participant, K3, asserted that she did not want to be like her past teachers disregarding individual interests and abilities. E1, K4 and K7 asserted that they were influenced by the good model teachers when forming their visions. K4, for instance, said that when she was an intern teacher, she had entered the courses of a primary school and she was very impressed of her because she had created such a warm classroom environment. She stated that she wanted to be like her. K7, on the other hand, maintained that her good model teacher was her high school teacher who was very friendly, calm and peaceful.

**Individual characteristics:** Some teachers explained the roots of their visions with their individual characteristics. According to them, their visions were shaped by some traits specific to them. E1, for instance, said that his ideology was the driving force behind his vision. He stated that he believed in democracy, and this shaped the dominant philosophy of his vision. Similarly, K1 and E2 claimed that their life view had influenced their visions. K2, on the other hand, said that her vision was shaped by her knowledge and her interests. Finally, the Turkish Language teacher stated that her experiences in life were one of the factors at the origins of her vision.

**Cultural influences:** Six of the participants found important the cultural influences in the formation of their visions. Three of them (K5, E1, E2), for instance, claimed that their family had been a factor shaping their visions. E1 said that he learned the importance of education in his family. According to E2, the way he was brought up was influential. K5, on the other hand, said that the she lived in a culture where the children were undermined. She claimed that she had seen the bad consequences of this and she wanted to do the opposite in her vision. Subject matter teachers, K6 and E2 considered the environment they lived as one of the roots of their visions. These three teachers claimed that they lived in conservative environments and families

where honesty, patience and modesty were prominent. Class teacher K2, on the other hand, said that TV programs were one of the causes forming her vision.

**Religious influences:** For two interviewees, religion also lied at the roots of their visions. K8, the teacher of Religious Culture and Moral, said that her religious beliefs influenced her vision. K5, on the other hand, said that her religious beliefs indicating conscience, earning legitimate money shaped her vision. That was the reason why she wanted all her students to achieve the educational goals she set.

### 4.3 Teachers' Current Practices and Their Visions

This part of the interview aimed to relate teachers' current educational practices with their visions. The researcher desired to know the extent to which their current school context (including the social context of the school neighborhood and the student characteristics) realized their visions and the extent to which the participants could reflect their visions on their classroom practices

### 4.3.1 Teachers' Visions in relation to Their Current School Context and Current Classroom Practices

This section aimed to find answers to the questions "*To what extent does the school context realize teachers' visions*," and "*To what extent do the current classroom practices reflect teachers' visions*"?

When teachers made comments about their current school context, nine of the participants did not think that their current school was appropriate enough to realize their visions. Only K8 said that the school context was partially appropriate though she mentioned only those factors inappropriate for her vision. In relation to their students, eight teachers believed that their students were not appropriate for their visions. Two of the participants, on the other hand, thought that the students were partially appropriate for the realization of their visions. Only class teacher K7 commented on this and said that her students were respectful and had a positive attitude towards education.  However, as the data supported, majority of the teachers

considered the following factors to prevent them from realizing their visions: School characteristics, legal issues, student characteristics, parents.

About the extent to which classroom practices reflected their visions, teachers' responses ranged from "majority of the vision" to "few of the vision". They also explained the reasons for their responses. The data showed that there were three teachers; K1, E1 and E2 who claimed to reflect the majority of their visions in the classroom. On the other hand, there were five teachers (K4, K4, K5, K6 and K8) who said that their classroom practices reflected some of their visions. Finally, two class teachers (K2 and K7) asserted that they could reflect few of their vision in the classroom.

Participants who had no or less difficulty in reflecting their visions to their practices considered the new curriculum as a means to practice their vision. K4, the Science teacher, said that she could reflect her vision mostly in the sixth grade where the new science curriculum was implemented. On the other hand, interviewees who had difficulty to practice their visions in classroom mentioned school characteristics, legal issues, social and cultural context, student characteristics, parents and their own personal characteristics.

**School characteristics:** All of the participants thought that current school's characteristics were not appropriate for their visions. K3 said that she was discouraged by the existing school conditions and student characteristics. K1, K4, K6 and K8 complained about the low number of students. K1 asserted that this caused lack of diverse thinking. K8, on the other hand, said that she could not motivate due to the low number of students. The Science teacher (K4) said that she could not do group work in class because of low student number.

Five teachers claimed that physical conditions were not appropriate. K4 believed that the school was isolated like it was forgotten. K6 talked about the distance to school. She claimed that the school was too far from home and this was very tiring. She claimed that she had no energy for classes after coming to school. K5 highlighted

poor classroom conditions. Heating and hygiene conditions were often criticized by the participants.

Financial problems of the school were often voiced in interviews. Six participants believed that this was an obstacle for their visions to be achieved. As a result of the financial problems, five participants complained about the lack of instructional materials and technology. K1 highlighted that students had no opportunity for research. Two other interviewees, (K3 and K6) maintained that there was no research opportunity for teachers as well. K6 asserted that there were not enough books for children. K3 said she could not improve her knowledge.

E1, on the other hand, said that school administration was not supportive to what they were trying to do. He also added that the ideas or knowledge he wanted to impose could not be established due to other colleagues' practices or teaching philosophies. E2 complained about the lack of common vision among colleagues. K2 complained about the lack of dialogue between teachers and school administrators.

**Social and cultural context:** Majority of the teachers considered the social and cultural context in school neighborhood as not convenient for their visions. Three teachers mentioned the low economic status of the people living in the area. To illustrate, K4 said that students could not purchase the materials needed for projects, or for some courses. On the other hand, K3 maintained that they could not get support from the social context due to the lack of people having a profession. Science teacher K4 also stressed the negative attitude towards education in the environment. According to her, education was not viewed as something necessary and not given much importance. Additionally, K5 said that students' living conditions was a negative factor. She told that students did not have proper conditions to do homework or study at home. Similarly K7 said that students lacked hygiene due to their living conditions. For one class teacher, insufficient and difficult physical conditions of the area were hard to overcome.

**Legal boundaries:** Two participants stated that they were restricted by some legal issues: According to K5, they were wasting time with some prescribed unreasonable

tasks. She said that they were asked to prepare too much unnecessary paperwork, plans, evaluation forms and stuff which were useless in a small school like this. She also added that she could not find time to deal with her real tasks because of wasting time with this paperwork. "There are some already defined criteria about what we teach, when we try to go beyond them, we are told that we break the rules," she said. E2, on the other hand, believed that Ministry of National Education's policies made it difficult for them to realize their visions. He said that the structure of the ministry was cumbersome and was not in parallel with the fast information age.

**Student characteristics:** Eight of the interviewees considered student characteristics as an obstacle to their visions. The responses of the teachers might be grouped under two factors: Cognitive and affective.

Six teachers talked about cognitive factors. Class teacher K3 asserted that her students were not yet in readiness level for learning: "There are students who do not know how to hold a pencil. This delays everything. Instead of reaching my targets about learning, I try to be close." K5, teaching third graders, said that there were students in her class who were unable to read and write. Besides, E1, K4 and K5 claimed that their students lacked required knowledge for their age. Two teachers, on the other hand, believed that their students were unable to understand. One of them, Turkish Language teacher complained about her students and said that her students did not possess the ability to think over any concept or problem. She also criticized her students for not being creative. Class teacher K1 who was a philosophy graduate said there was no diverse thinking among her students. Three class teachers, on the other hand, claimed that their students' levels were very low. Finally, two interviewees asserted that students were unable to express themselves.

