

Defining the Good Teacher through Microteaching and Practicum Experiences

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ABSTRACT: *This longitudinal qualitative case study examines how Turkish pre-service English teachers' perceptions of a good teacher evolve after microteaching and practicum experiences. Using a thematic analysis framework based on affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions, the study interprets their perceptions. Data were collected from participants' written reflections at the beginning and end of a semester-long microteaching process and analyzed through content analysis. Results show that pre-service teachers initially defined a good teacher through traditional roles like knowledge transfer and classroom management. By the end of the process, however, they emphasized contemporary teacher competencies such as student-centeredness, reflective thinking, cultural sensitivity, and flexibility. Significant increases were found in themes like adaptability (18.75% → 34%), reflective thinking (6.67% → 38.24%), and positive learning environment (1.85% → 26%). These findings highlight that structured, theory-practice-integrated experiences enhance pre-service teachers' pedagogical awareness and professional self-development.*

KEYWORDS: EFL, Good Teacher, Pedagogical Awareness, Pre-Service Teachers, Teacher Education

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Introduction

Teachers are one of the cornerstones of education and their role and influence in education is an important determinant of students' academic achievement and personal development. As such, the concept of good teacher has been defined in different ways and analysed through various theoretical frameworks in the educational literature for many years (Biesta, 2015; Grant, 2015; Inan, 2014; Khalimova, & Mukhsinova, 2024; Miron, 1983; Trivaudom, Tuntinakorngul, & Tungkunan, 2025). Although the definition and characteristics of a good teacher have been questioned for long decades, there is no common agreed definition. However, different theoretical approaches and frameworks have been developed in the literature. One of these frameworks in the literature is Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) model. Shulman (1987) emphasizes that a good teacher should possess not only subject matter knowledge (content knowledge) but also the ability to effectively transfer this knowledge to their students (pedagogical knowledge). PCK refers to the interaction between the teacher's content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. This model provides an important framework for understanding how teachers shape their teaching methods, how they present the content of the lesson, and how they guide the students' learning process when interacting with students. Shulman's PCK model was later extended with the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model with the developing technology by Mishra and Koehler (2006). TPACK (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) addresses teaching practice more comprehensively by adding the teacher's pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and technological knowledge. However, while both PCK and TPACK models focus on the cognitive dimension of teaching, they overlook the emotional and social needs of students and the psychological and empathic aspects of teacher-student relationships. This shortcoming may prevent the teacher from moving beyond being merely a knowledge transmitter and may limit the teacher's impact as it does not adequately address the affective aspects of the learning process.

Another important pedagogy is Rogers' humanistic approach (1969). Unlike Shulman (1987), Rogers (1969) emphasizes the importance of teachers considering students' emotional needs. In this approach, it is argued that teachers are expected to understand students, provide them with a safe learning environment and respect their individual development. According to Rogers, the learning process is not only a cognitive but also an emotional interaction process. Therefore, it is proposed that the teacher is expected to demonstrate an empathetic, understanding and supportive attitude. Since the emotional well-being of students has a direct impact on the effectiveness of their learning (Durlak et al., 2011; Shafait et al., 2021), Rogers' human-centred approach prioritizes ensuring the psychological safety of students beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. This approach is highly valuable in supporting students' emotional well-being. However, focusing only on emotional connections and empathy risks overlooking the pedagogical and academic aspects of teaching. Since the learning process is a holistic construct that includes both cognitive and emotional elements, teachers need to effectively apply the necessary pedagogical methods and techniques to achieve academic goals in addition to providing emotional support. In this context, creating a supportive learning environment requires a balanced approach to teaching without ignoring academic and cognitive needs.

Danielson's (2007) teaching framework, in turn, evaluates teachers' activities and responsibilities around four main components: Planning and Preparation, Classroom Environment, Instruction and Professional Responsibility. This approach enables the teacher to adopt a multifaceted perspective in the teaching process. According to Danielson (2007), teachers are not just supposed to present academic knowledge, but also to shape the learning environment and students' experiences in the classroom. In this respect, it aims to address the

students' learning process in a broader context, enabling the teacher to move beyond being a mere transmitter of information. While Danielson's framework emphasizes behavioural dimensions such as classroom management and professional responsibilities of the teacher, it devotes insufficient emphasis to the emotional bonds that teachers form with students or to their personal development. In other words, this framework focuses on the cognitive and behavioural dimensions of teaching while overlooking the teacher's emotional relationships with students or personal development. Danielson's (2007) approach, similar to Shulman's (1987) PCK model, combines the teacher's content knowledge with pedagogical knowledge, but lacks an emphasis on how to convey this knowledge in an empathetic way. However, as literature also suggests emotions play a crucial role in the teaching-learning process (Garner, 2010; Pekrun, 2006) and the emotional needs of students in the learning process and the individual attitude of the teacher are factors that can directly influence the learning process.

