

Volume 19
Number 02
December, 2023

SIEF

science insights education frontiers

pISSN: 2644-058X eISSN: 2578-9813

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY
INSIGHTS PUBLISHER

COPYRIGHT, 2023, BY INSIGHTS PUBLISHER

Science Insights Education Frontiers

pISSN 2644-058X
eISSN 2578-9813
(Monthly Since January 2023)

Volume 19, No. 2

December 2023

Insights Publisher

Science Insights Education Frontiers

EDITORS

Editor-in-Chief

ROGER C. SHOUSE
College of Education
Sichuan University
China

Executive Editor-in-Chief

LONGJUN ZHOU
Division of Education and Economy
China Center
International Education Communication Agency
The BASE
USA

Editorial Board Members

CHAIR

ALAN CHEUNG
Department of Educational Administration and Policy
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong, China

BOARD MEMBERS (Alphabetically)

PHILIP C. ABRAMI
Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP)
Concordia University
Canada

JOHN LENON E. AGATEP
Education Management
President Ramon Magsaysay State University
Philippines

ARIANE BAYE
Department of Education and Training
University of Liege
Belgium

GEOFFREY D. BORMAN
Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College
Arizona State University,
USA

XIAOQIAO CHENG
School of Education Science
Nanjing Normal University
China

BEVERLY IRBY
Educational Administration and Human Resource Development
Texas A&M University
USA

ÖZGÜL KELEŞ
Faculty of Education
Aksaray University
Turkey

ICY LEE
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong, China

TILAHUN ADAMU MENGISTIE
College of Education
University of Gondar
Ethiopia

CLEMENT KA-KIT NG
Centre for University and School Partnership
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong, China

MARTA PELLEGRINI
Department of Education, Languages, Intercultures, Literatures, and
Psychology
University of Florence
Italy

MARIA JOSÉ SAMPAIO DE SÁ
CIPES – Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies
Universidade de Aveiro
Portugal

SANDRO N.F. DE SERPA
Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social and Human Sciences
University of The Azores
CICS.UAc/CICS.NOVA.UAc & NICA-UAc
Portugal

FUHUI TONG
College of Education and Human Development
Educational Psychology
Texas A&M University
USA

GIULIANO VIVANET
Dipartimento di Pedagogia, Psicologia, Filosofia
University di Cagliari
Italy

ANNE WADE
Centre for the Study of Learning and Performance (CSLP)
Concordia University

Canada

JIJUN YAO
School of Education Science
Nanjing Normal University
China

Linguistic Editing

Division of History and Language (DHL), The BASE

Statistics

Division of Mathematics and Computation (DMC), The BASE

Editorial Office

Paul Barlow (Production Editor, Linguistic Coordinator):

paul.barlow@basehq.org

Shanshan (Cherry) Wu (Section Editor): cherry.wu@bonoi.org

Amie S. Cahill (Technician): amie.cahill@bonoi.org

Staphenia D. Park (Publishing Administrative Coordinator, RAAD):

staphenia.park@basehq.org

Monica R. Silber (Assistant Editor): monica.silber@bonoi.org

Jean L. Worder (Administrative Assistant, Database Coordinator):

jean.worder@basehq.org

Mengyuan Hua (Assistant Editor): mengyuan.hua@bonoi.org

Jiagan Huang (Assistant Editor): jiagan.huang@bonoi.org

Editorial Office: editorial-office@bonoi.org

Executive Publisher

Insights Publisher

Science Insights Education Frontiers

pISSN 2644-058X

eISSN 2578-9813

<http://www.bonoi.org/index.php/sief>

Is Indexed/Abstracted by





TABLE OF CONTENTS

SIEF, Vol. 19, No. 2, December 31, 2023

Commentary

Give Students Autonomy in the Use of Break Time in Conformity with the Principles of Humanistic Education (By Yao, J.) (China) 3053-3055

Original Article

The Use of Self-Assessment in Improving Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Development (By Kilic, D., & Saglam, N.) (Turkey) 3057-3071

An Investigation of the Speech Skills of Children Living in Rural and Urban Areas (By Arıkan, A., & Kan, M. O.) (Turkey) 3073-3087

Review

Overburdened Chinese Compulsory Education Teachers (By Tang, Y.) (China) 3089-3102

Break Time on the School Schedule: Evidence from Basic Education Schools in China (By Xu, X.) (China) 3103-3113

Give Students Autonomy in the Use of Break Time in Conformity with the Principles of Humanistic Education

Jijun Yao

Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing 210024, China

*“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”
–William Butler Yeats*

HUMANISTIC education (also known as person-centered education) is a learning theory based on humanistic psychology, aiming to promote the development of the learner as a “whole person.” Various aspects such as the intellect, social and emotional skills, and artistic and practical capabilities of the student are all important considerations in the humanistic approach to education (Zhang, 2010). It places a great deal of emphasis on students’ choice and control over the course of their education. Students are encouraged to make choices that range from day-to-day activities to goal settings. According to Rogers, one of the founders of humanistic psychology as well as the humanistic learning theory, the primary purpose of education is to train the student to want and know how to learn, and the ability to learn should relate to the fulfillment of other needs (as cited in Xie, 2016).

Break is an integral component of students’ school life and the best opportunity for them to exercise autonomy. Despite its seemingly insignificant weight in the school timetable, the scheduling and management of break time have profound impacts on student holistic development. Ramstetter et al. (2010) argue that break allows the student a time to rest, play, imagine, move, and socialize and a necessary break from the rigors of academic tasks.

From the perspective of humanistic education, the student should be afforded the freedom and autonomy in choosing the content and mode of break time activity. Free activity at break makes a unique contribution to their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. First, exploratory activities occurring during play help children develop intellectual concepts; break makes them more attentive and cognitively more productive in the ensuing class. Second, free activity at break promotes social-emotional growth of children. Through play, they learn essential social skills, such as communication, negotia-

© 2023 Insights Publisher. All rights reserved.



Creative Commons Non Commercial CC BY-NC: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License

(<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed by the Insights Publisher.

tion, cooperation, sharing, and problem solving; they also learn how to relax after a period of stressful work and develop other coping skills for emotion management. Equally important is that physical activity at break provides benefits for students' physical well-being. The opportunity for practicing movement and motor skills at break is an effective counterbalance to the sedentary lifestyle of a student (Zhang, 2016).

Students' enjoyment of break is guaranteed in many countries despite the variations in its timing and duration. For example, primary schools in the United States place premiums on student outdoor activity at recess. Typically, the young students have three sessions of recess during the school day, in addition to the lunch break. Each session lasts 20 minutes, during which the children must get out of their classrooms for outdoor activity. In the event of harsh weather, the teacher takes students to the indoor gym for physical activities. In Britain, break time ranges from 10 to 30 minutes and has distinct names at different education levels depending on the varied focuses. In pre-primary and primary schools, it is called play time, with a focus on its functioning of game; In secondary schools, the interval between lessons is named break time --- time for rest. Although there are no structured games for secondary students as for their younger counterparts, they must leave the classroom at break to pursue outdoor physical activities, which may be organized by the students themselves or the school. Break time in Australian primary schools is filled with voluntary physical activities of students. On finishing a lesson, the children rush to the playground for their favorite games, such as playing on a slide, hopscotch, pole climbing, and ladder climbing. There is ample sports equipment in the playground and gym in almost every school. Some teachers join their students in the play. Together, they create a joyful atmosphere in the playground. In Canada, the retired teacher Doyle initiated the Active Playground Movement. Four students were selected from each of the 35 primary and secondary schools to participate in a four-session training program with each session lasting two hours, where they learned to play traditional games such as rope skipping, chess, and hopscotch. The four "trained" students then taught their schoolmates to play these games during break time. The initiative is not only effective in encouraging active physical activity and interactions in students, but also successfully pass on traditional games among them (Modern Education News, 2014).

Break Time on the School Schedule: Evidence from Basic Education Schools in China in this issue of the journal gave an overview of issues with break in Chinese basic education schools and analyzed the harms and causes of recess deprivation in students. It is hoped that the article can arouse more attention on the right of the student to rest and free activity at break and the significance of recess for their growth and development (Xu, 2023).

References

- Modern Education News. (2014). The use of break time among teachers in foreign countries. Available at: <http://edu.people.com.cn/n/2014/0429/c1053-24958490.html>
- Ramstetter, C. L., Murray, R., & Garner, A. S. (2010). The crucial role of recess in schools. *Journal of School Health*, 80(11):517-526. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2010.00537.x>
- Xie, W. (2016). The Guiding Significance of Humanistic Psychology-Based Theory of Education for Junior Secondary Geography Instruction (doctoral dissertation). Central China Normal University.
- Xu, X. (2023). Break time on the school schedule: Evidence from basic education schools in China. *Science Insights Education Frontiers*, 19(2):3103-3113. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15354/sief.23.re315>

- Zhang, S. (2016). The Current State of Break Time Activities in Primary Schools and suggestions (master's thesis). Henan Normal University. Available at:
https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=sdjqx_hohgvx0ykwofqppy1wqhtwoqcp4uxqavpgedkyrjm56try-EQeu4xsTvCgIa8sNIZe-72QjOjklBnnSPpz4yS-7Z3ZaDuH2rMLuenlYMo0_GjaHj9S5nErHkhHO7Z75XS9RfHWtHCVNbw==uniplatform=NZKPTlanguage=CHS
- Zhang, X. (2010). Humanization of Education: Differences between the Notions of Person-Centered Education and Humanistic Education. *Journal of Shanghai Educational Research*, 2010(1):20-22. DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.16194/j.cnki.31-1059/g4.2010.01.011>

Correspondence to:

Jijun Yao
School of Educational Science
Nanjing Normal University
Nanjing 210024
China

E-mail: E-mail: yaojijun_njnu@163.com

Conflict of Interests: None

Doi: 10.15354/sief.23.co237

The Use of Self-Assessment in Improving Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Development

Didem Kilic,¹ Necdet Saglam²

1 Aksaray University, Aksaray, Turkey

2 Institute of Science Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey

Abstract: *The use of self-assessment in teacher training has been strongly suggested by researchers because these assessment tasks activate students, motivate them to participate in learning, and cause more oriented and effective learning. This study focuses on using self-assessment in teacher education for the purpose of exploring the benefits of self-assessment practices for the pre-service teachers' learning process and their professional development. Thirty-eight pre-service teachers participated in this study. Within the context of the study, every participant was supposed to perform a teaching practice by applying teaching methods. Pre-service teachers' assessed their own performances through a self-assessment form composed of two parts. The first part of this form includes a criteria-based scoring matrix, and the second part includes open-ended written questions. Analyses of the data showed that pre-service teachers perceive themselves as worst at 'efficient teaching practice' and best at 'using body language and gesture effectively' among the given criteria. When the data obtained from the written questions was analyzed, it was concluded that the pre-service teachers had the most difficulty following the teaching plan. According to the results, it can be argued that by using the self-assessment tasks, pre-service teachers realized their strengths and weaknesses; they recognized that they have difficulties with some competencies required for effective teaching and what they need to improve themselves.*

Science Insights Education Frontiers 2023; 19(2):3057-3071.

Doi: 10.15354/sief.23.or436

How to Cite: Kilic, D., & Saglam, N. (2023). The use of self-assessment in improving pre-service teachers' professional development. Science Insights

Keywords: *Self-Assessment, Pre-service Teachers, Teacher Education, Professional Development*

About the Authors: *Didem Kiliç, Professor, Department of Mathematics and Science Education, Faculty of Education, Aksaray University, Aksaray, Turkey, E-mail: didem_kilic@yahoo.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2250-8580>*

Necdet Saglam, Professor, Institute of Science Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey, E-mail: saglam@hacettepe.edu.tr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5463-8355>

Correspondence to: *Didem Kiliç at Aksaray University of Turkey.*

Conflict of Interests: *None*

© 2023 Insights Publisher. All rights reserved.



Creative Commons NonCommercial CC BY-NC: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License (<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed by the Insights Publisher.

Introduction

CONTEMPORARY approaches to assessment emphasize the learning potential of assessment, and now assessment is presented as a tool for learning. Researchers suggest that assessment procedures not only function as a tool for grading but are also used to follow students' progress and guide them in enhancing learning activities. It is also emphasized in the OECD's Assessment for learning report that assessment may also serve a formative function (OECD/CERI, 2008). In general, it is accepted that increasing the use of assessment for learning or formative assessment leads to more advanced quality learning (William et al., 2004). In classrooms, formative assessment supports the goals of lifelong learning, greater equity of student outcomes, raising levels of student achievement, and improved learning to learn skills (OECD/CERI, 2008). Effective implementation of formative assessment promotes lifelong learning competencies and autonomous learning (Clark, 2012).

A critical component of classroom formative assessment is student self-assessment, as it supports students in becoming self-directed and self-regulated learners. "Self-assessment refers to the involvement of learners in making judgments about their own learning, particularly about their achievements and the outcomes of their learning" (Boud & Falchikov, 1989, p529). Through self-assessment, students better evaluate the quality of their learning process and outcomes, comprehend strengths and weaknesses in their study, and revise accordingly (Andrade & Du, 2007, p160). Researchers emphasize the strengths of using self-assessment, which encourages students to become more autonomous in their learning and makes them think more deeply (Sluijsmans et al., 1998). Boud et al. (2015) suggest that students cannot be effective learners without the skills to make efficient judgments about their own work. Using self-assessment to support the acquisition of skills and abilities gives students the opportunity for better quality products, taking responsibility for one's own learning, and raising consciousness about problem solving (Sluijsmans et al., 1998). Sadler and Good (2006) argue that self-assessment is valuable, as this approach prepares students to be accountable and responsible. Using self-assessment enhances learner responsibility and independence (Spiller, 2012). The participation of students in the assessment supports their ability to think critically and enables them to take control of their own learning. By analyzing their own performance, students can develop a better understanding of their own learning process (Searby & Ewers, 1997).

Besides improving skills and abilities for learning, self-assessment practices increase the quality of learning performance and outcomes. Self-assessment advances learning by giving feedback that guides students' efforts and strategies (Andrade & Du, 2007). Zimmerman and Shunk (2001)

suggest that self-assessment can promote achievement by contributing to academic self-regulation through planning, goal-setting, self-judgment, and self-reaction. Through improving self-assessment strategies, the development of metacognitive strategies can be stimulated (Clipa et al., 2011). Andrade and Du (2007) state that self-assessment has a role in becoming an autonomous, metacognitive, and self-regulated learner. Self-assessment also increases learners' competence for self-regulation by giving them the opportunity for self-monitoring and enabling reflection (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006). It is stated that self-assessment is a key factor in retaining student attention and interest (Ross, 2006), and students' motivation can be increased when self-assessment is integrated into the learning process (Dochy et al., 1999). Hanrahan and Isaacs (2001) report that students see the advantages of self-assessment as improving critical thinking, developing a better understanding of grading, and developing empathy with teachers. Self-assessment enables students to develop leadership roles in the learning and teaching process.

Boud and Falchikov (2006) emphasize the necessity of preparing students for the responsibility of making complicated judgments and for making decisions in which they will find themselves in the future. It is especially substantial for future teachers. Self-assessment promotes some skills such as critical thinking, goal setting, making decisions, evaluating the learning process, and evaluating products, which are essential abilities for teachers. The incorporation of students in educational settings through self-assessment is one of the most significant ways to facilitate the development of crucial competencies for the teaching career, such as responsibility, autonomy, and judgment. These competencies can help develop 'reflexive teacher' qualifications. Self-assessment is also considered a reflective practice for teachers' personal and professional development (Warsi & Khurshid, 2022).

It is of great importance that training in using self-assessment is gained during teacher training (Oscarson, 1989). Researchers revealed that teachers who had been trained in formative assessment were able to make significant differences in their lessons (Clark, 2012). The application of self-assessment tools in teacher training programs has been found to be helpful in leading teachers to think over their own standards for qualified teaching and improving them in goal-setting for development (Ross & Bruce, 2007). The development of expertise in self-assessment has become a noteworthy issue in numerous higher education schools, and various self-assessment tools are being introduced to support learning (Stefani, 1994).

