



The transformation of prospective primary school teachers' perspectives on the teaching profession through activities based on transformative learning theory in the context of the life studies course *

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the transformation in prospective primary school teachers' perspectives on the teaching profession through learning activities designed based on the Transformative Learning Theory (TLT). The study was conducted with 16 pre-service teachers who held the view that the competencies required for the elementary teaching profession are not inherently challenging and that these competencies can be acquired through experience within the profession. In line with the needs analysis conducted for the participants, action plans aligned with the TLT were developed. Within the framework of these plans, efforts were made to transform the prospective teachers' professional competencies and perspectives through critical reflection processes. Structured according to an action research design, this study utilized multiple data collection tools. The results of the research revealed that a transformation occurred in the perspectives of 15 participants regarding the teaching profession. It was demonstrated that there was a bidirectional interaction between professional competencies and professional perspectives throughout the process; prospective teachers who acquired competencies restructured their perspectives, and as a result of these changing perspectives, they became more motivated to develop their professional competencies. The findings indicate that TLT-based practices enhance the internal motivation of prospective teachers to discover new roles, pathways, and relationships. The study highlights that critical reflection is a fundamental skill for transformation and that activities supporting reflection and critique—which involve intensive interpersonal interaction—are necessary to develop this skill.

Keywords

Transformative learning
Perspective transformation
Teacher competencies
Professional perspective
Prospective primary school teachers

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Introduction

In recent years, there has been a shift in educational approaches from the traditional understanding—where the teacher is the sole source of knowledge and communication is one-way—toward a student-centered approach where the learner takes an active role and knowledge is constructed through a subjective process (Smart et al., 2012). Along with this paradigm shift, a fundamental transformation has occurred in the roles of teachers and students. Students are no longer passive recipients; they have become individuals who give meaning to knowledge, solve problems, and take active responsibility in collaborative learning processes (Hains & Smith, 2012). The reflection of this transformation in educational settings has necessitated a redefinition of teachers' roles. Teachers are expected to guide students in constructing knowledge, support their thinking skills, and create learning environments that make learning meaningful (Keiler, 2018). Effectively fulfilling these roles is directly linked to professional competencies (Koç, 2014). In this context, the new roles expected of teachers necessitate not only a shift in pedagogical orientation but also a redefinition of multidimensional professional competencies.

It is evident that professional competencies have a multidimensional structure comprising professional knowledge, subject-matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and practical skills related to teaching processes (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). These competencies have been conceptualized in the literature through various models (Shulman, 1986). Although there are some differences among these models, their commonality lies in their expectation that components such as subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical subject knowledge be integrated into the teaching process. Efforts to develop professional competencies through the training of qualified teachers have brought the establishment of global teaching standards and the structuring of pre-service education according to these standards to the forefront. It is noted that prospective teachers who receive effective education during the pre-service period are more successful in their professional lives and are able to provide their students with higher-quality and meaningful learning experiences (Wong & Goh, 2009). It is stated that these competencies shape not only technical skills but also the prospective teacher's perception of the profession and self-confidence (Gratch, 2001; Michel, 2013). Conversely, it is emphasized that teachers with underdeveloped professional competencies face challenges in various aspects of teaching, and deficiencies in areas such as assessment, classroom management, planning, and subject knowledge negatively impact the teaching process (Dickson et al., 2014). In particular, it has been noted that a lack of subject-matter knowledge may lead teachers to contribute to the formation of misconceptions in students (Koehler & Mishra, 2009).

While the acquisition of professional competencies is largely achieved through structured instruction, perceptions and attitudes regarding these competencies are shaped through individual mental representations (Flores & Gago, 2020). In other words, a pre-service teacher's perspective on the profession is not only about what they know but also how they make sense of what they know. However, transforming this perspective requires a process that is more complex, longer, and may encounter resistance than the acquisition of knowledge (Kelchtermans, 2018).

The literature emphasizes that teachers and prospective teachers with high levels of professional competence possess a positive perspective on the profession (Gratch, 2001; Wong & Goh, 2009) and that this perspective is directly related to the quality of the teaching-learning process (Guskey, 2002; Kagan, 1992). However, it has been reported that some prospective teachers believe teaching is learned through experience and that pre-service education is unnecessary (Whitbeck, 2000) or that they view subject-matter knowledge as unimportant (Perry & Rog, 1992). This situation demonstrates that not only the development of competencies but also the transformation of the professional perspective is critical. In this context, this study aims to develop the professional competencies of prospective teachers who do not value primary school teacher competencies and view the profession as a process to be acquired through experience, and to transform their perspectives on the profession through practice-based learning processes.

Theoretical Framework: Transformative Learning Theory (TLT)

TLT is an adult learning approach based on individuals restructuring their worlds of meaning by questioning them. According to Mezirow (1991), this theory posits that individuals undergo cognitive, emotional, and behavioral transformation by re-evaluating their experiences and questioning their assumptions, values, and beliefs regarding those experiences. Learning is not merely a process of acquiring knowledge; it is a process of change in an individual's structures of meaning (O'Sullivan, 1999).

The perspective shift at the core of transformative learning is triggered by the cognitive dissonance an individual experiences when confronted with new learning that does not align with their current frames of reference. This dissonance leads the individual to critically question their assumptions and move toward a more inclusive or differentiated understanding (Mezirow, 2003; Taylor, 2015). This transformation can be triggered by a sudden crisis or occur through small, accumulated insights over time (Mezirow, 1991). For example, "dilemmas" such as failure, loss, or a significant life change can lead an individual to question their perspective on meaning. In this study, however, transformation was facilitated through planned, structured dilemmas; the goal was to bring about a transformation in meaning perspectives by questioning meaning schemas.

Meaning schemas consist of an individual's established sets of judgments, emotions, and beliefs and represent more specific learning representations (Mezirow, 2003). They function as expectations that guide an individual's behavior. In contrast, a meaning perspective denotes a more general and holistic reference framework. A shift in perspective can occur through the accumulation of small changes in schemas; however, Mezirow (1991) notes that true transformation is only possible through a change in this general perspective.

In this study, each learning activity aimed at prospective teachers' professional competencies was structured in accordance with the principles of TLT, and a process of critical reflection was initiated regarding the dilemmas they encountered during the implementation process. The aim is to encourage prospective teachers to question the meaning schemas they possess regarding their professional competencies and to determine whether a transformation has occurred in their perspectives of meaning by the end of this process. In this sense, this study was conducted through the Life Studies course taught in primary schools, with the objective of determining the professional competency levels of prospective teachers and facilitating a transformation in their professional perspectives by developing these competencies. The study was designed to include prospective teachers who have a low level of awareness regarding their professional competencies and who do not sufficiently prioritize primary school teacher competencies. The Life Studies course often lags behind Turkish and Mathematics courses in the primary school curriculum due to the intensity of the initial reading and writing process; this situation may also lead to a tendency among primary school teachers to not prioritize the course sufficiently. In this context, it is believed that selecting the Life Studies course will enable prospective teachers to recognize deficiencies in their professional competencies and confront these shortcomings. Additionally, within the TLT framework that forms the theoretical basis of the study, during the dilemma-creation phase, the assumption was made that this approach—which places the Life Studies course in the background—would create the intended awareness and dilemma among prospective teachers. For this reason, the Life Studies course was selected as an appropriate context for the study's purpose and implementation process.

The general objective of the study is to examine the transformation in prospective primary school teachers' perspectives on the teaching profession through TLT-based learning activities designed for the Life Studies course. In this regard;

- What changes or transformations have occurred in pre-service teachers' perspectives on the teaching profession as a result of learning activities designed according to TLT?
- How have the activities designed according to TLT established a relationship between professional competencies and professional perspective?
- What relationship or interaction has been observed between the core concepts of TLT—experience and the reference framework?