Evidently, different theoretical frameworks of the good teacher concept in education address various qualities and skills of teachers and each of them contributes significantly in its own context. However, these frameworks have some limitations in fully explaining teacher competencies as shown above. In this context, each of the existing frameworks, while revealing certain aspects of teachers, falls short of fully reflecting the multifaceted role of the teacher. Therefore, in order to address the concept of good teacher more comprehensively, it is necessary to develop a holistic framework that examines the affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions of teaching practice together. Such an approach will make it possible to evaluate the role of the teacher in education from a broader perspective and to understand teacher competencies not only at the cognitive or affective level, but also through the interaction of teachers with each other. Thus, the proposed framework examines teaching practice through three key dimensions: affective, behavioural, and cognitive. These dimensions can be collectively referred to as the ABCs of the teaching profession (See Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of the ABC framework

Dimension	Affective	Behavioral	Cognitive
Key features	Empathy, student orientation, motivation, inspiration	Classroom management, effective communication, flexibility, organization	Content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, PCK, TPACK, learning strategies, assessment
Literature sources	Rogers (1969), Pekrun (2006)	Danielson (2007)	Shulman (1987), Mishra and Koehler (2006), Bloom et al. (1956)
Examples	Sensitivity to students' emotional state, creating a safe learning environment	Effective lecture presentation for students, using teaching tools	Subject knowledge, effective teaching methods

The affective dimension encompasses the teacher's emotional connections with students, empathy, trust, and the ability to be sensitive to students' individual needs. Based on Rogers' humanistic approach (1969), this dimension emphasizes the importance of the teacher's emotional interactions with students in the teaching process. The affective dimension states that the teacher exhibits a student-centred approach and considers the emotional and social development of the students.

The behavioural dimension includes concrete practices such as the teacher's classroom management, teaching strategies, and interaction style with students. Interactions and teaching practices in the classroom, which are addressed in Danielson's teaching framework (2007), are directly related to this dimension. This dimension assesses how the teacher shapes the classroom environment, how they guide students' learning experiences, and whether they demonstrate a disciplined, effective approach in the teaching process. It also includes the teacher's professional responsibilities and the need for continuous professional development. The cognitive dimension refers to the interaction between the teacher's content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge. Based on Shulman's (1987) PCK model, this dimension includes the teacher's ability to develop strategies to deepen students' learning beyond the transfer of knowledge. The cognitive dimension emphasizes the teacher's capacity to shape learning processes, the integration of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge, and provides information on how to guide students in the teaching process. In other words, this dimension aims to transcend the mere knowledge and comprehension levels of Bloom's taxonomy (1956) to a deeper process of knowledge transfer and application. The combination of these three dimensions enables a deeper understanding of teaching practice and a more comprehensive assessment of teachers' multidimensional roles. This approach reveals that teachers' affective, behavioural, and cognitive competencies in education are complementary and that each dimension is critical to teaching practice.

The aim of this study is to examine how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers define the concept of good teacher in line with the affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions of the teaching profession and how they redefine this concept after a treatment process. Understanding the change in this concept after different experiences such as theoretical knowledge transfer, micro-teaching, and real classroom practices is of great importance to discover how pre-service teachers develop their pedagogical approaches and teaching methods within the changing dynamics in education. This process provides an opportunity to assess how pre-service teachers transform and develop their own educational practices, teaching roles and professional identities. In this regard, the study aims to contribute significantly to the understanding of pre-service teachers' professional development processes. With these aims in mind, this study set out to seek answers for the questions below:

RQ1) What differences emerged between the participants' definitions of good teacher at the beginning and at the end of the training process?

RQ2) How were these differences shaped by theoretical knowledge, microteaching, and classroom experiences?

Materials and Methods

This research is designed as a longitudinal qualitative case study. The research examines the transformations in a cohort of Turkish EFL pre-service teachers' teaching skills and perceptions of good teachers over the course of an academic semester through processes that involve micro-teaching, theoretical knowledge transfer, and real classroom experiences. While the longitudinal design focuses on understanding the changes that occur during the process, the case study allows for elaborating the impact of context on these changes. The study is structured around iterative cycles of reflection, feedback, and teaching practice.

Participants and Study Context

The participants of this study consisted of 22 pre-service teachers studying in the English Language Teaching program of a public university in south-eastern Turkey in the fall semester

of the 2024-2025 academic year. The participants were enrolled in the microteaching module as part of their pedagogical formation process and actively participated in the theoretical and practical activities within the scope of the course. The microteaching module included both the transfer of theoretical knowledge and practical activities to develop teaching skills. The aim of the course is to improve pre-service teachers' classroom teaching skills, to enable them to self-reflect, to increase their pedagogical competence through peer feedback, and ultimately to prepare them for the real teaching environment.

Although microteaching provides an extremely valuable pedagogical experience for pre-service teachers (Kilic, 2010), it is mostly clinical and controlled. Therefore, in order to enable pre-service teachers to apply their acquired teaching skills in broader and more dynamic contexts, school-based internship practices are carried out in parallel with the microteaching process in teacher education in Turkey (Musa, 2014). In this process, pre-service teachers have the opportunity to integrate the theoretical knowledge and skills they have acquired during their undergraduate education with practice-based learning in real classroom settings. Thus, pre-service teachers are aimed to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical areas and gain a deeper understanding of their conceptual knowledge and pedagogical practices related to the teaching profession (Zeichner, 2010).

