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## Effective Teaching in the Eye of Teacher Educators: A Case Study in a Higher Education

MELEK ÇAKMAK

Gazi University, Faculty of Education, melek@gazi.edu.tr

Ülker Akkutay

Gazi University, akkutay@gazi.edu.tr

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## Effective Teaching in the Eye of Teacher Educators: A Case Study in a Higher Education

### Abstract

Attempts to explore teacher educators' thoughts seem to be meaningful at educational sciences since the number of studies discussing effective teaching and effective teacher at teacher education in the eye of teacher educators are quite limited. Therefore, this study mainly aims to identify the viewpoints of teacher educators in order to discover how they contextualize the concept of effective teaching. For this aim, a case study design, increasingly used in education (Tellis, 1997), is utilized in the study. This method is suitable when the research addresses an explanatory question such as how or why? (Yin, 2004). A questionnaire including open-ended questions is given teacher educators (n=48) who are working at a state university in Turkey. The participants are asked how they conceptualize effective teaching and which characteristics of effective teachers they prioritize. The results mainly show that to know what teacher educators' opinions on the key concepts of effective teaching might be helpful for teacher educators to revise some points in their teaching and raise their awareness on the issue.

### Keywords

Effective Teaching, Effective Teacher, Case Study, Teacher Educator, Teacher Education

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## Effective Teaching in the Eye of Teacher Educators: A Case Study in a Higher Education

Melek Çakmak and Ülker Akkutay  
Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey

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*Attempts to explore teacher educators' thoughts seem to be meaningful at educational sciences since the number of studies discussing effective teaching and effective teacher at teacher education in the eye of teacher educators are quite limited. Therefore, this study mainly aims to identify the viewpoints of teacher educators in order to discover how they contextualize the concept of effective teaching. For this aim, a case study design, increasingly used in education (Tellis, 1997), is utilized in the study. This method is suitable when the research addresses an explanatory question such as how or why? (Yin, 2004). A questionnaire including open-ended questions is given teacher educators (n=48) who are working at a state university in Turkey. The participants are asked how they conceptualize effective teaching and which characteristics of effective teachers they prioritize. The results mainly show that to know what teacher educators' opinions on the key concepts of effective teaching might be helpful for teacher educators to revise some points in their teaching and raise their awareness on the issue. Keywords: Effective Teaching, Effective Teacher, Case Study, Teacher Educator, Teacher Education*

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Teaching is a multidimensional, complex activity as stated by Khandelwal (2009). At the same time, teaching is very important in every level including higher education. Therefore, many studies (e.g., Betoret & Artiga, 2004; Haigh, Kane, & Sandretto, 2012) have been conducted on teaching and its components. These studies have particularly focused on defining and explaining effective teaching and teacher for last two decades. Related concepts have been studied from primary to higher education in different educational systems (e.g., Mohidin, Jaidi, Thien Sang, & Osman, 2009; Kızıltepe, 2002; Trigwell, 2001) especially based on students' perceptions. Some related studies (Barnes, 2010; Devlin & Samarawiskrema, 2010; Khandelwal, 2009; Werbinska, 2009; Brown, Morehead, & Smith, 2008) have attempted to identify the concepts of effective teaching and effective teacher in higher education. On the other hand, it is observed that studies (Arnon & Reichel, 2007; Buchel & Edwards, 2005; Devlin & O'Shea, 2011; Korthagen, 2004; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002; Ditcher, 2001; Northcote, 2009; Parpala & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2007; Postareff & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2008; Wachtel, 1998, Wilson, 1996) in higher education about this issue mostly investigated student teachers' viewpoints.

### Literature Review

Effective teaching and effective teacher which are the key concepts of this present study have been explained from different viewpoints in the related literature. For example, according to Vries and Beijaard (1999), good teaching is also effective teaching and it leads students to success. On the other hand, Harris (1998, p. 179) states that effective teaching mostly depends on outcomes and aims of education. In a similar way, some researchers such as Parpala and Lindblom-Ylänne (2007), Kyricaou (1997) claim that the quality of teaching is related to students' achievement. Different from these researchers, Johnson (1997) states that effective teaching based on communication which is directed by a teacher who is competent in his/her

