

## The Opinions of Prospective Teachers about Peer Assessment

### Öğretmen Adaylarının Akran Değerlendirmeye İlişkin Görüşleri

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#### Abstract

**Introduction:** Peer assessment has been popular in teacher education for decades. In this study, the opinions of prospective teachers about peer-assessment after an implemented course were collected. The correlation between peer-assessment scores and those of self-assessment and teacher assessments were also investigated.

**Method:** A survey was administered to 56 prospective teachers taking the “Measurement and Evaluation” course in the department of English language teaching. Peer assessment, as well as self-evaluation and teacher-based assessment were applied in the study. To collect the data, open-ended questionnaires and interview forms were employed.

**Finding:** The results indicated that that prospective teacher thought that they acquired professional skills through peer assessment. They also perceived that peer assessment enhanced the quality of learning, provided constructive feedback in learning process, and enabled them to obtain some democratic values. It was also regarded as a tiring and time-consuming activity. Lastly, as parallel to the literature, prospective teachers criticized peer assessment that they were not capable of evaluating themselves effectively because of several reasons such as peer-effect, emotional improper acts and unreliability among peers against each other's. Besides, significant a positive correlation was found among peer, self and teacher assessment scores.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, secrecy, usage of the rubrics, better comprehension of the criteria, training of prospective teachers in evaluation, and spending less time can be the factors that affect the peer assessment. Teachers are suggested that they should adopt contemporary measurement and evaluation techniques reflected within constructivist implementations in learning environments.

**Key words:** peer assessment, teacher, assessment, self-evaluation.

### Özet

Akran değerlendirme son yıllarda öğretmen eğitiminde popüler olmaya başlamıştır. Bu çalışmada, öğretmen adaylarının akran değerlendirmeye ilişkin görüşleri ile öğretmen, akran ve kendini değerlendirme sonuçları arasındaki korelasyon araştırılmıştır.

Araştırma, İngilizce öğretmenliği anabilim dalında ölçme ve değerlendirme dersine devam eden 56 öğretmen adayı üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Verilerin toplanmasında açık uçlu anket ve görüşme kullanılmıştır.

Öğretmen adaylarının, bu tekniğin kişisel ve mesleki beceriler kazandırdığını, öğrenmenin niteliğini artırdığını, öğrenmelere ilişkin yapıcı dönütler sağladığını, demokratik değerler kazandırdığını ve güvenilir bir teknik olduğunu düşündükleri belirlenmiştir. Zaman alıcı faaliyet olarak görülmesi, öğretmen adaylarının değerlendirme yapabilecek yeterliliğe sahip olmadıkları, bazı öğrenenlerin duygusal davranması, arkadaşlık etkisi faktörlerin bu tekniğin güvenilirliğini etkilediği, bu tekniğe ilişkin olumsuz eleştiriler olarak görülmektedir. Bunların yanı sıra kendi, öğretmen ve akran değerlendirme puanları arasında anlamlı pozitif korelasyon hesaplanmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, dereceli puanlama anahtarı, gizlilik, ölçütlerin belirginliği, değerlendirme konusunda öğretmen adaylarının eğitimi ve akran değerlendirme için daha az zaman ayrılması akran değerlendirmeyi etkileyen faktörlerdir. Öğretmenlere, yeni ölçme ve değerlendirme yaklaşımlarını öğrenme ortamındaki yapılandırmacı uygulamalar içinde yansıtılmaları önerilebilir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Akran değerlendirme, öğretmen eğitimi, kendini değerlendirme

### I. Introduction

Recently, the importance of peer assessment for teacher education has begun to be recognized. According to Sluijsmans and Prins (2006) peer assessment can be a valuable learning tool in teacher education because it supports student teachers in acquiring skills that are essential to their professional working life. However, in spite of this trend, there is little to be found in the published literature on how students perceive these methods. In this study, it was tried to find out how effectively this method can be used in teacher training.