The participants were selected using purposive sampling method. The main reason for choosing this method is to ensure the inclusion of a group of individuals who are suitable for the context of the study and who have the knowledge to understand the experiences and transformations related to the process. All of the participants were pre-service teachers in the fourth year of their undergraduate education. This enables them to have a certain awareness of both theoretical knowledge and classroom practice experiences.

Data collection tools and the process

In this study, several data collection tools were used to examine the participants' development in their teaching skills and the transformation in their perceptions of good teacher. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the data collection process was designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' individual experiences. The data collection tools aimed to provide a comprehensive perspective on the pre-service teachers' educational processes and to increase the reliability of the data obtained.

At the start and end of the study, participants were asked to provide written definitions of a good teacher. Participants' written descriptions provide a reference point for understanding the change in their teaching skills and pedagogical approaches and also constitute an important source of data for examining their awareness and ideals regarding the teaching profession. Additionally, this instrument was employed to compare participants' perceptions of a good teacher at the onset and end of the study.

During the study period, the participants underwent theoretical courses for three weeks in order to improve their teaching skills. These theoretical lessons focused on basic pedagogical skills such as preparing a lesson plan, creating the content of the lesson, identifying learning objectives and selecting teaching methods. In addition, the participants created a lesson plan template as a class and discussed what elements the lesson plan needs to include. These theoretical lessons aimed to provide participants with a solid pedagogical foundation. After the theoretical trainings, each participant prepared a lesson plan for a topic of their choice. They shared their lesson plans with other participants in the class and received peer feedback and teacher feedback. This stage is important to ensure that the participants think critically about their lesson plans and make adjustments in line with the feedback.

After reviewing the lesson plans, the participants presented 10 minutes of their lesson plans in a microteaching lesson. These presentations were observed by both the lecturer and their classmates and were video recorded. The video recordings were used to evaluate the participants' teaching skills, to monitor the development of their teaching strategies and to initiate a self-reflection process. After the presentation, the participants received feedback from both the lecturer and their peers and further improved their teaching approaches by making necessary adjustments in their lesson plans in the light of feedback. Next, the participants delivered a lesson in a real classroom environment at the internship school by implementing the revised lesson plan. These practices were also recorded and their progress in the teaching process was monitored. These phases play a critical role in order to observe the transformation in the participants' teaching skills and to evaluate their pedagogical development.

At the end of the research process, participants were asked to write a reflection journal based on their overall experiences (theoretical sessions, microteaching sessions, peer and lecturer feedback, real classroom experience) and redefine the concept of good teacher. These journals allowed the participants to reflect on their experiences in the training process, the knowledge they gained and how the process affected them. The reflective journals were an important source of data to assess the development of the participants' self-reflection skills and their individual awareness of the teaching process. Moreover, their redefinition of good teacher as an indicator of their pedagogical development provided an insight into the change in their perceptions of the teaching profession, based on the theoretical knowledge, practical experiences, and feedback gained during the process. This transformation was an important step in the shaping of the participants' professional identities and the evolution of their understanding of teaching.

Data Analysis

In this study, a qualitative data analysis approach was adopted to understand the changes in the participants' teaching skills, the transformation in their approaches to lesson plan preparation and the evolution of their definitions of good teacher. Qualitative data analysis allows for an in-depth examination of the participants' experiences during the training process, their self-reflection processes, and changes in their conceptions of teaching. In this regard, the collected data from their definition of a good teacher and reflective journals were analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following the steps of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), meaningful data from the journals were grouped under specific themes. In the first stage, the content of each log was carefully read and then the main themes and sub-themes were extracted. Finally, relationships were established between the themes and the main themes that would shed light on the changes in the participants' pedagogical development were formed.

The participants' definitions of a good teacher, both at the start and end of the training, served as a key data source for examining the development of pre-service teachers' pedagogical awareness and professional identities. These definitions reflect shifts in participants' conceptions of teaching and the impact of the training process. A comparative approach was used to analyze these changes. The similarities and differences between the participants' initial and final definitions were analysed through content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In this analysis, the suggested ABCs of the teaching profession framework is employed.

A frequency analysis of the participants' thematically analysed pre- and post-experience definitions of good teachers was also conducted to complement the analysis of the qualitative data. In this process, the most frequently emphasized key concepts were identified and their change over time was tracked. Thus, the qualitative data were evaluated not only in terms of

content, but also quantitatively to provide a more comprehensive picture of pre-service teachers' pedagogical development.

Ethical Considerations

All individuals participating in this study were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights and signed a consent form. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. They were also informed that pseudonyms would be used to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. The class consisted of 26 students. Four of them did not consent to part. Hence, they were not included.