field and good at classroom management. Additionally, researchers (e.g., Berliner, 1983; Slavin, 2003), point out the four characteristics of effective teaching: the quality of teaching, considering students' level, motivation and enough time for learning. Giovannelli (2003), for example, states that effective teaching consists of five components: the composite of effective teaching, classroom management, instructional behaviour, and classroom organization and teacher expectations. According to Ramsden (1992, cited in Khandelwal, 2009), there are six key principles of effective teaching in higher education as follows: interest and explanation, concern and respect for students and student learning, appropriate assessment and feedback, clear goals and intellectual challenge, independence, control and active engagement, and learning from students. It is obvious that research provide a number of such lists of the characteristics of effective teaching, which are essentially checklists of skills, practices and qualities, with little or no agreement as Devlin and Samarawickrema (2010) stated. In sum, what constitutes effective teaching in the context of higher education has proven rather elusive to describe (Khandelwal, 2009). Even though numerous attempts have been made to identify effective higher education teaching, there is no universally accepted definition (Johnson & Ryan, 2000; Trigwell, 2001; cited in Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). On the other hand, definitely, one of the most important components of effective teaching is teacher (Kyriacou, 1997). At this point, it is not surprising to question the characteristics of an effective teacher since it has been observed that in many studies teacher is an important player in this context. According to Cruickshank, Jenkins, and Metcalf (2003, p. 329), for instance, effective teachers are supportive, caring, competent in their field, excited for their job, and leader with good communication skills. Liston, Borko and Whitcomb (2008) define effective teacher, for example, teachers' ability to foster student achievement. Yates (2005, p. 687, cited in Allan, Clarke, & Jopling, 2009) also suggests that it is crucial to differentiate between the notion of the "effective teacher" (indexed by student learning criteria) and that of the "good teacher" (indexed by professional respect and humanities criteria) in explain effective university teacher. Even though the characteristics of effective teachers have been discussed in a detailed way, it is difficult for researchers to infer a common definition for these concepts from those discussions. As Steele (2010) states, every good teacher has personal qualities and therefore it is difficult to answer the question of "who is an effective teacher"? At this point, what Korthagen (2004) states might be crucial. According to Korthagen (2004), it is not easy to find out what the qualities of a good teacher are and how we can contribute to good teacher education as teacher educators.

In this light, it is a remarkable fact that, although various studies have been conducted on the conceptions of effective teaching and effective teacher research (Korthagen, 2004; Minor et al., 2002; Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, Collins, Filer, Wiedmaier, & Moore, 2007; Steele, 2010; Walls, Nardi, Minden, & Hoffman, 2002) research focusing on teacher educators' opinions (e.g., Parpala & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2007) seems to be very limited. However, understanding of what it means to be an effective university teacher forms the basis of ensuring quality (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). Hativa et al. (2001, cited in Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010), for example, lists many characteristics such as being well prepared and organized, presenting the material clearly, stimulating students' interest, having positive rapport with students, encouraging them, maintaining a positive classroom environment for exemplary university teachers. Based on Wideen et al.'s viewpoint, Lunnenberg, Korthagen, & Sweennen (2007) stated in their studies that teacher educator is important player in teacher education. Lanier and Little (1986, cited in Lunnenberg et al., 2007, p. 588) says that "teachers of teachers-what they are like, what they do, what they think-are systematically over-looked in studies of teacher education." Teachers' conceptions of teaching and learning have been found to influence the approach they use while teaching (Stenfors-Hayes et al., 2010). Therefore, understanding academics' beliefs is essential if we want to improve educational practice

(Pajares, 1992; cited in Visser-Wijnveen et al., 2009). Based on the discussion so far, it can be seen that there is very limited study on effective higher education. On the other hand, it is clear that there has been an increasing focus on the quality of teacher education and also teacher educators, therefore taking teacher educators' perceptions of teaching and related concepts can be very crucial. In particular, effective teaching in teacher education can be considered as more sensitive and should be studied in detail and in different contexts. Therefore, to put forward teacher educators' evaluation of the concept of effective teaching may help us to evaluate and discuss the issue of effective teaching based on their insight.

In the light of this discussion so far, this present study proposes to identify teacher educators' opinions about the effective teaching and effective teacher regarding teacher education in Turkey. Based on literature review discussed above, the present study addresses two main questions: (1) how do teacher educators explain the concept of effective teaching? (2) how do teacher educators describe characteristics of an effective teacher?

