PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Resource management strategies have been identified as important factors in the enhancement of students' learning. Therefore we sought to (i) to explore and describe the Resource Management Strategies of third year pre-service EFL teachers; (ii) to explore the relationship between the Resource Management Strategies (iii) to explore the relationship between the gender variable and the Resource Management Strategies of third year pre-service EFL teachers. A total of 174 pre-service (males = 40, females = 134) completed Motivated Learning Strategies Questionnaire (Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie, 1991). Firstly, the results of the study indicated that pre-service EFL teachers showed poor time management behaviours. Secondly, they do not have the tendency to maintain focus and effort toward goals despite potential distractions. Thirdly, they displayed both poor peer collaboration and help seeking behaviours. What emerged from the data is that local culture has some important

1. INTRODUCTION

Are there strategies that can be taught to advance greater success? Can anyone learn at whenever and wherever or are there required strategies for learning? Does the good language learner need to have specific skills or strategies to be successful?

Identifying factors that influence students' learning continues to be an important aim of educators at all levels. To address this issue, researchers have investigated factors that influence students' effective learning. One factor, resource management strategies, has been identified as an important mediator in the enhancement of students' learning.

Certainly, high quality learning requires use of resource management strategies. Students must be able to (a) manage and regulate their time and their study environments, (b) monitor their effort, (c) learn from peers, and (d) seek help and support from peers and instructors (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Pintrich & De Groot (1990) state that resource management strategies enable students control their physical environment to meet their needs, regulate their efforts effectively, seek help when needed, and use time management skills.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will discuss the four subscales of Resource Management Strategies.

2.1. Time management and study environment

Management of time and study environment refers to the ability to engage in time management and to exercise some control and organization over their study environments. It involves scheduling a time to study, planning weeks or months ahead, choosing a location to study, and effectively using the study time for the realistic setting of goals. Study environment management refers to the physical place where students study. Choosing a location provides students with control over possible distractions or availability of supportive materials or people.

Research found that good time management can facilitate productivity and minimize stress (Lay & Schouwenburg, 1993), contribute to work effectiveness (MacKenzie, 1990) and academic success (Moore, 1994; Price, 1996), improve students' grade-point average (Zimmerman, Greenberg, & Weinstein, 1994). Britton & Tessor (1991) sought to determine a link between student time management and cumulative grade point average in college students. They concluded that students' beliefs in planning time and their short-range planning were more strongly related to their academic achievement. The findings of time management studies and observation with students,

we believe that time management is a complex behaviour repertoire. It involves not only cognitive understanding and skills but also attitudes. Successful time management programmes tend to provide a deep learning environment in which learners are allowed to increase self-understanding and to clarify personal goals, to apply time management principles and techniques, and to get feedback for continuous improvement so as to bring about behavioural change.

In order to create a deep learning environment for students to develop their time management behaviours, training courses has been offered. However, research on impacts of time management training, based on Lakein (1974) and others such as setting goals, planning time and priority, dealing with interruptions, has lead to inconclusive results. Studies (e.g., Orpen, 1994; Slaven & Totterdell, 1993) found significant improvement on the part of participants when they were required to complete activity diaries to indicate how they spent each of half hours of their day after the completion of the training programme. Also, participants' positive attitude towards the programme is an important factor for its success (Drucker, 1966). On the other hand, studies on using a planner to manage time and to meet responsibilities show no significant improvement on students' GPAs (e.g., Trockel, Barnes & Egget, 2000). Training programmes, like seminars on time management strategies seem to have little impact on students' time management behaviours (Bost, 1984; Macan, 1996).

2.2. Effort regulation

Effort regulation refers to students' ability to monitor and manage their effort and attention in order to persist through boring tasks as well as distractions from those tasks. Effort regulation is a management strategy which requires students to monitor and adjust the amount of attention given to the completion of a goal, particularly in the face of difficulty.