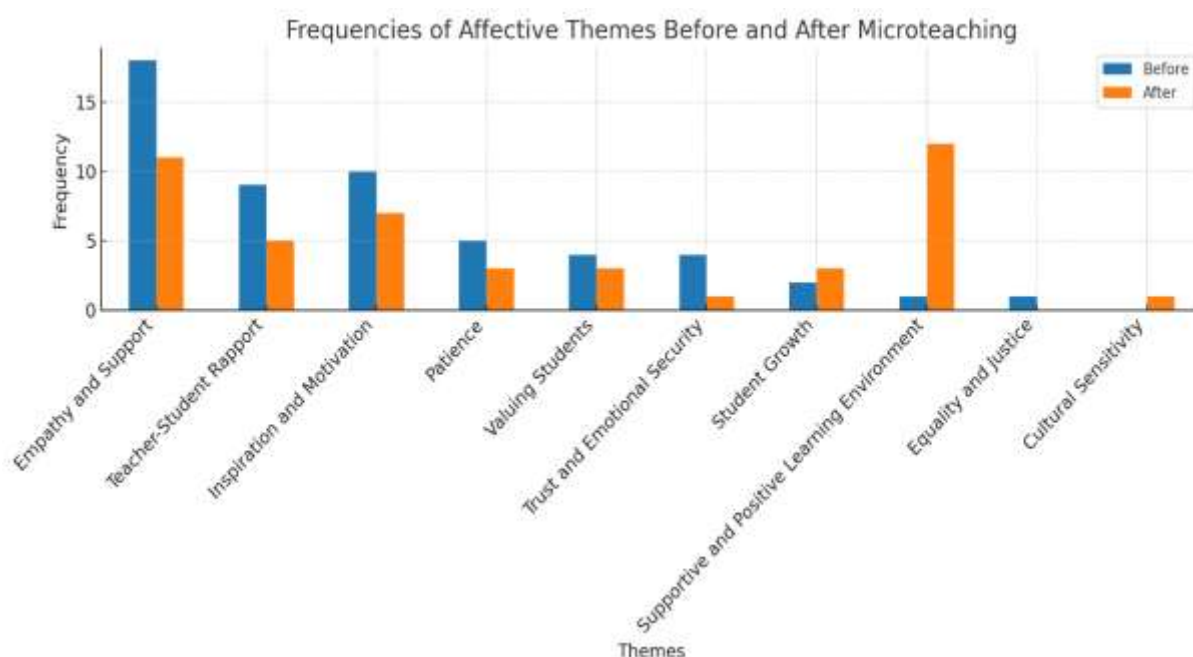
Results

The findings of the study reveal that pre-service teachers' definitions of good teachers changed significantly before and after the micro-teaching and practicum experiences. The data were analyzed within the framework of the ABC (Affective, Behavioural, Cognitive) model, and the transformation in pre-service teachers' perceptions was addressed through these three basic dimensions. In general, the analysis revealed that the participants' definitions of good teachers evolved into a more practice-based, flexible, and student-oriented structure as they gained experience. More detailed findings for each dimension are presented below.

Affective dimension

In the thematic analysis process, the themes coded in two stages as before and after were analysed in order to determine the transformations of pre-service teachers in the training process. At both stages, recurring concepts were identified and frequency analysis was applied. Accordingly, the findings of the frequency analysis related to the affective dimension are summarized in below in Figure 1.

Figure 1 *Affective dimension frequency analysis*



An analysis of the figure above reveals striking findings regarding the changes between before and after the microteaching and practicum intervention. While the participants focused more on human and emotional factors such as empathy, teacher-student relationship, and inspiration before the intervention, the importance of these factors decreased after the intervention and structural and environmental factors such as student development and positive learning environment were emphasized more. For example, the term Empathy and Support had the highest percentage of 33.3% before the training, but decreased to 23.9% after the training. Similarly, while the frequencies and percentages of terms such as Teacher-Student Rapport and Inspiration and Motivation were higher before the intervention, they showed a significant decrease afterwards.

In particular, the term Supportive and Positive Learning Environment increased from 1.85% before the intervention to 26% after the intervention. This change shows that the emphasis on the learning environment and the importance in this area increased significantly after the implementation. In addition, while the term Cultural Sensitivity was not included at all before the intervention, it was included by 2.2% after the intervention, which indicates that cultural sensitivity has become more prominent in the post-implementation process. However, some topics such as Trust and Emotional Safety were almost completely ignored after the implementation, while the term Equality and Fairness disappeared completely after the implementation.