The interview data revealed that seven teachers complained about some affective characteristics specific to their students. K2 and K4 said that their students were reluctant to study, to make progress, if not, to learn anything at all. Another teacher claimed that his students were introvert: According to E1, the reason for this might have been lack of stimuli in students' childhood. He argued that his students had lived in oppressing, authoritative cultures and they had no courage to construct an

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idea. Similarly, K1 complained about his students for not being talkative. E1 and K8, who were in their first year of teaching, stated that students were timid. Some teachers also asserted that students were not competitive and they were not responsible children. One class teacher criticized her children for not possessing any hobbies.

**Parents:** During the interviews, participants gave emphasis to parents' negative impacts on their visions. Three class teachers complained about the parents' indifference to their children's needs. The Science teacher (K4) stated that parents did not support their children and that they were reluctant to come to school, to take part in school activities or to do anything in favor of their children. K5 and E2, on the other hand, argued that the parents had negative attitude towards education. According to them, parents were against the idea that children, especially girls, should continue their education after the primary school. E2 added that parents had different expectations from their children other than academic achievement. He said that parents gave primacy to different things like getting a job for their children, making work them in fields or as shepherd. Some teachers believed that parents did not provide a suitable context for their children. The subject matter teachers E1, E2 and K8 argued that parents were discouraging their children and were not motivating them.

**Personal characteristics:** Two of the participants (K3 and K5) stated that they were not able to put their visions into practice. K3, a class teacher in her fifth teaching year, said that her not doing research and her reluctance against self-progress were important factors for her failure to reflect her vision. According to her, she let her guard down due to the difficulties caused by school's poor physical conditions, long distance to the city center and lack of resources at school. Another class teacher K5, who was in her second year of teaching, claimed that she had deficiencies and inadequacies as a teacher and this stood as a disadvantage.

### 4.3.2 A Change in Vision with Different Student Characteristics?

This part sought to learn whether teachers' visions might change if they had different students. According to the interview data, eight teachers believed their vision would not change even if they had different students. Two of the participants K6 and E2 who were subject matter teachers, said that their vision might change. The answers to this question were based on the following categories: The distinct character of the vision, the personal characteristics of the teacher and the context.

**The distinct character of the vision making it constant:** Majority of the participants thought that they would not change their vision because vision was something which should not change. Two class teachers K1 and K7 said that vision did not depend on student characteristics. E1 and K3 maintained that not their vision but the result might change with different students. K4 defined vision as her wish and K5 considered vision as a goal. Both claimed that this was the reason why vision was unchangeable.

**Personal characteristics of the teacher as a factor for change:** K6, the Turkish Language teacher, said that her vision might change because of her philosophy. She explained her life-view as "always moving forward and making progress."

**Contextual influence on vision:** One participant, E2, thought that the context where he would be might shape his vision. By giving examples from his past days in another school, E2 explained how his vision was shaped by the context where he had been. He told that when he was working in Ağrı, his commitment to his vision was strengthened because he had witnessed students' tendency to support terrorist activities against country's unity. There, he decided to give more importance to educate students as attached to country's unity rather than teaching his course's curriculum.

## 4.4 Achieving Vision in the Future

Here, teachers asserted with their reasons whether they would achieve their visions at some point in their professional career. Seven participants had faith that they would achieve their visions in the future. Three of the participants were pessimistic about the achievement of their visions. According to the interviews, teachers saw the following factors helpful to reach their visions: Future school's characteristics, new attitude towards education and personal characteristics.

**Future school's characteristics:** Three of the participants thought that they would achieve their visions one day because they were optimistic about the schools they would be employed in the future. Class teacher K1 said that her future students' characteristics would allow her to achieve her vision. Another class teacher K2 thought that when she would go to another school, the parents' attitudes would be positive and their economic conditions would be better. Science teacher K4, on the other hand, stated that the school she would be employed would have better instructional technology.

**New attitude towards education:** One teacher's hope about her vision came from her optimism for the new attitudes towards the education. Class teacher K3 believed that the new curriculum would help her to reach her vision since it emphasized student centredness and avoided memorization. K4, on the other hand believed that the new curriculum urged students to seek knowledge by themselves.

**Personal characteristics as a means to vision:** Some teachers thought that some characteristics specific to them would help them reach their visions. Math teacher E1 said that his desire to reach his vision would drive him to his vision. Turkish Language teacher K6, on the other hand, said that she was an optimistic person and she believed that she would achieve her vision. Another subject matter teacher K8 asserted that she loved her job and this was a means to her vision.

On the other hand, the teachers think that following factors are obstacles to the achievement of their goals: School characteristics as obstacle, problems peculiar to country and change in vision.

**School characteristics as obstacle:** Unlike the interviewees who had hopes about their future schools, three participants (K5, K7 and E2) were pessimistic about the school characteristics in Turkey. To illustrate, Class teacher K5 said that student characteristics and context would not let her achieve her vision. Another class teacher K7, on the other hand, stated that poor economic conditions and uncertainty about the future were obstacles to the attainment of her vision. Finally, social sciences teacher E2 told that the physical characteristics of the current schools led him to be pessimistic about the achievement of his vision.

**Problems peculiar to country:** Some participants were pessimistic because of the problems Turkey-wide. K7, for example, complained about the attitude towards schooling in Turkish society. According to her, the Turkish society did not believe that graduating from school could help people find a job. Instead, children were encouraged to earn money through easy ways. Another participant, E2, stressed that with the presence of country's economic conditions, parents' economic conditions and such a media; achieving his vision did not seem possible.

**4.5 Thinking about Vision**

At the end of the interviews, teachers were asked to comment about this study. All teachers stated positive comments about the study. According to K3, K6 and E2, they had remembered their vision. Three teachers; E2, K1 and K8 said that this study about their visions had given them the chance to review their visions. K1, in fact, asserted that she thought for the first time about her vision, so did K4, K5 and K7. On the other hand, E1 stressed that this study helped him answer the question: "What kind of teacher I am?" K2 said that it was nice to dream. She added that her students would be successful if she could realize all that she told. K5 asserted that she considered herself as insufficient after this study. As K4 highlighted, she realized that it was not impossible to reach the ideal classroom. She said she had never

thought about an ideal classroom before. On the other hand, K8 and K3 claimed that their vision had become concrete due to this study. K3 said that this study encouraged her about the teaching and the future. She claimed that she thought about what could be done about her students. K4 and K5 maintained that this study gave way to new thoughts for them. Finally, E2 stated that he compared his position with respect to his vision.

To sum up, teachers' visions about teaching and learning, classroom management and evaluation presented education as a lifelong process involving a student-centered, democratic classroom environment where learning differences were given importance; meaningful learning and process evaluation were highlighted. According to teachers, this educational process would lead a democratic society where science, moral values and citizenship values would prevail.

The next chapter is about drawing conclusions upon the results written in this chapter and presenting implications for practice and research.

# CHAPTER 5

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The questions that this study has sought to answer are as follows:

1. What are the personal visions of the teachers at a village primary school with regard to education (classroom management, teaching and learning and implications for the society)?

2. How are the visions of teachers at a village primary school affected by the context in which they teach?

The following sections include discussions and conclusions based on the questions above. Finally, the researcher suggests implications for practice and research.

### 5.1 Discussion

The results show that understanding teachers' visions helps us understand their teaching and learning perceptions, classroom management perspectives and give us clues about how vision shapes their decisions and thinking. The findings discern the coherence between teachers' beliefs and their ideal practices. Visions of teaching and learning, classroom management and evaluation, their ideal practices, their ideal classrooms, their perceptions of education and society portray a mixture of progressivist and existentialist teacher.

In their teaching and learning visions, teachers' put emphasis on meaningful learning and student centredness. As Coyle (2000) posits, the goal of a progressive environment is to provide meaningful learning experiences for autonomous learners.