It is thought that revealing teacher educators' viewpoints regarding these concepts might be crucial since they train future teachers and their views might affect teacher candidates' future teaching so that teacher educators should be good models of the kind of teaching they are trying to promote (Swennen, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008). On the other hand, findings of the study can be compared with the findings of other studies results on effective teaching. Lastly, it is hoped that the results of this study will show us the teacher educators' priorities in their explanation of effective teaching. In this study, the term of effective teacher was preferred even if some terms such as "qualified teacher," "good teacher," and "effective teacher" have been used interchangeably in related literature as discussed earlier. However, in this study what teacher educators understand from this term is sought. Studying on the perceptions of teacher educators and trying to explore their thinking about effective teaching and teacher will provide different insights about these difficult concepts which are found as difficult to describe by researchers and educators.

### **Role of Researcher**

The concept of effective teaching has been a crucial topic in higher education including teacher education. The researcher, who has research experience with pre-service teachers' viewpoints as a teacher educator, focused on the necessity of examining effective teacher education context from the other perspective, namely teacher educators. The limited number of studies on this topic encouraged the researcher to investigate the issue in detail. Additionally, working in teacher education context for a long while led the researcher to have an insight about the whole concept of effective teaching with the details, reflect on the holistic structure of the context and utilize those experiences in teacher education research. Moreover, the researcher has started to focus on the concept of effective teaching from the perspective of pre-service teachers and continued to work on this topic from the other perspective belonging to teacher educators. To ensure ethical aspect of the research, the researcher conducted interview with voluntary teacher educators after explaining the aim of this research. It was expected that all teacher educators would not voluntarily participate in the study and accordingly, few of them did not accept participating in the study because of their academic program.

### **Methodology**

The opinions of teacher educators about "effective teaching and effective teacher" are investigated qualitatively with case study design in this present study. Yin (1984, p. 23) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and

context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. According to Yin (2004), a researcher may aim to describe a particular situation to get an in-depth and first-hand understanding of the specific case by making direct observations and collecting data in natural settings based on the needs of the research. Additionally, when the case is dealt with a “microscopic” perspective as Giddens argues, the phenomenon examined can provide crucial clues and input for future research even though the number is limited (Yin, 1993, as cited in Tellis, 1997). With this research, it is aimed to explore how the concepts of effective teaching and effective teacher are perceived or understood by teacher educators in a Faculty of Education in Turkey. As researchers seek to understand a phenomenon that is unique or unusual (Creswell, 2002; Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2003, cited in Grierson & Gallagher, 2009), it is thought that case study method would be best to see teacher educators’ viewpoints. As Robson (2011) pointed out case studies take place at particular time in particular place with particular people. In this sense, in order to determine teacher educators’ conceptualization of effective teaching and their priorities about effective teacher characteristics, case study design is expected to contribute to the analysis of explanatory research questions.

### Participants/Subjects

Purposive sampling which enables the researcher to satisfy their specific needs in a study was used in this research. Purposive sampling technique refers to selecting certain units or cases “based on a specific purpose rather than randomly” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a, as cited in Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 80). In other words, the purposive sampling technique is deliberately choosing participants because of the participants’ characteristics. Another characteristic of this sampling technique is that it does not require underlying theories or a set number of participants. The researcher decided to adopt this technique to determine voluntary participants who will provide the necessary information based on knowledge or experience (Bernard, 2002; Lewis & Sheppard, 2006, as cited in Tongco, 2007). One of the questions for the researchers is deciding what they want to accomplish and what they want to know. Researchers, using purposive sampling, regard it as a series of strategic choices about with whom, where, and how one does one’s research (Plays, 2008).

In this research, the target of the researcher was all teacher educators in the Faculty of Education. Since the number of teacher educators in the faculty is high, the researcher aimed to conduct interviews with representative population from different departments (see Table 1). The researcher visited teacher educators and mentioned the research project. Those who would consent to participate and have appropriate time for the interview were included in the study. Moreover, the participants are informed that the purpose of the study was to learn about their perspective regarding the concept of effective teaching and their names would be kept pseudonymous. Finally, the participants of the study (n=48) were teacher educators from the Education Faculty of a university in Ankara, Turkey. They were from both primary and secondary education departments of the faculty. Twenty one participants were male (43.75%) and 27 (57.25%) of them were female. The detail about the characteristics of research participants is given in Table 1.