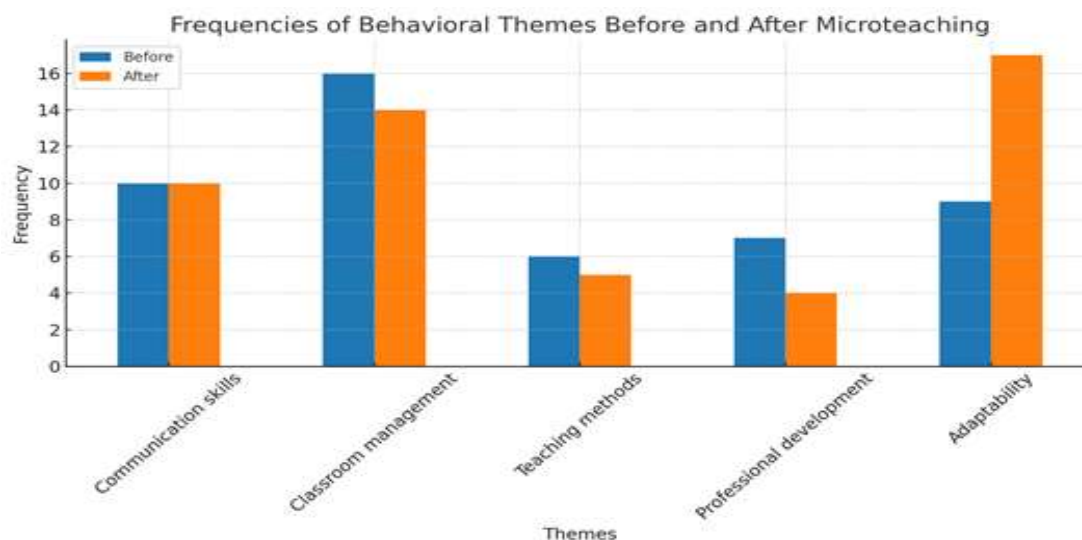
Upon closer examination, in the affective dimension, pre-service teachers generally defined a good teacher as a patient (PST3, PST5, PST9, PST13, PST18, and PST22), fair (PST3 and PST18), supportive (PST3, PST18, and PST22) and empathetic (PST8, PST9, PST10, PST12, PST13, PST15, PST19, PST21, and PST22) individual. However, these definitions were generally limited to abstract and general statements. For example, while PST1 did not make any definition in the affective dimension before microteaching and practice, he emphasized the importance of a safe learning environment by saying “[a] good teacher makes students feel comfortable and safe” (PST1, after the experience). Similarly, PST19 defined a good teacher as someone “who can understand his/her students' needs” before the microteaching and practicum, whereas after the practicum, she stated that “being a good teacher also involves providing emotional support and creating a positive classroom environment, even when academic goals seem to take precedence”. In addition, PST19 stated that the practicum process revealed the importance of understanding students' emotional and psychological needs. These findings suggest that pre-service teachers' emotional awareness increased and they displayed more sensitivity to students' individual needs.

In addition, while the term Student Growth was considered as a general concept before the microteaching and the practicum, it was defined in a more detailed and specific way as Building Confidence, Responsibility and Emotional Growth after the practicum.

Behavioural dimension

Preservice teachers' definitions of the concept of good teacher before and after the microteaching and practicum experiences were examined in the behavioural dimension, and the results of the frequency analysis of both stages are presented in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Behavioural dimension frequency analysis



Regarding the behavioral dimension, before the microteaching and practicum experiences, pre-service teachers emphasized basic skills such as communication skills, classroom management, teaching methods, professional development, and adaptability. When the figure is analyzed, no remarkable change is observed except adaptability before and after the microteaching and practicum experiences of the pre-service teachers. Especially, the change in adaptability is striking. Before the microteaching and practicum experiences, pre-service teachers defined adaptability in more general terms, whereas after the experience, they emphasized more on the need to cope with unexpected situations in the classroom and to flexibly adapt teaching methods according to student needs. For example, PST9 stated that before the experience, teachers need to be able to use teaching methods flexibly and creatively according to students' needs before the experience. After the experience, it was observed that the pre-service teachers realized the chaotic environment of the classroom and the necessity to be prepared for this situation. They also recognized that they would need to be able to change their plans flexibly when necessary. To illustrate, PST8 expressed this as follows, "They should prepare plan B for unexpected situations and show flexibility in their teaching approach" (PST8, after the experience). In a similar vein, PST9 stated, "A good teacher plans their lessons carefully but is also willing to change the plan if something unexpected happens" after the microteaching and practicum experiences. Additionally, PST15 noted that "A good teacher adjusts their methods and plans based on classroom dynamics, unexpected challenges, or student feedback" (PST15, after the experience).