*What is peer assessment?*

Peer assessment can be described as an educational process whereby the students appraise the quality, value, and level of learning, they appraise their friends' results in the same situation, and they receive feedback in accordance with the criteria previously stated (Deardorff, 2005; Leighton, 2004; Topping et al. 2000). Peer assessment activities can be done in certain curricula in different ways. In this study, peer assessment is defined as: 'the assessment of performance tasks of prospective teachers by their peers'.

*Pros of peer assessment*

There are many positive aspects of peer assessment. Peer assessment enhances learning and contributes to learning efficiency and quality (Barakat & Hassan, 2009; Brindley & Scofield, 1998; Prins et al., 2005; Sluijsmans et al 2002; Stephanie & Geoff, 2001; Topping, 2009; Weaver & Cotrell 1986). It also helps students to get detailed information about their expected work. Students are

required to think critically so that they can evaluate their performances, improve them, and make suggestions; as a result, their analytical skills contribute to their own work (Kathy, 2000).

Peer assessment, as well as self and co-evaluation can be used for the development of interpersonal and professional skills and competencies, from which students are supposed to benefit in their future fields of study (Cebrián de la Serna, 2008; Prins and et al. 2005; Sluijsmans et al, 1998). It was also found in a study administered by Kim (2009) that this method contributes to meta-cognitive awareness of learners. Related literature clarifies that peer assessment helps objective evaluation and justification, and improves social and communicative skills needed to challenge criticism (Falchikov, 1986; Kwok, 2008; Topping, 2009). It also enables students to participate in the learning and evaluation process (Carr, 2008; Price et al. 2007), to take responsibility for learning, and to improve collaborative working skills. Brown (2004) states that students like to actively participate in evaluation and in the possession of student success.

One of the most preponderant objectives of peer assessment is the supply feedback to learners. Teachers and students need feedback to improve their learning in the class (Carr, 2008; Price et al. 2007). Students are encouraged to observe their goals and improvements through peer and self-evaluations. Peer feedback can be supportive, advisory and corrective (Kathy, 2000; Topping, 2009). Also, as some skills are common in both peer and self-evaluation, students can better evaluate themselves through peer feedback (Berg v et al., 2006; Liu and Carless, 2006). One of the aspects of peer assessment is that it is copious because in the class, there are more students than teachers, therefore the students' feedback is quicker and more individualized (Topping, 2009).

In most of the studies carried out, the attitudes of learners and teachers towards peer assessment are generally positive. (Cheng and Warren, 1997; Gatfield, 1999; Kim, 2009; Orsmond *et al.*, 1996; Price et al. 2007; Prins et al., 2005; Wen et al. 2006). From the data collected in these studies, it can be pointed out that peer assessment includes several positive aspects as encouraging learning, enabling feedback, the participation of students in the learning and evaluation process, and the taking on of responsibility.

#### *Cons of peer assessment*

There are also negative aspects of peer assessment. Along with positive opinions, students think that peer assessment is a waste of time (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; Topping, 2009). Topping (2009) states that establishing quality peer assessment requires time for organization, training, and monitoring. If peer assessment is to be complementary to teacher feedback, rather than a substitution for it, then extra time needs to be devoted to training students in determining the ways in which to provide constructive feedback. However, there are also possible benefits for teachers as well as learners.

One of the objections to peer assessment is that it is preferable when it is completed by a teacher instead of peers. In the studies carried out, it is noted that the learners prefer a teacher's evaluation and his/her constructive feedback (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; Kwok, 2008; Özoğul & Sullivan, 2009). In addition,

in a research done by Özoğul & Sullivan (2009), the groups evaluated by a teacher outnumber the others in knowledge-based tests. On the other hand, one of the most important criticisms of peer assessment is related to the unreliability of this method. It is indicated in the studies that some students think it is an unfair system since it does not have objectivity (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998). Topping (2009) says that differences in subjects, course levels, performances and products evaluated, unexpected results, uncertainty of justification criteria, education, and co-operation are some of the factors that affect the reliability of peer assessment.