Table 1. The Characteristics of Research Participants

Variables		n	%
Gender	Male	21	43.75
	Female	27	57.25
	Total	48	100.0
Teaching	0-5 years	10	20.83
	6-10 years	11	22.91

experience	11-15 years	12	25
	16-20 years	8	16.67
	21-25 years	3	6.25
	26 + ...	4	8.33
	Total	48	100.0
Department	Department of Educational Sciences	21	43.75
	Department of Primary Education	12	25
	Department of Secondary School Science and Mathematics Education	11	22.92
	Department of Foreign Languages Education	2	4.16
	Department of Special Education	2	4.16
	Total	48	100.0

## Data Collection Process

At the beginning, a pilot study was carried out with a group of teacher educators to see whether the questions prepared are understandable or not. After the final version of the questionnaire including open-ended questions was prepared, it was distributed at the Faculty of Education in a state university by the researcher herself. Participants who filled out the questionnaire returned and those who did not respond were reminded about participation to the research one again. Since the study group consisted of academicians, their preference for participating in the study was filling out questionnaires in the spare time. On the condition that the participants are appropriate for the interview, the researcher conducted interviews with them face-to-face. For the most of the participants, she gave the questionnaire including personal information questions and open ended questions. Open ended questions are asked generally during exploratory research that answers the questions of how and why based on individuals' own perspectives. The main aim of using open-ended questions was to obtain participants' ideas in their own words and to give them the freedom to express their own ideas (Demircioğlu, 2008).

The following open ended questions were asked to teacher educators: (1) How do you explain the concept of effective teaching? (2) Please write down three major and significant characteristics of effective teaching. (3) In your opinion, what are the most significant characteristics of an effective teacher? (4) Please write down five of such significant characteristics of effective teachers.

## Data Analysis

In this study, data was analyzed through content analysis method (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Content analysis is defined as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Representative quotations were also selected in order to enable readers to be able to see that a range of participants have contributed to the data (Anderson, 2010). There are some steps in conducting content analysis process as the related literature suggests. In this present study, the steps followed are listed below:

1. Data obtained from the interviews was transcribed. Transcripts belonging to both interview and open-ended questions were read by the researchers. During this process, researchers take individual notes about interesting and relevant information on the text. Notes were useful in coding data. Based on the codes in all transcripts, main categories were identified.

2. Based on the content analysis of the first question, four main categories emerged with agreement of both researchers as: understanding and comprehension of students, teaching method, adapting classroom content to daily life, adapting classroom content to daily life.
3. Analysis of the second question revealed effective teaching characteristics are listed in items rather than narrative form by the participants. Responses to this question are not in the form of full sentences. Therefore, all clues and phrases obtained from the responses are presented in categories. In the tables, 'n' refers to the number of expression rather than the number of participants.
4. The same procedure was followed for the second open-ended question "In your opinion, what are the most significant characteristics of an effective teacher? Please write down five of such significant characteristics of effective teachers."
5. For trustworthiness, the categories are identified, compared and checked in terms of consistency by both researchers. Inconsistent categories were omitted with the agreement of the researchers. Thus, the validity was taken into consideration in defining categories and preparing tables for presenting data in detail. Moreover, individual viewpoints and experiences were obtained (Shenton, 2004) from teacher educators working in different departments in order to get a rich picture of their viewpoints. Additionally, flexibility to fill out the questionnaire was another important point for trustworthiness.

## Results

The results of this present study are organized under research questions. The first research question was to identify teacher educators' perceptions of the concept of effective teaching and its components. This question was answered by twenty-eight of the participants. The analysis of responses indicates that teacher educators do not define effective teaching with a holistic perspective (e.g., Kyriacou, 1997). Their expressions generally focus on one dimension they regard as important for themselves. The definitions obtained from written responses of teacher educators and the points frequently discussed are categorized and example quotations are presented as given below:

**Understanding and comprehension of students.** Under the category of understanding and comprehension of students, there are viewpoints that generally focus on students' learning. This suggests that teacher educators point out a relationship between effective teaching and learner outputs as suggested by some researchers (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). To exemplify:

For me, effective teaching is the one that lasts for a long time but not forgotten immediately... (Male, 14 years teaching experience).