Student is the center in a progressive environment. Similarly, teachers in this study picture their classrooms as one where the student is the focus and where the students are active. On the other hand, as Coyle (2000) maintains, the progressivist philosophy emphasizes that students learn through their own interests. According to Ryan and Cooper (2004), progressivist teachers act as guide in the classroom. They urge their students to do problem-solving. They do not direct but advise. Progressive teachers prefer methods like discovery and hands-on learning. This goes parallel with the ideal classrooms of the teachers. In these ideal classrooms, the teacher enhances experiential learning and students reach knowledge by themselves. Their ideal classrooms reflect a democratic learning environment which is also an essential aspect of progressivist teaching. As Parkay and Stanford claim (1995), the type of classroom management that would appeal to a progressivist would be an environment that stimulates or invites participation, involvement, and the democratic process. Additionally, teachers' visions of society are highly related to the progressivist understanding since they highly emphasize democracy in their society visions. As Coyle (2000) suggests, the progressivist idea emphasizes that democracy permits the free interplay of ideas and personalities that is a necessary condition of true growth. Additionally, the teachers in this study favor process evaluation which is highlighted by the constructivists who give primacy to learning processes rather than learning outcomes as stated by Johnson (2004).

On the other hand, there are findings that support that teachers also adopt the humanistic approach and its underlying philosophy; existentialism. In their perception of teaching and learning, considering learning differences is crucial for the teachers in this study. According to this, different interests, abilities and levels are to be taken into account in the teaching and learning process. As Shaw (2000) maintains, existentialism gives students options to choose from and allows them to explore their interests. The students in an existentialist classroom are allowed to question their existence. Similarly, one of the themes highlighted by the teachers is to develop the self-concept in their students. As Ornstein and Hunkins (1998) assert, in humanistic approach, the learners' self-concept and self-esteem are considered as essential factors in learning. Besides, the ideal teacher described by the teachers is one who is mild, not forceful, friendly, considerate, lovable and nonassertive. This

goes hand in hand with the humanistic premise basing learning on warm, friendly and democratic student-teacher interactions and minimizing coercive and strict disciplinary measures (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). According to the findings, none of the teachers have perennialist, essentialist or reconstructionist visions.

Results support that in order to understand teachers' teaching in a deeper level, the teacher visioning process provides a structure for expressing and examining existing beliefs as found by Squires and Bliss (2004). The vision statements of the teachers consist of their articulation of the sights and sounds of their classrooms, the role of the teacher and students, the curriculum and how it relates to student learning and the relationship between the classroom and the kind of society they would like to see. This study supports the findings of Hammerness (2002) indicating that teachers' visions reflect their understanding of teaching and learning and the role of teacher and student. The interview data give clues that they aim to organize their classrooms in accordance with their visions. Indeed, teachers' statements and classroom pictures show that majority of the teachers try to organize their classrooms based on their visions. There are only two teachers who have much difficulty in reflecting their visions on their classrooms according to the interviews. The data also show that, when the context is appropriate, teachers want to select methods and topics which are in parallel with what they want their students to become.

The ideal classroom perceptions of teachers also reflect a vivid environment which refers to aesthetic and belongingness needs of the students and to their senses of development and growth. Teachers mostly describe their classrooms as colorful, displaying student work and neatly organized. This is in line with Maslow's theory of education that claims the fulfillment of different student needs as crucial (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1998). Teachers also believe that there should be adequate instructional materials and technology in classrooms. This shows that the instructional context plays an important role for teachers in their teaching performance and students' learning. The more the classroom refers to students needs, the more learning will occur.

The classroom pictures show that the class teachers are partially successful to reflect their ideal classrooms on their current classrooms whereas the second scale teachers, i.e. subject matter teachers fail to reflect their ideal classrooms. The first scale classrooms are vivid; their walls are filled with colorful posters and drawings. Student activities are displayed on the walls. The second scale classrooms are colorless, there is almost nothing on the walls and there are very few student activities displayed.

The data support that visions shape teachers' thinking and decisions. Teachers' much emphasis on concepts like meaningful learning and experiential learning reveals that their educational perspective relates to life itself. They want their students to learn by experiencing, in real environments. They want to teach their students things they can use in real life. As Dewey (1946) states, this is the philosophy suggesting that "education is the life itself."

Teachers' visions of education and society are very much in line with TUBITAK's vision statement for the year 2023. The highlighted themes in teachers visions; creativity, imagination, democracy, science, peace are voiced in TUBITAK's vision for 2023. TUBITAK envisions Turkey in 2023 as a democratic and fair country which makes efforts for establishing peace in the world and in its region and is developed in science (TUBITAK, 2004). TUBITAK's vision presents a learning-centered educational system that promotes imagination and creativity and cares for the individual differences.

The data show that the foci of the visions differ from each teacher. Some teachers' visions are clear and detailed whereas some teachers have fuzzy visions. To illustrate, the social sciences teacher (E2) envisions many details about his ideal classroom, whereas K7 describes her teaching and learning vision as student-centered without providing any additional detail about the process. The vision supports the commitment and motivation in teaching for the teachers who have sharp and distinct visions. For instance, the Math teacher (E1) clearly identifies his vision as eliciting the latent abilities of students and basing his teaching on the learning differences of his students. He says that he possesses the desire to reach that goal. As

Hammerness (2002) states, the sharpness of focus enables the vision to function effectively both as a guide for practice and as a means of reflecting upon it.

Teachers' visions can be defined to have a broad range. All teachers have visions encompassing not only their students or their schools, but covering the whole society by means of education. Some teachers even have a broader range as E2 whose vision refers to the whole world. Teachers can be told to have a globalized vision.

According to the data; for the teachers, the distance to their visions is far. Teachers believe that there is gap between the vision and the real practice. Even those few teachers who claim to reflect their vision in their classrooms say that they can not obtain any results. Most of the teachers have a tendency to postpone their visions since they have cancelled their expectations for their future schools. Current school context has much influence on the distance to their visions.

The study shows that context influences the achievement of the vision. As the findings support, the school context and the social and cultural context influence the achievement of the vision. The interviews show that when the school, social and cultural contexts are not supportive, vision is not achievable. According to the data, teachers do not work in a supportive context for their visions. There are three main themes that affect teachers' visions negatively: Poor conditions, school structure and individuals.

Poor conditions mostly refer to conditions of the school and school area. Teachers complain about lack of heating and hygiene; bad physical conditions; long distance to school; lack of finances, equipment and instructional materials; and lack of research opportunity in school. These conditions not only prevent the achievement of the visions but also lead some teachers to lower their guard down and blame themselves.

School structure refers to some legal and demographic characteristics of the school that stand as barrier in front of the teachers. The school has few students and the low number of students affects teachers' visions. It prevents teachers from practicing

methods like group work and does not allow diverse thinking to happen. It also makes teachers to lose their motivation. On the other hand, teachers criticize the cumbersome structure of the Ministry of National Education which, according to teachers, imposes prescribed unreasonable tasks that cause waste of time.

Individuals consist of students and their parents. The negative effect of students emerges from their low socio-economic background which influences their living conditions and performance; and some cognitive and affective characteristics specific to them. Students' lack of skills required at their age, low readiness level, lack of creativity, reluctance to learn and their being introvert are the factors that prevents teachers from achieving their visions. On the other hand, parents who expect their children to get a job or work in agriculture show indifference to their children's education and remain reluctant to motivate them. Their negative attitude towards education prevents the achievement of vision. The lack of good model in the school neighborhood is another disadvantage. Absence of educated people and people working in jobs eliminates students' education outside school and leaves the school alone as the only social institution. Teachers' criticisms on parents support the findings of Şeker (1998) who indicates that parents hardly contribute to their children's academic achievements and Koçyılmaz (2000) who stresses the negative attitude towards education of girls in rural areas.