Because cognitive and social frameworks can affect the accuracy of the self-assessment, the reliability and validity of these assessment procedures seem debatable. The reliability of self-assessment can be affected by some factors, such as student grade level and academic success (Dochy et al.,

1999; Friedman et al., 2008). Boud and Falchikov (1989) stated that less successful students tend to overvalue their performance, while more successful students have a tendency to undervalue their own performance. In relation to the practice of self-assessment according to grade levels, it is reported that advanced students can evaluate their own performance more accurately than novices (Dochy et al., 1999). In addition, more experienced students seem to be straighter in their self-assessment (Lejk & Wyvill, 2001). According to a review of self-assessment research, Dochy et al. (1999) stated that students are quite accurate in valuing their own learning outcomes. However, according to Topping (2003), self-assessed scores seem to be higher than teacher scores (Friedman et al., 2008). Researchers propose various suggestions concerning these problems (Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006): clear assessment processes, implementing specific criteria, explicit instructions, training for the advancement of students' assessment skills, and also that the use of a scoring matrix may be beneficial.

Overall, from the research reports, it can be concluded that using self-assessment in educational practice has positive results, despite its limitations. Some of the students found the process intellectually challenging, time-consuming, and socially uncomfortable, but efficient in advancing the quality of their own work (Topping et al., 2000). Researchers reemphasized that self-assessment develops the students' understanding of assessment, helps students develop crucial professional skills using high-level thinking, increases efficacy in determining strengths and weaknesses of their work, enables student assessors to have a better understanding of the processes included in the learning activities, and provides students with the opportunity to take part in the assessment process, which increases their motivation (Andrade & Du, 2007).

Since self-assessment practices lead to more effective and directed learning because they motivate students and stimulate active involvement in learning (Sluijsmans et al., 1998), the application of these assessment procedures in teacher education has been promoted by researchers, and educators have been seeking ways to apply the self-assessment tasks effectively in their classrooms. This study aimed to empirically explore the ways and consequences of using self-assessment tasks in teacher training programs.

Method

Participants

The participants of the study were thirty-eight pre-service teachers from a state university in Turkey. Pre-service teachers were enrolled in the 'teaching principles and methods' course, which is a practical course. All of the

participants were in their second year and experienced in self-assessment. Of these, thirteen were male and twenty-five were female, with a mean age of 20.

Procedures

The course of teaching principles and methods targets students comprehension of the essential fundamental concepts and teaching principles, their grasp of instructional approaches and strategies, and their ability to apply them effectively. Within the applied part of the course, each of the pre-service teachers was expected to implement a teaching practice involving the application of a teaching method. Before the implementation of teaching practices, an example of teaching method application was demonstrated and explained by the researcher. Besides, the pre-service teachers were instructed in effective presentation skills as part of another course named Effective Communication by the researcher. Every pre-service teacher presented the subject content by applying a teaching method, and the sessions continued for approximately 30 minutes.

Data Collection

Pre-service teachers assessed their own performances through a self-assessment form. This form consisted of two parts, which comprised a criteria-based scoring matrix in the first part and written questions in the second part. The criteria of the scoring matrix are based on various substantial competencies for efficient teaching, such as effective teaching practice, comprehensible expression, management of time, being planned and controlled, and using gestures and body language effectively. These crucial competencies were arranged as specific criteria in a scoring matrix with informative instructions for providing an effective and objective assessment task. Based on the five assessment criteria, pre-service teachers graded their performances using the scoring matrix, which ranged from 1 to 5, yielding a maximum possible score of 25 points. In the second part of the self-assessment form, there were six open-ended written questions to reveal pre-service teachers' perceptions about their own performances. Some of the written questions were: 'What did I learn about myself when doing this work?', 'What did I do well?', 'What will I do differently at subsequent tasks?' Participants were familiar with self-assessment tasks, and they had experience evaluating themselves.

Data Analyses

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Criteria of the Scoring Matrix.

Criteria	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Comprehensible expression	4.00	1.06	1	5
Efficient teaching practice	3.55	1.12	1	5
Being planned and controlled	3.88	1.02	1	5
Management of time	3.94	1.06	1	5
Using body language and gestures effectively	4.03	0.95	1	5
Total Self-Assessment Score	19.39	4.25	5	25

Descriptive statistics were determined for the pre-service teachers' self-assessment scores. The mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values were calculated for the data collected from the scoring matrix. The data obtained from open-ended questions was analyzed through content analysis. Pre-service teachers responses were arranged by reducing the statements, coded, and grouped into related categories. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for the data collected from open-ended questions.

Results

Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation and minimum and maximum values for self-assessment scores are summarized in **Table 1**.

The results of the analyses of the data collected from the criteria-based scoring matrix revealed that, through the given criteria, pre-service teachers perceived themselves as worst at 'efficient teaching practice' and best at 'using body language and gesture effectively'. They were also of the opinion that they were good at 'comprehensible expression', but in the meantime, they challenged their 'management of time' and 'being planned and controlled'. The minimum and maximum values in **Table 1** show that some pre-service teachers perceived themselves as very inadequate or very sufficient in various criteria. The criteria in the scoring matrix, in which the pre-service teachers evaluate themselves, were decided together with the pre-service teachers who were the participants of the study. While creating the self-assessment form used in the study, pre-service teachers were asked their opinions about the criteria they thought were necessary for effective teaching. Boud (2013) proposed the involvement of students in setting standards and/or criteria to be applied to their work and in making judgments about the extent to which they met those criteria and standards. It is stated that including students in defining the assessment criteria allows students to better understand what is expected of them (Ross, 2006). The criteria in the scoring matrix may not be exhaustive, but they are consistent with those reported in

the relevant literature. In the self-assessment form used within the scope of the study, open-ended questions were included apart from the criteria-based scoring matrix, and the analysis results are presented below.

The answers given by the pre-service teachers to the written questions were analyzed and coded by reducing the statements. The generated codes were collected in four different categories. These categories were strengths, weaknesses, difficulties, and needs for improvement. Descriptive statistics regarding the codes grouped under the relevant categories are presented in the tables below. In **Table 2**, the frequencies and percentages calculated for the statements of the pre-service teachers regarding their strengths are presented.

As can be seen in **Table 2**, ‘open, clear, and comprehensible expression’ is the most frequently coded statement regarding pre-service teachers’ strengths. They also feel themselves strong at ‘efficient presentation and teaching practice’, and at ‘tone of voice and body language’. Some quotations from the statements expressed by the pre-service teachers’ regarding their strengths are: “I was good at using body language and at communication with students”, “My tone of voice was good”, “I think that I was successful at effective teaching practice”, “I can speak open and clear; this is my strength”, and “I think that I could express myself clearly and easily”.

In **Table 3**, the frequencies and percentages calculated for the statements of the pre-service teachers regarding their weaknesses are presented.

Pre-service teachers perceive that being excited or nervous is their great weakness. Time management and classroom management are also among their weaknesses. Some of the pre-service teachers stated that they are weak at getting trusted or true sources. Even a little, they also feel weak at public speaking. Some quotations from the statements expressed by the pre-service teachers’ regarding their weaknesses are: “Because of my excitement, I could not be effective”, “After I entered the classroom, because of my excitement, I forgot some of my words that I had to say”, “I felt panicked when students asked questions”, “I could not use the time well; I made everything quickly”, “I know that I have a problem with public speaking; this is my weakness”.

In **Table 4**, the frequencies and percentages calculated for the statements of the pre-service teachers regarding the difficulties are presented.

As can be seen in **Table 4**, ‘efficient teaching practice’ and ‘implementing the lesson plan’ are the most frequently coded as difficulties. ‘Finding or selecting material’ is also seen as another difficulty considered by pre-service teachers. At the very least, preservice teachers stated that ‘lesson planning’ and ‘evaluating the lesson’ were the other difficulties they encountered. Some quotations from the statements expressed by the pre-service teachers’ regarding the difficulties are presented below: “I could not follow the lesson plan, therefore I could not finish the lesson as I planned”, “I had

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages of Codes under the Category of 'Strengths'.

Codes	f	%
Open, clear, and comprehensible expression	13	30.9
Efficient presentation / teaching practice	6	14.3
Tone of voice / body language	6	14.3
Providing active participation	5	11.9
Effective communication	4	9.5
Being calm / controlled	3	7.1
Having a good grasp of the subject matter	3	7.1
Getting student attention	2	4.8

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages of Codes under the Category of 'Weaknesses'.

Codes	f	%
Being excited / nervous	16	39.0
Time management	6	14.6
Classroom management	6	14.6
Getting trusted / true sources	3	7.3
Tone of voice / body language	3	7.3
Having a good grasp of the subject matter	3	7.3
Public speaking	2	4.9
Answering the questions	2	4.9

Table 4. Frequencies and Percentages of Codes under the Category of 'Difficulties'.

Codes	f	%
Efficient teaching practice	7	23.3
Implementing the lesson plan	7	23.3
Finding / Selecting material	6	20.0
Providing active participation	3	10.0
Exemplifying	2	6.7
Lesson planning	2	6.7
Evaluating the lesson	2	6.7
Getting student attention	1	3.3

Table 5. Frequencies and Percentages of Codes under the Category of ‘Needs for Improvement’.

Codes	f	%
Following the lesson plan	7	15.6
Effective exempling	7	15.6
Being at ease / Controlling emotions	6	13.3
Tone of voice / body language	6	13.3
Effective / Comprehensible expression	5	11.1
Classroom management	5	11.1
Time management	4	8.9
Speaking speed	3	6.7
Getting trusted / true sources	2	4.4

difficulty at teaching practice while I did not have enough experience”, “After the exercises, I had difficulty getting students attention again”, “I had difficulty at exempling while I could not find short and effective examples”.

In **Table 5**, the frequencies and percentages calculated for the statements of the pre-service teachers regarding the needs for improvement are presented.

‘Following the lesson plan’ and ‘effective exempling’ are the most important requirements for improving pre-service teachers themselves. Pre-service teachers need to ‘be at ease’, and they need to ‘control their emotions’, like excitement and worry. And some of them need to improve their use of ‘tone of voice’ and ‘body language’. ‘Classroom and time management’ are the other requirements that pre-service teachers need to improve themselves. Some quotations from the statements expressed by the pre-service teachers’ regarding the needs for improvement are presented below: “I could not follow the lesson plan. At this point, I need to develop myself”, “I need to improve myself at classroom and time management; I have to speak slowly and understandably”, “If I can control my excitement, I think my control in the classroom will increase”, “I could be more effective at questioning and exempling” and “I will do more practice for being good at time management”.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study aimed to provide empirical evidence for the contribution of self-assessment to pre-service teachers’ professional development. Findings of the research supported previously reported results that self-assessment improves students thinking critically and enables them to gain control over their own learning (Searby & Ewers, 1997), motivates students and encour-

ages their active involvement (Sluijsmans et al., 1998), makes them aware of strengths and weaknesses in their work (Andarade & Du, 2007, p160), and improves their performances (Boud, 2013; Falchikov, 1986; Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001; Stefani, 1992).

The results showed that pre-service teachers perceived themselves best at 'using body language and gesture effectively', and they found themselves good at 'comprehensible expression'. On the other hand, they perceived themselves as the worst at 'efficient teaching practice'. Similarly, in another study, it was reported that the pre-service teachers were challenged mostly by the delivery of instruction, and from their perspectives, this issue was the most difficult part of the teaching-learning process (Borja et al., 2019). The fact that effective teaching practices require experience explains this result. In the current study, the results also revealed that pre-service teachers were challenged with 'management of time' and 'being planned and controlled'. In another study aiming to determine the problems experienced by pre-service teachers during their teaching practice, planning and time management were considered problematic (Tok, 2010). Since time management requires planning, it is an expected research result that time cannot be controlled as a result of not conducting the lesson in accordance with the plan. The responses of pre-service teachers' to the open-ended written questions revealed that they had difficulties following the teaching plan in general. They specified that the most challenging experiences were ensuring students' active participation, presenting effective examples, and managing classroom control. As a result of a study conducted by Welsh and Schaffer (2017) on developing effective teaching skills for pre-service teachers, they stated that the participants rated themselves lowest on engaging students in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving. Similarly, in another study, it was revealed that the pedagogical area where pre-service teachers need the most improvement is engagement (Snead & Freiberg, 2019). Pre-service teachers in this study found themselves weak in public speaking, answering questions, and effective presentation. A great majority of the participants expressed that they were excited, and this affected their time management and tone of voice negatively. According to a very similar research result, pre-service teachers stated that they were nervous and anxious at the beginning of their teaching practice. Therefore, they stated that they had difficulty managing the problems and challenges (Akram & Samar, 2021). An important result of this study was that pre-service teachers' emphasized that they acquired a lot regarding classroom management, that the course content could be taught effectively with a teaching plan, and that there could be unexpected situations.

In light of the results of the present study, it can be argued that by using the self-assessment tasks, pre-service teachers became aware of their weaknesses and strengths, realized that they had difficulties with some com-

petencies required for effective teaching, and recognized what they needed to improve themselves. It can be concluded that self-assessment tasks mediated pre-service teachers taking responsibility for their own learning, thus enabling them to make more reliable assessments and allowing them to be reflective and autonomous, which are crucial skills for being an efficient teacher. As a result of a study, it was stated that they proved that self-assessment is a strategy to enhance teachers' professional development (Warsi & Kurshid, 2022). In another study aiming to identify teachers' professional activities that are important for the development of the teaching profession, it was revealed that self-assessment is among the most important activities (Sharma & Pandher, 2018).

Implications

This study hypothesized that self-assessment is an essential skill for teachers' professional development and plays an important role in the pre-service teachers' self-evaluation process. The results generally supported this hypothesis. Through self-assessment, pre-service teachers could make rational judgments about their own performances and outcomes. It was understood that they had realistic perceptions of their own abilities. They felt confident in valuing their own performance while taking responsibility for their own learning.

In teacher training programs, applying self-assessment in a formative way is expected to result in significant gains like improved learning performance, higher confidence for teaching practice, and competencies essential for effective teaching. The present study proposes to use the self-assessment process for improving the professional development of pre-service teachers, which enables self-reflection, self-monitoring, and self-judgment for reviewing pedagogical strengths and weaknesses and revealing the aspects that need improvement.

In this study, self-assessment was not used as a grading tool but to reveal how self-assessment could play a role in contributing to the development of the teaching profession. It may be possible to obtain more reliable and valid results from self-assessment tasks by clarifying goals and expectations, providing effective feedback, and presenting practices and examples. Self-assessment can be used in combination with other indicators or measures such as the teacher portfolio, classroom observation, and peer observation (Warsi & Khursid, 2022). In the same context, Ross and Bruce (2007) argued that self-assessment is a constructive strategy for improving in-service effectiveness, provided it is supported with other professional development strategies such as peer coaching, external observation, and focused input into teaching strategies. The use of self-assessment practices along with the instructor's feedback not only increases learners' immediate success

but also leads to enhanced self-efficacy by helping them develop their capacity for self-reflection and self-regulation (Hung, 2019).

Finally, although this study provided important evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of self-assessment for improving pre-service teachers' professional development, other factors such as social and academic concerns that may affect pre-service teachers' self-assessment performance cannot be ignored. Diversified and similar studies are needed to validate or modify the design of the self-assessment practice. Since it is thought that increased experience in self-assessment can provide more valid results, it is thought that it is important to repeat self-assessment practices in educational settings. It is expected that the results of the research, in which repeated self-assessment applications are made, will provide more in-depth inferences.