Another negative aspect of peer assessment is that the effectiveness of this method may be negatively affected due to friendly relationships (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; Topping, 2009). Peer assessment can partly be abused because of strong friendships, jealousy of other students, the popularity of certain individuals, disruption in criticisms, and even secret agreements made between students in order to get high scores, something which results in partiality (Topping, 2009).

Those who learn through peer assessment consider themselves incapable of using this method, especially when it comes to commenting about the measurement stage (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; Topping, 2009). Some studies (Kennedy, 2005; Cheng & Warren, 1997) in this field reveal that the lack of students in evaluation affects objective scoring.

Overall, despite these negative aspects related to the unreliability of peer assessment, there still exist several studies that show that this method is still reliable. More than 70% of the studies on the reliability of peer assessment prove the validity and reliability (Topping, 2009). Moreover, there are other studies showing that there is a positive correlation between learner and teacher scores, and that the students think it is a justifiable method, and is good enough to be used (Boydell, 1994; Conway et al., 1993; Fry, 1990).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the opinions of prospective teachers about peer assessment. In regard to this, answers to the following questions have been researched:

- 1- What do teachers think about the positive aspects of peer assessment?
- 2- What do they think of the negative aspects of peer assessment?
- 3- What are their suggestions with regard to peer assessment?
- 4- Is there a correlation among the peer, self and teacher assessment scores?

## **II.Method**

### **Subjects**

The survey method was mainly employed in this research. A researcher-made open ended survey was administered to 56 sophomore prospective teachers (23 male, 33 female) of English education who enrolled to the “Measurement and Evaluation” course in a public university.

### *Data Collection Tool*

In order to get the opinions of prospective teachers about the research questions, an open-ended questionnaire and an interview form were used. The questionnaire involved the following questions:

- 1) In your opinion what are the pros of peer assessment?
- 2) In your opinion what are the cons of peer assessment?
- 3) What are your recommendations to improve peer assessment?

After analyzing the open-ended questionnaires, interviews were conducted with 15 volunteer participants to gather in depth data on the topic studied. In the interviews, the participants responded to the similar questions that they answered in the questionnaire, so that more reliable and consistent results can be obtained.

In order to score the works of prospective teachers, rubric forms were used. Multiple choice and other tests (classic, matching, short-answered) were utilized in analytical rubric forms as criteria. In the analytical rubrics, there were 20 criteria such as “options to be compatible with the roots of options”. In scoring these criteria, the lickert types of, `(5) Very Good, (4) Good, (3) Medium, (2) Bad, (1) Very Bad`, were benefited. In rubric forms, the lowest and the highest scores range were between 20 and 100.

### *Data Analysis*

In qualitative data analysis, as Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate, analysis of the data, making data visual, conclusion, and confirmation were respectively followed. From the information obtained in open-ended questionnaires, three categories, “positive-negative-suggestions” were formed. Then, the data concerning each category was encoded. The data encoded in each category was classified under different themes. As a result of the analysis, the positive aspects were divided into four: “*quality of learning, feedback, democratic values and reliability-objectiveness*”. As for the negative aspects, four codes “*timing, reliability-objectiveness, competency and personality-interpersonal trait*” were clarified. After each analysis, the findings related to each category (positive–negative–suggestion) were given in tables with their frequencies and then commented upon.

The data collected from the interviews was transcribed and each interview form was numbered. On the written forms, with regard to the interviews, different coding was made after conducting the content analysis. Based on these codes, the themes and the findings mainly supported the ones collected through open-ended questionnaires.

### *Procedures*

In this first stage, it was determined which tasks the prospective teachers should undertake with groups in the context of the course, and the instruction for performance was prepared. At the beginning, it was thought that an assessment should have been conducted of peer, self and teacher scores for the evaluation of the work that prospective teachers were supposed to do. It was decided to undertake the peer assessment in private, the identity of the assessing groups was to be kept

hidden (Özoğul and Sullivan, 2009; Topping et al. 2000); rubric forms were to be used (Kwok, 2008; Omelicheva, 2005; Price et al. 2007; Topping, 2009), and the participants was to be informed about this method (Cheng and Warren, 1997; Sluijsmans, 2002).