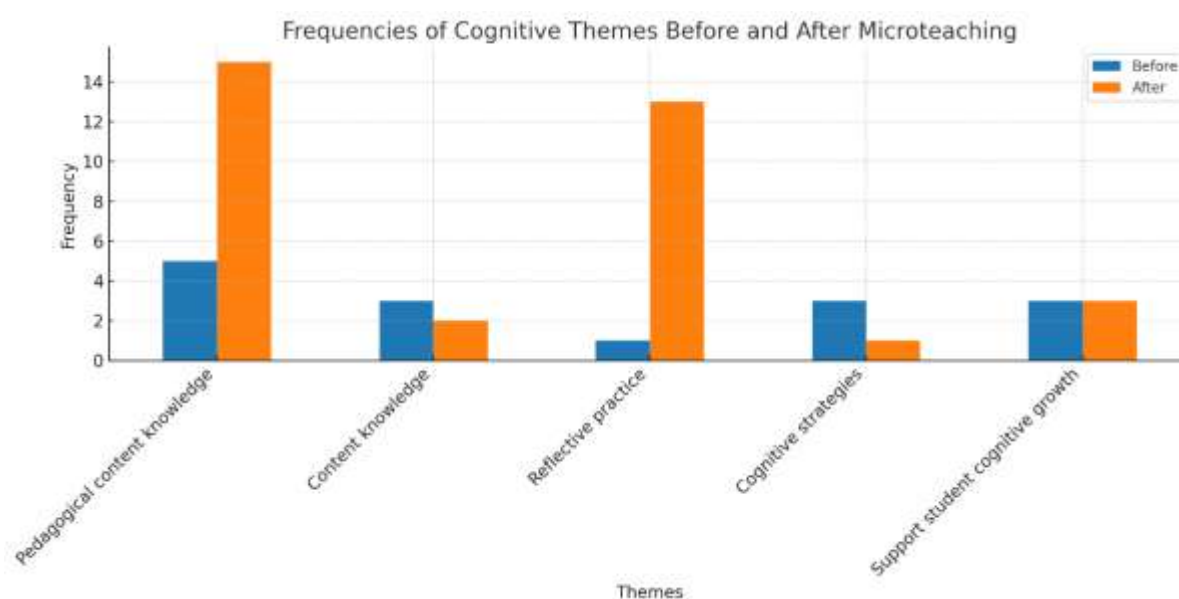
An examination of the figure indicates that there is no significant numerical difference between before and after in the areas of communication skills (10 vs 10), classroom management (16 vs. 14), teaching methods (6 vs. 5), and professional development (7 vs. 4). However, a more detailed analysis reveals that pre-service teachers started to adopt a more student-centered approach in these areas. For example, while PST8 defined a good teacher as "someone who maintains discipline when necessary" before the experience, after the microteaching and practicum experiences, she expanded this definition to "A good teacher excels in organizing and managing the classroom environment, maintaining discipline while fostering a positive and engaging atmosphere". Likewise, a more student-oriented approach was adopted in terms of communication skills. PST8 emphasized the contribution of communication to students' learning processes by stating, "Clear and understandable pronunciation helps students grasp the subject more easily and encourages effective

communication” (PST8, RJ). These findings suggest that the pre-service teachers expanded their understanding of teaching with a more student-centered approach and gained more flexibility and adaptability in their teaching processes.

Cognitive dimension

Pre-service teachers' definitions of the good teacher concept were coded thematically from a cognitive perspective as well. Frequency analysis of these codes are presented in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3 Cognitive dimension frequency analysis



As the figure above reveals, it was observed that the pre-service teachers had limited cognitive interpretations of the concept of good teacher before their microteaching and practicum experiences, whereas after the experiences, they addressed this concept in a more detailed and broader framework. In particular, the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) theme was emphasized only 5 times before the pre-service teachers' experiences, whereas it was repeated 15 times after the experience. A more detailed analysis revealed that the pre-service teachers covered the PCK theme in more depth after their experience and addressed more specific issues such as preparing effective lesson plans, integrating technology, selecting materials and adapting lesson plans when necessary. These findings suggest that the pre-service teachers related their pedagogical knowledge and skills more concretely with their microteaching and practicum experiences.

Another striking finding is that the theme of content knowledge was emphasized 3 times before the experience, while it was emphasized 2 times more in detail after the experience, referring to pedagogical content knowledge. For example, before the micro-teaching and practicum experiences, PST3 thought that a good teacher is someone who 'explains everything clearly' (PST3, good teacher definition before the experience). However, in his reflective journal, he mentions receiving peer feedback, in which his peers advised him to "give clearer instructions and allow the students to do more themselves: writing on the board and practicing out loud." (PST3, RJ). Drawing on this feedback and his experiences during the practicum, he further reflected on his teaching approach, stating, "Teaching is not only about giving

information but also about helping students feel confident and excited to learn... Teaching, then, is not so much about dispensing information but rather empowering students into a positive learning experience." This insight highlights his evolving understanding of teaching as a process that goes beyond simply delivering content, emphasizing the importance of fostering student engagement and confidence. Taking a step further after microteaching and practicum experiences, PST17 expressed that a good teacher requires not only content knowledge but also pedagogical knowledge by stating that "A good teacher possesses deep subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise to effectively plan and deliver lessons." These statements suggest that pre-service teachers have a better understanding of the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, that is, how to integrate this knowledge into the lesson and how to adapt it to the needs of students, beyond content knowledge.

Another finding was that while the theme of Reflective Practice was mentioned only once before the experience, this concept was repeated 13 times after the microteaching and practicum experiences. It was observed that the pre-service teachers realized the importance of reflective practice more with their experiences and discovered how they could integrate this practice into their teaching processes. To illustrate, in his reflective journal, PST7 stated that "Receiving feedback showed my insufficient parts and helped me prepare a better lesson plan and a better understanding of myself." (PST7, RJ). Similarly, Kardelen noted that "A good teacher is someone who continuously reflects on their practice and seeks to improve." (PST12, good teacher definition after the experience) and further highlighted that "The feedback I received during micro-teaching and the challenges I faced in the practicum highlighted areas for growth and inspired me to develop new strategies." (PST12, RJ).

In addition, the need to support students' cognitive development was emphasized three times both before and after the experience. However, while pre-service teachers focused on cognitive strategies (resource use, critical thinking and problem solving) before the experience, these strategies were not mentioned at all after the experience. Instead, the pre-service teachers focused on the theme of Contextual Awareness, which they perceived as an important factor in developing a broader understanding of their teaching process.