References

- Akram, N., & Samar, S. (2021). Prospective teachers' experiences during practice teaching. *Journal of Elementary Education*, 31(1):77-86. Available at: <http://journals.pu.edu.pk/journals/index.php/jee/article/view/2186>
- Andrade, H., & Du, Y. (2007). Student responses to criteria-referenced self-assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 32(2):159-181. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930600801928>
- Borja, M.B., Ompoc, A.B., Temblor, K.S. & Torello, N.C. (2019). The challenges among pre-service elementary teachers. *SMCC Higher Education Research Journal*, 1(1):60-68. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18868/sherjte.01.060119.05> Available at: <https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=14387>
- Boud, D. (2013). *Enhancing Learning Through Self-Assessment*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0749413682.
- Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. (1989). Quantitative studies of student self-assessment in higher education: A critical analysis of findings. *Higher Education*, 18(5):529-549. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00138746>
- Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. (2006). Aligning assessment with long-term learning. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31(4):399-413. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930600679050>
- Boud, D., Lawson, R., & Thompson, D.G. (2015). The calibration of student judgement through self-assessment: Disruptive effects of assessment patterns. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34(1):45-59. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2014.934328>
- Clark, I. (2012). Formative assessment: Assessment is for self-regulated learning. *Educational Psychology Review*, 24(2):205-249. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-011-9191-6>
- Clipa, O., Ignat, A.A., & Rusu, P. (2011). Relations of self-assessment accuracy with motivation level and metacognition abilities in pre-service teacher training. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30:883-888. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.171>
- Dochy, F., Segers, M., & Sluijsmans, D. (1999). The use of self-, peer and co-assessment in higher education: A review. *Studies in Higher Education*, 24(3):331-350. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/030750799123313>

79935

- Falchikov, N. (1986). Product comparisons and process benefits of collaborative peer group and self assessments. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 11(2):146-166. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293860110206>
- Friedman, B.A., Cox, P.L., & Maher, L.E. (2008). An expectancy theory motivation approach to peer assessment. *Journal of Management Education*, 32(5):580-612. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1052562907310641>
- Hanrahan, S.J., & Isaacs, G. (2001). Assessing self- and peer-assessment: The students' views. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 20(1):53-70. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360123776>
- Hung, Y. (2019). Bridging assessment and achievement: Repeated practice of self-assessment in college english classes in Taiwan. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(8):1191-1208. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2019.1584783>
- Lejk, M., & Wyvill, M. (2001). The effect of the inclusion of selfassessment with peer assessment of contributions to a group project: A quantitative study of secret and agreed assessments. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 26(6):551-561. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930120093887>
- Lindblom-Ylänne, S., Pihlajamäki, H., & Kotkas, T. (2006). Self-, peer-and teacher-assessment of student essays. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 7(1):51-62. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787406061148>
- Nicol, D.J., & Macfarlane-Dick, D. (2006). Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: A model and seven principles of good feedback practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2):199-218. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070600572090>
- OECD/CERI. (2008). Assessment for learning: Formative assessment. International Conference, Learning in the 21st Century: Research, Innovation and Policy. Paris: OECD. Available at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/19/31/4060533.pdf>
- Oscarson, M. (1989). Self-assessment of language proficiency: Rationale and applications. *Language Testing*, 6(1):1-13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026553228900600103>
- Ross, J.A. (2006). The reliability, validity, and utility of self-assessment. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 11(10):1-13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7275/9wph-vv65>
- Ross, J.A., & Bruce, C.D. (2007). Teacher self-assessment: A mechanism for facilitating professional growth. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(2):146-159. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.04.035>
- Sadler, P.M., & Good, E. (2006). The impact of self-and peer-grading on student learning. *Educational Assessment*, 11(1):1-31. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326977ea11011>
- Searby, M., & Ewers, T. (1997). An evaluation of the use of peer assessment in higher education: A case study in the School of Music, Kingston University. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 22(4):371-383. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0260293970220402>
- Sharma, P., & Pandher, J.S. (2018). Teachers' professional development through teachers' professional activities. *Journal of Workplace Learning*, 30(8):613-625. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JWL-02-2018-0029>
- Sluijsmans, D., Dochy, F., & Moerkerke, G. (1998). Creating a learning environment by using self-, peer- and co-assessment. *Learning Environments Research*, 1(1):293-319. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1009932704458>
- Snead, L.O., & Freiberg, H.J. (2019). Rethinking student teacher feedback: Using a self-assessment resource with student teachers. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 70(2):155-168. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487117734535>
- Spiller, D. (2012). Assessment matters: Self-assessment and peer assessment. Hamilton, New Zealand: Teaching Development, The University of Waikato. Available at: https://tek-teach.sdu.dk/uploads/simplex/documents/Workshops/assessment_matters_self-assessment_peer_assessment.pdf
- Stefani, L.A. (1992). Comparison of collaborative self, peer and tutor assessment in a

- biochemistry practical. *Biochemical Education*, 20(3):148-151. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0307-4412\(92\)90057-S](https://doi.org/10.1016/0307-4412(92)90057-S)
- Stefani, L.A. (1994). Peer, self and tutor assessment: Relative reliabilities. *Studies in Higher Education*, 19(1):69-75. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079412331382153>
- Tok, Ş. (2010). The problems of teacher candidate's about teaching skills during teaching practice. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2(2):4142-4146. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.654>
- Topping, K. (2003). Self and peer assessment in school and university: Reliability, validity and utility. In M. Segers, F. Dochy, & E. Cascallar (Eds.), *Optimising new modes of assessment: In search of qualities and standards* (pp. 55-87). (Innovation and change in professional education; Vol. 1). Kluwer Academic Publishers. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/0-306-48125-1_4
- Topping, K.J., Smith, E.F., Swanson, I., & Elliot, A. (2000). Formative peer assessment of academic writing between postgraduate students. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 25(2):149-169. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/713611428>
- Warsi, L.Q., & Khurshid, K. (2022). The role of self-assessment in english language teachers' professional development in Pakistan. *Education Research International*, 2022, Article ID 9401995. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/9401995>
- Welsh, K.A., & Schaffer, C. (2017). Developing the effective teaching skills of teacher candidates during early field experiences. *The Educational Forum*, 81(3):301-321. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2017.1314574>
- William, D., Lee, C., Harrison, C., & Black, P. (2004). Teachers developing assessment for learning: Impact on student achievement. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 11(1):49-65. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0969594042000208994>
- Zimmerman, B.J., & Schunk, D.H. (Eds.). (2001). *Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement: Theoretical Perspectives*. Routledge. ISBN: 9781410601032. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410601032>

Received: 30 June 2023

Revised: 07 August 2023

Accepted: 27 August 2023

An Investigation of the Speech Skills of Children Living in Rural and Urban Areas[¶]

Abdulkerim Arıkan,¹ Mustafa Onur Kan²

1 Ministry of National Education, Turkey

2 Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, Antakya, Turkey

Abstract: Communication is vital for children's development, especially in differentiating rural and urban speech skills. The aim of this study is to investigate the speech skills of children living in rural and urban areas. The speech skills of 72 students attending the 8th grade in rural and urban areas of Iskenderun in the 2020-2021 academic year were examined. In the study designed with the screening model, the data were collected with a structured observation form. The video recordings of the speeches made by the students on the topic of "human and nature" according to their levels were taken and evaluated according to the "Speech Evaluation Form". The results of the present research revealed that the highest average scores of the students belonged to the sub-dimensions of applying the external structural elements of the language, applying the internal structural elements of the language and the psychological state of the speaker. In addition, it was determined that the students' speech skills were at a moderate level, whereas their ability to briefly introduce the parts of the speech, to start the topic with interesting expressions, to use appropriate tools such as pictures, graphs and photographs that can make the speech interesting, to use proverbs, idioms and aphorisms suitable for the topic, to benefit from literary devices suitable for the topic and to summarize the speech were very low. Urban students demonstrated comparatively stronger speech skills, highlighting the value of targeted improvements in communication education.

Science Insights Education Frontiers 2023; 19(2):3073-3087.

Doi: 10.15354/sief.23.or469

How to Cite: Arıkan, A., & Kan, M. O. (2023). An investigation of the speech skills of children living in rural and urban areas. *Science Insights Education*

Keywords: *Language Skills, Rural, Urban, Speech Skills*

About the Authors: *Abdulkerim Arikan, M.A., Primary School, Ministry of National Education, Turkey, E-mail: abdulkerimarikan.4731@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://0000-0002-0782-6783>*

Mustafa Onur Kan, Assoc. Prof., Ph.D., Department of Primary Education Hatay Faculty of Education, Hatay Mustafa Kemal University, Antakya, Turkey, E-mail: mokan@mku.edu.tr, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8319-0791>

Correspondence to: *Mustafa Onur Kan at Hatay Mustafa Kemal University of Turkey.*

¶ *This work has been adapted from Abdulkerim Arikan's master's thesis written under the supervision of the Dr. Mustafa Onur Kan.*

Conflict of Interests: *None*

© 2023 Insights Publisher. All rights reserved.



Creative Commons NonCommercial CC BY-NC: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License (<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed by the Insights Publisher.

Introduction

SPEECH skill, which enables people to convey their emotions, thoughts and desires to those in their social environment in a correct and effective way, is very important for individuals to establish connection with the external world, and for their cognitive and affective development. Speech skill emerges as a result of individuals' cognitive maturity, personality development and social relations (Sever, 2000). In this process, socio-economic and socio-cultural characteristics of the environment can affect speech skills of individuals.

Environment, which is one of the basic factors that affect the development process, can enable individuals to improve their innate skills. Human beings develop an identity in accordance with the environmental conditions created by the individuals in the environment where they are born and raised, with their innate temperament and characteristic features, and continue their lives in accordance with this identity (Öztürk, 2017). Environmental conditions also affect the development process of individuals' speech skills, and it is stated in the studies in the literature that environmental differences have an effect on the speech skills of individuals (Uysal, 2014; Uzunyol, 2019; Ünsal, 2019). In rural and urban areas with varying structures in terms of conditions such as sociocultural and economic characteristics, technology, education, health, etc., the opportunities for accessing and benefiting from educational and sociocultural resources may differ (Deniz, 2000: 23).

In the literature, there are studies (Sağlam & Doğan, 2013; Yıldız, 2014; Yeğen & Topçuoğlu Ünal, 2015; Başar et al., 2015; Ünsal, 2019; Uzunyol, 2019) that examine the speech skills of students at different levels of education. However, very few studies (E.g. Sargin, 2006) have investigated students' speech skills have been examined according to the environment they live in. It is thought that the present study will contribute to the speech skill studies in the literature.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the speech skills of children living in rural and urban areas.

METHOD

Research Model

This research, which examines the speaking skills of children living in rural and urban areas, was designed in the screening model. The screening model is a research approach that aims to reflect, describe the events, facts or situations that occurred in the past or present as they are, without any change (Büyük öztürk et al., 2020: 243-244).

Working Group

The study group consisted of 72 students attending the 8th grade in rural and urban areas in İskenderun district of Hatay province in the 2020-2021 academic year. Of the students participating in the study, 38 are girls and 34 are boys.

Data Collection Tool

In the research, the “Speaking Evaluation Form” developed by Sargin (2006) as a structured observation form was used to collect the data. The observation form consists of three parts: speaking order, language awareness (knowledge and language use skill) and speaker’s psychological state. In the speaking order part, students’ speeches are evaluated under five sub-headings: starting the speech (3 observation items), introduction part of the speech (3 observation items), development part of the speech (11 observation items), conclusion part of the speech (4 observation items) and ending the speech (2 observation items). In the language awareness (knowledge and language use skill) part, there are two sub-headings: ability to apply the external structural elements of the language (12 observation items) and ability to apply the internal structural elements of the language (10 observation items). In the speaker’s psychological state part, there are a total of 6 observation items.

Data Collection

In the research, the students were asked to express their opinions and knowledge on the topic of “human and nature”, which was decided to be suitable for the student levels by benefiting from the opinions of two faculty members who are experts in the field of Turkish education. The students were informed about the topic they would be speaking on. They were then asked to speak on the topic of “human and nature” in the classroom environment the next day at the specified time. The students were given information that their speeches would be recorded with a camera. At the specified dates and times, each student’s speeches on the subject were listened to in their own classroom environments and the process was recorded with a camera.

Data Analysis

In the research, the video recordings of the students’ speeches on the topic of “human and nature” were evaluated according to the observation status of the items in the structured observation form. The speeches of the students participating in the research were handled as not observed at all (1), not ob-

served (2), partially observed (3), observed (4) and fully observed (5) within the framework of the items in the observation form. Descriptive analysis technique was used in the analysis of the obtained data.

Results

In this section, findings related to speaking order, language awareness (knowledge and language use skill) and speakers' psychological state are presented.

Findings on Speaking Order

The findings related to the “starting the speech” of the students participating in the research are presented in **Table 1**.

As indicated in **Table 1**, it was observed that of the students living in rural areas, 60.6% started their speech with an appropriate address style; 36.3% did not present the title related to the speech topic, and 51.5% briefly introduced the speech parts. It was determined that 64.1% of the students living in urban areas started their speech with an appropriate address style; 33.3% did not present the title related to the speech topic, and 46.2% briefly introduced the speech parts.

According to **Table 2**, it was determined that 87.9% of the students living in rural areas formed the introduction part of their speeches; 81.9% did not start their speeches with interesting expressions (proverb, poem description, memory, etc.); 69.7% presented the introduction part in a normal length. On the other hand, 89.7% of the students living in urban areas formed the introduction part of their speeches; 82.1% did not start their speeches with interesting expressions (proverb, poem description, memory, etc.); 92.3% presented the introduction part in a normal length.

The findings on the development part of the speech are given in **Table 3**:

When **Table 3** is examined, it is seen that a large portion of the students in both rural and urban areas did not use appropriate tools (pictures, graphs, photos, posters, etc.) to make the speech interesting. Moreover, they did not use proverbs, idioms and aphorisms suitable for the topic; they did not tell stories, tales and jokes etc. relevant to the topic and they did not benefit from literary devices. On the other side, the skills of giving examples from daily life related to the topic, bringing the topic up to date, having emotional and intellectual richness related to the topic, supporting the main idea with auxiliary ideas and reflecting the main idea were found to be higher than other skills.

As revealed by **Table 4**, of the students living in rural areas, 87.9% formed the conclusion part of their speeches; 78.8% created conclusion

Table 1. Findings Related to Starting the Speech.

Starting a Conversation	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Does he/she start the conversation with the appropriate style of address?	Rural	33	24.2	3.0	12.1	18.2	42.4
	Urban	39	17.9	10.3	7.7	20.5	43.6
	Total	72	20.8	6.9	9.7	19.4	43.1
Does he/she present the title of the speech topic?	Rural	33	18.2	12.1	6.1	36.4	27.3
	Urban	39	17.9	15.4	5.1	28.2	33.3
	Total	72	18.1	13.9	5.6	31.9	30.6
Does he/she briefly introduce the parts of the subject?	Rural	33	24.2	27.3	15.2	12.1	21.2
	Urban	39	41.0	12.8	7.7	5.1	33.3
	Total	72	33.3	19.4	11.1	8.3	27.8

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 2. Findings on the Introduction Part of the Speech.

Starting a Conversation	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Is there an introduction part in the speech?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	9.1	21.2	66.7
	Urban	39	2.6	0.0	7.7	17.9	71.8
	Total	72	1.4	1.4	8.3	19.4	69.4
Does he/she introduce the speech with interesting expressions (proverbs, poems, descriptions, memories, etc.)?	Rural	33	66.7	15.2	9.1	3.0	6.1
	Urban	39	46.2	35.9	7.7	2.6	7.7
	Total	72	55.6	26.4	8.3	2.8	6.9
Does he/she present the introduction in a normal length?	Rural	33	0.0	9.1	21.2	36.4	33.3
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	7.7	38.5	53.8
	Total	72	0.0	4.2	13.9	37.5	44.4

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

statements consistent with the main idea of the speech; 81.9% did not utilize literary products such as poems, proverbs, aphorisms, etc. in the conclusion part; 48.5% ended their speeches with an impressive expression. It was determined that all of the students living in urban areas formed the conclusion part of their speeches; 87.2% created conclusion statements that were consistent with the main idea of the speech; 56.4% of them did not use literary products such as poems, proverbs, aphorisms, etc. in the conclusion part and 60.3% ended their speech with an impressive expression.

Table 3. Findings on the Development Part of the Speech.

Development Part of the Speech	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Does he/she use appropriate tools (pictures, graphics, photographs, posters, etc.) to make the speech interesting?	Rural	33	78.8	21.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Urban	39	79.5	20.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	72	79.2	20.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Does he/she use proverbs, idioms and aphorisms appropriate to the subject?	Rural	33	78.8	6.1	9.1	0.0	6.1
	Urban	39	59.0	17.9	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Total	72	68.1	12.5	8.3	4.2	6.9
Does he/she tell stories, tales, jokes, etc. appropriate to the subject?	Rural	33	63.6	12.1	15.2	6.1	3.0
	Urban	39	38.5	41.0	15.4	2.6	2.6
	Total	72	50.0	27.8	15.3	4.2	2.8
Does he/she give examples from daily life on the subject?	Rural	33	3.0	0.0	3.0	39.4	54.5
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.9	64.1
	Total	72	1.4	0.0	1.4	37.5	59.7
Can he/she bring the topic up to date?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	9.1	45.5	42.4
	Urban	39	0.0	7.7	2.6	30.8	59.0
	Total	72	0.0	5.6	5.6	37.5	51.4
Does he/she make use of verbal arts appropriate to the subject (personification, metaphor etc.)?	Rural	33	69.7	15.2	6.1	3.0	6.1
	Urban	39	41.0	25.6	0.0	15.4	17.9
	Total	72	54.2	20.8	2.8	9.7	12.5
When he/she speaks, does he/she make intermediate addresses to the listeners?	Rural	33	27.3	45.5	3.0	12.1	12.1
	Urban	39	35.9	35.9	7.7	5.1	15.4
	Total	72	31.9	40.3	5.6	8.3	13.9
Does he/she go off the subject when speaking?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	9.1	48.5	39.4
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	2.6	56.4	41.0
	Total	72	1.4	0.0	5.6	40.3	52.8
Is there a richness of feeling and thought on the subject?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	24.2	24.2	51.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	15.4	28.2	56.4
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	9.4	26.4	54.2
Does he/she support the main idea with auxiliary ideas?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	18.2	33.3	45.5
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	2.6	41.0	56.4
	Total	72	0.0	1.4	9.7	37.5	51.4
Does he/she reflect the main idea?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	6.1	30.3	60.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.2	71.8
	Total	72	0.0	1.4	2.8	29.2	66.7

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 4. Findings Related to the Conclusion Part of the Speech.