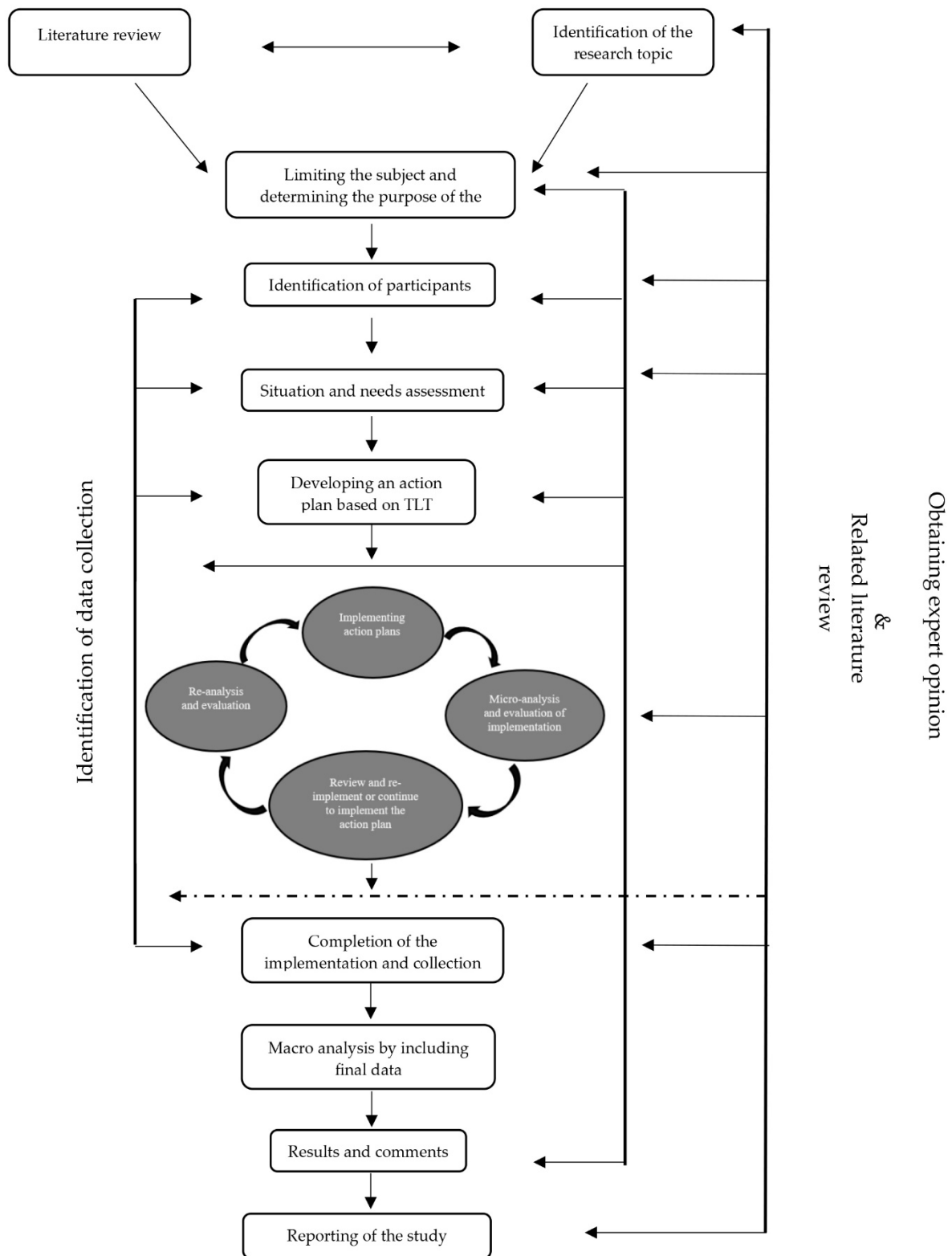
These questions were addressed.

Method

Research Design

This study was designed using a participatory action research model with the aim of encouraging prospective primary school teachers to question their current perspectives on the teaching profession and, in the process, to develop a professional perspective grounded in professional competence. Participatory action research is an approach based on interaction, collaboration, and shared learning between the researcher and the participants. The philosophical foundation of this design aligns with postmodern research traditions that aim to establish a balance of power between the researcher and the researched, seek the mutual transformation and empowerment of the individual and the community, and address evolving understandings in a dialogic manner (Kelly, 2005). This approach also encompasses a process in which the individual questions and transforms their own thoughts and behaviors. In this regard, the epistemological assumption of action research reflects an understanding where the object of inquiry is directly the "self," and where the individual's active participation in the learning and transformation process is central (McNiff & Whitehead, 2002).

The study was designed within the framework of TLT as an experience-oriented, interactive, and transformative structure in which prospective teachers question their own conceptual frameworks and assumptions. The general structure of the process conducted from the beginning to the end of the study is summarized in Figure 1.



*The action indicated by dashed lines and a dotted interior—“review the action plan and reapply or continue implementation”—represents the plan-do-reflect-evaluate-replan cycle of action research.

Figure 1. The Phases of the Action Research and the Processes Followed

Study Group

The working group for this study was determined based on the criterion sampling method. Criterion sampling is based on selecting individuals who represent a specific situation and possess characteristics appropriate to the research objective (Patton, 2014). Within the TLT framework, the fundamental element in determining the research topic is the presence of a “dilemma situation” among the individuals. In this context, the situation considered as the criterion in the study is the participants’ belief that primary school teacher competencies are easy to acquire and can be gained over time through professional experience, coupled with the presence of deficiencies in their current levels of professional competence. Accordingly, 16 participants exhibiting the identified dilemma were selected from among 60 prospective teachers enrolled in the fourth year of a primary school education undergraduate program at a state university in Turkey. Fifteen of the participants are female, and one is male; their ages range from 21 to 23.

The reasons for the participants’ choice of the primary school education undergraduate program were also examined; this analysis revealed that 2 individuals chose the program based on internal motivation, while 14 chose it based on external motivation. Among the sources of external motivation, exam scores (n=7), family guidance (n=4), and school counseling (n=3) stood out. Participants were coded as (Prospective Teacher) PT1, PT2, ... throughout the study. In determining the participants’ dilemma regarding the TLT, two primary criteria were considered: their perspectives on the primary school education profession and their professional competencies. These criteria were examined as follows:

1. The participants’ perspectives on the teaching profession were assessed using the “Questionnaire on Prospective Primary School Teachers’ Perspectives on the Teaching Profession,” prepared by the researchers.
2. Participants were asked to prepare lesson plans targeting a jointly identified Life Studies course learning outcome; these plans were reviewed using a rubric developed by the researchers to assess their professional competence levels.

The participants comprising the study group were identified by evaluating these two data tools together.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, various data collection tools were utilized to identify the study group, conduct needs and situation analyses, and track participants’ professional competence development and shifts in their perspectives. The data tools used at different stages of the research (pre-implementation, during, and post-implementation) are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Data Collection Tools Used in the Research Process

Pre-implementation	During Implementation	Post-Implementation
- Questionnaire on Prospective Primary School Teachers’ Perspectives on the Teaching Profession	- In-class individual work	- Questionnaire on Prospective Primary School Teachers’ Perspectives on the Teaching Profession
- Lesson plan	- In-class group work	- Learning Activities Survey (LAS) (King, 2009)
- Online group discussion	- Educational journal	- Semi-structured interview for evaluating Professional Perspective and Teaching Practice I course
	- SWOT Analysis	
	- Lesson plans and reflective writings on implementation	
	- Pre-implementation feedback meeting regarding the lesson plan	
	- Post-lesson critical evaluation meetings	
	- Observation reports	
	- Self-assessment form	
	- Online feedback submission	
	- E-portfolio	

The tools listed in Table 1 were used at different stages of the study. While these are occasionally referenced in the findings, details of the three “post-practice” data collection tools—which serve to reveal participants’ perspective shifts in line with the study’s objectives—are provided below.

1. ***Learning Activities Survey (LAS)***: Developed by King (2009) within the TLT framework, the LAS is an assessment tool designed to identify the cognitive and affective transformations individuals experience following the learning process. The survey is designed to elicit participants’ experiences—such as inquiry, awareness, and shifts in perspective—throughout the learning process. Consisting of a total of seven main questions, some sections of the survey comprise closed-ended questions, while others consist of open-ended questions. This structure enables participants to articulate their transformation processes through both quantitative and qualitative data. King (2009) noted that this survey can be adapted to the research objective and that the item statements can be reorganized to suit the research context. In this study, the form translated into Turkish by Şahin İzmirli (2012) was used as the basis; additionally, the survey items were adapted in line with the research objective by reviewing the modifications made in various studies (Akdağ Kurnaz, 2018; Feriver Gezer, 2010; Yılmaz Ergül, 2020). Prior to implementation, the questionnaire was submitted for review to two experts in the field of Primary School Education and an expert in English Education with research experience in TLT; necessary linguistic and content-related adjustments were made based on the experts’ feedback. In its final form, the questionnaire was administered to describe the transformation experiences of prospective teachers throughout their learning process.
2. ***Questionnaire on Prospective Primary School Teachers’ Perspectives on the Teaching Profession***: This questionnaire form was designed in the initial phase of the study to understand participants’ professional perspectives; the same form was administered again at the end of the program with minor modifications to analyze the process of change and transformation. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the TLT framework. While formulating the questions, studies addressing beliefs and competencies related to the teaching profession (Korthagen, 2004; Koster et al., 1995; Wubbels, 1992) were evaluated in conjunction with the theoretical framework of TLT. The questionnaire consists of a total of nine open-ended questions. The first three questions aim to determine the prospective teachers’ past educational experiences and the impact of these experiences on their professional beliefs. The fourth, seventh, eighth, and ninth questions, on the other hand, focus on the prospective teachers’ professional identities, their self-image regarding the profession, and their competence-based perspectives. Some questions are structured around sample scenarios to elicit a deeper understanding of the prospective teachers’ professional evaluations. During the questionnaire’s development process, the opinions of two experts in the field of Primary School Education — — and an English Education expert specializing in TLT were sought to evaluate the questions’ relevance to the purpose and clarity of their wording. Additionally, a pilot study conducted with third- and fourth-year prospective primary school teachers confirmed that the questions were understandable and produced data of the intended quality.
3. ***Professional Perspective and Teaching Practice I Course Evaluation Interview Form***: A semi-structured interview form was developed to gain a deeper understanding of changes in participants’ professional perspectives and to support the quantitative findings. The form was revised based on the validity committee’s evaluation; subsequently, the order of the questions was adjusted following two pilot interviews. The interviews consisted of three main questions and were conducted either in person or online, depending on the participants’ preference. The duration of the interviews ranged from 20 to 38 minutes.