Students' engagement and persistence on academic learning tasks often require their ability to regulate their learning activities. Tsai, Lin & Yuan (2001) an effort regulation management strategy showed more willingness to use the online testing system. The final model reveals that students, who are better capable of effort regulation, are more willing to execute critical thinking skills, possess higher test anxiety. Effort regulation is "the tendency to maintain focus and effort toward goals despite potential distractions" (Corno, 1994, p. 229). According to Corno (1989), the term volition was equated with motivation and had appeared rarely in psychological research reports. Modern volition theory, however, can be reconceptualized within a general information-processing theory and viewed as an action control strategy. It reflects a commitment to completing one's study goals by directing and controlling one's energy toward them. In an academic situation, effort regulation can be used to build learning skills gradually and to help students handle many distractions in and outside of schools (Alderman, 1999). Research shows that effort regulation was a strong predictor of academic success (Lee, 1997). Yet, traditional college instruction generally assumes that students possess such skills and do not provide opportunities for effort regulation skills to develop (Trawick & Corno, 1995).

2.3. Peer learning

The theories of Vygotsky & Piaget suggest several mechanisms through which students may learn by interacting with each other in collaborative settings. Substantial research has shown that peer learning, i.e., learning with and from peers, is effective (Cohen, 1994; Good, Mulryan, & McCaslin, 1992). It is stated that students can learn from each other in many ways: They give and receive help, share knowledge, build on each others' ideas, recognize and resolve contradictions between their own and other students' perspectives, observe others' strategies, and internalize problem-solving processes and strategies

that emerge during group work. All of these can lead to increased knowledge and understanding (Hatano & Inagaki, 1991; Webb & Palincsar, 1996).

Related research has shown that peer learning can bolster self-esteem, awaken interest in challenging tasks, enhance scholarly achievement, and foster prosocial behavior. They potentially improve learning and achievement, increase students' motivation and time on task, contribute to increased self-esteem, locus of control, liking and acceptance of others, as well as the ability to relate to others, and lead to the development of teamwork skills (Webb and Palincsar, 1996). Many researchers have explored the power of giving and receiving explanations in peer-directed small groups (e.g., Fuchs, Hamlett, Phillips, Karns, & Dutka, 1997; Nattiv, 1994). When a student gives an explanation in order to help someone else, this action also benefits her own understanding and achievement. Hogan & Tudge (1999) propose that reflection on peer reactions and perspectives provides a basis for students to revise their cognitive systems and such revisions can, in turn, lead to the establishment of new meanings. Rada (1997) states that peer learning plays a major role in cognitive development. Peer group activity in learning settings is acknowledged to have effects on academic achievement, affective development, and social outcomes.

2.4. Help seeking

Help seeking is defined as "an achievement behavior involving the search for and employment of a strategy to obtain success" (Ames & Lau, 1982, p. 414). Research shows that seeking needed assistance is an important self-regulatory strategy and it is highly correlated with student achievement (Ames, 1983; Karabenick, 1998; Kitsantas, 2002). Achievement motivation was found to be positively related to help seeking in some studies (Nadler, 1987; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997), but not in others (Weiner & Kukla, 1970). It helps students in dealing with complex concepts that they either do not understand or feel that they are unable to comprehend on their own (Ryan & Pintrich, 1997).

Researchers suggest that when college students are confronted with poor performance, they engage in help seeking behaviors (Ames & Lau, 1982; Karabenick & Knapp, 1991). Karabenick & Knapp, 1991) classified these behaviors into five categories: Formal help seeking, Informal help seeking, Instrumental activities, lowering performance aspirations and altering goals. Schonert-Reichl & Muller (1996) suggest that help seeking among adolescents has been described as a necessary ingredient in successful coping with developmental problems. However, research shows that the majority of college students do not seek help, particularly through formal channels (Karabenick, 1998).

According to theories of fairness, there is a "quid pro quo" relationship between other-oriented behaviour and the willingness to receive support from others (Blau, 1964). Greenberg & Shapiro (1971) state that people who are contributing to society are expected to be also willing to seek and receive help from others when needed.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary aims of the present research were:

- To explore and describe the Resource Management Strategies of third year pre-service EFL teachers;

- To explore the relationship between the Resource Management Strategies

- To explore the relationship between the gender variable and the Resource Management Strategies of third year pre-service EFL teachers.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Participants

The sample in this study consists of Atatürk University, the School of Education pre-service EFL teachers during the academic year 20032004. The school is located Erzurum, in the east Turkey, chosen for reasons of convenience All the subjects

are Turkish and speak Turkish as a first language, and English as a Foreign language. The students range from 19 to 38 years old with a mean age of 21.9. The distribution of the sample is as follows: (males=40, females=134).