Conclusion Part of the Speech	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Is there a conclusion part in the speech?	Rural	33	3.0	3.0	6.1	45.5	42.4
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	0.0	46.2	53.8
	Total	72	1.4	1.4	2.8	45.8	48.6
Do the concluding statements correspond to the main idea?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	21.2	42.4	36.4
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	12.8	38.5	48.7
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	16.7	40.3	43.1
Does he/she use poems, proverbs, aphorisms, etc. literary devices?	Rural	33	66.7	15.2	12.1	3.0	3.0
	Urban	39	35.9	20.5	15.4	23.1	5.1
	Total	72	50.0	18.1	13.9	13.9	4.2
Does he/she end the speech with an impressive expression?	Rural	33	24.2	12.1	15.2	3.0	45.5
	Urban	39	17.9	7.7	5.1	10.3	59.0
	Total	72	20.8	9.7	9.7	6.9	52.8

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 5. Findings on the Way the Students Ended Their Speech.

The Way He Finished the Speech	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Does he/she summarize the speech?	Rural	33	48.5	18.2	9.1	24.2	0.0
	Urban	39	28.2	20.5	15.4	28.2	7.7
	Total	72	37.5	19.4	12.5	26.4	4.2
Does he/she end the conversation with sentences containing expressions of courtesy?	Rural	33	15.2	18.2	0.0	21.2	45.5
	Urban	39	7.7	25.6	2.6	10.3	53.8
	Total	72	11.1	22.2	1.4	15.3	50.0

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 6. Findings on the Ability to Apply the External Structural Elements of the Language.

To be Able to Apply the External Structural Elements of Language	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Can he/she make sounds correctly?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	18.2	18.2	63.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	2.6	12.8	84.6
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	9.7	15.3	75.0
Does he/she prolong the sounds unnecessarily?	Rural	33	3.0	3.0	51.5	30.3	12.1
	Urban	39	2.6	0.0	38.5	43.6	15.4
	Total	72	2.8	1.4	44.4	37.5	13.9
Does he/she swallow sounds in words during speech?	Rural	33	3.0	6.1	42.4	15.2	33.3
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	23.1	28.2	46.2
	Total	72	1.4	4.2	31.9	22.2	40.3
Is he/she able to make connected speech where necessary to ensure fluency?	Rural	33	39.4	30.3	3.0	9.1	18.2
	Urban	39	23.1	15.4	2.6	30.8	28.2
	Total	72	30.6	22.2	2.8	20.8	2.6
Does he/she repeat words or sentences?	Rural	33	6.1	6.1	48.5	21.2	18.2
	Urban	39	2.6	2.6	28.2	41.0	25.6
	Total	72	4.2	4.2	37.5	31.9	22.2
Does he/she always use inverted sentences?	Rural	33	3.0	6.1	6.1	33.3	51.5
	Urban	39	0.0	15.4	5.1	28.2	51.3
	Total	72	1.4	11.1	5.6	30.6	51.4
Does he/she speak by heart?	Rural	33	3.0	21.2	9.1	45.5	21.2
	Urban	39	2.6	20.5	15.4	20.5	41.0
	Total	72	2.8	20.8	12.5	31.9	31.9
Can he/she speak standard Turkish?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	9.1	27.3	60.6
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	17.9	5.1	74.4
	Total	72	0.0	2.8	13.9	15.3	68.1
Does he/she make unnecessary sounds (eeee, ııı, ııııı, etc.) that disrupt the flow of speech?	Rural	33	0.0	6.1	42.4	42.4	9.1
	Urban	39	0.0	7.7	17.9	46.2	28.2
	Total	72	0.0	6.9	29.2	44.4	19.4
Can he/she adjust his/her speaking speed in a way that the listeners can understand?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	15.2	30.3	51.5
	Urban	39	2.6	0.0	2.6	28.2	66.7
	Total	72	1.4	1.4	8.3	29.2	59.7
Does he/she speak loud enough for the listeners to hear him/her?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	3.0	39.4	57.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	7.7	28.2	64.1
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	5.6	33.3	61.1
Does he/she speak naturally?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	12.1	27.3	57.6
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	12.8	12.8	71.8
	Total	72	0.0	2.8	12.5	19.4	65.3

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 5 illustrates the findings on how the students ended their speech:

It is seen in **Table 5** that 66.7% of the students living in rural areas summarized their speeches; 66.7% ended their speech with sentences that included courtesy expressions. It was also found that 48.7% of the students living in urban areas summarized their speeches; 64.1% ended their speeches with sentences that included courtesy expressions.

Findings on Language Awareness (Knowledge and Language Use Skill)

The findings on the ability of the students participating in the research to apply the external structural elements of the language are presented in **Table 6**.

As can be seen in **Table 6** 97.0% of the students living in rural areas could speak with a tone of voice that the listeners could hear, 87.9% could speak with standard Turkish, 84.9% could deliver natural speech, 84.8% did not constantly make inverted sentences, 81.8% could pronounce the sounds correctly, 81.8% could adjust the speech speed in a way that the listeners could understand, 69.7% could not make liaison and pause at the necessary places to ensure fluency and 66.7% did not speak by heart.

Considering the students living in rural areas, 97.4% could pronounce the sounds correctly, 94.9% could adjust the speech speed in a way that the listeners could understand, 92.3% could speak with a tone of voice that the listeners could hear, 84.7% could speak naturally, 79.5% did not constantly make inverted sentences, 79.5% could speak with standard Turkish, 74.4% swallowed the sounds in the words during the speech and 74.4% did not make unnecessary sounds (eeee, uuu, uuuuu etc.) that disrupted the speech flow.

The findings on the ability of the students to apply the internal structural elements of the language are given in **Table 7**.

Table 7 reveals that among the students attending school in rural areas, 84.8% could wrap up the sentence together, 78.7% could form meaningful sentences, 72.7% could establish semantic relationships between sentences, 69.7% could establish semantic relationships between words, 66.7% had harmony between speech language and body language, 66.6% could direct the phonetic flow related to the emotion and thought in the words within the framework of language awareness and 63.7% did not make unnecessary pauses.

Regarding the students attending school in urban areas, the findings indicate that 97.4% could form meaningful sentences, 84.6% could establish semantic relationships between words, 82.1% had harmony between speech language and body language, 82.0% could establish semantic relationships between sentences, 66.7% could direct the phonetic flow related to the emotion and thought in the words within the framework of language awareness,

Table 7. Findings on the Ability to Apply the Internal Structural Elements of the Language.

To be Able to Apply The Internal Structural Elements of Language	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Can he/she establish a meaning relationship between words?	Rural	33	0.0	6.1	24.2	12.1	57.6
	Urban	39	0.0	15.4	0.0	17.9	66.7
	Total	72	0.0	11.1	11.1	15.3	62.5
Does he use unnecessary words?	Rural	33	0.0	12.1	33.3	39.4	15.2
	Urban	39	0.0	5.1	33.3	30.8	30.8
	Total	72	0.0	8.3	33.3	34.7	23.6
Can he/she form meaningful sentences?	Rural	33	3.0	0.0	18.2	24.2	54.5
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	0.0	28.2	69.2
	Total	72	1.4	0.4	8.3	26.4	62.5
Can he/she establish the semantic relationship between sentences?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	24.2	18.2	54.5
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	15.4	17.9	64.1
	Total	72	0.0	2.8	19.4	18.1	59.7
Can he put a sentence together?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	15.2	24.2	60.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	2.6	33.3	64.1
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	8.3	29.2	62.5
Can he/she emphasize the words whose meaning he/she wants to convey?	Rural	33	9.1	30.3	9.1	3.0	48.5
	Urban	39	2.6	25.6	7.7	2.6	61.5
	Total	72	5.6	27.8	8.3	2.8	55.6
Can he/she direct the phonetic flow of emotions and thoughts in words within the framework of language awareness?	Rural	33	6.1	6.1	21.2	12.1	54.5
	Urban	39	5.1	17.9	10.3	10.3	56.4
	Total	72	5.6	12.5	15.3	11.1	55.6
Does he/she pause at the appropriate places to emphasize the meaning of words and word groups?	Rural	33	15.2	36.4	3.0	9.1	36.4
	Urban	39	0.0	51.3	0.0	7.7	41.0
	Total	72	6.9	44.4	1.4	8.3	38.9
Does he/she make unnecessary pauses?	Rural	33	3.0	3.0	30.3	45.5	18.2
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	30.8	28.2	38.5
	Total	72	1.4	2.8	30.6	36.1	29.2
Is there harmony between spoken language and body language?	Rural	33	3.0	9.1	21.2	18.2	48.5
	Urban	39	0.0	2.6	15.4	23.1	59.0
	Total	72	1.4	5.6	18.1	20.8	54.2

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

Table 8. Findings on the Psychological State of the Speaker.

Psychological Status of the Speaker	Region	N	Percentage of Observation				
			NOA	NO	PO	O	FO
Does he/she express self-confidence with his/her posture?	Rural	33	0.0	0.0	18.2	21.2	60.6
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	7.7	28.2	64.1
	Total	72	0.0	0.0	12.5	25.0	62.5
Does he/she display sympathetic behavior?	Rural	33	0.0	3.0	15.2	27.3	54.5
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	12.2	26.2	61.6
	Total	72	0.0	1.4	11.1	27.8	59.7
Does he/she make eye contact with the listeners?	Rural	33	15.2	15.2	15.2	6.1	48.5
	Urban	39	7.7	10.3	25.6	0.0	56.4
	Total	72	11.1	12.5	20.8	2.8	52.8
Is he/she affected by various behaviors of the listeners?	Rural	33	3.0	39.4	12.1	45.5	0.0
	Urban	39	10.3	23.1	15.4	46.2	5.1
	Total	72	6.9	30.6	13.9	45.8	2.8
Does he/she make unnecessary movements?	Rural	33	3.0	0.0	6.1	72.7	18.2
	Urban	39	0.0	0.0	15.4	61.5	23.1
	Total	72	1.4	0.0	11.1	66.7	20.8
Does his/her voice tremble?	Rural	33	3.0	15.2	9.1	30.3	42.4
	Urban	39	2.6	15.4	2.6	23.1	56.4
	Total	72	2.8	15.3	5.6	26.4	50.0

NOA: Not observed at all; NO: Not observed; PO: Partially observed; O: Observed; FO: Fully observed

66.7% did not make unnecessary pauses and 64.1% could emphasize the words they wanted to convey their meaning.

Findings on the Psychological State of the Speaker

The findings on the psychological state of the speaker are shown in **Table 8**:

When **Table 8** is examined, it is seen that 81.8% of the students living in rural areas showed their self-confidence with their posture; 81.8% exhibited sympathetic behaviors; 54.6% could make eye contact with the listeners; 45.5% were not affected by various attitudes of the listeners; 90.9% did not make unnecessary movements and 72.7% did not have trembling voice. On the other hand, of the students living in urban areas 92.3% showed their self-confidence with their posture; 87.8% exhibited sympathetic behaviors; 56.4% could make eye contact with the listeners; 51.3% were not affected by various attitudes of the listeners; 84.6% did not make unnecessary movements and 79.5% did not have trembling voices.

Discussion

In this study, the speaking skills of 8th grade students who study in the urban and rural areas of İskenderun district of Hatay province in the 2020-2021 academic year were examined. The findings obtained revealed that the students both from rural and urban areas had moderate levels of starting their speeches with appropriate address styles and presenting the topic of their speech, while most of the students did not briefly introduce the parts of their speeches. In addition, it was determined that most of the students formed an appropriate introduction part for their speeches and presented the introduction part at a normal length, while the level of starting the speech with interesting expressions (proverb, poem, description, memory, etc.) was very low. The students living in urban areas were found to have better speaking and introduction skills than those living in rural areas. However, these skills were generally at a moderate level. Although media technologies and the Internet are effective in improving speaking skills, exam-oriented education and the inadequacy of speaking activities in schools prevent the development of this skill. Muradoğlu (2021) determined that students at the 3rd grade level started speaking at a moderate level. Duran (2020) reported that students who study at the 3rd and 4th grade levels in combined classes had a moderate level of making a logical introduction to the topic; their ability to make logical transitions between topics and connect the topic with a concluding speech were at a low level. Karaköse (2019) found that most of the 6th grade students did not start their speeches with a salutation sentence and their level of introducing the parts related to their speeches was very low. In this context, it can be

said that the results obtained in the present study show similarity with those obtained in other studies in the literature.

In the study, it was observed that the students did not use different methods to make the speech interesting, but they were able to present examples, emotions and thoughts, main and supporting ideas related to the topic. In addition, the students attending school in urban areas were more successful than those living in rural areas in the introduction and development parts of the speech. This situation may be related to the breadth and diversity of the social environment of the students living in urban areas. Previous studies in the literature (Aydoğan, 2019; Doğan, 2019; Yaşar, 2017; Dedeoğlu Orhun, 2009; Sargın, 2006) have concluded that students do not use appropriate tools, narratives and figures to make their speeches interesting, but they present appropriate examples, main and supporting ideas for the given topic.

The students receiving education in urban areas were found to be better than those in rural areas in the conclusion part of the speech, but this skill was generally at a moderate level. These results are also similar to those reported in other studies in the literature (Üzüm, 2021; Karaköse, 2019; Sevim & Kapıcı, 2016; Kemiksiz & Güneş, 2017; Yeğen, 2014; Uysal, 2014; Dedeoğlu Orhun, 2009; Sargın, 2006).

The findings of the present research showed that the students could apply the external structural elements of the language at a high level, but their fluency skills such as liaison and pause were low. In addition, it was determined that the students in the urban areas were slightly better than those in rural areas in these skills. Sargın (2006) determined in his study that the ability to apply the external structural elements of the language varies depending on the grade level, and that secondary school students have a very high ability to apply the external structure elements of the language; while primary school students have a moderate level. The ability to apply the external structure elements of the language at a high level has also been determined in various studies in the literature (Dedeoğlu Orhun, 2009; Tüzemen & Kardaş, 2017; Kemiksiz & Güneş, 2017; Yaşar, 2017).

The findings also revealed that the students could apply the internal structural elements of the language at a high level, but their skills, such as emphasis, pause and phonetic flow, are at a moderate level. In addition, it was determined that there was no significant difference in terms of these skills between the students living in the urban and rural areas. Similarly, other studies in the literature (Sargın, 2006; Dedeoğlu Orhun, 2009; Aslan, 2018; Uysal, 2014; Tüzemen & Kardaş, 2017) have also reached the conclusion that students at different education levels have a moderate level of ability to apply the internal structural elements of the language.

This study showed that the students had high levels of self-confidence and sympathetic behavior skills, moderate levels of unnecessary movement, voice tremor and eye contact skills, and low skill of being af-

ected by the attitudes of the listeners. Besides, there was no significant difference between the students in the urban and rural areas in these skills. Sargın (2006) determined that most students at different education levels did not have confidence in themselves with their posture, could not exhibit sympathetic behaviors in their speeches, could not make eye contact with listeners, exhibited unnecessary movements during the speech process and their voices trembled. However, despite these negatives, they were not affected by the attitudes of the listeners. The ability of speakers to express their self-confidence with their posture, exhibit sympathetic behaviors, avoid unnecessary movements and make eye contact with the listeners were at a moderate level in other studies in the literature (Kemiksiz & Güneş, 2017; Uysal, 2014; Muradoğlu, 2021). This difference between the current findings and those in the literature may stem from sociocultural and socioeconomic characteristics of the students participating in the study.

The following suggestions can be developed based on the results obtained in the current research:

1. It was observed that the students participated in the study often omitted to briefly introduce the parts of the speech. To address this issue, feedback can be given to students after their speeches.
2. A majority of students failed to start their speeches with attention-grabbing elements such as proverbs, descriptions, poems and anecdotes. Therefore it can be considered to display informative and interesting contents, such as poems, proverbs and idioms, on classroom and school boards and to share speech examples that start with these elements with students.
3. It was found in the research that the students did not make intermediate addresses to the audience they spoke to. In this regard, speech examples demonstrating the effectiveness of intermediate addresses in capturing the dispersed attention of listeners can be shown.