The findings obtained from these three data collection tools were not presented separately in the study’s findings section; instead, they were synthesized and evaluated in a complementary and mutually reinforcing manner. This approach aimed to present a more holistic understanding.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis refers to the process of systematically classifying and interpreting raw data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the quality of the data analysis process, the principles of *credibility*, *transferability*, *consistency*, and *confirmability* were considered in the study:

Credibility: Details regarding the participant profile were included; the opinions of field experts were sought during the development of data collection tools and the analysis process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Transferability: The context, process, and implementation details of the study were comprehensively explained; this provided a foundation for applicability in similar settings (Güler et al., 2015).

Consistency: The data were analyzed independently by the researchers; consensus was sought by comparing the resulting codes and themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Verifiability: Participants' statements are directly included, allowing readers to interpret and verify the findings (Silverman, 2010).

In addition, a *Validity Committee*, as recommended in action research, was established. Five meetings were held with this committee throughout the research process. The committee consists of two faculty members—one professor and one associate professor—from the field of primary school education, along with a professor from the field of English education who has served as a doctoral thesis advisor under the TLT program. The committee provided scientific guidance in the conduct of the research and ensured internal oversight of the process.

The Research Implementation Process

This study, which is grounded in the TLT theoretical framework, was conducted using a participatory action research design. TLT consists of ten stages, and these stages provide a suitable structure for explaining the process of conducting action research (particularly stages 6 and 7). In this context, the entire process—from determining the research topic, selecting participants, identifying needs and circumstances, developing action plans, implementing and monitoring them, to the post-implementation stages—has been aligned with the ten stages of TLT. In particular, stages 6 and 7 of TLT share a structure that aligns with the action research approach. The timeline of the research process, from the group identification phase to the final data collection phase, is provided below with dates:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Determination and preparation of data collection tools for identifying the study group | Mar. 22, 2021-May 28, 2021
Jun. 7, 2021-Jul. 28, 2021 |
| • Study group identification activities (data collection and analysis) | Aug. 2, 2021-Aug.25, 2021 |
| • Needs assessment process for the study group (data collection and analysis) | Aug. 26, 2021-Sep.20, 2021 |
| • The process of developing action plans | Sep. 27, 2021-Dec. 31, 2021 |
| • The process of implementing action plans | Jan. 3, 2022-Jan. 14, 2022 |
| • Collection of final data | |

The process of developing and implementing action plans is highlighted in the stages above. The scope and content of the action plans in this process are presented in Figure 2.

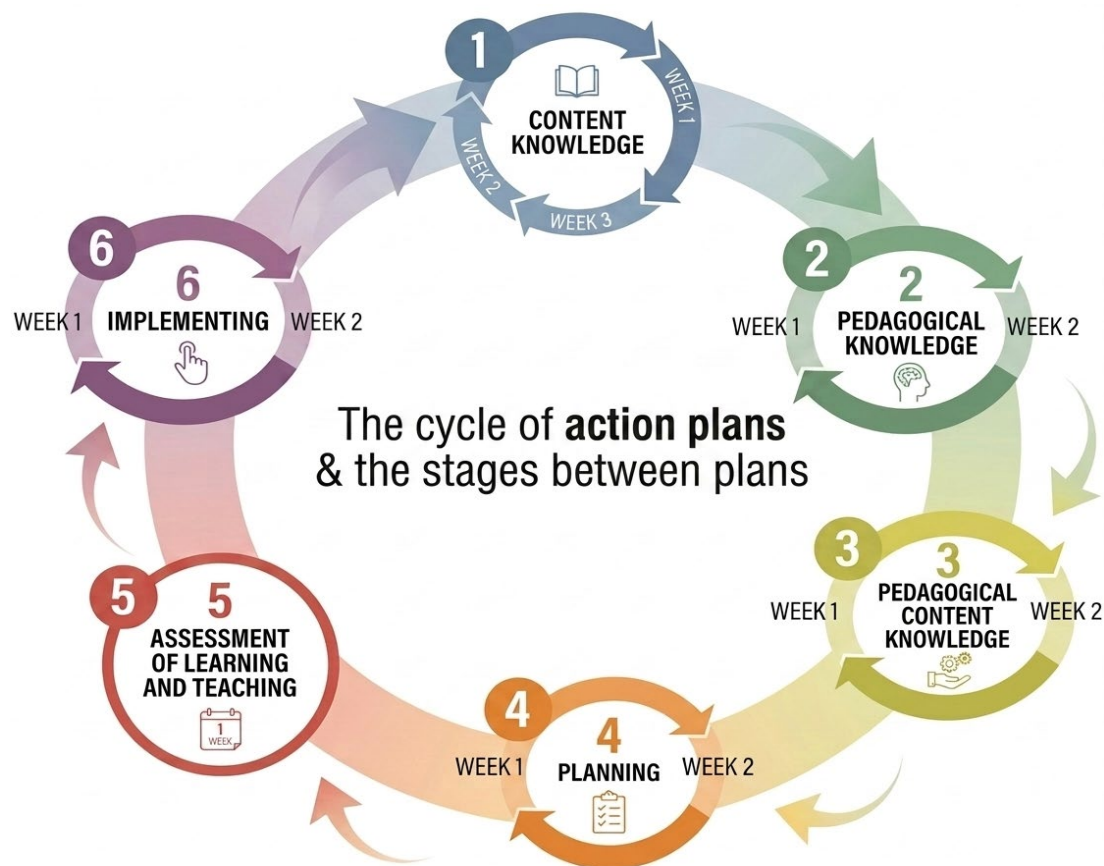


Figure 2. The cycle of action plans and the stages between plans (It was generated using Gemini)

Within the stages of TLT, *the development and implementation of action plans* in particular formed the focus of the research. In this context, the outcomes identified for each action cycle and the evaluation of these outcomes are presented in Figure 2. This structure, consisting of six cycles, corresponds to meaning schemas within the TLT context, while the entirety of the process reflects the meaning perspective representing the professional viewpoint.

At the outset of the study, a dilemma scenario was constructed to prompt participants to question their current perspectives. During the online meeting with the participants, both data derived from lesson plans and the results of the Perspective Survey were shared; this group, which had low awareness of their professional competencies, was made to confront their knowledge gaps regarding daily life topics in the Life Studies course— —such as the classification of vehicles, personal hygiene, climate, and weather.

Throughout this process, participants were encouraged to identify gaps in their professional competencies, conduct research to address these gaps, and develop solutions. Consequently, a roadmap was created based on the participants' feedback (Phase 6 of the TLT process), and content for the implementation phases was developed based on this roadmap. The implementation content was evaluated by the validity committee and finalized after necessary revisions.

Progression to the next cycle occurred upon achieving the learning outcomes identified in each cycle. Activities within the cycles were structured to encompass awareness-building, recognizing personal perspectives, acquiring knowledge and skills, and a competency-based shift in perspective. Activities were conducted individually and in groups, both in-person and online, based on the principles of continuous inquiry, critical reflection, discussion, and feedback. Participants' work was uploaded to an online platform and presented there in a way that was accessible to both their peers and the researcher. This established an e-portfolio system, facilitating monitoring, interaction, and feedback cycles throughout the process.

In line with TLT's stages 8 (trying out new roles) and 9 (building self-efficacy and self-confidence), participants implemented the lesson plans they prepared in the teaching practice course in real classroom settings. Prior to the implementation, the lesson plan was shared, evaluated, and finalized in person by the researcher and the participant on the online platform. During the implementation, while one prospective teacher conducted the lesson, the other three prospective teachers observed the process; following the implementation, an evaluation session was held with the participation of the primary school teacher, the observers, and the prospective teacher who conducted the lesson. This process was audio-recorded and analyzed in terms of transformation indicators.