Effective teaching is to leave traces in the learners (Male, 12 years teaching experience).

Effective teaching is a teaching which is enjoyable for students and puts marks on the students' mind (Male, 40 years teaching experience).



The statements of the teacher educators given above indicate a perspective with a dimension of focusing on gaining of knowledge. This suggests that teacher educators value students' cognitive developments in their effective teaching definitions. On the other hand, regardless of their teaching experience, teacher educators mostly focus on ensuring permanent learning for students. Teacher educators in this study mostly concentrate on the characteristics of "providing lasting and usable learning experiences" to the students as the most significant characteristic of effective teaching. Hiebert, Morris, Berk, and Jansen (2007) also pointed out that the goal of teaching is to support student learning and it is hard to imagine teachers becoming more effective over time without being able to analyze teaching in terms of its effects on student learning. Likewise, Fives and Looney (2009) stated that ideally, one of the purposes of higher education is to help learners in various fields to develop meaningful understandings about their domains of study and to facilitate the development of critical thinking within and among those domains. Macfarlane (2004, as cited in Fitzmaurice, 2010) also states that teaching in higher education is not simply about mastering a set of techniques or skills and following rules and prescriptions for practice, but is relational and involves recognizing and dealing with problematic ethical issues as part of supporting student learning.

**Teaching methods:** Some of the participants mostly define effective teaching in terms of procedure, method and process. Teaching methods used by instructors also constitute one of the important dimensions of effective teaching as argued by Kyriacou (1997). Teaching methods that refer to the question of how to teach are the focus point of teacher educators in this research. Examples for such focus points are given as follows:

Effective teaching can be regarded as a teaching method in which students actively learn, construct knowledge, make connections between various knowledge parts and choose a learning goal (Female, 15 years teaching experience).

...Effective teaching refers to teaching students how they should learn and which methods they can use in learning, not just to present them information (Female, 15 years teaching experience).

Effective teaching is the use of technology in the classroom and to make choices for proper methods and techniques (Male, 30 years teaching experience).

Analysis of the quotations above suggest that teacher educators stated particularly students' active participation and use of technology which are frequently discussed by researchers in higher education recently (e.g., Groves & Zemel, 2000). The most frequently mentioned points are acknowledging knowledge; learning environment, usage of technology, being student-centered, and connecting the classroom content with daily life.

**Adapting classroom content to daily life.** Some teacher educators' viewpoints of effective teaching were related to help students adapt their knowledge to real life, which suggests that this point was the first priority for their teaching for them who emphasized this point particularly. Example comments for this category are given below:

Effective teaching occurs when information given widens the students' vision and can be adapted to real life conditions (Female, 17 years teaching experience).

Effective teaching is a process in which students express their views in the classrooms, make connections between current learning and their previous

experiences, use what they have learned in their daily life and evaluate what they have learned using their own cognitive structures (Male, 14 years teaching experience).

**Learning environment.** A small number of teacher educators are more focused on learning environment to provide effective teaching. They, in particular, addressed the importance of social interaction and well-designed learning environment that are key elements of effective learning. Examples of the statements of teacher educators are the following:

Effective teaching is the creating a teaching and learning environment in which students take responsibility of their own learning and there is a social interaction in learning in classrooms (Female, 30 years teaching experience).

Effective teaching is the activity of interaction with students in a well-designed and positive learning environment. It creates effective student learning (Male, 12 years teaching experience).

As seen from the written responses of teacher educators, learning environment is one of the most important components of effective teaching. This is also emphasized by Phillips (2005) who claims, based on the explanation of Bransford et al. (2000), learning environment should be arranged in different forms such as student centered, knowledge centered, assessment centered so that learners can construct new conditions.

In relation to the first question asked to the participants, the following question was also asked to them: "Please write down three major and significant characteristics of effective teaching." Table 2 shows the categories and related subcategories indicating the views of the teacher educators. The written responses of teacher educators constitute ten categories about the characteristics of effective teaching:

Table 2: Views of the Teacher Educators on the Characteristics of Effective Teaching Process.