In this process, prospective teachers prepared multiple choice tests within the course context. In the next stage, they were asked to reproduce their works in power-point presentations in order to present them and deliver them to the groups. Before the first group made their presentation, they distributed rubric forms to be used in the scoring, as well as giving brief information about how to undertake peer assessments and about its importance. After these preparations, the first group made its presentation. During the presentation, the groups and the teacher filled out the rubric forms for the presenting group. The groups undertaking the assessment did not mention their names on the rubrics. After the presentations, the completed forms by the prospective teachers were collected. The teacher`s and other groups` criticisms were made after the peer forms were collected. This method prevented a possible negative influence on scoring. The groups were asked to report a self-evaluation verbally after the collection of the rubric forms used in the peer assessment. They made a self-evaluation relating to what they would like to change, if they were given the chance, and what kinds of shortcomings they have encountered. During this process, the presenting groups filled out rubric forms in order to check their self-evaluations. After these processes, the other groups were asked to report verbally on the written evaluations they had undertaken. A representative from each group explained the thoughts of the group to the presenting group, which enabled the presenting group to criticize the explanations of the presentation markers. By giving the presenting groups one copy of each evaluation form that the other groups had filled out, the correction of their work was ensured in accordance with the criticisms. All of the tasks were continuously undertaken in three weeks until all groups had finished their work. After this stage, all of the participants were asked to prepare a report about the pros and cons of peer assessment.

## **Results**

### *The positive aspects of peer assessment*

In the analysis of the opinions of prospective teachers about peer assessment resulting from the answers to open-ended questionnaires, themes such as quality of `learning, feedback, democratic values, and reliability` themes were noted. Their frequencies were also stated in the following table. Some items were stated more than one prospective teacher and the frequencies cover all responses by the respondents. The responses of the prospective teachers were coded under four themes and other responses with their frequencies were all presented in Table 1.

#### *Quality of learning*

As will be seen from the following table, four major themes were created in line with the responses of the prospective teachers that were also coded with their frequencies. Considering the Table 1, continuous interaction in the learning environment with regard to being a member of a learner centered atmosphere was

intensively recognized by most of the prospective teachers. They also claimed that the course developed their `critical thinking skills`, `decision making and observation skills`, and `active participations`. Another effect has been contributing to levels of competency in the measurement and evaluation of the learners and to their self-confidence. Regarding this issue, a prospective teacher's response was as follows:

“The most important benefit of this peer assessment is that it helped us act like a real specialist in measurement and evaluation, and we evaluated our friends' works” (E.B. 12, 2-4)

Another prospective teacher stated that

“With the help of this evaluation, our participation, sharing and collaborative skills have improved. Also, we have gained new skills to be used when we start to teach.” (T.K.13, 5-8)

As was obvious from the excerpts, learners developed new skills during and after the peer assessment process. When the findings of the quality of learning in peer-evaluation were studied, it was clear that this process had contributed a lot to the active participation of the learners, to the creation of amusing courses, and to interaction among the learners. Also, this evaluation rendered learning more permanent, helped the learners to compare their work with their friends' work, resulted in better learning, and proved to be a good example of a learner-centered learning method.

### *Feedback*

Regarding `feedback` theme, the respondents mainly implied that `how to do peers' work while evaluating the other groups`, `chance of seeing mistakes and problems from different perspectives`, and `seeing the mistakes and deficiencies during learning` were important. One of the positive aspects of peer assessment was the feedback. From the findings obtained through open-ended questionnaires, it was noted that prospective teachers had seen their mistakes from different perspectives and received the feedback of their friends, as well as that of the teacher. They also received help on how to evaluate one group. Regarding this issue, two prospective teachers stated as follows:

“We could see the work of our friends thanks to peer assessment. So, we could correct the mistakes and complete the shortcomings of our tasks.”(ÖÇ. 4, 6-8)

“During the course, we have had the opportunity to compare our work with that of our friends from different groups by studying them in detail. We have tried to avoid the mistakes made in other work and used the best patterns of others in our work.” (N.Ç. 9, 3-5).