4.2. Instrument: Motivated Learning Strategies Questionnaire (MSLQ)

Motivated Learning Strategies Questionnaire (MSLQ) (Pintrich et al. 1991) is a self report instrument which was designed to assess college students' motivational orientations and their use of different learning strategies for a college course. The questionnaire consists of 81 Likert-type items on a 5-point scale where 1 = not at all true of me and 5 = very true of me. The questionnaire includes two main parts: motivation and learning strategies. The motivation section consists of 31 items that assess students' goals and value beliefs for a course, their beliefs about their skills to succeed in this course and their test-anxiety. The learning strategy section includes 31 items regarding students' use of different cognitive and metacognitive strategies, and 19 items concerning their management of resources.

The results of the study conducted by Pintrich, Smith, Garcia, & McKeachie (1993) suggest that the MSLQ has relatively well and it seem to be valid given the results of the two confirmatory factor analyses. The MSLQ seems to represent a useful, reliable, and valid means for assessing college students' motivation and use of learning strategies in the college classroom. Number of items and reliability coefficients of the MSLQ scales are shown in Table 1.

5. RESULTS

Scale	Item #	alpha
Time and Study Environment	8	0.783
Effort Regulation	4	0.725
Peer Learning	3	0.813
Help Seeking	4	0.791

Table 1: *Number of items and reliability coefficients of the Resource Management Strategies of the MSLQ*

In this section the main results of the study will be offered.

In this study, we examined pre-service EFL teachers' "Time

Item	Resource Management Strategies: Time and Study Environment	M	SD
35	I usually study in a place where I can concentrate on my course work.	2.00	0.97
43	I make good use of my study time for this course.	2.66	0.86
52	I find it hard to stick to a study schedule. ®	3.15	1.16
65	I have a regular place set aside for studying.	2.66	1.12
70	I make sure that I keep up with the weekly readings and assignme nts for this course.	2.90	0.93
73	I attend this class regularly.	1.94	0.93
77	I often find that I don't spend very much time on this course because of other activities. ®	3.21	1.10
80	I rarely find time to review my notes or readings before an exam . ® (R)	3.13	1.27

Table 2: *The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the Time and Study Environment*

and study environment" utilization by collecting data from 174 fourth-year students. To evaluate time and study environment utilization descriptive statistics was run on each of the eight item of the scale. The general trend for many of the variables was low, indicating poor time and study environment management. This leads us to the need of the development of effective interventions to help students organise their time for a successful university life. Effective planning can reduce wasted time (May, 1997). However, in order to understand more about how students' develop their time management behaviours, we need to have information at the beginning of the course.

"Effort regulation" is "the tendency to maintain focus and

Item	Resource Management Strategies: Effort Regulation	M	SD
37	I often feel so lazy or bored when I study for this class that I quit before I finish what I planned to do.	2.78	1.10
48	I work hard to do well in this class even if I don 't like what we are doing.	2.92	1.03
60	When course work is difficult, I either give up or only study the easy parts. ®	2.84	1.07
74	Even when course materials are dull and uninteresting, I manage to keep working until I finish.	2.78	0.87

Note: ®=Reversed item

Table 3: *The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the Effort*

effort toward goals despite potential distractions" (Corno, 1994, p. 229). 3 reports the pre-service EFL teachers' effort regulation strategies. Students rated all items low, these results show that students were least likely to regulate their effort and persist when confronted with failure or boring tasks.

The most interesting finding in the MSLQ was the overall

Item	Resource Management Strategies: Peer Learning	M	SD
34	When studying for this course, I often try to explain the material to a classmate or friend.	2.59	1.03
45	I try to work with other students from this class to complete the course assignments.	2.53	1.11
50	When studying for this course, I often set aside time to discuss course material with a group of students from the class.	2.80	1.15

Note: ®=Reversed item

Table 4: *The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) Peer Learning*

students' average of the "Peer collaboration" and "Help seeking" items within the strategies section. Although we expected the contrary, students reported a low average. The results in Table 4 and Table 5 provide some interesting findings. For example, students reported below the median of 2.64 in the 5-point likert scale that they would try to work on their own even if having trouble. When examining student means concerning peer collaboration the means for all three items where noticeably lower than the help seeking means. However, when seeking help the means seem to indicate that if they did seek help, it would probably be first from the instructor and then individual peers. The findings indicate that pre-service EFL teachers prefer individual thinking.