References

- Aslan, M.A. (2018). Diksiyon Etkinliklerinin Ortaokul 7. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Konuşma Becerilerine Etkisi. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Sakarya.
- Aydoğan, Y. (2019). Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Konuşma Becerilerinin Geliştirilmesinde ve Konuşma Kaygılarında Kavram Haritalarının Etkisi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Kütahya.
- Başar, M., Keklik, S. ve Batur, Z. (2015). Konuşma becerisine ilişkin bir yöntem önerisi: sâmet yöntemi, *International Journal of Language Academy*, 3(3):66-82.

- Büyüköztürk, Ş., Kılıç Çakmak, E., Akgün, Ö.E., Karadeniz, Ş., Demirel, F. (2020). Eğitimde Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri, Pegem A Yayıncılık, Ankara.
- Dedeoğlu Orhun, B. (2009). İlköğretim Üçüncü Sınıflarda Türkçe Derslerinde Tekerleme Kullanımının Öğrencilerin Dil becerilerine Etkisi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Fakültesi, İzmir.
- Deniz, K. (2000). Yazılı Anlatım Becerileri Bakımından Köy ve Kent Beşinci Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Durumu, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Çanakkale.
- Doğan, Y. (2019). Dil becerisinin geliştirilmesine yönelik etkinlikler önerileri, Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi, 7(1):185-204.
- Duran, C. (2020). Birleştirilmiş Sınıflı İlkokul 3. ve 4. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Türkçe Dersinde Konuşma Becerilerinin Karikatürler Yoluyla Geliştirilmesi: Bir Eylem Araştırması. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Muğla Sıtkı Koçman Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Muğla.
- Karaköse, V. (2019). 6. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Hazırlıksız Konuşma Becerilerinin Geliştirilmesi Üzerine Bir Çalışma. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Kemiksiz, Ö., Güneş, F. (2017). Doğrudan öğretim Modeline dayalı konuşma eğitiminin 5. Sınıf öğrencilerinin konuşma becerilerine ve konuşma kaygılarına etkisi, Uluslararası Türkçe Edebiyat Kültür Eğitim Dergisi, 6(1):384-405.
- Muradoğlu, Ü. (2021). İlkokul 3. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Konuşma Becerilerini Geliştirme. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Bartın Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim Enstitüsü, Bartın.
- Öztürk, Ö. (2017). İlkokul 3.Sınıf Türkçe Dersinde Yaratıcı Drama Yönteminin Konuşma Becerilerini Geliştirmeye Etkisi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Bartın Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Bartın.
- Sağlam, Ö., Doğan, Y. (2013) 7. sınıf öğrencilerinin hazırlıksız dil becerileri, Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 10(24):43-56.
- Sargın, M. (2006). İlköğretim Öğrencilerinin Dil becerilerinin Değerlendirilmesi: Muğla İli Örneği, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Muğla Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Muğla.
- Sargın, M. (2006). İlköğretim Öğrencilerinin Konuşma Becerilerinin Değerlendirilmesi-Muğla İli Örneğinde. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Muğla Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Muğla.
- Sever, S. (2000). Türkçe Öğretimi ve Tam Öğrenme, Anı Yayınları, Ankara.
- Sevim, O., Kapıcı, M.S. (2016). 6. sınıf konuşmadan önce dinleme etkinliklerinin öğrencilerinin konuşma ve dinleme becerileri üzerindeki etkileri, Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi, 11(2):177-198.
- Tüzemen, T., Kardaş, M.N. (2017). Akademik çelişki tekniğinin 6.sınıf öğrencilerinin Türkçe dil becerilerine etkisi ve bazı değişkenlerle ilişkisi, YYÜ Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 14(1):581-610.
- Uysal, B. (2014). Dinleme ve Konuşma Becerilerinin Kazandırılmasında Yaratıcı Drama Temelli Bir Model Önerisi, Doktora Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Uzunyol, C. (2019). Mikro Öğretim Tekniğinin Ortaokul 7.Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Konuşma Beceri Ve Kaygılarına Etkisi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Van.
- Ünsal, F. (2019). Türkçe Derslerinde Rol Alma Modeli İle Hazırlanan Etkinliklerin Öğrencilerin Konuşma Tutum Ve Kaygılarına Etkisi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, İstanbul.
- Yaşar, Z. (2017). Kavram Karikatürleriyle Yapılan Etkinliklerin İlkokul 3. Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Konuşma Becerilerine Etkisi. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Bartın Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Bartın.
- Yeğen, Ü. (2014). Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Dil becerilerinin Geliştirilmesinde Görsellerin Etkisi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Sakarya.
- Yeğen, Ü. ve Topçuoğlu Ünal, F. (2015). Konuşma becerisinin geliştirilmesinde görsellerin etkisi, Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi, 17(67):129-144.
- Yıldız, D. (2014). Etkileşimli öğretim stratejisinin Türkçe eğitimi ana bilim dalı öğrencilerinin konuşma becerilerine etkisi, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Konya.

Arkan & Kan. (Turkey). Speech Skills in Rural and Urban Children.

Received: 27 August 2023

Revised: 06 September 2023

Accepted: 27 September 2023

Overburdened Chinese Compulsory Education Teachers

Yun Tang

Zhenjiang Jiangnan School, Zhenjiang 212008, Jiangsu, China

Abstract: *The universalization of “nine-year compulsory education” in China has significantly augmented the teaching force at this level. Compulsory education teachers are the most crucial human resource for the development of this system. However, they have been under disproportionately heavy work burdens, which are detrimental to their mental and physical health and compromise the quality of education. This article focuses on presenting the signs of overburden among compulsory education teachers and pinpointing its causes, with the purpose of contributing to alleviating the job strain of this group and developing a sustainable compulsory education.*

Science Insights Education Frontiers 2023; 19(2):3089-3102.

Doi: 10.15354/sief.23.re312

How to Cite: Tang, Y. (2023). Overburdened Chinese compulsory education teachers. Science Insights Education Frontiers, 19(2):3089-3102.

Keywords: *Compulsory Education, Teacher Workload, Overburden, China*

About the Authors: Yun Tang, Zhenjiang Jiangnan School, Zhenjiang 212008, Jiangsu, China, E-mail: 1051508666@qq.com

Correspondence to: Yun Tang at Zhenjiang Jiangnan School of China.

Conflict of Interests: None

© 2023 Insights Publisher. All rights reserved.



Creative Commons NonCommercial CC BY-NC: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License (<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed by the Insights Publisher.

SUBSTANTIAL attention has been paid to the issue of student burden reduction recently, and research on how to lighten students' academic burden has been carried out in various dimensions and has achieved significant outcomes (Wang, 2022). At the same time, it is noteworthy that overburden remains pervasive among compulsory education teachers (in China, compulsory education officially includes primary and junior secondary schooling). Job burnout is damaging teachers' mental and physical health, potentially degrading the quality of education and negatively impacting student development (Wei, 2022). This study seeks to reveal the harms of excessive burden of work on compulsory education teachers as well as its sources and to explore measures for alleviating teacher job pressures.

Signs of Overburden in Chinese Compulsory Education Teachers

Official statistics show that the number of full-time compulsory education teachers in China has experienced a steady increase, reaching 10.6546 million in 2022, with 6.6294 million primary teachers and 4.0252 million junior secondary teachers (Ministry of Education, 2022). Despite the expansion of the teaching staff, teaching itself has become one of the most stressful professions in China. There are multi-faceted factors in the mounting pressures on compulsory education teachers, including workload-, student-, and parent-related factors.

Disproportionately Long Working Hours

In China, legal working hours for the ordinary work force are 40 hours per week, which means eight hours for each of the five workdays (State Council of China, 1994). Nevertheless, the majority of compulsory education teachers work far more than eight hours every day. According to the Ministry of Education's "National Education Supervision Report 2008," 90% of compulsory education teachers need to work on weekends, resulting in their average weekly working hours far exceeding 40 hours (Ministry of Education of China, 2008). Between 2002 and 2016, Xu (2017) conducted a three-phase survey on the job strain of primary, secondary, and kindergarten teachers from all types of schools in Ningbo City. A longitudinal comparison of the data showed that the percentages of teachers working more than eight hours a day, teachers working more than ten hours a day, and those working more than eight hours a day at weekends significantly rose over the 15 years. Through a sampling survey of compulsory education teachers across the country, Wang (2020) discovered that, on average, primary and secondary school teachers in China worked 8.97 hours every day in schools and spent

2.14 hours handling teaching-related duties after work. As per a 2023's survey on the workloads of primary and secondary school teachers in 31 provincial administrative regions by Beijing Foreign Studies University's Center for Chinese and Foreign Education Law Research, Chinese compulsory education teachers worked 54.5 hours per week on average, far exceeding 44 hours, the maximum working hours specified by the Labor Law (Sun & Zhang, 2023).

What needs to be highlighted is that out-of-hours duties consume considerable amounts of personal time for the teacher. It is common for compulsory teachers to prepare lessons, provide individual tutoring, and grade student homework in off-work time. They often have to address school duties on weekends and even during holiday breaks, time that should be spent on leisure activities or with the family. The home has become a secondary workplace for the teacher. This is a severe infringement on the right of the teacher to rest and leisure, increasing the risk of burnout among teachers (Xu, 2022).

According to data from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018, nearly 80% of the teacher participants from Shanghai claimed that they lost a lot of personal time to work and that the consequential sacrifice of the teacher's physical and mental health and family life had a negative impact on their professional development in the long run (Zhu, 2020). Li and Liu (2020) argued that the loss of private time made the teacher feel like a working machine. Exceedingly drained and emotionally exhausted, they perceived a strong sense of emptiness.

Excessive Non-Instructional Duties

In addition to day-to-day teaching-related duties, compulsory education teachers face a plurality of non-instructional tasks, including involvement in top-down inspection and evaluation, meetings, administrative affairs, training, and more. Typically, they have 10–18 lessons to teach each week. Nonetheless, endless meetings, competitions, commemoration services, questionnaires, and various forms of assessment constitute overwhelming burdens on teachers (Qiao, 2021). As per the 2017 "Report on Reducing Teachers' Non-Instructional Duties" released by the New Education Research Institution, Chinese teachers averagely spent less than 1/4 of their total working time on instruction and teaching-related preparations, with the rest 3/4 being occupied by onerous and time-consuming non-teaching tasks (Newschool Insight Media, 2020).

Research on teacher work burden showed that workloads induced by miscellaneous non-instructional duties are disproportionately heavy for compulsory education teachers. Li (2021) claimed that primary and secondary teachers in China devoted only 20% of their total working hours to

teaching, which means that non-teaching workloads took up nearly 80% of their working time. Excessive non-instructional responsibilities have led to a pervasive overburden of teachers, resulting in a lack of time for self-improvement in professional expertise. In his survey on “contributors to meaningless consumption of energy in teachers,” Li (2017) discovered that teachers’ day-to-day work was inundated with all sorts of “seemingly important issues” such as submitting reports, filling out formats, participating in assessment, and collaborating with administrators on inspections, which would consume 3/4 of their working time. These constant “disruptions” not only infringed on regular school schedules but also imposed negative impacts on teachers’ emotional and psychological states, leading to a loss of professional enthusiasm and aspirations in them. Huang et al. (2019) used the OECD’s parameters as a framework of reference and found that Chinese teachers have longer weekly working hours, more working days within one academic year, but less time spent on teaching than their counterparts from other OECD nations. Based on a comparison of the workload and work composition between junior secondary teachers from Shanghai and other high-achieving countries, Zhang (2022) described the work paradigm of Chinese teachers as an exemplary illustration of the “Asia-Pacific model” of excessive working hours but low weight on instructional workloads.

The Double Reduction Policy Exacerbates Work Burden

The issue of on-campus after-school service was first raised in the “Guiding Opinions on the Provision of After-School Service for Primary and Secondary School Students” released by the Ministry of Education in February 2017. In the “Opinions on Further Reducing the Burden of Homework and Off-Campus Training for Compulsory Education Students” (hereinafter referred to as the Double Reduction Policy) issued by the State Council in July 2021, improving the quality of after-school service was reaffirmed as one of the main measures for lessening student academic burden and enhancing education outcomes at the compulsory education level. Higher-quality after-school service meant additional responsibilities for compulsory education teachers, the primary providers of the service. In the meantime, amid the stringent restrictions and regulations on off-campus tutoring and training services, more public attention was focused on the quality of formal schooling. As a result, teachers’ working hours and workloads significantly increased (Wang & Ru, 2023).

Furthermore, the Double Reduction Policy initiated the reform of homework assignments, marking a transition of emphasis from the quantity of homework to the efficacy of in-class instruction. This requires teachers to

advance their competence in in-class teaching and assignment design in a timely manner to adapt to the new work environment and its requirements. In the short term, it poses extra pressure on compulsory education teachers (Zhou, 2023).

Kong (2023) investigated the work burden of primary teachers in Dongchangfu District, Liaocheng City, Shandong Province, in 2022. Nearly two-thirds of the 196 participants claimed their workload increased under the Double Reduction Policy due to the additional stipulations on after-school service, homework assignments, and other matters. A fifth grade English teacher was quoted in his study as saying that the reduction in students' burden resulted in an increase in teachers' workloads as students are now required to complete homework at school, and the provision of after-school service and care and oversight on vacations means that teachers take over responsibilities originally resting with parents.

The Consequences of Overburden on Compulsory Education Teachers

Damaging Teachers' Mental and Physical Health

Mental and physical well-being have direct effects on teacher performance. A physically fit teacher can fulfill instructional tasks smoothly without disruptions from their illnesses. Psychological well-being enables teachers to cope with challenges and difficulties in work more optimistically and to have more effective communication with students (Li, 2003). However, current overly heavy workloads have elicited a variety of health issues in compulsory education teachers.

Continuous, intensive pressures have serious consequences for teachers' physical health, inducing problems such as fatigue, insomnia, and cardiovascular diseases. A survey on the current work burden of primary and secondary teachers in 2019 showed that the majority of primary school teachers were experiencing intensive pressure, with 80% of them suffering from throat and neck bone conditions and 68% suffering from work stress-related sleep disorders (Xiong & Jiang, 2019). Disorders like these not only had chronic, detrimental effects on their physical well-being but also severely disrupted their work and personal lives. Approximately one-third of teachers polled were considering a change in profession.

Mounting work burden also instigates psychological issues in teachers, such as anxiety and depression. The Blue Book of National Mental Health 2019 showed that the mental health of Chinese teachers was deteriorating year by year and that, in general, primary and secondary teachers had lower levels of mental healthiness than university teachers. In 2019, *Tomor-*

row, a journal under the China Teacher Education and Development Association, published a study on the psychological health issues of teachers. Its data showed that 32.4% of the teachers surveyed reported exceedingly high pressures of work, that 72% of them claimed to have mental health problems, and that 61.2% of primary and secondary teachers polled exhibited signs of anxiety (Newschool Insight Media, 2020). The undesirable mental state of teachers had negative impacts on their behaviors at work, thereby compromising teaching efficacy as well as other educational outcomes.

Degenerating Teachers' Quality of Education

At the compulsory education level, the teacher bears multi-faceted responsibilities for students. Apart from helping the young children build up a solid knowledge foundation for future development, the teacher needs to direct them to cultivate sound outlooks and values (Jiang & Yin, 2021). An overburdened teacher cannot well balance all the roles they need to play. First, an exhausted teacher may have difficulties concentrating on their instruction or developing well-prepared teaching plans, with the consequences of making mistakes in delivering the lessons. This will adversely affect student learning outcomes and academic performance (Hua, 2018). Second, under constant pressure, the teacher may fail to pay adequate attention to the varying needs of students, making some of them feel neglected (Jiang & Yin, 2021). Particularly, those students struggling with schoolwork need extra support from their teachers, including tailored tutoring and learning materials. They can hardly reach such support with distracted teachers (Wang, 2014). Third, a physically and emotionally drained teacher can easily get impatient or lose their temper in a classroom setting. This is unfavorable to healthy teacher-student relationships and may diminish students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning.

Damaging the Teacher's Public Images

The teacher is supposed to be a role model for their students and is somewhat canonized by society. Improper remarks and behaviors of teachers triggered by unreasonable work pressures may arouse dissatisfaction among students and parents and criticism from the public, damaging public images of teachers and reducing positive social evaluation of them (Zheng, 2021). Public evaluation is closely related to the teacher's perception of pressure. Positive evaluation from the public contributes to alleviating teachers' pressure by making them feel respected and recognized. On the other hand, negative social evaluation can enhance their stress levels by undermining their self-worth.