From the findings, it is clear that the learners have seen the work of their friends so they can correct the mistakes and complete the shortcomings of their work, have had the opportunity to compare their work with that of their friends, and have developed better work.

Table 1: Frequency values of *opinions prospective teachers on positive aspects of peer assessment*

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Codes</i>	<i>f</i>
<u><i>Quality of Learning</i></u>	Increase in the level of interaction among the learners	55
	A good example of student centered learning	50
	Development of critical chinking	40
	Active participation of learners in learning	39
	Improvement of ability to decide and improvement in observation skills.	35
	More attention and interest in the course.	36
	Contribution to the self-assessment skills of learners.	30
	More amusing courses.	30
	Better understanding of the subject evaluated.	30
	Permanence of what has been learned.	25
	Contribution to the self-reliance of learners.	23
	More attention to the work for the fear of the evaluation by other groups.	10
	Extensive experience, especially of the teaching profession.	36
<u><i>Feedback</i></u>	Learning how to do their work while evaluating the other groups.	55
	Chance of seeing mistakes and problems from different perspectives.	50
	Possibility of seeing the mistakes and deficiencies during learning.	48
	Ability to compare the work of learners with that of others.	38
	Opportunity to gain feedback, teacher excluded.	24
<u><i>Democratic values</i></u>	Encourages collaborative learning instead of survival strategy learning.	45
	Increase in the level of responsibility	40
	More respect for other opinions	35
	Acceptance of the mistakes revealed after the criticisms.	33
	Learning the importance of objectiveness when evaluating others.	24
Agreement in the decisions, sharing, and skills.	20	
<u><i>Reliability-Objectiveness</i></u>	Effective evaluation of friends working on the same level and in the same field of study.	36
	More objective assessment of groups as the names are not given	34
	Detailed evaluation of the works.	33
	Introduction to the criteria to be used in assessment being more instructive and of more use.	33
	Better assessment of scoring people in the process	26

### *Democratic value*

The responses of the prospective teachers also created an important theme: democratic value. This meant that peer assessment process also contributed their democratic values. Encouraging collaboration, increasing their responsibilities, respecting other opinions and acceptance of the criticisms were mainly shared by prospective teachers with regard to democratic values. It was clearly understood from their responses that this process also contributed to sharing, participation and collaboration skills which may also be attributed to democratic values. Lastly, the inclusion of peer assessment was seen as a means of providing students with interpersonal and professional skills and democratic values.

### *Reliability and objectiveness*

Reliability and objectiveness theme appeared after analyzing many responses of prospective teachers. Most of the prospective teachers mainly shared the ideas that peer assessment contributes reliability and objectiveness by `effectively evaluating peers` work on the same level and in the same field of study`, `assessing the groups more objectively since their names do not appear`, `introducing the criteria to be used in assessment being`, and lastly `developing self-assessment skills of learners`. From the positive aspects of the reliability, it was clear that maintaining the secrecy of students` names enabled an increase in the reliability level on the part of the evaluators. The criteria for the rubrics used to guide the evaluators were useful and made the evaluations more detailed.

### *The negative aspects of peer assessment*

In the analysis of the opinions of prospective teachers about peer assessment resulting from the negative answers to open-ended questionnaires, themes such as timing, reliability-validity, competency and readiness, and democratic values were noted. Their frequencies were also stated in the following table. Some items were stated more than one prospective teacher and the frequencies cover all responses by the respondents.

### *Timing*

The first heavily emphasized aspect was about timing according to the prospective teachers, as can be seen with their frequencies in the Table 2. From the findings, it can be concluded that due to the number of groups, assessment took quite a while because of group size and numbers, and therefore it was quite boring for most students. At the beginning it was intended to complete the research within a short time, but since there was not enough time, some evaluations had not been finished in time as intended. Regarding this, a prospective teacher stated that

“If peer assessment takes a lot of time, it loses its effectiveness, which makes learners bored. So, the time taken should not be too long.” (N.Ç. 9, 15-17).