The findings support the influence of context on the achievement of vision but also show that the context does not affect or shape teachers' visions. The results do not precisely support that the visions of classroom management may change with respect to the school culture. Most of the teachers claim that their vision would not change under different conditions, but the result might change. Only one teacher's statements support the contextual change on vision. He says that he has revised his vision due to the characteristics of his former school.

The findings show that vision is something new to teachers since most of them state that they have thought for the first time about their visions. However, as Duffy (1998) maintains, teachers' statements support that focusing on vision helps teachers develop a sense of alignment necessary for them to cope with problems they

encounter. After this study, for some of the teachers, thinking about vision means new horizons which encourage them about teaching and learning. The data also shows that thinking about vision serves to evaluate current practice. As E2 states, vision serves him to compare his position with regard to his vision. This indicates how far the current practice is from where one wants to be (Hammerness, 1999a).

As the results maintain, teachers support the new curriculum and believe it will help them achieve their visions. More focus on student-centredness, more emphasis on performance rather than product and methods encouraging students to do research increase the hopes of the teachers about the future.

## 5.1.1 Conclusions

Teachers' statements reveal that personal vision is constructed mostly by their educational experiences. Teachers that participated in this study are faculty graduates of post-2000 period which falls into time when teacher development programs put more emphasis on learning differences, different student abilities and interests and classroom management issues (Y.Ö.K., 1998). The influence of progressivism and humanistic theory on teachers' visions could be explained with the latest trends in faculties of education and recent attitude change towards education. Turkish Ministry of National Education maintains that the constructivist approach is the solution to the educational needs. Based on this premise, the ministry has renewed the curriculum, informed teachers through in-service training and started to implement the new curriculum in schools (Çınar, Teyfur & Teyfur, 2006). On the other hand, after 1998, the teacher development programs have given emphasis on topics like classroom management, communication, motivation and learning and teacher certification is upgraded to master's level. There has been emphasis on changing school structures and learning differences of the students in the new understanding. Especially primary school teachers are expected to educate students according to their interests and abilities and to elicit special education needs. Educational faculties, in this sense, have been reorganized to reach that goal (Y.Ö.K., 1998).

The data reveal that teachers are either unaware or do not have a clear knowledge of their school's vision since teachers state different perceptions about their school's vision. Some teachers do not have any opinion about their school's vision. The fact that teachers have different perceptions about their current school's vision and that some teachers even do not have any opinion about it imply that school, administrators and teachers are having difficulties in shared vision building. In fact, the school's vision is very much similar to the society visions of the teachers (see Appendix F for school's vision and Appendix G for the translated version). However, teachers' perceptions about their school's vision are different. This might be explained with school's failure to initiate concrete efforts to achieve its vision and to convince its teachers that this vision is realizable.

The researcher's descriptions and pictures show that class teachers are more successful in reflecting their visions on their classroom environments than the subject matter teachers. This might be indicative of class teachers' sense of ownership of their classrooms. At schools, class teachers always teach in the same classroom whereas the subject matter teachers give lessons in different classrooms.

Teachers' aspirations about their ideal classrooms mostly reflect the deficiencies of their current school. Teachers' emphasis on adequate materials and technology; healthy and safety, and shelter and security not only describe their ideal images, but also refers to the poor road, heating and classroom conditions of the school. Teachers often complain about the poor conditions of the school and think the improvement of these conditions would help them achieve their visions.

Findings posit that short distance between school and teachers' homes; sufficient resources, instructional materials and technology, good heating and hygiene conditions are quality indicators for schools.

The data show that teachers do not mention the characteristics of the classroom in their classroom management visions. This reveals that teachers have some misconceptions about the classroom management. Indeed, their statements imply that

teachers view classroom management mostly as arranging the relationship between teacher and the students and among students themselves.

The information about teachers reveals that they do not have easy access to in-service training. Most of the teachers have only participated computer or preparatory employee courses. This goes parallel with the findings of Seferoğlu (1996) who asserts that rural school teachers have less opportunity to have access to activities that will add to their professional development. Two teachers in this study consider themselves among the factors for not being able to achieve their visions. For one of them, the school conditions and student characteristics are discouraging and that she feels inadequate for coping with them. Another one believes that she has deficiencies and she is inadequate. This shows the loss in their motivation and their feeling insecure about their teaching as mentioned by Seferoğlu. The fact that there is no mentor teacher at the school supports the idea that these teachers lack necessary professional help.

The findings of Veenman (1998) in relation to reality-shock of the teachers have supportive evidence in this study. All teachers in this study are in their early careers. Especially the recent graduate teachers' statements reveal that there is a conflict between the theory and the practice. Some teachers in upper grades assert that some of their students do not even know the very basic skills required at their age. Teachers, sometimes, harshly criticize their students for being unable to do anything which reflects their disappointment and points out to moments when their guards are down. This illustrates that in an unsupportive context; teachers lower or cancel their expectations like K3 who decides to get close to the target rather than reaching it or like K4 who thinks that she needs to be realistic since she works in a rural school.

Finally, the fact that teachers do not think to quit or change their visions might be a sign of their commitment with their work and that they are headed towards their ideals. This could be explained with their idealistic enthusiasm (Edelwich, 1980). The new attitude towards education reflected in the new curriculum increases the hopes of the teachers with regard to achieving their visions. Indeed, according to his study conducted on 982 class teachers; Bulut (2006) reports that teachers have

positive views about the new curriculum of primary education. In this study, teachers state that the gains in the new curriculum are appropriate to the needs and interests of the students. Teachers also claim that the new curriculum refers to cognitive, affective and psychomotor levels of the students and the gains newly stated seem to be realizable. According to the teachers, the new curriculum provides equal opportunity for students and the activities in the curriculum motivate the students. As research findings show, teachers think that the new curriculum engages students actively in the teaching and learning process.

## 5.2 Implications

Looking at visions of teachers suggests some implications for teacher education, their performance and their professional development. Additionally, as a study conducted in a village school, this research may have further implications concerning teacher development programs, the rural schools, their influence on teachers' performance and on students' development and growth.

### 5.2.1 Implications for Practice

This study is a preliminary step in providing data about aspirations and ideals of teachers working in Turkish schools. For especially offering suitable school contexts for the teachers and to improve the quality of the Turkish educational system, this research will have contributions. The implications for practice of this study are as the following:

1. Study results show that asking about their visions made the teachers think or evaluate their current practices and this contributed to their knowledge of teaching. The fact that teachers feel encouraged when thinking about vision or question themselves indicates that thinking about vision helps teachers to establish ways to deal with the problems they face and develop a personal stance. As Hargreaves (1994) suggests, teaching is more than a set of technically learnable skills. Its meaning is given by teachers themselves, within the realistic contexts and contingencies of their work environments.

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Therefore, understanding the emotional life of teachers and their feelings should be central to teacher development efforts.

2. This study gives us implications about the teacher development programs. For preventing the reality-shock, teacher educators may help the teacher candidates or beginning teachers to identify practices that would cope with this conflict between the vision and reality and would assist them to move towards their visions. This way, teachers may continue to try to reach their visions and not be discouraged.

3. This study shows that teachers' visions are influenced by their educational past and their experiences. As stressed by Akar (2004), this finding is crucial for teacher educators to the extent that the culture they build in their classes construct new understandings in teacher candidates' visions about classroom management and teaching and this may be translated into their actual teaching practices as early practitioners.