Finally, within the scope of the 10th stage of TLT, "integrating the new perspective into life," the participants' professional perspective transformations were evaluated using data obtained through the post-implementation data collection tools listed in Table 1.

The Researcher's Role

In this study, the researcher is the person who both designed the study and conducted the fieldwork. The research was conducted with prospective primary school teachers whom the researcher advised as an academic supervisor as part of their Teaching Practice I course. Consequently, the researcher is in a position to plan and guide the process while also assuming a participatory role during the implementation phase. Furthermore, in accordance with the nature of the participatory action research design, the researcher supported the participants' opportunities for reflection and awareness development during the implementation process; avoided direct guidance and interventions to support the participants' own discovery processes; and took their views into account in structuring and conducting the process. All activities were conducted in accordance with the action plans jointly developed by the researcher and participants. Throughout this process, researcher maintained a balance between being an observer and a practitioner, serving as an active participant in the implementation while also taking care to preserve objectivity in the interpretation of data.

Ethical Statement

This research was reviewed by the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee in the Field of Social and Human Sciences at Çukurova University and was deemed ethically appropriate on August 27, 2021, via letter No. E-95704281-604.02.02.205691.

Findings

The findings are organized in the order of the research questions.

1- Findings Regarding Participants' Experiences of Transformation in Their Professional Perspectives

Table 2 presents the stage of TLT's 10-stage model at which participants experienced transformation, as assessed through King's (2009) Learning Activities Survey (LAS). The items in the LAS are designed to determine individuals' levels of experiencing transformation according to TLT's 10 stages. In the original LAS, the placement of some items is not parallel to the 10 stages of the TLT but is arranged in a mixed order. For example, item "g" corresponds to the 3rd stage of the TLT, while item "e" corresponds to the 4th stage.

Table 2. Findings Regarding Indicators of Changes in Participants' Professional Perspectives

TLT Stages	Items	f
1. A disorienting dilemma	a. I had an experience that caused me to question my normal behavior.	8
	b. I had an experience that caused me to question my ideas about social roles (an example of social roles is how a teacher should behave).	12
2. Self-examination	c. As I questioned my ideas, I realized that I no longer agreed with my previous perspective on the teaching profession or my expectations regarding my role as a teacher.	13
	d. Unlike option "c," as I questioned my ideas, I realized that I still think similarly to my previous perspective and expectations regarding roles.	1
3. Critical assessment	g. I felt uncomfortable with my expectations regarding the traditional role (related to your teaching role).	4
4. Awareness of the transformation process	e. I noticed that other individuals were also questioning their own perspectives during this training process.	11
5. Exploring new roles, relationships, and actions	f. During this training process, I had the opportunity to consider behaving in ways different from my usual beliefs and roles.	7
6. Creating an action plan	i. During this training process, I tried to discover new ways to adapt to the new behavioral patterns I acquired.	12
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills	j. I gathered the information I needed to adopt the new behavioral patterns I acquired during this training process.	10
8. Trying of new roles	h. I tried to put these new roles into practice to feel more comfortable and secure in them.	13
9. Building of competence and self-confidence	k. I began reflecting on the feedback and reactions I received regarding my new behavior. (Examples include the opinions of the practicum instructor, faculty members, and other prospective teachers following your teaching practice.)	14
10. Integrating with life	l. During this educational process, I took action and adapted to these new behavioral patterns.	11
A different situation	m. None of the above statements describe my situation.	-

According to Table 2, it can be stated that participants experienced different things at different stages of the TLT. The fact that participants experienced these stages from the 6th stage onward can be considered a significant finding in indicating that their experience constituted a transformation. In addition to this finding, data from various questions in the LAS and semi-structured interviews indicate that 14 participants noted changes in their beliefs, ideas, or expectations regarding the profession during the educational process. In response to the question regarding the nature of this change, the answers were grouped under themes related to changes in perceptions of professional competence (the importance of subject knowledge, designing lessons based on learning outcomes, etc.) and professional attitudes (overcoming preconceptions about the profession, taking the profession seriously, etc.). Two participants (PT10 and PT16), however, stated that they had not experienced any such change. Table 3 presents the findings regarding the transformations experienced by the participants:

Table 3. Findings Regarding the Transformations Experienced by Participants

Meaning	Gaining a professional competence-based perspective
Attributed to the Profession	Believing that the profession can be enjoyable
	Realizing the seriousness and importance of the profession
	Coming to terms with the profession
	Realizing that the meaning attributed to the profession does not align with reality
	Developing respect for the profession
	Overcoming prejudices toward the profession
Professional Competencies	Re-evaluating the roles of teacher and student
	A student-centered perspective
	The idea of not being bound by the textbook
	A shift in perspective regarding planning
	The idea of being sufficiently knowledgeable in the subject area
	Identifying shortcomings through self-assessments
	A shift in pedagogical perspective
	A shift in perspective regarding learning outcomes and the curriculum
	A shift in perspective regarding classroom management

Upon examining Table 3, it is observed that within the sub-theme of “the meaning attributed to the profession,” participants expressed a competency-based perspective on the profession; they believed they could derive satisfaction from it; they recognized the seriousness and importance of the profession and developed respect for it; and they stated that their previous thoughts and prejudices regarding the profession had changed and that they had become aware of the inconsistency in these views. In this context, the views of PT5 are presented below:

“While I used to think that primary school teacher was a static profession closed off to professional development, through this training I realized I could develop myself, that the profession is even more challenging than I expected, that it is open to career advancement, and I came to appreciate the seriousness of primary school teacher.” PT5 (Educational journal)

PT5 stated that their existing perceptions of primary school teacher did not align with reality during this training process, and that they realized the profession has a serious and respect-worthy aspect. On the other hand, within the “professional competencies” subtheme, it is observed that participants experienced a shift in their perspective regarding certain professional competencies. In this context, they were seen to re-evaluate the roles of teacher and student, adopt a perspective focused more on student learning than on teaching, and, when planning and conducting lessons, rely not only on the textbook but also consult various resources. In addition to all this, it was noted that they experienced a shift in perspective based on the knowledge and skills they gained in subject knowledge, classroom management, lesson planning, learning outcomes and curriculum, and pedagogical approaches. In this regard, some participant comments are presented below.

“I realized my subject knowledge was lacking and developed the perspective that I needed to improve it. I developed the perspective that I should enter the classroom prepared and competent, rather than just walking in.” PT11 (Reflective writing)

“I developed the perspective that teaching is not merely about attitude, but that knowledge and skills are also important.” PT8 (Educational journal)

It is evident that the prospective teachers whose views are presented above emphasized that they underwent a transformation in their understanding of the profession’s competencies during the training process. On the other hand, in response to the question regarding which individuals contributed to the change they experienced, the most frequently cited factor—with 14 mentions—was the support of the advisor (one of the authors). Furthermore, the responses to the question regarding which practical activities contributed to the change they experienced are presented in Table 4:

Table 4. Findings Regarding Activities Contributing to Participants' Transformation

Activities During the Training Process	f	Activities During the Training Process	f
Discussing/debating the lesson plan	14	Personal reflective writings evaluating your teaching practices	10
Individual feedback throughout the process	13	Self-assessment activities	10
Critical discussion following the class activity	13	Online activities and discussions	9
In-class group activities	13	Creating an e-portfolio in GC	9
The course's non-traditional (inquiry-based) structure	12	Group assessment activities	9
Classroom discussions	12	Course presentations and sharing	9
Presence at the practicum school	12	Reflecting on and writing about thinking processes	8
Interacting with students at the practice school	12	Educational journal	8
Critical reflection activities	11	Peer assessment activities	8
Individual reflection after class	11	Observing other peers at the practice school	8
Observations at the practicum school	11	Pre-class preparation videos	8
Assessment of personal learning	10	Pre-class reading assignments	5
In-class individual activities	10	Other: _____	--

According to Table 4, it is evident that multiple activities within the action process, which is based on multiple applications, contribute to prospective teachers' experience of change. Indeed, in their responses to the metaphor question in the survey—another data collection tool—participants described the training as nurturing, maturing, fostering professional awareness, and preparing them for the profession. Some prospective teachers' views are as follows:

"Water. Because we were like buds. During this training process, we were watered and bloomed." T14 (Questionnaire)

"A baby's learning to walk. Because before a baby walks, it crawls, seeks support from somewhere, sometimes falls, and cries. In my teaching practice, there were times when I made corrections with our instructor's support, and times when I got frustrated and cried because I couldn't do something. But I think I eventually managed to walk." PT1 (Questionnaire)