Table 2: Frequency values of *opinions prospective teachers on negative aspects of peer assessment*

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Codes</u>	<u>f</u>
<u>Timing</u>	Prevention of evaluation within a limited time from attentive evaluation.	50
	A lot of time given because of the number of groups	52
	Limited time for evaluation	45
<u>Reliability</u>	A difficult and objective assessment of a student's friend.	18
	Some learners influenced by emotions in the assessment	24
	Fake scoring due to friendship	13
	Negative effect of friendship on the evaluation.	11
	Thought of peer assessment as an unreliable method.	8
	High scores given to each other being friends due to agreement of the groups.	14
<u>Competency/ Readiness</u>	Unreadiness of learners due to unawareness as a teacher.	23
	Disadvantage of being the first group.	28
	Inexperience in evaluating.	34
<u>Personality- interpersonal trait</u>	Sensitivity of some friends.	21
	Objections of some friends to criticisms.	15
	Conflicts among some peers.	12

#### *Reliability validity*

Of the negative aspects discussed in peer assessment, the reliability-validity problem comes secondly in the prospective teachers' responses. The table 2 shows that emotional influence was a common threat for the peer assessment. They thought that it was difficult for a student to evaluate his/her friend, some of the learners being influenced unduly by their emotions in the evaluation. They have given high scores to close friends, which have resulted in subjectivity, and therefore they have started to think peer assessment is an unreliable method. In relation to this crucial issue, a prospective teacher explained his view as:

"I do not think peer assessment is objective enough. However, this has nothing to do with the peer assessment itself. Some friends may be perfectionists in tasks and some treat tasks superficially. Some friends feel they may have problems with their friends just because they criticize them" (MB. 3, 15-20)

It was clearly understood that some prospective teachers were not be able to perform evaluations objectively because of the “friend factor”.

*Competency/Readiness*

A third negative aspect concerning peer assessment is the incompetency of the learners to apply this method. It is understood that the students was not ready to evaluate their friends because they did not consider themselves as aware as the teacher about the process, and the inexperience in evaluation negatively affected their evaluation process.

F.T. illustrated this situation very clearly below:

“...at the beginning, all students cannot make an objective evaluation on account of having little knowledge about the evaluation. However, seeing the work of their friends and comparing the work, they can all understand better the criteria and so become more objective and professional in evaluation. In this way, they keep their learning permanent.” (FT. 10, 5-10)It is pointed out that the negative aspects of peer assessment may disappear at times, although they are inexperienced at the beginning of the process.

*Personality & Interpersonal traits*

As was noticed previously that democratic values were seen as positive contribution of peer assessment process by the prospective teachers. However, a similar but more personalized theme was derived from the responses of the prospective teachers again, as the negative aspect. The findings show that some friends was too sensitive, disturbed by the criticisms and various emotions. This situation caused disagreements and arguments among peers sometimes.

*Suggestions of prospective teachers for peer assessment*

The suggestions for this method which have been proposed are as the following:

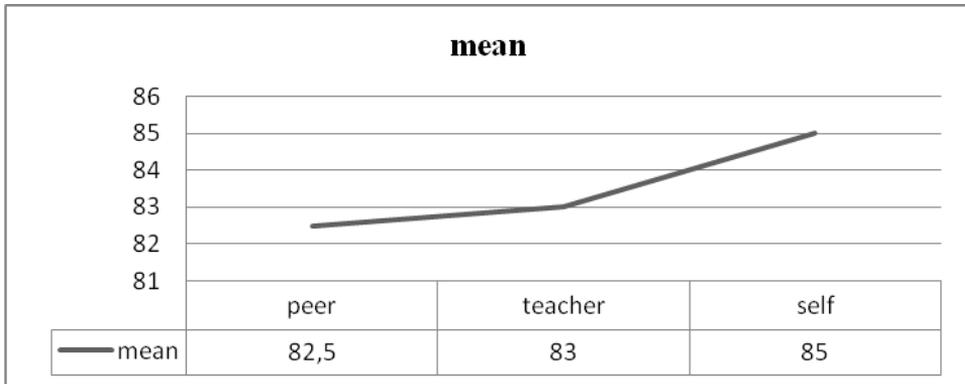
Table 3: Frequency values of suggestions of prospective teachers for peer assessment