4. Teacher development programs should help and encourage teachers to develop their visions. This will help teachers believe in themselves and enable them to cope with challenging circumstances rather than waiting for expert help. As Duffy (1998) maintains, instructional decision making based on their own moral beliefs about what is important promotes the mindful invention typical of inspired teachers. According to this, the key to developing inspired teachers lies in their belief in themselves and in their ability to decide how best to promote the visions they have for their students, as opposed to the belief in teacher educators and in their ways of doing things.

5. Teaching is not limited to the use of a single philosophy, program or technique. When demanded by a specific situation, teachers combine philosophies, modify methods and arrange programs. Teacher educators, rather than implying their way as the best way, should urge teachers to look for all different perceptions in education and empower them to adapt various

philosophies, methods and programs to their own visions for students, to make their own professional decisions.

6. Conditions in rural areas should be enhanced and working in rural areas should be economically advantageous for teachers in order to prevent frequent teacher rotation. As the data about the participants show, the senior teacher in the school works there for three years. Many teachers are in their first years. As Kuitunen (2004) reports, there is frequent teacher transfer from rural areas to urban centers and this influence the quality of the education. Rural schools should become attractive educational contexts. The teachers working in rural areas should have additional material benefits and the schools should be provided with adequate instructional materials and technology. Accommodation is necessary for teachers in order to prevent the tiring effects of the distance to school. Furthermore, by providing accommodation, people living in the school neighborhood will have direct contact with teachers, therefore with good models. This will reflect positively both on parents and students.

7. An important characteristic of a successful school is that everyone in the school understands what the school is trying to do (Edvantia, 2005). Teachers' unawareness of their school vision implicates that the lack of communication between teachers and administrators and lack of communication among teachers themselves prevent people in the school from connecting around common ideas and focusing their attention on possibilities and potentials. The vision statements of the schools should not remain on paper and should be shared with the other school stakeholders.

8. Teachers' complaints show that they spend much time trying to deal with routine tasks such as filling evaluation forms or preparing plans. Considering that we live in the information age, teachers have to be freed from paperwork and encouraged to focus on their primary task, namely, teaching and improving their professional skills. The Ministry of Education has to revise some regulations that stand as burden on the teachers. Additionally,

suggesting single type of curriculum and methods for all different parts of the country leads to difficulties in practice. Teachers' statements indicating that students lack some basic skills required at their age implicates that it is not easy to have results from programs that consider students as uniform. Arrangements for the rural areas should be made in the curriculum.

9. Studying teacher vision has been important to demonstrate the importance of culture in our lives. The life outside school has tremendous effects on shaping teachers' visions. Teachers' emphasis on their family lives indicates that education is a matter encompassing not only the school boundaries but the whole life. Participants in this study claim that they possess many aspects of their vision thanks to their culture or family life. Considering such influence of families and culture on children; if educators can reach the parents, they can achieve better results in educating the children. Parents' indifference as mentioned in the study can be dealt with by home visits and by organizing events that would lead community participation.

### 5.2.2 Implications for Research

This study has provided some insights about teachers' visions. Some of the questions this study has brought could be investigated concerning the improvement of education standards and teaching performance. What follow are this study's further implications for research:

1. This study has presented teachers' perceptions whereas students' perceptions are also important to be studied. Schools can do research on their students' visions and might reveal their hopes and ideals. This might help schools and teachers mentor their students more efficiently.

2. This case study has been conducted in a rural village school. To conduct such studies about teachers' visions in urban schools and other different school contexts would help us to see the effects of school contexts on teachers'

visions and their performances. Ultimately, this may help us to define school quality indicators in Turkey.

3. The study of teachers' visions with a large sample would enable us to compare visions of male and female teachers and to see how gender affects the vision of the teachers.

4. This research has shown that the rural school in this case study has not been a supportive context for teachers' visions. In order to see how other countries solved the problems associated with the rural schools in relation to providing suitable educational contexts, a study could be conducted to find out about the current situation in other countries.

5. In this study, the participants have been in their early professional careers. Conducting a similar study on experienced teachers may reveal whether visions could be achieved at a certain point in the career, may help to explore the ways these teachers use to reach their ideals or could contribute to see their methods to overcome obstacles.

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**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**VİZYON İFADE FORMU**

Bu anket formu, **İlköğretim Öğretmenlerinin Vizyonları** konulu bir çalışmaya temel oluşturması amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi'nde yüksek lisans tezi olarak sunulacaktır.

Çalışma sonuçlarının, öğretmen eğitiminde vizyon kavramının önemi, öğretmenlerin vizyonlarının düşünce ve uygulamalarını nasıl biçimlendirdiği, öğretmenlerin eğitim verdikleri ortamlarla vizyonlarının uyumluluğu gibi konulara ışık tutması amaçlanmakta ve 21. yüzyıldaki toplum hedefine ulaşmak yönünde öğretmenlerin hangi bakış açılarına sahip oldukları betimlenmek istenmektedir. 8 sayfa, 4 bölüm ve toplam 16 sorudan oluşan bu çalışmaya katılım gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Katılımcıların kimlik bilgileri gizli tutulacak ve elde edilen veriler hiçbir şekilde amacı dışında kullanılmayacaktır.

Katılımınız için teşekkür ederim.

Hasan Ali BAYINDIR

**KİŞİSEL BİLGİLERİNİZ**

- Cinsiyetiniz: ☐ K      ☐ E
- Öğretmenlik deneyiminiz (yıl): _____
- Mezun olduğunuz fakülte: _____
- Mezun olduğunuz bölüm: _____
- Mezuniyet yılı: _____
- Öğretmenlik Branşınız: ☐ Sınıf Öğretmeni ☐ Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz _____)
- Y.Lisans: ☐ EVET     ☐ HAYIR (EVET'se alanı belirtiniz: _____)
- Doktora: : ☐ EVET     ☐ HAYIR (EVET'se alanı belirtiniz: _____)
- Şu andaki sınıfınız; ☐ Birleştirilmiş Sınıf ☐ Normal ☐ Her ikisinde de derse giriyorum.
- Girdiğiniz ders(ler): ☐ Sınıf Öğretmenliği ☐ Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz _____)
- Girdiğiniz toplam sınıf sayısı: _____
- Sınıf veya sınıflarınızdaki öğrenci sayısı (Birden çok sınıfa giriyorsanız lütfen öğrenci sayılarını … / .. /… şeklinde yazınız.): _____
- Haftada girdiğiniz toplam ders saati: _____
- Şimdiye kadar katıldığınız hizmet içi eğitim(ler):
_____.

Bu çalışmada vizyon kavramıyla kastedilen, öğretmenlerin ideal eğitim-öğretim anlayışları, ideal sınıf yönetimi ve değerlendirmeden ne algıladıkları, bunları nasıl hayal ettikleri ve nasıl olmasını arzu ettikleridir. Vizyon; sınıf düzenlemesi, öğretme-öğrenme yöntem ve stratejileri ve sınıf içi uygulamaları içerebildiği gibi veliler, okul dışındaki düzenlemeler gibi kavramları da içine alabilir. Dolayısıyla **vizyon, öğretmenlerin ideal sınıf ortamı algılamasından, ideal öğrenci, okul ve hatta toplum** anlayışına kadar genişletilebilir bir alanı ifade eder.

Bu kısa hatırlatmadan sonra lütfen aşağıdaki soruları cevaplandırınız.

## A. VİZYONUNUZ

Bu bölümde bazı başlıklar altında vizyonunuzu ifade etmeniz istenmektedir. Lütfen ilgili başlıklar altında kavramlardan ne algıladığınızı, o kavramın ideal halinin size nasıl göründüğünü, gerekirse örneklerle açıklayınız.