"Driving. At first, it seemed complicated and difficult, so we struggled. However, as we gained experience, we figured out the rules and structure of the process. We're slowly getting the hang of it. At first, we fumbled around like novice drivers. Sometimes we had to stop and catch our breath. But we got used to it over time." PT3 (Questionnaire)

The findings from the survey on the perspectives of pre-service teachers and prospective primary school teachers toward the teaching profession are supported by findings from semi-structured interviews. The prospective teachers expressed their views as follows:

"Through the reflection activities, I recognized my own mistakes. By constantly critiquing myself and my practices, I identified my errors and shortcomings and tried to improve and change myself." PT6 (Interview)

"I experienced a shift in perspective regarding classroom management. Whereas I previously believed students needed to be kept under control, I now believe they learn through movement and interaction with one another." T-10 (Interview)

"Having the instructor visit the practice school and provide evaluations for both me and my peers helped me grow and completely changed my perspective." PT16 (Interview)

When both survey and interview data are analyzed, it is evident that participants emphasize the training's structure as one that fosters personal growth and equips them professionally. On the other hand, when asked whether the transformation they described stemmed from a life event outside of the training (such as moving, the death of a loved one, starting a job, changing jobs, becoming unemployed, changes in emotional/romantic relationships or friendships, or changes in family finances), none of the participants answered "yes."

In conclusion, the analysis of data obtained from the LAS revealed that participants experienced a transformation in their professional perspectives to varying degrees and through different experiences. In particular, the identification of participants as individuals open to change/transformation based on their responses to the sub-questions of the sixth question of the LAS indicates that transformation can be achieved through activities designed for these participants. Based on the responses to the subsequent second question, 14 participants indicated that they had undergone transformation. When their responses to other open-ended and closed-ended questions (particularly Questions 3, 4, and 5) were evaluated holistically, findings suggesting that they had experienced professional transformation were identified. The responses of the other two participants in the semi-structured interview and the survey on prospective primary school teachers' perspectives on the teaching profession were examined to determine whether they had undergone transformation.

According to the results of the Survey on prospective primary school teachers on the Teaching Profession, changes occurred in their decisions to become primary school teacher prior to the study. Eight participants who felt regret and unhappiness regarding their choice of elementary teaching prior to the study experienced a transformation in these views after the study, describing this transformation as a "positive transformation" and "overcoming their prejudices." On the other hand, findings from interviews with prospective teachers also support the findings obtained from the survey. The findings obtained in this context are presented in Table 5:

Table 5. Findings Regarding Participants' Feelings Toward the Profession Following the Completion of the Training

Overcoming negative emotions and thoughts	Overcoming fears and anxieties Feeling relieved Overcoming nervousness Overcoming the belief that they cannot perform their profession
Cultivating positive emotions and thoughts	Gaining self-confidence Developing belief and self-confidence based on gaining competence Feeling capable of performing and applying what you've learned Feeling like a teacher capable of meeting the profession's requirements Gaining self-confidence in using different teaching strategies The sense of joy from seeing students learn Feeling like a teacher Feeling prepared for the profession

Upon examining Table 5, it is observed that participants who harbored negative feelings toward the profession prior to training stated that they overcame these feelings through the professional competencies they acquired during the training process. In this regard, some prospective teachers' views are as follows:

"I feel ready for the profession. My self-confidence has grown as I've developed. I feel I can handle challenges." PT7 (Interview)

"As I gained professional competence, my belief and self-confidence in my ability to perform the profession increased." PT4 (Interview)

"When I realized the seriousness of the profession, I saw that I had been overly confident before. Once I grasped that seriousness, my confidence dropped—it returned to where it should be—and I began to develop myself accordingly." PT5 (Interview)

"At first, it didn't feel very appealing. I had a lot of doubts. But now I've warmed up to it more, and my doubts have diminished. So I can say that my decision to become a primary school teacher now feels more reasonable and appealing." PT11 (Questionnaire)

"When I made this decision, I actually chose this major not because I was suited for it, but because my grades were high enough. However, now I'm glad I chose it because, thanks to the internship we did, I realized I am suited for this profession." PT14 (Questionnaire)

"I had regretted choosing this program, but through the courses and internship, I started to like it and believe I could do it." PT13 (Questionnaire)

"... I wasn't aware of the profession's importance when I first arrived, but now I feel both the fear and excitement of knowing how important the work I'm doing is." PT15 (Questionnaire)

Another finding from the survey is the shift in perspective regarding the competencies required of primary school teachers. The responses provided by prospective teachers were evaluated under the following three themes both before and after the study: professional knowledge, professional skills, and competencies related to attitudes and values. While the responses of participants before the study were predominantly grouped under the theme of attitudes and values (such as being loving, tolerant, fair, patient, and trustworthy), post-research responses were found to be grouped under the themes of professional knowledge (subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, understanding the characteristics of curriculum programs such as) and professional skills (planning instruction, classroom management, focusing on student development, designing a democratic learning environment). These findings were supported by results obtained from semi-structured interviews. During the interviews, participants were asked about changes in their professional competencies during this process, and the findings from the analysis of their responses are presented in Table 6:

Table 6. Findings Regarding the Professional Competencies Gained by Participants

Competencies Gained Regarding the Planning of the Teaching Process	Ability to use time efficiently during the lesson planning phase Gaining the skill to know what to do and how to do it when preparing a lesson plan Understanding the necessity of lesson planning
Competencies acquired regarding the implementation of the teaching process	Gaining the ability to design the teaching process Preparing economical and effective materials Creating rich content by drawing on a variety of sources Development in classroom management Preparing a learning environment and process tailored to the child Acquiring the knowledge and skills to apply various strategies, methods, and techniques (SMT)
Competencies gained regarding the evaluation of the teaching process	A perspective on assessment Receiving feedback on student learning and teaching through assessment activities Recognizing that there are alternative approaches and techniques in assessment Alternative assessment techniques
Competencies gained regarding the analysis of learning outcomes	Interpreting and analyzing learning outcomes The necessity of ensuring alignment between learning outcomes, the teaching process, and assessment Designing the instructional process based on learning outcomes Learning how and why to use the rubric
Competencies acquired regarding concept analysis	Development in subject knowledge Ability to conduct concept analysis Gaining competencies and awareness regarding concepts and concept instruction Identifying and addressing conceptual misunderstandings

Upon examining Table 6, it is evident that participants indicated they have gained competencies in planning, implementing, and evaluating the teaching process; analyzing learning outcomes; planning the teaching process in line with learning outcomes; conducting concept analysis; and addressing concept misconceptions. In this regard, some participant comments are presented below.

"I could say I didn't know how to make a plan. Now I know how to create a plan, how to engage students, and I take the time to think about it. I no longer waste a lot of time preparing the plan. I believe in the necessity of a plan. Without it, an effective learning process wouldn't take place." PT7 (Interview)

"I've developed a new perspective on assessment. I didn't used to take it seriously and didn't know which assessment technique to choose. Now I can use different approaches and techniques. For example, I recently used a concept mapping test." PT16 (Interview)

"I've developed a perspective that I shouldn't be tied to the textbook when planning and conducting lessons. I've gained the skill to know what to do and how to do it when preparing lesson plans." PT10 (Interview)

When evaluating the participants' views, it is evident that they have gained competencies, particularly in lesson planning, being prepared for class, improving implementation processes, and identifying and using different assessment approaches and techniques. Additionally, participants were asked for their opinions regarding their competencies in the classroom practices they conducted as part of their teaching practice. They noted that they made positive progress throughout the process, that feedback based on observations of lesson plans and classroom practices helped them improve overall—particularly in planning and implementation—and that interactions with other participants in the group and self-assessments provided opportunities for further development. During the research's implementation phase, each participant's lesson plans, practice videos, and prepared activities were uploaded to the system—sometimes in person and sometimes online—to provide opportunities for other participants to offer feedback. Consequently, the environment created during the implementation process facilitated a collaborative process where participants contributed to one another's growth. An example of this practice is as follows:

"If the lesson plan is implemented over two class periods, I don't think there will be any time constraints. Looking at the methods and techniques used, they are quite effective and well-suited to the learning objectives; however, if I'm not mistaken, the research and investigation phase comes into play here: each group first conducts research on the environmental issue assigned to them and then moves on to the logo and slogan part. The tree-planting activity at the end of the lesson brings the responsibility-taking component into play. If implemented this way, I believe it will be a highly effective and successful lesson." PT9 (3rd Application Cycle: Pedagogical Content Knowledge—Comment via Online Platform)