<b>Codes</b>	<b>f</b>
Teacher’s instructions to take place during evaluation.	55
The number of the groups to participate in the evaluation should be low.	55
Need more time	55
The peer assessment form should not have too many criteria.	46
A good method; individuals being both serious and professional.	36
Evaluators to have enough competence.	34
The quality of learning to be focused upon instead of the score received	30
Learners to be given criteria for objectivity	26

As was seen from the table, the prospective teachers mainly insisted on existence of teacher instructions during evaluation process. This single finding itself indicated the lack of experience for learner-centered approaches in prospective teachers. They claimed that the criteria and clear directions in the process, but these criteria or directions should not be too many in order to provide the objectivity. The fact that the number of groups was not many, that they stated that there was an uncertainty because of the absence of teacher instructions. In that sense, the required more time for the assessment. They also emphasized that it is a quality process when the participants take it seriously and think professionally that are all indicators of an effective method or approach.

*The findings concerning the results of peer, self and teacher-based assessments*

In this section, quantitative data was collected. To determine the correlation among peer, self and teacher assessment results, mean, standard deviation and their correlations were calculated.



Graphic 1: Change in scores of peer, self and teacher assessments

In the graph, the arithmetical means of peer, self and teacher based assessment scores can be seen. The mean of the peer-assessment mean scores was 82,5, though those given by the prospective teachers was 85, and those given by the teachers' was 83.

Table 4: The correlation between teacher, self and peer assessments

	self	teacher
peer	0,730*	0,711*
self	-	0,888**

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In Table 4, a highly significant correlation between peer and self-assessments (r: .730; p<0.05) were observed. There was also a significant correlation between peer and self-assessment (r: .711; p<0.05), and self and teacher assessment mean scores (r: .888; p<0.01). These findings show that there was a

consistency among peer, self and teacher scorings. According to this result, peer assessment can be effectively used together with different types of assessments.

### **Discussion**

In this study that investigated the efficiency of peer assessment in teacher education, the views of teachers about the positive aspects of this assessment were collected. As far as benefits or contributions of peer assessment are concerned, prospective teachers thought that peer assessment helped them to improve their critical thinking skills, as well as the skills of measurement and evaluation in assessing themselves. They have also expressed that this method made it possible for them to develop their participative, collaborative and sharing skills, and they confirmed that it has been a good teaching experience for them. The relevant literature shows that peer assessment may enable learners to acquire these skills (Kim, 2009; Prins et al.; 2005; Sluijsmans et al, 2004; Topping et al., 2000). Brown et al. (1994) affirm that the skills to be acquired in peer assessment are the ones teachers are supposed to have in teaching. Teachers are bound to learn how to evaluate peer performance and how students should criticize before and after the performance of learners in primary schools, because the prospective teachers are the evaluators and plan the assessments.

The results also showed that how this method used in teacher education may help prospective teachers acquiring these skills. According to the data collected through the survey and interviews with the prospective teachers, they mostly claimed that this method helped them to actively participate in the learning process, the method drawn attention to and promoted interest in the course, and it encouraged the interaction of learners, and made learning more permanent. This method, on the other hand, was a good example of student-centered learning, which allowed students to improve their work after evaluation. The results of interviews showed that groups did their tasks carefully, knowing that they were to be observed by other groups, and that the views and the criticisms of their peers on the same level and in the same class as them, contributed to their work. From these findings, it can be concluded that peer assessment increased the level of learning quality (Prins et al., 2005; Sluijsmans et al., 2002; Topping, 2009; Weaver & Cotrell 1986).