Overall, the findings of the study reveal how pre-service teachers' perceptions of good teachers transformed over time. Before microteaching and practicum, good teachers were defined based on individual characteristics and subject knowledge, whereas after the experiences, these definitions shifted to pedagogical skills, student-centered approaches and classroom dynamics. These findings suggest that supporting theoretical knowledge with practical experiences during the teacher education process plays a critical role in the development of pre-service teachers' professional perceptions.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that pre-service teachers' definitions of good teacher displayed a significant transformation throughout the training process. When this shift is analyzed based on the ABC (Affective, Behavioral, Cognitive) model, it is seen that pre-service teachers initially had a more abstract and idealistic perception of good teacher, however, after the training process, they tended towards a more practical and student-centered understanding of teacher. These findings are consistent with the frequently emphasized studies in teacher education literature, which reveal that pre-service teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills are shaped not only by theoretical knowledge but also by practical experiences (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2012).

The pre-service teachers' definition of teaching through affective concepts such as empathy, teacher-student rapport, and inspiration before the microteaching process reveals that

they perceive the teaching profession largely within the framework of human relations and emotional bonds. This approach suggests that they perceive teaching not only as a position of transmitting knowledge, but also as a profession that takes into account the emotional needs of students and establishes an ethical caring relationship with them. This finding is directly related to the ethical care theory developed by Noddings (1984). According to Noddings, teaching is based on an empathic and responsive relationship that prioritizes the emotional safety of the student; such an approach leads to deeper and more sustainable learning. Similarly, Goldstein (1999) emphasizes that the development of empathy and relational skills by pre-service teachers plays a central role, especially in the early stages of their teaching identity. Goldstein argues that pre-service teachers initially shape their professional identity through the question “what kind of person and relationship builder am I” rather than “how should I teach”. Therefore, the findings of this study suggest that the emotional and relational focus in pre-service teachers' pre-experience definitions is consistent with both ethical care theory (Noddings, 1984) and constructivist approaches to identity formation (Goldstein, 1999).

However, after microteaching and practicum experiences, themes on the affective dimension such as empathy and inspiration started to decrease relatively, whereas more environmental and structural concepts such as positive learning environment and student growth came to the forefront, suggesting that there has been a qualitative change in pre-service teachers' perceptions of the good teacher concept. This change might suggest that pre-service teachers started to position teaching as a professional who constructs the learning environment and organizes student development rather than a figure who establishes a purely emotional relationship. Indeed, the evolution of the perception of teaching from an emotional-relational dimension to a pedagogical-organizational dimension over time suggests that pre-service teachers develop more complex and multidimensional definitions of teaching influenced by their preprofessional experiences (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Similarly, Flores and Day (2006) argue that teacher identity is shaped not only by individual values and ideals, but also by the teaching environment, students' needs, and the reinterpretation of professional roles. In this context, pre-service teachers' increasing emphasis on structural elements in their definitions of good teacher suggests that they are beginning to develop a more complex pedagogical framework shaped by experiential learning in the process of the formation of their teaching identities.

On the behavioural dimension, the findings of this study revealed that pre-service teachers already attached importance to basic pedagogical behaviors such as communication, classroom management, teaching methods, and professional development before the microteaching and practicum sessions; however, they defined these skills in terms of fixed and general qualities. After the experience, it is noteworthy that the definitions of these behavioral traits changed and pre-service teachers started to conceptualize these skills in a more flexible, contextual and student-focused way. This transformation, which is especially shaped around the concept of adaptability, reveals that pre-service teachers put more emphasis on reflective practices such as being prepared for classroom uncertainties, adapting teaching methods according to student needs, and changing teaching plans when necessary. This suggests that pre-service teachers have gained the capacity to develop solutions appropriate to the specific situation they face, rather than merely adhering to predetermined routines in their professional decision-making processes. Indeed, these findings coincide with Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-in-action and reveal that pre-service teachers started to see the teaching process as a dynamic process that requires not only planning but also reflection and adaptation during implementation.

This change observed in the behavioral dimension indicates that pre-service teachers not only expanded their existing behavioral repertoire, but also increased their pedagogical flexibility and contextual awareness while practicing these behaviors. In this context, findings of this study reveal that preservice teachers' behavioral development undergoes a qualitative transformation. Similarly, Kane and Harms (2022) reported that pre-service teachers developed the ability to adapt their teaching methods to student needs, develop flexible responses to unexpected situations in the classroom, and exhibit a more adaptive approach to the learning process. These findings suggest that pre-service teachers build not only technical competencies but also pedagogical reasoning and contextual adaptive capacity. Thus, the results of this study are consistent with the literature that microteaching and practicum experiences contribute to pre-service teachers' restructuring their pedagogical behaviors in a more complex, situation-sensitive, and student-centered manner.