The media often represents public evaluation of teachers. Amid the expeditious development of the Internet, the importance of media has been growing, and its regulation has also become increasingly difficult. In the coverage of major educational events, some new media channels purposefully spread misleading or sensational material, which may tarnish the image of the teaching profession as a whole. Thus, negative news about educational issues in return increases the psychological burden on the teacher (Lu & Zhou, 2014).

Reasons for Overburdening Compulsory Education Teachers

Progression Rate-Focused Education

The progression rate of a junior secondary school at the compulsory education level represents the percentage of students admitted to general senior secondary schools after participating in the senior secondary school entrance examination. Progression rate-focused education pursues one-sided growth in senior secondary school admissions, disregarding the needs of the student for comprehensive development. Under this education paradigm, the teacher implements an instruction inconsistent with the national compulsory education curriculum program and course standards. The teacher often incorporates advanced learning materials into the current curriculum while eliminating or reducing subject matter deemed irrelevant to the high-stake examination. Schools and school districts frequently sponsor unified exams and mock entrance exams as test-ability training. Teachers must devote extra time and energy to helping students prepare for these tests. In Chen's (2007) research on teacher work burden, X School from a mountainous area was cited as a case study. It was a junior secondary school with 21 classes, and for three consecutive years, it was among the few top schools in the local county in terms of progression rates. Its principal, S, received the county- and municipal-level Excellent Principal Awards. Principal S held a mobilization meeting of all faculty and staff right after the recent senior secondary school entrance examination and declared that the school was targeting a 10% increase in the progression rate in the next year. That meant the next year's progression rate for the school needed to rise to 95% to be the number one among all schools in the county. All teaching staff fell into deep fear of the prospect of onerous duties fueled by this target.

Ambiguity of the Teacher's Responsibilities

In China, the roles that the teacher plays are plural, including educational roles such as the instructor, tutor, advisor, and evaluator as well as administrative ones such as the organizer, administrator, and communicator. Social development and educational advancement constantly generate new roles for teachers and add fresh responsibilities to them. Amid the increasingly intense competition between schools, teachers are required to provide a variety of services for parents, such as parenting education and counseling. Under the novel pedagogy that advocates fostering the student's problem-solving and innovative abilities, the teacher themselves needs to develop innovative capabilities first in order to become a qualified director for students. The ongoing educational reform requires the teacher to actively engage in educational research, and thus they need to be a capable researcher. The definition of the teacher's primary roles is complicated by the excessive responsibilities imposed on them. In fact, teaching is just one of many professions in the age of division of labor and a means of making a living. The notion of the all-mighty educator places teachers under unnecessary pressure (Chen, 2007).

Influences of Social Culture

Traditionally, the “sage” or “perfectionist” was the images of the teacher. Confucius and Mencius were their earliest models. In the modern age, people have regarded noble-minded educators who aspire to save and strengthen the nation as exemplary teachers. The combination of the two notions contributes to the ideal public expectations of teachers, who must be morally perfect and academically proficient (Li, 2014). Such personal and professional images of the teacher do not allow even minor defects. Other professions do not have to adhere to a code of ethics as strict as that of teachers. The need to be exceedingly cautious aggravates the psychological pressure on the teacher. In addition, there is a substantial gap between the high profile society gives teachers and their actual socioeconomic status, resulting in their low levels of happiness, job satisfaction, and sense of gain (Li, 2022).

Parents' Overly High Expectations of Teachers

According to the “*Report on Education Anxiety Indexes of Chinese Parents*” issued by SmartStudy, an educational technology company, in 2018, parental education anxiety is pervasive in China. To transfer the anxiety to teachers, parents choose to assume that teachers should take full responsibility for their child's education when they start school. In their minds, if their child does not do well at school, it is due largely to the teachers' incompetence. On the one hand, parents welcome teachers' constant nudges to their child for the latter's excellence in academic performance; on the other hand, they will not hesitate to lodge complaints against the teacher whenever their child

says they have been wronged in the school. The bulk of private tutoring and training institutions closed as a consequence of the implementation of the Double Reduction Policy. The majority of parents feel happy about it but expect teachers to do more to make up the gap in tutoring services. These unrealistic expectations from parents are a source of stress for the teacher (Fang & Liu, 2022).

Competition for Professional Titles

The professional title is one of the primary indicators of the teacher's professional standing as well as a valuable honor to the teacher awarded with it. The teacher evaluation system, initiated in 1886, includes the current practice of teacher professional title rating. It is meant to encourage initiative in the work of teachers and couple their salaries and perks to their performance. Nonetheless, there have been issues arising from its implementation, fueling an extra work burden for teachers. First, the number of professional titles across all ranks is limited. The criteria for professional titles vary in different districts, and there is an unbalanced distribution of the awards between schools. The teacher needs to compete extremely hard with their colleagues to win the targeted title, which arouses tremendous psychological pressure among them. Second, the preparations for professional title applications are also burdensome. The applicant needs to submit a large variety of materials to verify their qualifications, which is time-consuming. Besides, they need to earn as many accolades as possible to make themselves competitive, and as a result, they must participate in all sorts of contests, such as the demonstration lesson contest. In addition, there are subjective factors in the professional title rating. It is difficult for the evaluators, usually the school leaders, to make a completely impartial, objective assessment. That complicates interpersonal relationships between teachers (Yang, 2022).

Recommendations on Alleviating the Work Burden of Compulsory Education Teachers

In response to the issues with the work burden of compulsory education teachers, the State Council of China's General Office issued "Opinions on Further Improving Education and Teaching Environments to Reduce the Work Burden of Primary and Secondary Teachers" in 2019. The paper emphasized the importance of burden alleviation for guaranteeing the quality of compulsory education as well as the mental and physical health of teachers (State Council of China, 2019). This article proposes recommendations on this issue in the dimensions of school management, teacher professional competences, and social recognition, as follows:

Improving School Management of Teachers' Workloads

Reducing miscellaneous tasks that are disruptive to routine instruction is helpful in concentrating teachers on teaching duties and enhancing the quality of instruction. To do so, it is necessary for the school to clearly define the responsibilities of the teacher. School leaders should stringently screen external tasks to avoid engaging teachers in excessive activities that are irrelevant to school-based instructional work. Non-teaching personnel can be assigned school-based non-instructional duties such as classroom hygiene and oversight over student dining. It is also necessary for school leaders to streamline administrative procedures by reducing the number of meetings, eliminating redundant paperwork, and utilizing educational technology to increase procedural efficiency.

Furthermore, ameliorating the teacher evaluation system also helps alleviate the stressfulness of the job of teaching. First, the current teacher evaluation criteria emphasize student examination results over the educational process. To address the overly utilitarian tendency in the educational community, we should formulate a multidimensional teacher evaluation framework. Second, the components of teacher evaluation should be comprehensive to cover various aspects of the teacher's devotion, such as the number of lessons taught, education research outcomes, educational attitudes, and more. Third, a reasonable staff evaluation framework for the school should be stratified, with varied criteria for front-line teachers, administrators, and other logistic personnel. Lastly, the evaluators of teacher performance should be diversified to include school leaders, educational researchers, teaching research group leaders, labor unions, etc.

Focusing on Teacher Professional Competences

Improving teaching efficiency and effectiveness contributes to the teacher better managing the burden of work. Persistent professional development of the teacher is based on the notion of lifelong learning. They should continuously pursue new information and skills to upgrade their knowledge repertoire and pedagogical expertise. They can increase work efficiency by strengthening their digital literacy and applying educational technology, particularly AI-assisted technology, to day-to-day teaching and education. A teacher's better time management capability is also beneficial for handling workloads efficiently and reaching intended teaching outcomes. In addition, proficiency in stress management can significantly mediate the sense of burden on the teacher. An individual sense of burden is, to a certain extent, objective. There are differences in the perception of pressures at work among

teachers. Measures for making teaching school less stressful include, but are not limited to, remaining positive-minded, making time to unwind, seeking support from colleagues, and communicating with parents in an effective fashion.

Developing a Reasonable Social Attitude towards the Teaching Profession

The government and educational authorities should work to establish scientific educational goals for society and develop a healthy educational climate where fixations with student progression rates and examination results ought to be discarded. Parents should have a sensible notion of child education and legitimate expectations of teachers' roles. Child development is contingent on a wide range of factors, and the teacher's effort is just one of them. Student academic achievements should not serve as the only criterion in teacher evaluation. A teacher-respected social culture helps increase the teacher's identification with the teaching profession, thus boosting their overall satisfaction.

On the other hand, the misconduct of certain individual teachers may expeditiously garner the intense attention of the public as a consequence of the skewed and misleading coverage of irresponsible media. These inaccurately reported stories have severely tarnished the public image of the teacher and made them live in constant fear of being targeted by the media. Stricter regulation of media reporting on educational events is needed to prevent its detrimental impact on the public's perception of the teaching profession. Objective public opinion is beneficial for fostering a reasonable social environment where the teacher feels respected and recognized and can experience a strong sense of wellbeing in their career.

References

- Chen, D. (2007). Sources of stress of Chinese primary and secondary teachers and coping measures. *Jiangxi Educational Research*, 2007(4):45-48. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16477/j.cnki.issn1674-2311.2007.04.018>
- Chi, M. & Li, X. (2020). Causes of overburden in primary and secondary teachers and solutions. *Journal of Teaching and Management*, 2020(3):27-31. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ujtf4ygbm9mqueetmyxpfj0vgj9puepipxsn7yxyxgnebj-X50AmQq3pfXW09vEjHHaOt9EXc_ZcM_XcAx5bNvtWkRPvtlGTSdns2ZG1hBplsDHBetLxMMIucdmGjKVMPhs=&uni

- platform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Fang, Z. & Liu, J. (2022). Parental education anxiety under the Double Reduction Policy: Manifestations, causes, and alleviation. *Journal of Chengdu Normal University*, 38(9):9-14.
- Gai, K. & Li, G. (2020). Achievements, problems, and strategies for the building of primary and secondary teaching staff: Based on a survey on work and lifestyle of primary and secondary teachers in eight provinces in China. *Journal of South China Normal University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 2020(6):107-116+191. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ujucwqxq55wfn4pqqonlulv77akxqeqpy6ldoflsjxibunptxmtsjsbokavndjqlvrxo2yieark8j9yvj5v-KYR8veLU5Jqm1jdPXjLaiekDCVQeXzLB_LNRRed4mPYRJAKe=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Hua, W. (2018). Relationships between Job Strain, Coping Styles, Occupational Burnout, and Psychological Capital in Primary and Secondary Teachers (master's thesis). Shenyang Normal University. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ugkqwqamjb5j399syhxlrutu9sfjxc94rnxgbel-0KX4HtA5eWNzVO7X0dMLUK0_JXAMhir_QOSCKj_YZAdAtXAGez87RsHKogH7V4b56qUWO9355GLI8kxbGxOr5xbIe6gS6QToj_HJg==&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Huang, M., Zhao, M. & Sun, H. (2019). A comparative study on working hours of primary and secondary teachers in OECD countries and implications: Based on the Education Overview 2016: OECD Indicators. *New Teachers*, 2019(04):5-7. Available at: <https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ugmfanpotx909zrxbk7eroae-Hri3ZBZICKSOAeTx1DrJYb9LszDTqwQLZEV2NAQGqXxFsnhZuGMgc7y1tO3IKy4b44j7tzmyWw7SZ6YFfmVWU-om2LY0yRgd4l4vdZvo=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS>
- Kong, Q. (2023). Current State of the Workload of Primary Teachers and Improvement Strategies (master's thesis). Liaocheng University. DOI: https://doi.org/10.27214/dcnki.glcsu.2022_000312
- Jian, G. & Huang, Y. (2013). Competence-focused teacher professional development. *Teachers*, 2013(13):10-11. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1674-120X.2013.13.005>
- Jiang, X. & Yin, W. (2021). A brief discussion on the causes of behavioral deviations among middle school students and guiding strategies. *Teachers*, 2021(3):13-14. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ui_fcw50pfqzwnz-XDjF4KW_JMDkHcgZUJfDniMICSVP_GU0xo2xWKRmXHeYalWwJwOfKrqO0_AohXYBjElfJs0pmU7M-9x0NIIdZXUhv98rM7JB1IihINSxeT0hj_LCrB6Q=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Li, S. (2003). The impact of teacher mental health on educational work. *Guizhou Education*, 2003(8):21-22. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ujftfhsqewt5remiw9k4klyn_pnr44zecxzp1ac7yjpxcyydmdmxynxyuw_tx3c8achp7wq1w2pg-177z_HnWllrrortS0kS50OZpTxZ8PNFSYDyRo5iOlvLaYFXOOOT6Q=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Li, W. (2014). Reflection on moral role models for contemporary Chinese teachers. *Global Teacher Education Summit 2014*. Available at: <https://d.wanfangdata.com.cn/conference/8485049>
- Li, X. (2021). Workloads of primary and secondary teachers: Composition, level, and type. *Journal of Educational Science of Hunan Normal University*, 2021(2):82-89. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19503/j.cnki.1671-6124.2021.02.011>
- Li, X. (2022). Current State of Work Burden of Primary Teacher and Coping Measures (master's thesis). Qingdao University. Available at: <https://link.cnki.net/doi/10.27262/d.cnki.gqdau.2022.002097doi:10.27262/d.cnki.gqdau.2022.002097>
- Li, Y. & Liu, L. (2020). Addressing the issues with teachers' working hours. *Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University (Education Science Edition)*, 2020(4):80-83. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6uigodbl31i39z5hod-WXvqzgjZ02IEI1DcrrV8pgYmp2bjpK_Vo9Q8vxmkaSuhTkVa4aVe0SHr15cSsKQ08eGrb7kZ0XxiKbICkMLifYW0cdz_H

- [R3xLp6HTlhbiVF0U=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS](#)
- Li, Z. (2017). Report on “Reducing Non-instructional Work of the Teacher.” *Research and Review on Education*, 2017(4):74-79. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ujxwtylitn6jefcrjvr20xcyv4puqmi_4slxpc2oohupgin4ei6kwfytiqj8s2kb8fy12dyepwhjjezr-3WzGxAxVxdUb3-yeet228QAP_UD3EJyX2r5NB5FIdSovM3_Wg=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Lu, Y. & Zhou, J. (2014). The guiding effect of mainstream media on public opinion in the We Media era and its affecting pathways. *New Education Era*, 000 (13):53-54. Available at: https://wenku.baidu.com/view/4b3c211e905f804d2b160b4e767f5acfa0c78364?fr=xueshu_top&wkts=1701832944029
- Ministry of Education of China. (2008). Notice of the National Education Supervision Panel on Issuing the “National Education Supervision Report 2008.” Available at: http://www.moe.edu.cn/s78/A11/s7057/201410/t20141021_178950.HTML
- Ministry of Education of China. (2022). Statistical Report on National Education Development 2022. Available at: http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_fztjgb/202307/t20230705_1067278.html
- Newschool Insight Media. (2020). The Focus: 61% of teachers are experiencing anxiety, and it is imperative to pay attention to their mental health. Available at: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/162912686>
- Qiao, X. (2021). A Qualitative Study on Non-Instructional Burden on Primary Teachers (master’s thesis). Shan’xi University. Available at: <https://link.cnki.net/doi/10.27292/d.cnki.g.sxfu.2021.001357doi:10.27292/d.cnki.g.sxfu.2021.001357>
- State Council of China. (1994). State Council’s Regulations of Employee Working Hours. Available at: https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/202203/content_3338442.htm
- State Council of China. (2019). “Opinions on Further Improving Education and Teaching Environments to Reduce the Work Burden of Primary and Secondary Teachers” issued by the General Office of the State Council. Available at: https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2019-12/15/content_5461432.htm
- Sun, S. (2011). Teacher-related Factors in the Academic Weariness of Middle School Students and Countermeasures (master’s thesis). Shandong Normal University. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ugf07ufktrkshp06dfack7tbrs57vayw4wowqx64nak1btqek70akedgt0um7kydquas2r0pyj23ept6kd101o3ns4uinhi viegl43nbn5pd9xh5osnttxhgsjt_mfvpuxyt2k-P2TtQ==uniplatform=NZKPTlanguage=CHS
- Sun, T. & Zhang, S. (2023). Investigation of Non-Instructional Burden on Primary and Secondary Teachers: The Overly Wide Range of Duties Compromises Their Professional Identification and Wellbeing. Available at: https://www.thepaper.cn/newsdetail_forward_25235047
- Wang, G. (2014). The efficacy of in-class science education. *Course Education Research*, 2014(35):169-170. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.2095-3089.2014.35.182>
- Wang, G. (2022). The Implementation of the Double Reduction Policy in W County, Shandong Province (master’s thesis). Guangxi Minzu University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27035/d.cnki.gxmc.2022.000045>
- Wang, X. (2020). Causes of overburden in primary and secondary teachers and practical paths to burden reduction. *Journal of Teaching and Management*, 2020(28):9-12. Available at: <https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6uhglozo9yh6vjkcasgs92xef9whjv0h19cmr1zvqkljthcftiudakaqecwukhb2afhjmundrtai1hzynqgzsksp9FoH13rZXGfnqUR10i1e7D6RzyYdHNXAhAVUQgYa4=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS>
- Wang, X. & Ru, Z. (2023). Manifestations, causes, and alleviation of teacher job strain in after-school service. *Journal of Teaching and Management*, 2023(34):9-12. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ugdwvt-Y5gSUbSGnt1OHQeTFWY996446W78oeHbY_NiNt20OsmqtqDiTsygFM1rmNv7r-6mIK_EzYHoP1OmDLBj6cDpn4N_T-2j6mVQmWOW12TBFRiiO_Fs&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Wei, M. (2022). The Management of Teacher