During the implementation process, participants worked both individually and in groups. The comment above is an example of feedback provided via the online system regarding the lesson scenario activity prepared by Group D (PT4, PT8, PT12, PT16) under the Life Studies learning outcome "Take responsibility for protecting nature and the environment." Similarly, participants were also encouraged to write self-assessments and reflective writings about their own work during the application process. For example, regarding Ö15's lesson plan:

"I believe the elements I used are appropriate for a 9-year-old child. The question-and-answer technique encourages them to think, while the educational game both entertains and teaches. Because, based on my observations, children love anything with a game element, given their age and developmental stage. For this reason, I do not want to skip either the inquiry or the entertainment phases in both my current lesson practices and my teaching career." PT15 (2nd Practice Cycle: Pedagogical Knowledge - Reflective Writings)

It is evident that PT15 has developed awareness regarding what they did and why, and has attempted to evaluate this objectively in their reflective writings. PT12, similarly, expressed their views on their own practice as follows:

“...the only problem was that I got nervous and the time was short; these sometimes affected my motivation during the lesson. ... I also lacked knowledge about some heroes of the War of Independence; sometimes I couldn't answer the questions asked, and I felt inadequate. I plan to do extra preparation for the subject area in the next lesson.” Student A12 (6th Practice Cycle: Teaching Practice-Reflective Writings)

Upon examining PT12's statements, it is evident that they can identify both positive and negative aspects with a critical perspective and express them clearly. It is understood that PT15's evaluations are more positively focused compared to PT12's. Considering that PT12 wrote this reflection in the 6th cycle and PT15 in the 2nd cycle, it can be noted that both participants experienced changes within the process and that the research's implementation process gradually fostered their awareness regarding critical thinking and a focus on development.

Both group and individual evaluations positively influence the development of both the evaluator and the evaluated individual(s). Indeed, upon examining Table 4, it is evident that the activities contributing to the participants' changes include in-class group activities (f:13), in-class discussions (f:12), critical reflection activities (f:11), self-assessment (f:10), online activities and discussions (f:9), and group evaluation activities (f:9). Additionally, they noted that their competencies in practice had positive effects on students and the learning environment. Commonly highlighted outcomes included increased active participation, the creation of a democratic, effective, and enjoyable learning environment where opinions were freely expressed, and heightened student interest and motivation.

Another finding that can be interpreted as an indication of the participants' transformation is their responses regarding how undergraduate education should be structured. Prior to the study, it was determined that prospective teachers referred to factors outside the faculty, such as the need for undergraduate education to be practice-based and for more internships. After the study, participants emphasized that the program should incorporate experience- and practice-based processes aimed at developing professional competencies, and that school-based practices should be conducted following these processes.

“There is a need for a process where students can acquire sufficient, solid theoretical knowledge and understand their own development and learning progress. Additionally, I believe there is a need for an educational process that provides the opportunity to apply this theoretical knowledge—which is already part of current processes (referring to teaching practice). Furthermore, I believe there must definitely be a process within this practical training where feedback is provided to each student, showing them the positive, negative, correct, and incorrect aspects of their practice. Because only then does the practical training and internship process become more meaningful and productive.” PT11

On the other hand, the participants' self-assessments as primary school teachers at the end of the study are considered a significant finding in terms of developing a professional competence-based perspective. The participants assessed themselves as individuals who possess professional knowledge and skills, are open to learning and development, engage in self-reflection, are aware of the profession's requirements, and have developed a student- and learning-centered perspective.

Finally, in Question 9 of the Survey on Prospective Primary Teachers' Perspectives on the Teaching Profession, short stories were presented about Prospective Teachers A, who does not prioritize professional competence, and Prospective Teachers B, who focuses on professional competence alongside professional experience; participants were asked for their opinions on these two stories. Before the study, all participants stated that they found Prospective Teachers A's attitude to be more

accurate. However, after the study, it was observed that all participants except one had developed a perspective focused on professional competence. Regarding this, PT14's views are as follows:

"Actually, neither of these two situations is sufficient on its own. If we take something from both of these situations, more accurate results will emerge. In Situation 1, experience takes center stage, which is a very necessary thing; however, this does not indicate that basic-level knowledge and skills are sufficient. A teacher must possess all necessary knowledge and skills and continue to develop themselves in this regard. Additionally, they must reinforce all of this through their lived experiences." PT14

Upon examining PT14's views, it is evident that they express the necessity of acquiring professional knowledge and skills during the undergraduate program and having the opportunity to apply them, thereby representing the views of the other 14 participants. On the other hand, while PT10—one of the two participants who stated they had not experienced change in LAS—actually provided responses indicating they had experienced transformation, PT16 gave a response suggesting they had not experienced transformation here either.

"Learning to swim. Because you won't learn anything by standing still until you jump into the water and learn through experience. Teaching is the same—you learn best not through theory but through practice, by facing the real classroom environment head-on." PT16

PT16's statements do not reflect a perspective that professional competencies must be acquired before entering the profession; rather, they emphasize that practice and experience alone are sufficient. A similar response was also given to a different question that supports this view:

"... sometimes we may encounter unwanted situations; in such cases, the most helpful factor is experience. I believe I will gain this while practicing the profession." PT16

These and similar statements by PT16 suggest that they have not adopted a competency-based perspective on the profession. On the other hand, some findings indicating that participants have undergone a transformation are evident in their responses regarding the training they received.

"The other side of the coin. Because before this training, I thought teaching was a simple profession that anyone could do. However, after the training, I realized that this is a professional occupation." PT13

"Moving from an unknown path to a known one. Because I had gaps in my knowledge and didn't fully know what I was doing or how to do it. Now that I've learned the steps, especially the training I received on lesson planning, it's been very important for me." PT12

"A place of rapid transformation at the end of the journey. Because during this process, I experienced a positive transformation in my perspective on the profession—one I honestly never expected. My self-confidence and belief in my professional competence have grown. So I really want to thank you for this process. Otherwise, I would have been someone constantly anxious, trying to adapt to the profession, and perhaps I wouldn't have been able to continue. But right now, I believe I've come a long way even in this brief training 😊" PT11

"The biggest step I've taken on my path to becoming a teacher. Because this was the first time I truly felt like a teacher. I deeply understood what I needed to learn and what it means to be an effective and efficient teacher during this period." PT2

Participants explained that the training provided them with the opportunity to gain professional awareness, understand that the profession is not simple and is a professional one, recognize and change their own perspectives, discover themselves, and identify and develop areas where they lacked competence. These responses serve as findings that demonstrate the transformation they experienced regarding the profession and teaching competencies.

On the other hand, in the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked for their opinions regarding the process and implementation of the program. The participants' statements highlighted that they found the process efficient and enjoyable; they recognized their professional shortcomings; they gained knowledge and skills; they viewed participating in the training as an opportunity; they had the chance to re-evaluate their views on the profession; and they gained self-confidence in their profession. However, evaluations also noted that the program was intense and exhausting, that it should not be limited to Life Studies classes but applied to other subjects as well, that writing the educational journal frequently became tedious at times, and that participants had other obligations outside of this program. Some prospective teachers' views are as follows:

"If my practicum teacher had been more engaged, there could have been more development. However, aside from that, our training was very well-structured." PT14

"I think it's because of who I am. I'm generally resistant to change and growth; I'm someone who doesn't open up easily and tends to be introverted. But in this course, we managed to break through that barrier, and I was able to overcome it. I was able to grow and change despite 'who I am.' But if my personality traits had been more suited to it, things could have been even different. I have social anxiety; I'm aware that some things changed in this course, but that's as far as it went. Both the structure of the course and your efforts to engage me actively played a role in this." PT13

According to the participants' statements, the factors hindering their development and change are related more to factors outside the training and personal characteristics than to the general functioning of the training. Participants generally indicate that they found the training process to be developmental and sufficient.

When the findings are evaluated as a whole, it was revealed that 15 of the prospective teachers underwent a transformation in their professional perspective. The findings indicate that the prospective teachers considered the development of professional competencies to be important. It can be stated that these 15 prospective teachers developed a professional perspective based on professional competencies, which was the primary objective of the study. It was also found that another prospective teacher (PT16) did not fully experience this transformation. On the other hand, indications of a perspective transformation were observed in PT16's data. Examples of this can be seen in the excerpts below Tables 4 and 6. However, according to TLT, these can be evaluated as a transformation of the meaning schema. This is because the data collected regarding the transformation of the meaning perspective at the end of the process showed that this transformation did not occur. According to TLT, changes in meaning schemas are not evaluated as transformations. In a subsequent face-to-face interview with this prospective teacher, they stated that the KPSS exam created pressure and that certain personal circumstances they experienced during this process—which they did not wish to share—had lowered their motivation throughout the training period. Additionally, noted that while her pre-training views on the profession were centered on the idea that the profession could be learned somehow by passing the KPSS, her post-training views shifted to the belief that foundational professional competencies must be acquired and that one should begin the profession in this manner. She expressed her belief that foundational professional competencies would be developed through the professional process. In this study, it is accepted that professional competencies must be developed through professional experience; however, it is believed that acquiring competencies at a basic level alone is insufficient. Indeed, the study's findings indicate that a perspective has emerged among other prospective teachers suggesting they can acquire professional competencies and further develop them during the application process. Additionally, the findings obtained during the six action cycles created in PT16's action research process revealed that the action cycle achieved the competencies expected to be gained and that a transformation occurred in the meaning schemas within the scope of these competencies. However, the data collected after the action research was completed indicated that no professional perspective transformation had taken place.