The findings of this study reveal that pre-service teachers' cognitive interpretations of the good teacher concept were limited before the microteaching and practice experiences and that they defined this concept with general and superficial expressions. However, after the microteaching and practicum process, it is seen that their definitions of the concept evolved into a more holistic, structured and pedagogically justified one. In particular, the emphasis on the components of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) such as lesson planning, material selection, integration of technological tools and adapting teaching to student needs shows that pre-service teachers do not only see the teaching process as content transfer, but also begin to position themselves as pedagogical actors who take responsibility for structuring learning environments. This transformation indicates that pre-service teachers reconstructed their conceptual schema of teaching processes and developed a more professional pedagogical perspective. Likewise, Hamidi and Kinay (2021) found that microteaching practices directly contributed to pre-service teachers' professional development by increasing their awareness of teaching processes. These findings suggest that the microteaching process is an effective tool to deepen pre-service teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and develop a more holistic approach to teaching processes.

On the other hand, this cognitive transformation is not only related to the technical dimensions of teaching; it also shows that pre-service teachers achieved significant improvements in terms of their reflective thinking skills. The significant increase in the emphasis on the theme of "Reflective Practice" after the experience indicates that the pre-service teachers gained more consciousness about critically reviewing their teaching processes, benefiting from peer feedback, and evaluating their strengths/weaknesses. This finding reveals that microteaching is not only a tool for improving teaching skills, but also a critical pedagogical process that shapes pre-service teachers' professional selves. This is in line with Park's (2022) study with Korean EFL preservice teachers. Park (2022) found that the microteaching process enabled pre-service teachers to progress through multiple levels of reflective thinking such as identifying, informing, adapting and reconstructing their teaching experiences. Similarly, Deocampo (2024), in his study conducted in Thailand, states that microteaching enables pre-service teachers to gain awareness in areas such as self-discipline, taking responsibility, peer learning and student-centered thinking, which contributes significantly to their cognitive development and teaching competencies.

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that microteaching and practice experiences not only provide a conceptual expansion in pre-service teachers' cognitive development, but also contribute to the development of a more critical, contextualized and reflective pedagogical consciousness about teaching. In this regard, microteaching needs to be

considered as a reflective and dynamic learning process that strengthens the cognitive basis of pre-service teachers' professional identities.

Limitations and suggestions for further studies

As a qualitative case study, this research aimed to examine the transformation of pre-service teachers' perceptions of good teacher in the context of the microteaching and practicum experiences. However, the study has some methodological and contextual limitations. First of all, the study was conducted with a limited number of pre-service teachers enrolled in the English language teaching program of a state university in Turkey. This hinders the generalization of the findings to other disciplines, universities or cultural contexts. In addition, the study was conducted in a period covering only one academic semester. Therefore, longer-term transformations that may emerge over time in the pedagogical development of pre-service teachers are beyond the scope of this study. However, the data obtained from the participants were collected through written reflections, which may limit the depth of the narratives and may be restrictive in terms of reflecting the full intellectual processes of the pre-service teachers. In line with these limitations, in future research, a similar analysis framework can be applied with pre-service teachers from different disciplines, with longer longitudinal designs and enriched with various data collection tools such as interviews. Additionally, follow-up studies that include pre-service teachers' post-graduation teaching practices can provide important contributions in terms of evaluating the long-term effects of microteaching and practicum experiences. Such studies will provide the opportunity to reveal the extent to which the theoretical and practical components of teacher education programs are integrated and the impact of this integration on the development of professional identity from a broader perspective.

Conclusion

This study examined the transformation of Turkish pre-service EFL teachers' definitions of good teacher before and after the microteaching and practicum processes. The study proposed a thematic framework that encompasses affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions developed based on the literature to analyze this transformation. The pedagogical structure of the study started with the pre-service teachers creating their own lesson plans following the theoretical course. They developed these plans within the scope of a structured hands-on activity and then realized microteaching practices in the classroom environment. The microteaching process was designed as a holistic structure that included not only the student practitioner, but also the instructor and other pre-service teachers as the audience. During the implementation, the instructor and students made instant observations, and at the end of the process, verbal feedback was provided from the instructor and peers. Each implementation was documented with a video recording and these recordings were watched later by the pre-service teacher who carried out the implementation and a self-reflection process was carried out. In the next stage, the candidates revised their lesson plans and made mindfulness-based comparisons between the two experiences by implementing them in the real classroom environment at the internship school. This multi-layered structure contributed significantly to pre-service teachers' reflective awareness of their own teaching.

The findings of the study revealed that pre-service teachers defined good teacher within the framework of traditional roles such as knowledge transfer, classroom management and discipline before microteaching and practicum experiences. However, after the experience, it was observed that contemporary teacher competencies such as student-centeredness, cultural sensitivity, reflective thinking and creating a positive learning environment were emphasized

more. Especially the increases in the themes of adaptability, “-reflective thinking and supportive learning environment reveal that pre-service teachers experienced a significant transformation in their pedagogical self-perceptions.

In conclusion, this study reveals that a structured and multi-stage microteaching process is a valuable tool that can transform not only the development of teaching skills but also pre-service teachers' professional values, ways of thinking and pedagogical identities. This approach suggests that teacher education programs need to focus not only on content transfer, but also on preservice teachers' processes of questioning, reconstructing and reframing their own teaching.

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