Work Burden in Primary and Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Educational Ecology (master's thesis). Southwest University. Available at: <https://link.cnki.net/doi/10.27684/d.cnki.gxndx.2022.000835doi:10.27684/d.cnki.gxndx.2022.000835>

- Xiong, J. & Jiang, B. (2019). The current state of work burden of primary and secondary teachers and alleviation measures. *Teachers' Journal*, 2019(9):72-75. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ugpn0huezysmw2s2mgjpkriuyzppiwl0mujbtvaju6-5Ngc1r90lbIUAKlqMZYdhGrqLvCzdX6YnYHtpoq96ugcSyT8YkT5mq3opxHkkQ_XP4VN-H92rSpS_5ItXMU=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS
- Xu, X. (2017). A three-phase survey on teacher job strain: An empirical study. *Shanghai Education Research*, 2017(8):65-69. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16194/j.cnki.31-1059/g4.2017.08.016>
- Xu, Y. (2022). Homework Management in Primary Schools under the Double Reduction Policy and Recommendations (master's thesis). East China Normal University. Available at: <https://link.cnki.net/doi/10.27149/d.cnki.gghsu.2022.005250doi:10.27149/d.cnki.gghsu.2022.005250>
- Yang, G. (2022). Issues with Professional Title Rating for Primary and Secondary Teachers and Countermeasures (master's thesis). Harbin Normal University. Available at: <https://link.cnki.net/doi/10.27064/d.cnki.ghasu.2022.000308doi:10.27064/d.cnki.ghasu.2022.000308>
- Zhang, Q. (2022). From resource distribution to policy support: Reducing teacher work burden from the perspective of international comparison. *Educational Research*, 2022(2):29-43. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6uhruzfvzhrp7xi04rvewpzjqcct9zizkvojaelbwrtshl8_8wxaiwyok9bz01xlavbkegnunwyh5futbw7w4bzqdy109v18zf5xoda8yhct3e2xdome8grcpvo28b_3k=&uniplatform=nzkpt&language=chs
- Zheng, Y. (2021). Job Strain among Primary Teachers and Coping Measures (master's thesis). Hainan University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27073/d.cnki.ghadu.2021.000414>
- Zhou, J. (2023). Work Burden of Primary and Secondary Teachers under the Double Reduction Policy (master's thesis). Zhejiang Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27464/d.cnki.gzsfu.2022.000096>
- Zhou, Q., Chen, S., & Xiang, Z. (2023). The level and characteristics of work burden among primary and secondary teachers under the Double Reduction Policy: Based on a survey in Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Chongqing. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 10(3):102-112. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13718/j.cnki.jsjy.2023.03.012>
- Zhou, Y. & Shen, H. (2016). Effects of the current teacher evaluation system on the professional development of university teachers from the perspective of driving forces. *Tsinghua Journal of Education*, 37(5):54-61. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14138/j.1001-4519.2016.05.05408>
- Zhu, Y. (2020). Ethical examination of the Issue of Excessive Competition in Education (doctoral dissertation). Shanghai Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27312/d.cnki.gshsu.2020.002402>
- Zhu, Y. (2020). Work pressures among teachers from Shanghai and their impact on job satisfaction: An empirical analysis based on TALIS data 2018. *Global Education*, 2020(8):117-128. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=tzo8jwpg6ujgmoiohm5jbsiiejx-AzgUidiS_4DTdHDc05j_KyoV_O7g7Nn6aJSmpxJF9rz-nsamSdc8-8KakvBTOBdvywu_8hx3Yu281pLoohuq-8CRH-S3vDaOfuO0H2BwheelIs=&uniplatform=NZKPT&language=CHS

Received: 16 October 2023

Revised: 05 November 2023

Accepted: 26 November 2023

Break Time on the School Schedule: Evidence from Basic Education Schools in China

Xinyuan Xu

Wisdom Education Institute of Chinese Society for Tao Xingzhi Studies,
Nanjing 211100, Jiangsu, China

Abstract: *The mandatory 10-minute break on the basic education school schedule in China is intended to help students relieve fatigue and pressure and refresh their minds and bodies between lessons. However, instructional activities have often taken precedence over its intended purpose. This article described the current state of break time deprivation among Chinese basic education students and analyzed its causes, with a view to arousing more attention to the protection of the right of the student to rest and leisure activities at school.*

Science Insights Education Frontiers 2023; 19(2):3103-3113.

Doi: 10.15354/sief.23.re315

How to Cite: Xu, X. (2023). Break time on the school schedule: Evidence from basic education schools in China. *Science Insights Education Frontiers*, 19(2):3103-3113.

Keywords: *Right of the Student to Rest, Break Time, Basic Education, China*

About the Authors: Xinyuan Xu, Wisdom Education Institute of Chinese Society for Tao Xingzhi Studies, Nanjing 211100, Jiangsu, China., E-mail: Xinyuan Xu, E-mail: 286353224@qq.com

Correspondence to: Xinyuan Xu at Wisdom Education Institute of Chinese Society for Tao Xingzhi Studies of China.

Conflict of Interests: None

© 2023 Insights Publisher. All rights reserved.



Creative Commons NonCommercial CC BY-NC: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License (<http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>) which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed by the Insights Publisher.

Introduction

THE primary purpose of education is to foster healthy student growth. This fundamental purpose should guide the centering of all school activities (Xue, 2011). A reasonable school schedule is the foundation of desirable educational outcomes. Nevertheless, the fixation with student examination results in current Chinese basic education has caused plural issues that impede student growth and development, such as overly long school hours, between-lesson breaks being filled up with instruction, and the limitation on student voluntary activities other than studies (Wen & Bi, 2023). Such injudicious use of school time has become a severe constraint on the healthy school life of students and, consequently, on their comprehensive development. This study focused on the issues with the recess between lessons in Chinese basic education schools and their causes. We suggested recommendations to promote a more scientific basic education by guaranteeing the right of students to break time.

Status Quo of Break Time on the School Schedule

China has the largest scale of basic education in the world, with estimated enrollments of 0.168 billion in 2022 (Ministry of Education of China, 2022). Chinese basic education universally implements class-based instruction according to prescribed schedules. A typical school timetable includes four periods in the morning and three or four periods in the afternoon, with a 10-minute break between every two periods and a 15-30-minute “big break” in the morning and afternoon, respectively (**Table 1**).

Table 1 shows that Chinese school schedules mandate break time. However, their implementation does not guarantee it well. Teachers may use it to finish class activities. Students at some schools are required to stay mute, stick to their seats, and not do anything irrelevant to their studies during breaks. Certain schools even go to such extremes as to set limits on students’ visits to the toilet (Wen & Bi, 2023).

Break Time Disruptions in Basic Education Schools

Using Recess as an Extension of Class Time

In China, teacher lecturing has been the predominant approach to instruction in the majority of classrooms at the basic education level (Sun, 2006). Teachers may choose to extend their instruction to break time when they fail to fulfill their teaching plan within class time. Some of them make students do after-class assignments at recess (Wang, 2023).

Table 1. A Typical Basic Education School Schedule in China.

	Primary	Junior Secondary	Senior Secondary	
A.M.	Period One	8:00 – 8:40	7:50 – 8:35	7:50 – 8:35
	Break	8:40 – 8:50	8:35 – 8:45	8:35 – 8:45
	Period Two	8:50 – 9:30	8:45 – 9:30	8:45 – 9:30
	“Big Break”	9:30 – 10:10	9:30 – 10:00	9:30 – 10:00
	Period Three	10:10 – 10:50	10:00 – 10:45	10:00 – 10:45
	Break	10:50 – 11:00	10:45 – 10:55	10:45 – 10:55
	Period Four	11:00 – 11:45	10:55 – 11:40	10:55 – 11:40
	Noon Break (Including Lunch Time)			
P.M.	Period One	2:00 – 2:40	2:00 – 2:45	2:00 – 2:45
	Eyes Exercise	2:50 – 2:55	2:55 – 3:00	2:55 – 3:00
	Period Two	2:55 – 3:35	3:00 – 3:45	3:00 – 3:45
	Setting-up Exercise	3:35 – 3:50	3:45 – 4:00	3:45 – 4:00
	Period Three	3:50 – 4:30	4:00 – 4:45	4:00 – 4:45
	Break		4:45 – 4:55	4:45 – 4:55
	Period Four		4:55 – 5:40	4:55 – 5:40
	<i>Note: There are slight regional variations in the school schedule in China.</i>			

According to Wang’s (2023) survey on class time management by primary school teachers, 64.7% of the teachers polled stated that students could complete learning activities in class, 71.3% of them were not quite satisfactory with their class time usage, and more than half (56.7%) have undertaken prolonged instruction to varying degrees. Along with the researcher’s classroom observations, it was concluded that the extension of class teaching was indeed pervasive. In addition, as per a survey conducted by the Social Investigation Center of China Youth Daily in collaboration with Wenjuan.com, among 1908 parents of primary and secondary school students, 64.7% claimed that teachers of their kids should manage class time better than extend their teaching to break time (Du & Li, 2019).

Imposing Unnecessarily Strict Discipline on Break-Time Activities

Due to the influence of the former Soviet Union’s educational ideas, Chinese basic education emphasizes collectivism in education and the regimentation of school life (Tan & Zheng, 1992). Even at break, students are required to follow strict discipline, being not allowed to talk loudly or walk around freely in the classroom, and being particularly discouraged from leaving the

classroom (Wu, 2021). This deprives students of the rest and relaxation they deserve.

In a 2023 report titled “Be More Considerate of Children’s Needs for the Ten-Minute Break” by Guangming Daily, the statement of a third grader at a primary school in Beijing was quoted: “After making necessary preparations for the ensuing class, I can drink some water or use the toilet but cannot go downstairs or talk to classmates. When I feel really bored, I either day-dream aimlessly or imagine a fighting game in my mind.” A mother of an eight-year-old boy said, “Every child in the school must follow the rule of ‘being mute on entering the classroom and starting learning on sitting down, and they will even be penalized for talking to peers from other classes on the way to the toilet at break.” She saw such strict rules as literally a torture to her lively and outgoing son (Deng, 2023).

During an investigation by *Legal Daily* into break time deprivation in students, a parent from a primary school in Nanning City of Guangxi reported that students were prohibited from playing games like basketball and table tennis on the playground during break, and their activities were limited to areas near the classroom. A parent in Zhengzhou City of Henan said that their child was only allowed to get some drinking water and use the toilet during the 10-minute recess and spent most of their break time in the classroom except for having a little walk in the corridor and doing the outdoor setting-up exercise at “big break” in the afternoon. The restriction on student break-time activities also occurred in some secondary schools. The class teacher reprimanded a student’s father for his son’s violation of the school regulation by playing basketball at break, which they thought could possibly cause an accident. The teacher reminded him to educate his kid on break-time behavior (Wen & Bi, 2023).

Harms of the Loss of Break Time to Basic Education Students

Impairing Student Psychological and Physical Health

According to relevant psychological research, adequate free activities and social interactions are preconditions for student psychological development (Yang, 2023). The class-based teacher-led instruction in China per se renders little room for free interaction. The loss of break time has further exacerbated the dearth of opportunity for voluntary activities and peer communication among students. This imposes dire challenges on their psychological state.

According to the *Report on National Mental Health Development in China 2021-2022* and the *Blue Book of National Depression Disorders 2022*,

14.8% of Chinese adolescents were subject to the risk of depression, a much higher percentage than that of adults; 50% of those diagnosed with the depression disorder were students from various education levels. Moreover, the number of teenagers who have had psychological counseling experiences is climbing year by year. Low-spiritedness, a short concentration span, learning fatigue, and an increased frequency of interpersonal conflicts are among the main mental issues with students. Psychotherapists emphasize that the restriction on student free activity at break and their sedentary behavior are unfavorable to the refreshment of mind and body, leading to concentration difficulties in the next class. Over time, students may grow weary of learning (Wen & Bi, 2023).

The lack of free activities at break is not only detrimental to students' mental and psychological health but also to their physical fitness. It contributes to the risks of issues such as obesity and myopia in children and adolescents (Zhang et al., 2022). In some extreme cases, students deliberately reduced their intake of food and water due to the constraints on toilet visits. There has been a report circulating that a seven-year-old girl contracted urethritis after only a few months of school, and upon parents' closer examination, she admitted to forgoing drinking water all day at school to reduce visits to the toilet (Deng, 2023).

The Infringement of the Student's Right to Freedom of Action

The pursuit of freedom is a fundamental human right. Children and teenagers have a natural tendency for free activity. Freedom of action is vital for their growth and development, playing crucial roles in fueling innovative thinking, enhancing self-directed learning ability, cultivating an independent mentality, and developing a sense of social responsibility in them (Zhou, 2006).

Injudicious use of break time and overly strict discipline on student voluntary behaviors not only violate their natural tendency but also hinder their social and emotional development. Students need peer interactions, such as playing with classmates, which give impetus to the development of social and emotional skills. The loss of break time deprives students of opportunities to interact with peers, leading to unmet emotional needs and negative feelings such as loneliness and anxiety (Xiong, 2019).

Children have an innate preference for play, and it is a paramount avenue for understanding and exploring the world. Professor Tian at the China Youth Research Center underlined the importance of a moderate number of voluntary activities in school life. In his view, the seemingly insignificant break has unique educational value in addition to its refreshing function. During the short ten-minute recess, the student learns a lot about

others and society through casual chats with peers and becomes more motivated to know more of the world; they develop their judgments on the right and wrong and awareness of social norms via “group gossips;” they can experience positive emotions such as mutual support, understanding, and friendship as well as negative emotions such as sadness, embarrassment, disappointment, and anger in playing games with classmates, which can improve their emotional intelligence and social skills. Content knowledge learning alone cannot lead to the attainment of these skills (Deng, 2023).

Causes of Break Time Deprivation among Basic Education Students

Improper View of the Teacher-Student Relation

According to the traditional view of the teacher-student relationship, the teacher plays a dominant role in education, holding an authoritative position as the sole controller of the educational process; in the meantime, the student must follow the teacher’s instructions and directions without reservation (Gao, 2020). In a teacher-dominated classroom, the teacher tends to overemphasize order and discipline with disregard for the fundamental rights of the student, such as the right to rest and recreation (Wang, 2021). Also, this unequal relationship between teachers and students finds expression in the teacher’s mistrust in students’ ability to manage themselves. They justify their arbitrary control over students’ behaviors by assuming that self-regulation is beyond the latter’s capabilities (Ji, 2021).

A Narrow Notion of the Purpose of Education

A scientific notion of student growth emphasizes student holistic development in academic, physical, emotional, social, and more dimensions, with a focus on the cultivation of healthy character and key competences in students as the foundation of their future development and the fostering of self-development ability to enable them to adapt to the changing social environment (Jin, 2013). However, in practice, Chinese teachers tend to narrow the purpose of education to achieving student academic attainments. As a result, they attempt to improve student academic performance by maximizing learning time and intensity by every means, including using break time for extra class instruction and written exercises by students (Li, 2012). This practice has ignored the negative impact on student learning efficacy and mental and physical health. Over time, with accumulated pressures and fatigue, students lose interest and motivation in learning. In addition, a portion of schools pay no attention to personal differences between students and the consequential

diversity of their needs and learning styles. To pursue uniform standards and targeted performance, they place students in one unified framework of requirements, depriving them of free activity and self-development opportunities (Luo, 2017).