2- Examining the Relationship/Interaction Between Teacher Competencies and the Professional Perspective on the Teaching Profession in the Context of TLT

The second research question aims to reveal the relationship between learning activities prepared according to TLT and the professional perspective on the teaching profession. The findings obtained in this context are presented below.

The study began with the development of teaching competencies identified based on the participants' needs, and following the acquisition of these competencies, the participants' mental transformations were examined. Figure 3, created based on the study's findings to illustrate this relationship between possessing teaching competencies and professional perspective, can be examined:

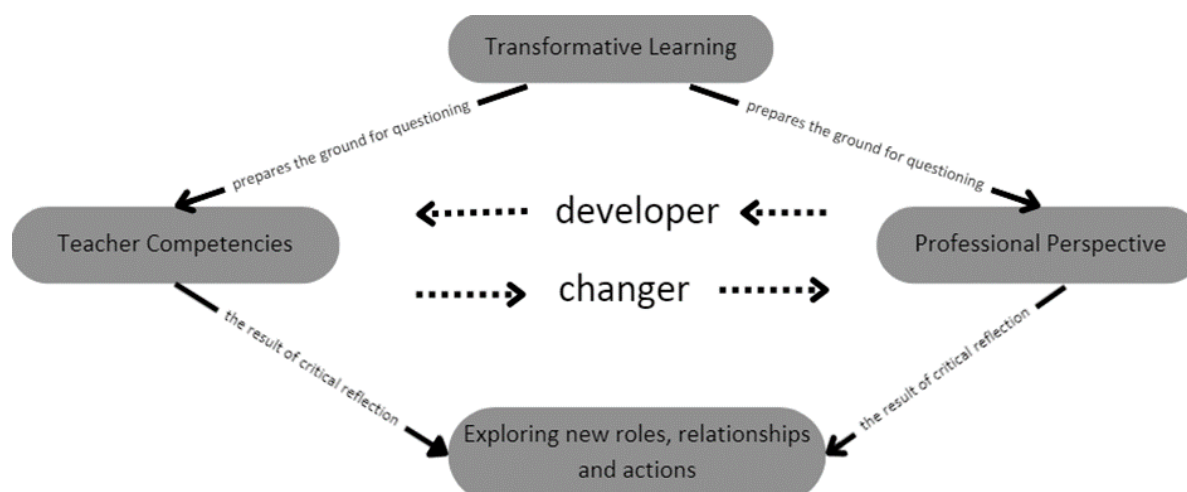


Figure 3. The relationship between teaching competencies and professional perspective

The model presented in Figure 3, based on the study's findings, illustrates the relationship between teaching competencies and the perspective on the teaching profession. First, through the critical nature of TLT activities, the individual engages in self-reflection to become aware of both the competencies they possess and the perspective they have developed in this context. As a result of this reflection, the individual, feeling dissatisfied with their current perspective on teaching, aims to change it. This developed perspective serves as a foundation for altering teaching competencies. Developing professional competencies facilitate a shift in the individual's perspective, leading to more successful outcomes. This reciprocal relationship persists throughout the process of development and transformation. Through this mutual interaction, the resulting professional competencies and perspective enable the individual, according to TLT, to discover new roles, relationships, and pathways and integrate them into their professional life. Indeed, in this study, the data collected using various data collection tools and the researcher's observations have highlighted the importance of the awareness formed regarding what prospective teachers can achieve as a result of acquiring professional competencies in the process of mental transformation within a professional context.

To illustrate with an example, the prospective teachers participating in the study stated that subject knowledge is not very important in the profession of primary school teacher and that it consists of superficial information; therefore, they did not consider it necessary to prepare for the learning outcome in question in terms of content knowledge. An examination of the lesson plans they prepared to demonstrate their professional competence revealed deficiencies in their subject knowledge. Additionally, during the processes of self-reflection, critical reflection, and subject knowledge action planning, it was observed that they were surprised and felt discomfort when confronted with subject knowledge deficiencies in areas such as personal care, duties and responsibilities, and weather phenomena—topics encountered within the Life Studies course. This sense of discomfort can be described as the first step toward a shift in perspective. As a result of the perceived need for a shift in their perspectives, they developed their professional competencies, gaining knowledge and skills in

areas such as achievement analysis and content types and analysis. Consequently, these developed competencies led to a shift in their perspectives, revealing that they had developed a new perspective on the importance and necessity of subject knowledge. This interaction between professional competence and perspective has motivated the prospective teachers to explore new paths; as a result, they have sought ways to develop their competencies while also striving to adjust their perspectives to align with what is required. As an example, here are some participant comments gathered during the implementation process:

"I also had gaps in my knowledge regarding some heroes of the War of Independence. At times, I couldn't answer questions asked on this topic. I felt inadequate. That's why I plan to do extra preparation and topic study for the next class to address potential questions." PT12 (1st Practice Cycle: Subject Knowledge Educational Journal)

"After receiving this training on subject knowledge, I experienced changes in my perspective. Before the training, my approach to teaching focused on looking at the learning objectives and explaining the topic to students based on what was written in the textbook. However, analyzing the learning objectives turned out to be a crucial point. Because through these analyses, I better understood what information I needed to provide to the children within the scope of the learning objectives and what approach I should adopt in this regard." PT14 (1st Application Cycle: Subject Knowledge - Educational Journal)

PT12's efforts to develop the competencies they lacked can be cited as an example of a perspective oriented toward professional development. On the other hand, PT8 expressed themselves as follows:

"After this course, I realized something. What's important for creating a good lesson plan isn't using a lot of methods and techniques, but using methods and techniques appropriate for the learning objective. I used to spend a lot of time trying to come up with many methods. Maybe it enriches the instruction, but I now think finding the right method is more important." PT8 (4th Practice Cycle: Instructional Planning - Educational Journals)

An analysis of PT8's views suggests that the situations encountered during the implementation phase led to a shift in perspective, and consequently, they developed their own practices.

3- Examination of the Relationship/Interaction Between Experience and the Reference Framework (Perspective of Meaning) Through Critical Reflection

The findings indicate that activities conducted through critical reflection contribute to individuals' ability to re-interpret their reference frame (perspective of meaning) and experiences by questioning them. Inquiries into experience and the frame of reference enter into a reciprocal interaction, whereby the frame of reference influences experience; conversely, the frame of reference leads to the modification, development, or transformation of experiences. Through critical reflection, the individual questions the experiences they have acquired and attempts to enter a process different from the current state, both in terms of interpretation and application. As a result of the reinterpretation of experiences, the process of transforming existing reference frames—which shape how individuals interpret their experiences—begins through critical reflection. The reference frame can be characterized as the personal filters used in interpreting experiences. In this context, the changes or transformations resulting from the continuous questioning of the reference frame through critical reflection lead individuals to question their experiences in different ways. In summary, changes in one structure trigger transformations in the other, and this process continues reciprocally. Figure 4, created based on the findings, attempts to illustrate this process.