To examine the relationships, correlation coefficients were

Item	Resource Management Strategies: Help seeking	M	SD
40	Even if I have trouble learning the material in this class, I try to do the work on my own, without help from anyone.	2.95	1.12
58	I ask the instructor to clarify concepts I don't understand well.	2.37	1.07
68	When I can't understand the material in this course, I ask another student in this class for help.	1.99	0.88
75	I try to identify students in this class whom I can ask for help if necessary.	2.34	0.97

Note: ®=Reversed item

Table 5: *The mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) Help seeking*

Scale	Statistics	Time and Study Environment	Effort Regulation	Peer Learning	Help seeking
Time and Study Environment	R				
	P				
Effort Regulation	r	0.04			
	P	0.63			
Peer Learning	r	0.24	-0.10		
	P	0.00**	0.18		
Help seeking	r	0.33	0.16	0.35	
	P	0.00**	0.04*	0.00**	

Table 6: *Significant correlations (p<0.05) between Resource Management Scales*

calculated between each Resource Management scales on the MSLQ. Significant correlations (p<0.05) are presented in Table 6. "Time and study environment" is related to "Peer learning" and "Help seeking". "Help seeking" is related to "Time and study environment", "Effort regulation" and "Peer learning".

For many years, teacher educators have been interested to

Scale	Statistics	Gender	M	SD
Time and Study Environment	r	0.12	2.70	0.51
	P	0.10		
Effort Regulation	r	0.08	2.83	0.49
	P	0.31		
Peer Learning	r	0.06	2.64	0.71
	P	0.44		
Help seeking	R	0.03	2.41	0.60
	P	0.67		

Table 7: *Significant correlations (p<0.05) between gender and Resource Management Scales*

understand the kind of motivated strategies for learning prevailing among prospective teachers. It is expected that the motivated strategies for learning adopted by a student teacher possibly affects how he/she is motivated to learn and what strategies they use, acquire and integrate knowledge and experience from the teacher education program. To examine the relationships between Resource Management Scales and gender, correlation coefficients were calculated (Table 7). No sex difference was found. Female students used equally the same strategies. However, the mean scores.

6. DISCUSSION

Firstly, the results of the study indicated that pre-service EFL teachers showed poor time management behaviours. The findings indicated that females had same levels of self-reported time management practices.

Although previous studies have already recognized time management as a competitive tool in individual and organizational performance, many studies have alredy found that effective time planning and management training helped students to better self-regulate their use of study time and, in turn, improved students' grade-point average, and many studies have already found that

students' beliefs in planning time and their short-range planning were strongly related to their academic achievement, poor time management of these students need to be considered carefully.

Actually, the finding that the subjects of this study had poor levels of selfreported time management practices was rather expected of a sample drawn from a Turkish cultural background where the belief that Turkish people are polychronic people is widely held. Undubtly, the concept of time is one of the fundamental assumptions that people hold dearly without question. Turkish culture seem to have a highly flexible sense of time. It is easy to say that most Turks are not very time-conscious.

Components of culture can be isolated, yet no one component alone fully describes the culture of a community. Culture is a mosaic of interrelated elements. as these individual elements interact each work day, they collectively create the community's culture. Time management is one of the components that together establish an operational description of culture. This compenent, evidently, can minimise productivity, maximize stress, contribute to work ineffectiveness and academic failure. The subjects in this study are the future teachers. These students' conceptions of time management may affect the way they go about using their their in their in their future profession. Their perceptions of time are considered significant because (a) pre-service teacher opinions and attitudes toward teaching can affect their decisions on how best to manage their time in the future (b) certain attitudes derived from their perceptions can have a profound impact in turn on their students' management of time (Tercanlioglu, 2001).