Categories	Examples
• Characteristics concerning learning (n=52)	Lasting, usable learning experience, process of cognitive learning, process of participation, motivation
• Characteristics concerning teaching dimensions (n=48)	Making connections with daily life, employing distinct teaching methods, principles and approaches, activities to support practice, communication and interaction, effective use of time, purposeful and planned course preparation and delivery, enjoyable and productive lecturing, classroom management
• Characteristics of teacher (n=13)	Field knowledge, eager to teach
• Environment (n=4)	Positive learning environment
• Content (n=2)	-
• Class size (n=1)	-
• Other (n=2)	-

The emerged categories formed with respect to teacher educators' viewpoints seem to vary. It was realized that teacher educators' responses indicate a twofold case: characteristics of learning and teaching. On the other hand, some research focusing on pre-service teachers'

viewpoints provide similar viewpoints with teacher educators. For example, Allan, Clarke, and Jopling (2009) investigated first year undergraduate students' perceptions of what constitutes effective teaching in university. Providing a supportive learning environment; having high expectations; scaffolding learning; and providing clear explanations were the four main dimensions of effectiveness. In addition, consensus regarding ten factors that describe effective university teachers is assigned.

The participants are, then, asked to answer the following question: "In your opinion, what are the most significant characteristics of an effective teacher? Please write down five of such significant characteristics of effective teachers." The main reason of this question in this study is that teaching behaviors have a great deal of influence on the learning of students (Harrison, 2007, as cited in Akhtar, Tariq, & Topping, 2009). Teacher educators stated different viewpoints in defining effective teacher. Subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, teaching roles such as guidance are some of the remarkable points in their written statements. Some of the statements of the teacher educators about the major characteristics of effective teachers are given below. A small number of comments belonging to teacher educators emphasize the subject knowledge and transmitting the content. For example:

Effective teacher is a person who has the master level of his field knowledge, eager to teach and employs plans in his teaching (Male, 6 years teaching experience).

An effective teacher is a person who transmits his knowledge and experiences. (Male, 19 years teaching experience).

In related literature, similar results are observed in some studies. Kember and Kwan (2002, as cited in Parpala & Lindblom-Ylänne, 2007), for instance, stated that there is a close relation between teachers' understanding of good teaching and their approach to good teaching. According to them, lecturers' conceptions of teaching influence their teaching approaches. While teachers who think that effective teaching is transferring knowledge have content-centred approaches in their teaching, those who think effective teaching is based on facilitating student' learning have student centred approaches. The responses of teacher educators for this present study seem to have content-centred approaches.

Several of the participants' comments highlighted the importance providing positive learning environment. To exemplify:

Effective teacher is a person who designs a proper teaching environment in regard to the goals of the course, directs the students and attempts to make the learning permanent and improved (Female, 27 years teaching experience).

Effective teacher is a person who provides the students with a positive learning environment (Male, 12 years teaching experience).

Some of teacher educators pointed out the pedagogical issues for being effective teacher:

Effective teacher is a person who has high levels of field knowledge, delivers courses with active student participation and uses body language as an actor (Male, 10 years teaching experience).

Effective teacher is a person who does not lecture monotonously. Effective teachers know their students well, can discover how they learn, can stimulate

student interest and can attract his students' attention (Female, 15 years teaching experience).

On the other hand, teaching roles such as guidance and instructional leadership was stated by several teacher educators:

Effective teacher is a person who guides the learners, increases the students' desire to learn and is model for his students (Female, 17 years teaching experience).

Effective teacher is a person who guides the students to find the information by considering learning theories and helps those making connections (Male, 5 years teaching experience).

Effective teacher is a person who is an instructional leader for the students (Male, 27 years teaching experience).

These statements suggest that guiding role is also crucial for teacher educators. As Koster, Brekelmans, Korthagen, and Wubbels (2005) stated, a teacher educator provides instruction and gives guidance and support to student teachers. Even though technology role of teacher educator was stated by only few participants in this study, this new role has started to be important issues for teacher education as technology has been widely used in learning and teaching environment. Such statements from teacher educators in this study are below:

Effective teacher is a person who can use instructional technology and renew himself, in addition to good communication skills (Male, 12 years teaching experience).

On the other hand, several participants stated different characteristics of being effective teacher. To give an example:

Effective teacher is a person who is aware of his responsibility, regards the students as the centre of the teaching process and creates a parallelism between theory and practice (Female, 3 years teaching experience).