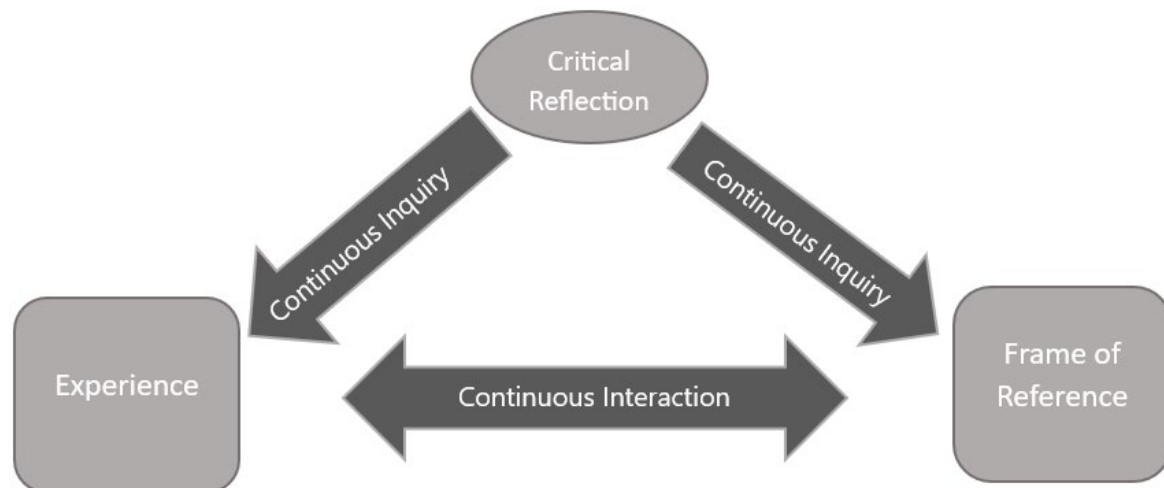


Figure 4. The Basic Concepts and Interactions of TLT

In Figure 4, an individual encounters an experience and interprets it. However, when critical reflection comes into play, a shift in interpretation occurs. At this point, if the individual feels discomfort or a sense of contradiction, they become aware of the assumptions—the structures that define, filter, and underlie the interpretation of this experience. This awareness is the realization of the transformation process. In this context, the skill that facilitates the transformation process is critical reflection. In this study, it was observed that pre-service teachers questioned their reference frameworks regarding the teaching profession as a result of the critical reflection activities conducted (particularly in the 2nd Self-examination, 3rd Critical evaluation, and 7th Knowledge and skill acquisition stages of the TLT), and as a result of these inquiries, they reshaped their professional perspectives. As a result of this transformation in the reference framework, a shift also occurred in valuing the experiences within the study's action plans and in experiencing this process.

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The research findings indicate that pre-service teachers do not prioritize the acquisition of professional competencies during the pre-service period and believe that these competencies can be acquired through the professional process. Whitbeck (2000) noted that pre-service teachers tend to underestimate the profession at the outset. Wideen et al. (1998), however, note that these perspectives are shaped during pre-licensure processes and that recognizing existing meaning structures and working on them can pave the way for transformation. Within this framework, it is argued that transformation in prospective teachers can only occur through conscious interventions targeting their meaning structures. Guskey (2002), on the other hand, emphasized the necessity of supportive environments for teachers to undergo transformation in their perspectives on teaching processes. In this study, practices that enabled prospective teachers to recognize and transform their meaning structures were implemented, and the transformation process was comprehensively analyzed using various data collection tools. Findings based on the Professional Development Model (PDM) developed by King (2009) revealed that participants experienced professional perspective transformation at different levels. In particular, participants who reached the sixth stage and beyond were observed to have become aware of their mental assumptions and entered a process of planning accordingly. These findings align with the results of Kerins et al. (2020), who found that medical students were eager to apply the understanding gained from their new perspectives, thereby demonstrating consistency with the findings of this study. Similarly, Arıkan's (2022) study also indicates that transformation occurs at different levels within the context of participation in social processes.

Another notable finding of the study is that the primary factors contributing to the transformation of prospective teachers are the faculty member (researcher), other participants, and activities based on critical reflection. Liu (2020) notes that collaborative critical reflections on individual

performance foster transformation; Liu and Ball (2019) emphasize that such reflection communities play a critical role in transformative learning. Kroth and Cranton (2014) state that adult educators lead the way in challenging individuals' assumptions, while Dođru Oral (2022) demonstrates that perspectives on environmental issues can be transformed through activities based on critical reflection. Maloney and Campbell-Evans (2002) found that prospective teachers had the opportunity to evaluate their professional performance through daily writing practices; Uline et al. (2004) noted that these journals contributed to identifying classroom issues. Brookfield (1995) highlights that journals provide a constructive foundation for the critical reflection process.

Survey data indicate that a significant shift has occurred in pre-service teachers' professional perspectives. Olafson et al. (2014) highlight the importance of teachers' beliefs in professional development, while Palak and Walls (2009) argue that teachers' classroom practices align closely with their belief systems. A similar trend was observed in this study, with a positive shift noted in pre-service teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession. While nine pre-service teachers were dissatisfied with their career choice before the training—this number dropped to one after the training. Participants' perceptions of the profession shifted from being based on attitudes and values before the training to being grounded in knowledge and skills afterward. The results of the LAS and the survey indicate that transformation-oriented theoretical framework (TLT)-based practices supported this change. These findings are consistent with studies by Kitchenham (2008) and Özdemir Yılmaz (2018). Specifically, Kitchenham (2008) emphasizes that questioning individuals' perspectives and assumptions, fostering critical thinking, and developing new perspectives in adult education support the transformation of professional perceptions. Furthermore, interview data also confirm that prospective teachers have experienced a significant shift in their professional perspectives. While prospective teachers prioritized only professional experience, post-training they tended to evaluate professional competence and experience together. This transformation aligns with the confidence-boosting effect of professional competence highlighted in the studies by Gratch (2001) and Wong and Goh (2009).

It was determined that the training process's structure, based on inquiry, critical thinking, and reflection, fosters transformation in prospective teachers. Maloney and Campbell-Evans (2002) noted that such structures contribute to prospective teachers' professional development. Syaharuddin et al. (2022) demonstrated the contribution of interactive activities to the transformation process. Additionally, the study observed that e-portfolios serve as an effective tool for monitoring prospective teachers' development process, providing feedback, and organizing data (Liu, 2020). The fact that prospective teachers found the educational process beneficial despite the challenges they faced aligns with the findings of Gwee and Toh-Heng (2022) and Buchwald (2023).

Figure 3 in the research findings reveals a reciprocal and interactive relationship between professional competencies and professional perspectives. As prospective teachers develop their competencies, their professional perspectives evolve; as their perspectives change, they seek ways to further develop their competencies. This finding indicates that competencies are not limited to technical knowledge and skills alone but also shape the individual's professional world of meaning. The literature suggests that prospective teachers who acquire professional competencies experience positive changes in their perspectives (Gratch, 2001; Michel, 2013; Wong & Goh, 2009) and that this transformation directly influences the quality of the teaching-learning process (Guskey, 2002; Kagan, 1992; Whitbeck, 2000). Within this framework, the competence-perspective relationship revealed by this study is consistent with the literature and offers original contributions through its bidirectional nature. Pang's (2023) study also supports this structure by demonstrating that a transformation in one domain (e.g., competence) can trigger transformations in other domains (e.g., professional perspective).

Figure 4 in the study's findings illustrates a bidirectional interaction between experiences and reference frames. While the reference frames held by prospective teachers play a decisive role in the interpretation of experiences, experiences grounded in critical reflection have facilitated the questioning and transformation of these frames. This transformation has led to subsequent experiences being

perceived in different ways. Taylor (2015) notes that teachers' beliefs are continuously reinforced by experiences, yet powerful experiences can challenge these beliefs. Mezirow (2003) emphasizes that critical reflection is essential for recognizing and transforming assumptions, while Brookfield (1995) and Liu (2020) present findings supporting this process. Suh and Park (2017) have demonstrated that there is a reciprocal interaction between perspective and practice. In this context, the research is significant in that it shows that experiences are not merely outcomes but also triggers for transformation.

Limitations and Recommendations

In this study, data collection and implementation processes were carried out following the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants were in their third year of teacher training and had experienced distance learning during the pandemic. Given that distance learning limits opportunities for in-class interaction and practical application in the teacher training process, this prior experience may have indirectly influenced the prospective teachers' perspectives on the teaching profession. This situation can be considered one of the study's limitations. However, the research findings revealed that prospective teachers underwent a meaningful transformation in their professional perspectives and that practice-based on professional competencies contributed to this transformation. It was concluded that critical reflection, individual and group work, observations, and regular feedback were effective in the transformation process. In this context, the following recommendations are presented:

- *The development of a professional perspective* is directly linked to the enhancement of professional competencies. Therefore, deliberate processes aimed at developing pre-service teachers' competencies should be designed; awareness should be fostered regarding what they can achieve as they acquire these competencies.
- *Self-reflective activities* (self-assessment, reflective writing, educational journals) are effective in helping individuals recognize their assumptions and perspectives. It is recommended that such activities be included in the curriculum.
- *E-portfolios* can be used in transformation-focused practices because they facilitate the monitoring and documentation of the process for both researchers and participants.
- *Reflective writings should not be uniform*; they should be presented in various structures and formats to enhance participant motivation.
- *A reciprocal relationship* has been identified *between professional competence and professional perspective*. Therefore, research and practices aimed at professional development should be planned in a way that prioritizes this two-way interaction.

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