**Eğitim-öğretim**



**Sınıf Yönetimi**



**Değerlendirme (Öğrenme-Öğretme açısından)**

# B. İDEAL SINIF VE VİZYON

Bu bölümdeki sorular ideal sınıf ortamınızın tanımlanması için tasarlanmıştır. Şu andaki sınıfınızdan çok farklı olsa bile, lütfen aşağıdaki sorulara cevap verirken, olmasını arzu ettiğiniz sınıf ortamını tanımlarken özgür davranın. Bu ideal sınıfı bir an için gözünüzün önüne getirmekle başlayabilirsiniz. "Sanal gerçeklikte gezinti" gibi, ideal sınıfınızda dolaştığınızı hayal edin. Etrafınıza bakabilir, gerçekleşen aktiviteleri duyup görebilirsiniz.

1- Öğretmen olarak hayal ettiğiniz ideal sınıfınızda dolaştığınızda ne(ler) görüyorsunuz ve duyuyorsunuz? Lütfen açıklayınız.

2- Hayal ettiğiniz ideal sınıfınızda **siz** ne(ler) yapıyorsunuz?

a) Öğretmen olarak rolünüz nedir? Nedenini açıklayınız.

b) Hayal ettiğiniz ideal sınıfınızda **öğrencileriniz** ne(ler) yapıyorlar? Nasıl öğreniyorlar? Nedenini açıklayınız.

3- Hayal ettiğiniz ideal sınıfınızda öğrencileriniz **neler** öğreniyorlar (Örn., Hangi konuları işliyorlar? Hangi materyaller üzerinde çalışıyorlar? Konu başlıklarına örnekler veriniz.)

4- Soru 3'te ifade ettiğiniz **konular ve konu başlıklarının** öğrencilerinizin öğrenmesi için neden önemli olduğunu lütfen açıklayınız.

5- 21. yüzyılda nasıl bir toplum görmek istiyorsunuz? Sizin ideal sınıfınızda olanlarla 21. yüzyılda görmek istediğiniz toplum arasında nasıl bir ilişki var? Lütfen açıklayınız.

6- Şu anda çalıştığınız okulunuzun bir vizyonu var mı? Lütfen görev yaptığınız okulun vizyonunu açıklayınız.

7- Sizin sahip olduğunuz vizyonla çalıştığınız okulun sahip olduğu vizyon arasındaki benzerlik ve farklılıkları açıklar mısınız?

8- Sahip olduğunuz vizyonunuz nereden geliyor? Kaynağı nedir? Başka bir deyişle, vizyonunuzun biçimlenmesinde etken olan unsurlar nelerdir (örn., pedagojik, politik, kültürel, dini veya teorik etkenler, eğitim-öğretim deneyimleri vb. ) Lütfen örnekleyerek açıklayınız.

## C. UYGULAMALARINIZ VE VİZYON

1- Mesleki kariyerinizin bir noktasında vizyonunuzu tamamıyla
gerçekleştirebileceğinizi düşünüyor musunuz?    ☐ EVET    ☐ HAYIR

Neden öyle düşündüğünüzü açıklayınız.

2- **Sizce**, şu anda çalıştığınız okul vizyonunuzun gerçekleşmesine ne derece uygun
bir ortam hazırlıyor? Lütfen açıklayınız.

3- Şu anda eğitim verdiğiniz öğrencilerinizin özellikleri sahip olduğunuz vizyonu
gerçekleştirebilmeye ne derece uygun? Lütfen açıklayınız.

4- Şu anda sınıfınızda vizyonunuzun hangi boyutlarını gerçekleştirmeye çalışıyorsunuz? Başka bir deyişle, sınıfınızdaki uygulamalarınız vizyonunuzu ne derecede yansıtıyor?

☐ TAMAMINI ☐ ÇOĞUNLUĞUNU ☐ BİR KISMINI ☐ AZINI ☐ HİÇ BİRİNİ

Neden öyle düşündüğünüzü lütfen açıklayınız.

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5- Şu andakinden daha farklı özelliklere sahip öğrencilerim olsaydı farklı bir vizyonum olurdu diye düşünüyor musunuz?　☐ EVET　☐ HAYIR

Lütfen cevabınıza göre açıklayınız.

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## D. VİZYONUNUZU DÜŞÜNMEK

1. Vizyonunuzu düşünmek, size ne derecede yararlı oldu?

2. Vizyonunuz ve bu çalışma konusu hakkında ek olarak söylemek istedikleriniz ya da önerileriniz nelerdir? Lütfen belirtiniz.

ZAMAN AYIRDIĞINIZ İÇİN TEŞEKKÜR EDERİM

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TRANSLATED)**

A.YOUR VISION

In this section, you are asked to indicate your vision with regard to the following headings:

- Teaching and learning
- Classroom management
- Evaluation (in relation to teaching and learning)

Please under each heading, express by giving examples how you perceive these concepts, how you see the ideal states of each concept.

B. YOUR IDEAL CLASSROOM AND YOUR VISION

The following questions are designed to elicit your images of the ideal classroom. Please feel free to describe what you dream about or hope for even though it may be somewhat different from your current classroom. I'd like you to begin by envisioning this ideal classroom for a moment. Suppose, akin to a "virtual reality tour," you can imagine yourself walking into your classroom. You can look around the room, and you can hear and see the activities going on…

B.1- What do you see, feel and hear when you walk around your ideal classroom?

B.2- What are you doing in your ideal classroom? What is your role? WHY?

B.3- What are your students doing in this ideal classroom? What role(s) do the students play? WHY?

B.4- What kinds of things are the students learning in your ideal classroom? For instance, what topics or texts are they working on? Why are those important for them to learn?

B.5- How is the society you want to see in the twenty-first century? What is the relationship between what goes on in your ideal classroom and the kind of society you would like to see in the twenty-first century?

B.6- Does your current school have a vision? Please indicate it.

B.7- What are the similarities and differences between your vision and the vision of the school?

B.8- Where does your vision come from? What are their roots? In other words, what are the factors that shaped your visions? (Such as pedagogical, political, cultural, religious or theoretical factors, educational experiences, etc.). Please give examples.


C – YOUR CURRENT PRACTICES AND YOUR VISION


C.1- Do you think you will be able to achieve this vision at some point in your professional career? (*Yes or No*? Please indicate why you think so.)

C.2- To what extent your current school provides an appropriate context for achieving your vision?

C.3- To what extent are your students' characteristics appropriate for achieving your vision?

C.4- What dimensions of your vision are you currently trying to realize in your classroom? In other words, to what extent do your classroom practices reflect your vision? (*Completely/Majority/Some/Few/None*. Please indicate.)

C.5- Do you think your vision would be different if you had different students? Or would it be the same? (*Yes or No*? Please indicate why you think so.)


D – THINKING ABOUT VISION


D.1- Thinking about your vision, what contributions did this made to you?

D.2- Is there anything else about your vision that you would like to add or want to clarify?

**SAMPLE FROM THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE DATA ANALYSIS**

Teacher's role

    Activator K1
       – Ask questions K1
    Make students curious K1, E1, K5, K6
    Leads them to inquiry E2, K1

    Motivator E1
    Emphasizes visual teaching K2
    Guide K2, K3, K4, K6, K7, K8
    Experiential learning K2, K4, E2
    Practice K2
    Mastery learning K3
    Discovery learning K3 K4 K5 E2 K8
       – Gives clues E1

    Permanent learning K6 K8


Students in the ideal classroom

    – Students' interests K1, K2
    – Students' opinions K1, E1, K6
    – Research K1, K2, K6, K7, K8
    – Active K2 K4 K6 K7
    – Experiential learning E1 E2 K8
    – Latent abilities E1
    – Learning differences K5

**SAMPLE CROSS-CHECK**

5

What's the teacher's role?