Therefore, it seems urgent to train and motivating pre-servive teachers to plan their time. Time Management Training Courses and workshops may help them increase work effectiveness and productivity, achieve greater control of their daily activities and overcome work stressors. Moreover, to confirm the findings of this study more research is needed. In order to understand more about how Turkish students' develop their time

management behaviours, how they perceive time and priorities, to get a clearer picture of students' time management development, we need to obtain more information from both students and colleagues. We need to collect qualitative data in order to understand the reasons for the pre-service EFL teachers spending more time in studying. We also need to examine students' grades to see if academic ability is a contributing factor to these different patterns of time utilization or is a consequence of good time management practice among pre-service EFL teachers. To follow the pre-service EFL teachers further to see if they can maintain this good time management practice will be interesting. To collect more data from students of different programmes and years is apparently needed. We are motivated to follow these areas of interest in the near future to help pre-service EFL teachers enhance their time management and thus their success in university study and in their future teaching profession.

Secondly, the mean values indicate that these pre-service EFL teachers are relatively low on effort regulation. They do not have the tendency to maintain focus and effort toward goals despite potential distractions. The findings indicated that there is no sex difference on effort regulation.. Understanding the idea of destiny may help us to comprehend why effort regulation is relatively unimportant. If a project falls behind schedule, this is generally attributed to God's will and is more easily forgiven. Thus the phrase, Inshallah, "if it is God's will," is heard quite often. However, there has been a long research tradition concerning the role of effort-regulation for learning and achievement in the academic domain. We need to re-orient our way of thinking. The project fell behind schedule because failed to put forth reasonable efforts to reach the goal. Evidently, further research is needed to investigate how pre-service EFL teachers deal with failure or build resiliency to setbacks. Moreover, research found has already found that effort regulation training resulted in achievement. Therefore, effort regulation should be taught to help them build learning skills gradually, and in turn help them handle distractions in and outside of classroom.

Thirdly, although substantial research has shown that peer learning, i.e., learning with and from peers, is effective (cf. Cohen, 1994; Good, Mulryan, & McCaslin, 1992), the findings of the research indicate that the use of peer collaboration and collaborative reflection has the potential to facilitate teacher development. Peers helped problematize learning issues, teaching actions, and mathematics for one another. Their level of reflection increased in the process (Manouchehri, 2002), the findings of this study showed that pre-service EFL teachers avoid peer learning. Future research might identify the reasons why pre-service EFL teachers avoid peer learning. One reason may be that they are not aware of unique motivational and cognitive benefits for participating peers. Another source of difficulty with regard to peer learning may relate to the issue that collaboration involves the mutual engagement of students in a co-ordinated effort to solve the problem together. Organising the small group studying and mutual co-operation between students may cause more problems. Further research is needed to understand why these students were reluctant to collabote heir peers and how peer collaboration can be promoted.

Fourthly, pre-service EFL teachers displayed poor help seeking behaviours. No sex difference was observed. This study found that students avoided asking for help in the classroom. Research has identified several reasons why students avoid asking for help in the classroom. First, it may not be practical or feasible to ask for help in a given situation. Or students may judge that asking for help is not going to be effective because (a) there is not a competent, willing helper who can provide assistance or (b) it will take too long to get help (Ryan, Pintrich, & Midgley, 2001). However, we do not know why students in this study avoided help seeking. Future research might identify these reasons. Such research has the potential to help teacher educators to help students seek help when they need it.

The present study has some limitations. First, measurements were gathered at only one point in time. Longitudinal research is necessary to replicate and further examine the Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Resource Management Strategies. Second, even if self-report measures have been shown to have good reliability and validity (Pintrich et al., 1993), it would be informative to replicate this study using other measures such as think-aloud protocols, stimulated recall procedures, interviews, or actual observations (Solmon & Lee, 1997). Furthermore, teacher-educator ratings of some strategies such as help seeking could provide cross-validation of pupils' reported behaviour. Despite these limitations, the findings add to our understanding of. pre-service EFL teachers' resource management strategies.

What emerged from the data is that local culture has some important impact on how pre-service EFL teachers manage resources. The findings have implications for the improvement of Pre-Service EFL Teacher education when attempting to foster effective management of resources.

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