An Unscientific Education Evaluation Framework

Meaningful education evaluation is a process of scientific assessment of educational activities, procedures, and an outcome based on prescribed educational objectives and is intended to provide evidence and directions for the further improvement of education quality (Yuan & Huang, 2006). Nevertheless, academic results-focused (or simply test scores-focused) evaluation systems are still pervasive in Chinese basic education schools, which is one of the main factors in break time deprivation. Exam results-focused evaluation leads to the teacher's blind faith in the student's learning load and disregard for the importance of scheduled breaks. A frequent practice in some schools is that teachers use break time to deliver problem-solving techniques to increase students' test ability (Ma, 2020). It may appear to be effective in enhancing student academic performance instantly, but it has negative effects on their long-term development, both physically and psychologically.

Furthermore, when school progression rates and exam results of students become the only evaluation criteria for education administrators, teachers inevitably neglect assessment of other education outcomes, such as physical and mental health, creativity, and social skills. In this context, students' break time can be easily sacrificed due to the teacher's primary consideration being their test ability rather than holistic development (Yang, 2023). Also, such one-sided evaluation systems exacerbate inter-school and inter-student competitions. Amid the ever-intensifying competitive climate, schools and teachers naturally place more pressure on students, requiring them to utilize all available time, including intervals between lessons.

The School Schedule is Incompletely Managed

Effective education management provides guarantees for the efficient operation, high quality of education, and optimal education outcomes of the school (Ma, 2014). At the basic education level, break time is an essential component of a student's school life. Rest deprivation among students is partially attributable to insufficient school management.

In schools that place emphasis on student academic learning and see break time as irrelevant to learning, the right of the student to rest is often neglected, and there is a lack of supervision over teachers' handling of recess on the school schedule (Ma, 2020). Without an effective monitoring device, the teacher may arbitrarily set restrictions on students' activities at break,

Table 2. Government Papers on Guaranteeing Student Break Time at School.

Years	Titles of Papers	Relevant Points
2007	Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening Physical Education to Boost Physical Fitness of Children and Adolescents (State Council of China, 2007)	A minimum of one hour of physical exercise every day is compulsory for each student.
2008	Action Plan for Myopia Prevention in Primary and Secondary Students (Ministry of Education of China, 2008b)	The teacher must finish classes in time and is not allowed to use student break time for other purposes.
2009	Guiding Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Strengthening the Regulation of Primary and Secondary School Operation (Ministry of Education of China, 2009)	Formulate regulations to specify student rest, study (including self-study), exercise time as well as forms of activities and homework; organize large-scale examination to rectify misuse of student break time; encourage the involvement of parents and the community; reduce the on- and off-campus schoolwork burden to guarantee the right of the student to rest.
2010	Strategy on the National Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development 2010-2020 (State Council of China, 2010)	Reaffirm the guarantee of one-hour on-campus physical exercise minimum for primary and secondary students.
2011	Regulations on the One-hour On-campus Physical Exercise of Primary and Secondary School Students (Ministry of Education of China, 2011)	Mandate the implementation of the state's regulations on the one-hour on-campus physical exercise of primary and secondary school students; make compulsory the 25–30-minute physical exercise at "big break" in the morning.
2021	Notice on Strengthening the Management Work of Student Physical Health and Fitness (State Council of China, 2021)	Reiterate the importance of one-hour on-campus physical exercise minimum for primary and secondary students.
2021	Regulations of Minors Protection at School (Ministry of Education of China, 2021)	Remove unnecessary restrictions on freedoms of reasonable in- and out-class communication and games as well as outdoor activities on the part of students.

using safety concerns as excuses. In addition, no training or guidance on break-time activity design is provided to teachers to increase their skills in creating colorful and intriguing games for their students. As a result, students may stay idle during breaks, unable to acquire effective relaxation. In sum, the evaluation of the quality of break time has not been incorporated into school management, making it difficult to spot and correct relevant problems in a timely manner (Liu, 2011).

Recommendations on Guaranteeing the Right of the Student to Rest at Break

The central education authorities of China have devoted a great deal of attention to the issues with break time in basic education schools. In recent years, the Ministry of Education has released a series of government papers (Table 2) in an effort to rectify the aforementioned issues and support healthy student development.

Drawing on the spirit of these government papers, recommendations on the regulation of break time on the school schedule are proposed as follows:

Formulating Specific Measures

Schools should create age-specific schedules that take account of the characteristics and needs of various age cohorts and provide adequate rest time for them. It is advisable to extend the between-lesson break to 15 minutes from the current 10 minutes so that students can have reasonable amounts of time for relaxing activities aside from visiting the toilet and taking refreshments. The 30-minute or so physical exercise at “big break” should be guaranteed every morning; each individual student should have one hour’s physical exercise minimum at school every day (Ministry of Education of China, 2011).

Facilities should be provided to students for undertaking a variety of break-time activities rather than confining them to the classroom and corridor. They should be allowed to visit the playground, gymnasium, library, art classroom, and other places at break and “big break” so that there are various options open to them, including but not limited to physical exercise, reading, and artistic activities.

Teachers should properly plan instruction content and progress and improve in-class teaching efficiency in order not to extend class activities to break time. As a result, teachers can prevent students from studying continuously for a long time (Ministry of Education of China, 2008a).

Strengthening the Supervision of the Use of Break Time

There should be supervision mechanisms in place to oversee the school’s and teachers’ management of break time. The educational department can deploy specialized personnel to investigate the implementation of the prescribed schedule among schools and engage other stakeholders, such as parent committees and student representatives, in the supervision effort. Regular evaluation of student break-time activity is needed to ensure that schools’ practices are in conformity with relevant national standards and child protection laws. The evaluation results should be coupled with an assessment of school performance.

Public opinions should also have a place in the supervision mechanism. Schools may engage professional social forces in creating and managing school schedules to ensure optimal use of break time. Public opinions can help oversee students’ enjoyment of rest and free activity at break with the assistance of information technology. For instance, an online questionnaire survey is workable for investigating the satisfaction of the neighborhood with the school’s organization of break-time activities.

References

- Deng, H. (2023, November 7). Be More Considerate of the Need of the Child for the Ten-minute Break. *Guangming Daily*. p.13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.28273/n.cnki.ngmrb.2023.005347>
- Du, Y. & Li, D. (2019, May 30). Can the ten-minute break time be returned to the child? *China Youth Daily*. Available at: http://zqb.cyol.com/html/2019-05/30/nw.d110000zqbnb_20190530_2-08.htm
- Gao, J. (2020). *The Practical Reason Underlying Teaching* (doctoral dissertation). Southwest University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27684/d.cnki.gxndx.2020.003771>
- Ji, Y. (2021). *An Examination of the Execution of Punishment in Primary and Secondary Education* (master's thesis). Shan'xi Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27292/d.cnki.gsxfu.2021.001801>
- Jin, X. (2013). Follow the scientific view of education to enhance the quality of education: Several considerations of current basic education management. *Curriculum Research*, 2013(34):36-36. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.2095-3089\(x\).2013.34.036](https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.2095-3089(x).2013.34.036)
- Liu, Z. (2011). *Causes of Damage in Primary and Secondary Schools and Countermeasures* (master's thesis). Inner Mongolia Normal University. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=agn3ey0zxcb9onrg4oidocsbhdzcmd5tjixdcqhjtjixa8u1c5tbhknzmkllm-9lFK_VM_K-WddDjQaQvMaiQbMRRJ_SHPa2-vLIOTprTL_UZTf0XJNknWzpW3C00wnj0C2C8MU5OAvaVknFKA==uniplatforrn=NZKPTlanguage=CHS
- Luo, Z. (2017). *Promotional Effects of Organizational Change of the School on Teacher Professional Development* (doctoral dissertation). Nanjing Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27245/d.cnki.gnjsu.2017.000013>
- Ma, J. (2014). Practical exploration of quality management systems that promotes the comprehensive development of primary school students. In *Proceedings of the 13th Annual Academic Meeting of the National Committee of Education Management*. Available at: <https://www.zhangqiaokeyan.com/confere-nce-cn-3054/>
- Ma, Y. (2020). *A Moral Examination of Break-time Activities of Primary School Students* (master's thesis). Nanjing Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27245/d.cnki.gnjsu.2020.001766>
- Ministry of Education of China. (2008a). *Guiding Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Strengthening the Regulation of Primary and Secondary School Operation*. Available at: http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/a06/s3321/200904/t20090422_77687.html
- Ministry of Education of China. (2008b). *Notice of the Ministry of Education on Issuing the "Action Plan for Myopia Prevention in Primary and Secondary Students."* Available at: http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/a17/moe_943/s3285/200809/t20080904_81037.htm
- Ministry of Education of China. (2011). *Notice of the Ministry of Education on Issuing the "Regulations on the One-hour On-campus Physical Exercise of Primary and Secondary School Students."* Available at: http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/a17/s7059/201107/t20110708_171747.html
- Ministry of Education of China. (2021). *Regulations of Minors Protection at School*. Available at: http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/s5147/202311/t20231103_1088952.html
- Ministry of Education of China. (2022). *Statistical Report on National Education Development 2022*. Available at: http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_sjzl/sjzl_fztjgb/202307/t20230705_1067278.html
- State Council of China. (2007). *Opinions of the State Council on Strengthening Physical Education to Boost Physical Fitness of Children and Adolescents*. Available at: https://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2007-05/24/content_625025.htm
- State Council of China. (2010). *Strategy on the National Medium- and Long-Term Educational Reform and Development 2010-2020*. Available at: https://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2010-07/29/content_1667143.htm
- State Council of China. (2021). "Notice on Strengthening the Management Work on

- Student Physical Health and Fitness” issued by the General Office of the Ministry of Education. Available at: https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2021-04/26/content_5602164.htm
- Sun, X. (2006). The Development of Herbart’s Theory of Teaching in Modern China and Its Influence. In Proceedings of the 10th Annual Academic Conference of the Education History Institute of the Chinese Education Society. p.466-468. Available at: <https://d.wanfangdata.com.cn/conference/7718000>
- Tan, Q. & Zheng, H. (1992). The development of the consciousness of discipline in primary and secondary school students. *Psychological Development and Education*, 1992(4):21-27.
- Wang, L. (2023). Class Time Management by Primary Teachers (master’s degree). Liaoning Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27212/dcnki.glnsu.2022.000587>
- Wang, Z. (2021). A Narrative Study on the Development of Classroom Management Ability in Novice Teachers at Primary Schools (master’s thesis). Nanjing Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27245/dcnki.gnjsu.2021.002253>
- Wen, L. & Bi, R. (2023, November 7). What happens to the 10-minute break? Legal Daily. p.004. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.28241/n.cnki.nfzrb.2023.006207>
- Wu, S. (2021). Issues with Class Management by Novice Class Teachers in Primary Schools and Suggestions (master’s degree). Hunan Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27137/d.cnki.ghusu.2020.000524>
- Xiong, B. (2019). What students lose in a “greenhouse-like” education environment. *Educators*, 2019(45):35-36. Available at: <http://qikan.cqvip.com/qikan/article/detail?id=7101066790>
- Xue, Y. (2011). Physical Health Education in Secondary Schools from the Perspective of Life Education (doctoral dissertation). East China Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.76666/d.y1904235>
- Yang, J. (2023). Key Components of the Reform in Physical Education Evaluation Systems at the Compulsory Education Level and Implementation Pathways (master’s thesis). Shandong Sport University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27725/dcnki.gsdy.2023.000064>
- Yang, L. (2023). The Significance of the Course of “Morality and Rule of Law” for the Cultivation of Sound Character in Middle School Students (master’s thesis). Yunnan Normal University. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.27459/d.cnki.gynfc.2023.001204>
- Yuan, Y. & Huang, X. (2006). The deviation of educational values in the process of curriculum reform. *Education Science Forum*, 2006(6):13-14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1673-14289.2006.06.004>
- Zhang, X., Xu, H., Wan, Y., & Tao, F. (2022). The impact of break-time activities on the physical and mental health of children and adolescents. *Chinese Journal of School Health*, 2022(11):1750-1754+1760. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16835/j.cnki.1000-9817.20211.036>
- Zhou, Q. (2006). Freedom as the Paramount Aim of Human Endeavors (master’s thesis). Hunan Normal University. Available at: https://kns.cnki.net/kcms2/article/abstract?v=vccgnc-OR20HvWafIBCtQTnoMrbIoBRVbd0LD8jut0_Jx9lIrLcAGQWX0BieSG7v6d5DBYdwfHbz769hXBR_CjRixUxEnt0zuJmNMxbddlhoZ6zIYkyh3zL_58ePMxDWHjXCE8AaHOMH7NWsqMQ==uniplatform=NZKPTlanguage=CHS

Received: 11 October 2023
Revised: 10 November 2023
Accepted: 01 December 2023

Note to Contributors

Science Insights Education Frontiers (SIEF) is published under the auspices of the Bonoï Academy of Science and Education to provide authoritative, critical surveys on the current status of subjects and problems in the diverse fields of education.

We accept manuscripts on every aspects of education. We only accept four types of manuscript: Editorial, Commentary, Short Communication, Article, and Review. Editorial and Commentary are invited perspectives written by our editors and external expert reviewer(s), respectively. Review is solicited and welcomed from the experts in corresponding research fields. All manuscripts should be submitted [online](http://bonoi.org/index.php/sief/about/submissions) (<http://bonoi.org/index.php/sief/about/submissions>) or E-mail to editorial-office@bonoi.org. In addition, the following suggestions may serve as a general guide.

Authors should note that they are writing for an international audience. National colloquialisms and idiomatic use of language should be avoided to the extent possible. Word choices and sentence constructions that might imply bias against persons on the basis of gender, racial or ethnic group membership, disability, sexual orientation, or age should be avoided.

Manuscripts are accepted for publication subject to copyediting. Manuscript submission indicates the author's commitment to publish in *SIEF* and to give *SIEF* first publication rights. No paper known to be under consideration by another journal will be reviewed.

Judicious selection of references is an important function of the authors. Cited references should be listed alphabetically according to author, and the author's last name and publication year should be used in the text. The full title of each paper should be given. Each citation should be checked with the original publication to avoid embarrassing errors. The system used in the Chemical Abstracts for abbreviations of journal names should be followed.

The length of a paper is no measure of its quality, and it is only the latter that determines acceptability for publication. However, practical considerations make it desirable to set a provisional limit of 10,000 words of the main text that does not include tables, figures, and references; and at least 1,000 words for each accepted paper should have for the main text.

The acceptability of a manuscript cannot, of course, be finally decided until the finished product has been examined. The acceptance is contingent upon the advice of the Editor-in-Chief of the *SIEF*.

(In writing to advertisers, please mention the journal – it helps.)

Science Insights Education Frontiers
pISSN 2644-058X eISSN 2578-9813

Correspondence relating to editorial matters should be addressed to the editorial office via online contact form.

(In writing to advertisers, please mention the journal – it helps.)

Science Insights Education Frontiers

pISSN 2644-058X

eISSN 2578-9813

(Monthly)

<http://bonoi.org/index.php/sief>

ORDER FORM

Start my 2023 print copy subscription to the journal of
Science Insights Education Frontiers
pISSN 2644-058X, eISSN 2578-9813

_____ \$125.00 Author Individual _____

_____ \$475.00 Non-author Individual _____

_____ \$2480.00 Institution _____

Sales Tax: 5.75% _____

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \$ _____

Subscription orders must be prepaid. Subscriptions are on a calendar year basis only. Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery of the first issue. We use the same subscription rate internationally.

SEND THIS ORDER FORM TO (*Hard copy only*)

Science Insights Education Frontiers

Insights Publisher

Subscriptions

725 W. Main Street

Suite F, Jamestown

NC 27282, USA

Call +1 336-528-4762

Email: base.publication@basehq.org (*Send E-copy*)

Check enclosed (Make Payable to BASE)

Charge me: Visa MasterCard
 American Express UnionPay

Cardholder Name _____

Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature (*Required for Charge*)

Billing Address

Street _____

City _____

State/Province _____

Zip _____ Daytime Phone _____

Email: _____

Mail To

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Province _____

Zip _____

Country _____

SIEF23

(*You can make a copy of this form*)

Science Insights Education Frontiers
Vol. 19, No. 2, 2023

pISSN: 2644-058X

eISSN: 2578-9813

DOI: 10.15354/sief