Effective teacher is a person who has the skill of managing the classroom, can use those teaching methods and techniques that are proper for the program and can employ educational technology to support them (Male, 30 years teaching experience).

According to Norton, Aiyegbayo, Harrington, Elander, and Reddy (2010), university teachers cannot always transfer theory into practice. In earlier study conducted by Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead, and Mayes (2005), beliefs and intentions of university teachers who have been working at four different universities in England were investigated. The results showed that university teachers adapt their beliefs according the academic and social environment, which suggests that they cannot fully implement their beliefs.

In addition to discussion above, there were also some interesting comments which are merit to mention here. For example:

Effective teacher is a person who makes the learning process enjoyable for their students. (Female, 8 years teaching experience)

This statement is valuable because this belief in this brief definition shows that it might affect their teaching styles. In order to create this kind of learning environment in which learning is more student-centered, students are more active and willing to participate in the activities, the teacher educator tend to use different teaching methods which ensures the qualities of this learning environment. At this moment giving the following statement can be meaningful: Good teaching is charged with positive emotions... Good teachers are not well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 853, as cited in Luk-Fong, 2009). The remaining part of the question asked to the participants was "Please write down five significant characteristics of the effective teachers."

Analysis of the responses concerning the characteristics of effective teacher point out that teacher educators reported a number of characteristics. As the number is very high, similar characteristics are put under the same categories; namely pedagogical knowledge and skills (n=87), personal and professional attributes (n=53), professional development (n=20), subject matter knowledge (n=15), communication and interaction (n=11). It is useful to note that n refers to the number of reported statements rather than the number of participants.

**Pedagogical knowledge and skills.** Under this category, teacher educators have mentioned different focus points. For instance, most of them listed teaching skills of effective teachers. Some examples are given as follows: making clear explanations, encouraging students to learn, using time effectively, effective classroom management, adopting new technologies in classroom, using body language effectively, transforming theory into practice, providing supportive learning atmosphere.

**Personal and professional attributes.** The most frequently mentioned category refers to personal and professional attributes. Under this category, personal characteristics such as being consistent, prestigious, tolerant and respectful, open, natural, humorous, confident are listed. On the other hand, professional characteristics such as having a professional discipline and professional commitment are highlighted. Finally, there are some characteristics referring to teacher roles such as being observer and specialist.

**Professional development.** Based on the responses, the third category is named as professional development. This category includes characteristics such as being open to innovations and developments in their subject and making research.

**Subject matter knowledge.** Even though the number is limited, there are also items that are put under the category of subject matter knowledge. Being competent and specialist in the related subject are among the characteristics under this category.

**Communication and interaction.** The last category was communication and interaction which emphasizes effective communication skills.

## Discussion and Results

Effective teacher education has a key role in developing and fostering future teachers' learning environment (Tekkaya, Çakıroğlu, & Özkan, 2004) therefore it might be beneficial and crucial to study with teacher candidates and their teachers on similar issues. On the other hand, current definitions regarding teachers' beliefs indicate that these beliefs influence many aspects of their teaching such as defining their objectives (Pajares, 1992). As teachers' belief shape their perceptions and evaluating classroom interactions, it can be considered as a system which reflects the teaching and learning created by teachers themselves (Artzt & Armour-Thomas, 1998, p. 8, as cited in van der Shaaf, Stokking, & Verloop, 2008). Teachers' belief

about educational and instructional concepts has always been an important variable of studies about teachers' behaviours and teacher education. Particularly, researchers who has been studying on this issue from 1980's to recent times, mostly focused on teacher candidates, new teachers and experienced teachers' beliefs and how these beliefs affect their teaching and learning as Valcke (2010) emphasized. Akhtar et al. (2009), for example, tried to explore students' perception of university teaching behaviours in Pakistan. Students' views on five conceptual variables were also analyzed: instructional design, active teaching, learning activities, questioning styles, and assessment framework. University teaching in Pakistan was found to be driven by assessment.