The principal goal of peer assessment is to get feedback. The feedback should be constructive and supportive (Kathy, 2000; Topping, 2009). In this study, prospective teachers announced that this method provided them the opportunity to see the mistakes and shortcomings from different perspectives, in particular without a teacher. They also declared that they can correct their mistakes while they investigate the work completed by their friends. It can be said here that peer assessment provided the prospective teachers with constructive feedback.

The prospective teachers state that this method contributed to the acquisition of some democratic values too. According to John Dewey, if we want to talk about democracy, the educational environment should be democratic. This method was used to democratize the educational environment and to have the individuals learn democratic values.

The principle of secrecy was considered in this study and the rubrics prepared by the teacher were used for evaluation. The relevant studies demonstrated that secrecy resulted in better, objective and impartial evaluation, and reduced socio-emotional disruption among the students (Leighton, 2004; Lejk & Wyuill, 2001; Özoğul & Sullivan, 2009; Topping et al. 2000). In addition, the check-list and the rubrics give birth to an objective assessment (Kwok, 2008; Falchikov, 1995; Price et al. 2007; Omelicheva, 2005; Topping, 2009). Therefore, the reliability of the evaluation was ensured, as the criteria were clear and understandable.

In the study, the negative aspects of evaluation were also collected, which are timing, reliability-validity, competency and readiness, and personality & interpersonal traits. In accordance with the data, some learners pointed out that it was very difficult to evaluate one's friend objectively due to friendship and mutual agreement to give high scores to the works of each other, and therefore they found this method quite unreliable. In the interviews, the question of reliability did not derive from the method itself but from the inattentive work of some prospective teachers, although most paid a lot of attention to the work. Moreover, some gave high scores to the work of their close friends, while they were giving low scores to the work of those people they liked the least. So, it can be stated that the scores in peer assessment were not objective all the time. While in some studies related to peer assessment, learners felt that this method is reliable (Fry, 1990; Topping, 2009), they perceived that it was not so in some other studies (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; Liu & Carless, 2006).

The prospective teachers found this method time-consuming either. The findings revealed that due to the number of groups in the evaluation, the work could be repetitive, time consuming and disruptive. It was revealed that there was not enough time for a whole evaluation. In the first application, the work was regarded as being comprehensive (multiple choice tests), the number of learners or groups being too high, and the verbal communication completed, and more than enough time was spent on this work. Some work done before has revealed that this method was a time-wasting activity (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; Topping, 2009). One negative aspect of this assessment was some students were emotional and too sensitive to respect the criticisms, causing some debates among the students. Some students stated that their work was better than that of others. For that reason, they were not tolerant towards the critics.

Certain prospective teachers did not find themselves competent for using this method and think that the inexperience in evaluation negatively affected the process and it was not good to be the first group to be evaluated. The relevant works shown that the learners felt they were not competent enough to comment about the criteria (Brindley & Scoffield, 1998; Topping, 2009; Kennedy, 2005; Cheng & Warren, 1997).

In this study, peer, self and teacher based assessments were used. It was observed that there was a meaningful correlation among all three types of scorings in the assessment. As related literature (Boydell, 1994; Fry, 1990) confirmed, these findings also revealed that there was a consistency among peer, self and teacher-based assessments.

In conclusion, secrecy, usage of the rubrics, better comprehension of the criteria, training of prospective teachers in evaluation, and spending less time can be the factors that affect the peer assessment. Under the light if the data obtained from this research followings are suggested:

- The peer assessment could be applied to smaller groups
- It can be applied in private
- The learners need instructions and guidance on how to evaluate. Thus, similar works/products can be evaluated before a real assessment is done so that they can practice evaluation process. Teacher may explain the criteria before the application.
- The learners should be informed about the criteria.
- Peer assessment should be employed together with self and teacher-based evaluations.
- Peer assessment should not only be used for scoring.

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