— Activate students $K_1$
— Arouse curiosity $K_1$, $K_5$, $E_1$, $K_6$
— Motivate students $E_1$
— Ask questions $K_1$
— Guide $K_2$, $K_3$, $K_4$, $K_8$
— All students learn $K_3$
— Discovery learning $K_3$, $K_4$, $K_5$, $E_2$, $K_8$
— Emotional learning $E_1$
— Involve student in thinking $K_5$
— Learn by doing $K_2$, $E_2$
— Involve student in learning $E_2$

o

What's the student's role?

— students express their own thoughts $K_1$
— emphasis on research $K_1$, $K_2$, $K_2$, $K_8$
— learning by doing $E_1$, $E_2$, $K_8$
— individual differences $K_5$
— addressing all students $K_5$
— visual learning $E_2$

# FINAL DATA ANALYSIS

## 1.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Lifelong Process**

| | |
|---|---|
| Starts from family | K1 |
| Socialization | K5 |

**Student-Centeredness**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Students active | K2 | |
| Student-centered | K4 | K7 |
| Students drive the process | K2 | |
| Elicit latent abilities | E1 | |
| Develop self-concept | E1 | |
| Teacher as a guide | K2 | K4 |

**Meaningful learning**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Knowledge to be used in daily life | K6 | |
| Up-to-date | E2 | |
| Not separate from life | K1 | K5 |
| Current | K3 | |
| Based on student problems and solving them | K3 | |

**Adequate resources, materials and technology**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Materials | K2 | K5 |
| Technology | K3 | K4 |
| Adequate economic resources | K8 | |

**Learning differences**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Individual differences in interests and abilities | K3 | |
| Different student levels | K5 | |
| Individual differences and characteristics | K1 | E1 |

## 1.2 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

**Democratic learning community**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Equal power distribution | K6 | |
| Authority through learning | K6 | |
| Democracy | E2 | K7 |
| Freedom to ask questions | K3 | |
| Freedom of expression | K4 | K7 |
| Student respect each other | K4 | K1 |
| Teacher-student cooperation | E2 | |
| Teacher-student dialogue | K6 | |
| Trust between teacher and student | E1 | |
| Teacher-student same goal | E2 | |

**Humanistic approach**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| friendly, considerate, mild, not forceful | K2 | |
| affective and respectful | E1 | |
| not like principal | K4 | |
| lovable | K3 | |
| nonassertive | K4 | |
| does not oppress student | K1 | K4 |
| does not hurt student | K1 | |
| Students rule | K3 | |
| Teacher as guide | E1 | |
| Teacher-student good relationship | K8 | |
| Students' interests | E1 | |

## 1.3 EVALUATION

**Process Evaluation**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| - Projects | E1 | K5 |
| - Activities | K4 | |
| - Classroom performance | K2 | |
| - Participation | K2 | |
| - Development process | K3 | |
| - Research | K5 | |
| - Exams as secondary | K2 | |
| - No exam, no grade | K3 | |
| - Exams not enough | K4 | |
| - Self-evaluation | K4 | |

**Meaningful learning**

| | |
|---|---|
| - Relating what's learned to daily life | K1 |
| - Using knowledge in real life | E2 |
| - Solving real problems | K1 |

## 2.1 IDEAL CLASSROOM

**Healthy and Safe environment**
- Clean                K1    K3    K6
- Students in order     K1
- dustbins for each student    K5
- Proper            K6

**Development and Growth**
- library            K1    K2    K3    K6    E2
- none lacking       K1    K7
- computer        K1  K2  K3  K4  E1  K6  K7  E2  K8
- lab              K3
- painting atelier      K3
- TV-VCD          K3    K4    K6
- Projector          E1    K5
- internet           K6    E2
- tepegöz          K7    E2    K8
- maps            E2    K3
- museum          E2
- newspaper       E1
- activities         K2
- projects           E1    K4

**Shelter and security**
- **softness**
  - sun light         K1    E1
  - homelike        K7
  - armchair         K3
  - not crowded     K2    K3    K5
  - lively colors      K2    K8
  - music           K2

**Belongingness**
- locker for each student     K5
- single desks           K1    K2    K5    E2     K8
- mockups            K4    E1
- space to exhibit student work    E1    K5    K6    K8

**Reality atmosphere**
- like a lab                     K4
- like an ancient style study room    E2

## 2.2 TEACHER'S ROLE IN THE IDEAL CLASSROOM

**Teacher as guide**
- Guide                      K2    K3    K4    K6    K7    K8
- motivator                  E1
- help them find resources   K4
- facilitator                K8

**teacher enhancing experiential learning environments**
- Visual learning            K2
- Practice                   K2
- experiencing and doing     K2    K4
- different activities       K5
- engage student into learning    E2

**Discovery learning**
- giving clues                                   E1
- inquiry                                        K1
- students discover                              K3  K8
- promotes imagination                           E1
- in depth thinking                              E1  K5  E2
- make students realize the reason of something  K4
- activator                                      K1
- arousing interest in student                   K6
- asking solution                                E2
- synthesis                                      E2

## 2.3 STUDENTS IN THE IDEAL CLASSROOM

**Progressivist learning**
- Experiments                       K3
- Learning by doing, experiencing   E1    E2
- Visual                            K4
- Dramatization                     E2    K8
- Students active            K2     K8
- latent abilities           E1
- self-concept               E1
- creativity                 K6
- they reach by themselves   E1
- research                   K1     K3    K6    K7    K8

**Humanistic approach**
- their opinion         K1
- their interests       K2
- their abilities       K2
- learning differences K5
        - individual differences       K3

## 2.4 WHAT DO STUDENTS LEARN?

**Experiential learning**
- Experiments             K3     K7
- Concrete                K3     K7
- Visualization         K3     K7
- they feel                K3

**Discovery learning**
- Abstract thinking     K1
- Inquiry                K1     E2

**Meaningful learning**
- Things to be used in real life     K2     K4     K5     K8

## 2.5 VISIONS OF SOCIETY

**Scientific**
- Science                E1
- Research              K1     E1     K4
- scientists            K1     K6
- educated             K7
- knowledge          E2

**Democratic**
- Freedom of expression     K1     K5
- freedom              K8
- respecting others       K3     K5     K6     E2
     - empathy            K3
- justice                 K5     E2
- freedom of travel      K7
- democratic society      K8

**Moral values**
- Morality              K1     K2     E1     K5
- meritocracy          K5     E2
- no private interests     E1

**Citizenship values**
- inquiry                      K2
- innovative               K2     K4
- goal-oriented                              K3
- Conscious               K2     K5     K7
- productive              K4     E1
- environmentalist       K5     K7

## 2.6 CURRENT SCHOOL'S VISION

**Legal issues**
  - M.O.N.E. goals                K1      K5      E2
  - confined to laws            E1

**Academic achievement**
  - literacy                    K3
  - success in high-stake exams     K6

**Preparing for life**
  - socialization                K4
  - problem-solving in life       K3

**Village school as representative of state**
  - developing school neighborhood through education     K4
  - represents state in village                K8

**No idea**                  K2      K7

## 2.7 COMPARING YOUR VISION TO SCHOOL'S VISION

**Similarities**
  - Science                  K1
  - research                  K1
  - problem solving         K3
  - literacy                  K4

**Differences**
  - School vision routine                 K1
  - school disregards student interests and abilities     K3      E1
  - school not directed towards job attainment        K3
  - School short-term vision              K6
  - school vision not worldwide            E2