This study offers a different point of view in this research area. Even though there are some limitations, this research has provided some remarkable and considerable results regarding teacher educators' insights about effective teaching and teacher. This study results only reflect teacher educators' opinions who are working in one teacher education program at higher education even though there are some limitations. Even though it seems facilitating for the researcher to work in the same context with the participants, this situation resulted in some problems. For instance, teacher educators' limited time resulted in few face-to-face interviews and more written responses which may not provide information as detailed and representative as interviews. Another limitation stems from the fact that this study is a case study and is conducted in only one institution. It could be useful to conduct similar studies in different context or institutions so that different viewpoints of teacher educators could be obtained and examined. In this context, this study deals with the views of teacher educators on "effective teaching" and "effective teacher." These concepts have been studied in varying contexts in many researches. However, mostly the views of student teachers have been investigated in regard to the characteristics of effective teaching and of effective teacher. Therefore, this study is significant in that it provides an opportunity to identify similarities or differences between student teachers and teacher educators in terms of their views about effective teaching and effective teachers.

The studies concerning the student teachers' views about teaching have become a necessity (Tillema, 1997). However, the views of teacher educators about teaching and teachers are also required since these professionals train the future teachers and their teaching might affect their teaching styles. It is highlighted in the study of Arnon and Reichel (2007) that younger pupils tend to perceive the personality of the teacher as dominant attribute of a good teacher, while college students tend to give importance to the knowledge component. On the other hand, the findings of this present study showed that teacher educators tend to respect not only subject knowledge but also pedagogical knowledge such as how to teach the content, which suggests that teacher educators might possess a different viewpoint from student teachers and other actors of effective teaching. Thus, more research is needed on the views of teacher educators in regard to various educational concepts. Some characteristics of the effective teachers are personal traits, but the others are related to teaching methods and techniques. Therefore, being an effective teacher requires a personal attempt. For instance, following related scientific research and innovative practices and integrating such innovative educational practices into one's own teaching will certainly facilitate the provision of the effective teaching. On the other hand, since the number of studies discussing effective teaching and effective teacher at teacher education are quite limited, this study can be considered as comparable and considerable since how teacher educators think about effective teaching is critical and crucial to provide suggestions for teacher education. It is hoped that the findings of the study will help to improve teacher training programs in terms of the characteristics of effective teaching practices. To know what teacher educators' opinions on this issue can also be helpful for teacher educators to revise some points in their teaching and raise their awareness on the issue. The last point is that, future research can be conducted on effective teaching in

higher education and the topic can be studied in more detail and reveal more comprehensive framework on this.

Finally, this study aimed to provide research-based assistance to teacher educators and researchers. Research like this study might provide directly relevant information for teacher educators and might be valuable to educators and researchers who can identify with it. It is also hoped that teacher educators can find implications for their teaching education program and their professional development. As Arnon and Reichel (2007) suggest that more research of the image of the good teacher, which is labeled as effective teacher image in this study, can provide important contributions to the process of teacher education. Goubeaud and Yan (2004) also stressed the difference between the types of instructional practices utilize by teacher education and higher education faculty. They concluded that teacher educators use a variety of teaching methods when compared the others who works in other fields in higher education, which suggests that more studies in teacher education is necessary. To conclude, as Liston, Borko and Whitcomb (2008) contend teacher educators have a potential to contribute the quality of teacher education. The results of this present study also indicate that teacher educators' viewpoints, regarding the concepts underlying the quality of effective teacher education, such as effective teaching and characteristics of effective teacher are essential for enhancing teacher quality.

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### Author Note

Melek Çakmak has been working in the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education at Gazi University. Her specific field is Curriculum Development and Instruction. Areas of specialization include teacher education, curriculum development and instruction, research in teaching and comparative teacher education, curriculum evaluation. She is currently researching into effective teacher characteristics; preservice teachers, teacher educators' perceptions and beliefs on effective teaching and its components. She has publications and participated in conferences in those areas. Correspondence regarding this article can be addressed directly to: [melek@gazi.edu.tr](mailto:melek@gazi.edu.tr).

Ülker Akkutay is a Professor in the Department of Educational Sciences, at Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey. Her major research interests include, particularly, social and historical foundations of education; the history of teacher education. The author has many studies and publication on these areas. She has also involved in some projects about college youth' research and research on instructors' profile. Correspondence regarding this article can also be addressed to Professor Dr. Ülker Akkutay, Gazi Üniversitesi, Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü, Ankara, Turkey; E-mail: [akkutay@gazi.edu.tr](mailto:akkutay@gazi.edu.tr).

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