## 2.8 ROOTS OF VISION

**Educational experiences**
- University education      K1    K2    K3    E1    K4    K5
K8
- Education                 K6    E2
- School life experiences   K1    K3    K5    K8
    - weak model teachers                         K1
    - neglected individual interests and abilities K3
    - good model teachers                         E1    K4    K7
- Books                     K2


**individual characteristics**
- ideology     E1
- life view    K1    E2
- knowledge    K2
- interests    K2
- experiences  K6

**Cultural influences**                  K8
- Family                    E1    K5    E2
- Environment               K6    E2
- TV                        K2
- the way I was brought up  E2

**Religious influences**
religion                    K5    K8

**3.1 WILL YOU ACHIEVE YOUR VISION IN THE FUTURE?**

| Yes | **K1** | **K2** | **K3** | **E1** | **K4** | **K6** | **K8** |
|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|

**- Future school's characteristics**    K1    K2
    - Student characteristics    K1
    - Parents' attitude    K2
    - Economic conditions    K2
    - technology    K4

**- new educational attitude**    K3
    - new curriculum    K3

**- personal characteristics**
    - wish    E1
    - optimistic    K6
    - love my job    K8

| No | **K5** | **K7** | **E2** |
|----|--------|--------|--------|

**- Vision may change**    K5

**- School characteristics**    K5
    - student characteristics    K5
    - context    K5
    - economic conditions    K7
    - uncertainty of future    K7
    - physical characteristics of the environment    E2

**- Problems peculiar to country**
    - attitude towards school    K7
    - country's economic conditions    E2
    - parents' economic conditions    E2
    - media    E2

**3.2 TO WHAT EXTENT DOES YOUR CURRENT SCHOOL CONTEXT REALIZE YOUR VISION?**

    **- Not Appropriate   K1   K2  K3  E1  K5  K4  K6  K7  E2**

        **- school characteristics**

| | |
|---|---|
| - low number of students | K1  K8 |
| - physical conditions | K1  K3  E1  E2 |
|    - classroom | K5 |
| - administration | K2  E1 |
| - low finances | K2  K3  E1  K4  K7  K8 |
|    - lack of materials and technology | E1  K4  K5  K6  K8 |
|    - no research | K6 |
| - social and cultural context | K1  K3  K4  K7 |
| - mates | E1  E2 |

        **- legal boundaries**

| | |
|---|---|
| - prescribed unreasonable tasks | K5 |
| - ministry | E2 |

        **- student characteristics**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| - no diverse thinking | K1 | | |
| - low level | K2 | K3 | K5 |
| - living conditions | K5 | | |

        **- parents**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| - indifferent | K2 | K3 | K7 |
| - not support their children | K4 | | |
| - reluctant | K4 | | |
| - negative attitude toward education | K5 | E2 | |
| - different expectations from children | E2 | | |

    **- Partially appropriate    K8**

### 3.3 TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOUR STUDENTS' CHARACTERISTICS REALIZE YOUR VISION?

**Not appropriate**    **K1**    **K2**    **K3**    **E1**    **K4**    **K5**    **K6**    **E2**

**- individual characteristics**

    cognitive
- low readiness    K3
- lack of knowledge  E1    K4    K5
- unable to understand    K5    K6
- unable to think    K6
- unable to express    K5    K8
- not creative    K6

    affective
- reluctant    K2    K4
    - for research  K2
- introvert    E1
- childhood experiences    E1
- timid    E1    K8
- not competitive    K5
- no responsibility    K7
- no habits    K1

**- social and cultural context**    K1
- low finances    K1    E2
- lack of good model  K3
- negative attitude towards education    K4
- poor living conditions  K4
- no hygiene    K7

**- parents**
- don't provide a suitable context    K1
- not supportive    K4    K8
- indifferent    K3
- discouraging    E1
- their primacy is different    E2
- not motivator    K8

**Partially appropriate**    **K7**    **K8**

**- individual characteristics**
- respectful    K7
- positive attitude towards education  K7

**3.4 TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOUR CLASSROOM PRACTICES REFLECT YOUR VISION?**

**- Majority of my vision**     **K1**     **E1**     **E2**
         - curriculum    E2
         - problems in practice     K1     E1

**- some of my vision**     **K3**     **K4**     **K5**     **K6**     **K8**
         - new curriculum     K4

**- few of my vision**     **K2**     **K7**


         - student characteristics K4    K6
             - not talkative     K1
             - no diverse thinking   K1
             - inadequacy     K2
             - low level     K5
             - parents     K3
                 - indifferent     K2

         - school characteristics     K4
             - low economic resources     K2     K7     K8
                 - lack of materials     K5     K6     K7
             - low number of students     K3     K4     K6
                 - no group work     K4
             - long distance     K6
             - prescribed tasks     K5

         - social and cultural context
             - inadequate-difficult physical conditions     K1
             - low finances K4

         - personal characteristics
             - no research    K3
             - no self-progress     K3
             - being discouraged    K3
             - deficiencies     K5

**3.5 MIGHT YOUR VISION CHANGE IF YOU HAD DIFFERENT STUDENTS?**

**No**    **K1**    **K2**    **K3**    **K4**    **K5**    **K7**    **K8**    **E1**

    - not depending on student characteristics    K1    K7
    - result might have changed    E1    K3
    - my wish    K4
    - my goal    K5

**Yes**    **K6**    **E2**
    - philosophy as a factor    K6
    - contextual influence    E2

**4.1 THINKING ABOUT VISION**

    - Reviewed vision    K8    E2    E1    K1
    - Concrete    K8    K3
    - Remembered vision    E2    K6    K3
    - Thought for the first time    K7    K5    K4    K2    K1
    - gave way to new thoughts    K5    K4

**APPENDIX F**

**OKUL VİZYONU**

İnsanların birbirlerine saygı gösterdikleri, toplumun çıkarlarını kendi çıkarlarından önde gören, özgürlüklerinin sınırlarını iyi bilen, demokrasiyi özümsemiş ve kurallara saygılı, farklı kültürleri ve farklı değerleri zenginlik olarak kabul eden, fiziksel, duygusal şiddetin, dil, din, ırk, cinsiyet ayrımcılığının olmadığı, insanlara bireysel olarak değer verildiği, hukukun üstünlüğüne inanılan, görüşlerinden dolayı kimsenin suçlanmadığı, içinde yaşadığı toplumu, ülkesini seven ve faydalı olmak için; herkesin kendi imkanları ölçüsünde birşeyler yapmaya çalıştığı, çevresini, doğayı, dünyayı gelecek kuşaklardan alınmış bir emanet olarak gören, kimsenin savaşlardan açlıktan, ihmalkarlıktan ölmediği, herkesin yaşama hakkına saygı duyulduğu, fırsat ve olanak eşitliğinin her alanda sağlandığı, herkese kendilerini geliştirebilmelerini sağlayacak imkanların sunulduğu, üretken ve adil bir gelir dağılımının sağlandığı bir toplumda yaşamak hayalimizdir.

**APPENDIX G**

**VISION OF THE SCHOOL (TRANSLATED)**

Our dream is to live in a society where people respect each other; where society's interests are given primacy rather than people's own interests; where people know the boundaries of their freedom; where democracy is adopted; where rules are respected, where different cultures and values are considered as richness; where there is no physical and emotional violence; where there is no discrimination based on language, religion, race and gender; where people are valued as individuals; where law has the priority; where nobody is charged for his opinions; where people love their society and their country; where people make effort to be useful; where environment and nature are considered to be borrowed from the next generations; where nobody dies due to wars, hunger or negligence; where everyone's right to live is respected; where equality of opportunity is available in every area; where everybody has the opportunity to develop themselves; and where there is productivity and a fair distribution of income.