

Teacher Education With A Distance Education Model In The Period Of Pandemic: P4c Philosophy For Children

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to determine the effects of P4C education on the development of teachers' ability to ask the right questions in their classrooms, the development of their method and technical knowledge, the determination of their ability to conduct discussions and their applications. The case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the research. The study group of the research consists of 30 teachers working in different schools in Istanbul, who receive education within the scope of Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education Teacher Academies. In order to collect the data in the study, the opinion of three experts in the field of educational sciences was taken by the researcher. A semi-structured interview form developed was used. Descriptive analysis was carried out using the NVIVO 8 package program, which is one of the qualitative data analysis programs obtained. When the findings obtained as a result of the research were analyzed, it was determined that teachers were curious about how P4C applications were applied in the classroom, what their effects were on developing thinking skills, which resources and materials they could use in the classroom application process, and what was included in the content of P4C applications.

Keywords: Distance Education Model, Philosophy for Children, Teacher Education

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INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of education is to raise individuals who can think, solve problems, think creatively, evaluate critically and make decisions together with academic knowledge and skills. Having these skills not only affects the academic success of individuals, but also enables them to have the ability to transfer their knowledge and skills in certain areas to other different situations that they may encounter in their daily lives (Alnesyan , 2012; Dilekli, 2015 ; Johnson & Siegel , 2010).

It is stated in the MEB curricula that innovations and developments in learning and teaching theories along with changes in science and technology also affect the needs of the individual and the roles expected from the individual. However, in the curriculum, it is necessary to produce knowledge from the individual, to use it functionally in life, to solve problems, to think critically and creatively, to empathize and to make decisions, etc. It is also advocated that it should have the necessary qualifications (MEB, 2018).

The realization of the thinking skills targeted in the curriculum depends on the learning and teaching processes that are planned effectively and efficiently. In the related literature, the main factors that are effective in gaining thinking skills are teacher characteristics (Alwehaibi , 2012; Krishan , 2010; Zohar , 2006), methods and techniques used (Jones , 2008; Krishnan , 2010, Sender and Sender , 2008), classroom environment and climate. (Alynesyan , 2012; Mahuyyidin et al., 2004; Othman & Mohamad , 2014) support skills such as teamwork and communication skills (Barak & Shakhman , 2008 ; Wilks , 2005).

The first thing that comes to mind when thinking skills are mentioned is the aspect of cognition. However, as a human being versatile, situations such as emotions and interests should also be taken into consideration. There are no programs that develop affective aspects in education systems . The ability to express feelings and thoughts, the ability to dominate them, or the lack of an education for this affects people negatively (Dombaycı & Kızıltan, 2020). Philosophy for children is one of the methods that supports students' ability to express their feelings and thoughts, and supports collaborative work and communication in learning environments, as well as demonstrating its effectiveness in improving students' thinking skills in the related literature . Philosophy for children is a pedagogy developed by an American professor, Matthew Lipman in the 1970's. Lipman , a professor of philosophy at Columbia University , observed that the students attending his class were limited in skills such as reasoning and critical thinking. Based on the view that the university is a late period for the development of these and similar skills, he believed that it should be gained at an earlier age, especially during the natural curiosity period of children, without going into a system with limits such as school (Lipman, 2003).

It emerged as a result of adapting Charles Pierce's "Investigation Society Model" to the educational environment with inspiration and shaping philosophy education based on this model. (Lipman , Sharp and Oscanyan , 1980). In the classroom environment, which is considered as a community of inquiry, it is seen as a prerequisite for the participants to develop attitudes such as careful thinking, acting respectfully away from impositions, along with skills such as shaping information, investigating, and filtering. Therefore, *the facilitator leading the philosophy session for children* is not the person who conveys the information, but the person who encourages the participants to think, talk and investigate. The awareness, knowledge and/or understanding that emerges at the end of the session is the product of the active participation of the participants, not the facilitator.

While practicing philosophy sessions with children; making a connection circle where the community is aware of each other, determining the rules, presenting stimuli (story, poem, video, picture, etc.), giving time to think, asking questions and connecting questions, determining the philosophical (conceptual) question, following each other's thoughts and A process such as encouraging ways of inquiry is implemented. It can be said that these applied stages directly affect the thinking skills of children. When the literature is examined, in many studies; Mathematical skills, listening skills, self-esteem, expressive language, emotional intelligence, development of social skills, making definitions, developing a perspective, changing ideas critically, developing a new idea, making analogies, and using metaphors were recorded (Karadağ and Yıldız Demirtaş, 2018).

While students gain different knowledge and skills, they should play an active role in the process and discover the knowledge themselves (Gecgel et al ., 2020). Therefore, learning environments should be created for children that will enable the student to be active in the process of philosophy practices and to discover and make sense of the information in the mind. However, the pandemic period in our country has also affected the learning and teaching process.

During the pandemic period, teachers started to use internet-based applications, online learning environments and web 2.0 digital tools in education environments. These developments support the presentation of course content in different ways, the participation of students in practices and discussions, and the sharing of what they have learned. When the relevant literature is analyzed, it has been determined that technological developments support students' creative and analytical thinking skills (Elmas & Geban, 2012) and lead students to higher-level thinking while creating their own knowledge (Adcock & Bolick, 2011; Virkus, 2008). Therefore, during the pandemic period, teachers have provided students with much knowledge and skills in the online environment.

The structure of Philosophy for children applications is thought to be suitable for online learning environments. In the first sessions of philosophy practice with children, teachers ask self-created conceptual questions and encourage them to think. It encourages deep thinking, making new connections, expressing thoughts with justifications, and supports creating an environment for philosophical discussion. The main purpose is to create a community of inquiry and to encourage children to think. In groups accustomed to community inquiry, children can pose questions and choose from among them the questions they want to discuss with the community. These studies are supported by digital tools and are effectively carried out in online environments.

It is of great importance to get the opinions of our teachers, who have a great role in the execution of the above-mentioned process, on the functioning of the process. It is thought that this study can fill this gap in the literature, as it will allow improvements in the next processes in line with the opinions of our teachers. At the same time, it is thought that this research will contribute to the development of teachers' ability to ask the right questions in their classrooms, to develop their method and technical knowledge, to determine their competence in conducting the discussion and to determine the effectiveness of their practices that can be answered in the field. In line with these purposes, answers were sought for the following situations regarding the "Philosophy for Children (P4C) Education, which is carried out with the teachers' distance education model.

1. What do you wonder about before the P4C Teacher Training?
2. What did you learn in P4C Teacher training?
3. In which areas do you plan to use the knowledge you have gained here after the P4C Teacher training?
4. What are the effects of the P4C teacher training process on your daily life during the pandemic period?
5. What are the positive contributions of distance education to your personal and professional development?
6. What are the limitations of distance education for your personal and professional development?

METHOD

Pattern of the Research

The case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the research. Case studies are an empirical research model that deals with a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, where the lines between the phenomenon and its content are not clear-cut, and where more than one evidence or data source is used in existing situations (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). With this research design, how the teaching processes of philosophy education for teachers were affected was examined according to the views of the teachers.

Working group

The study group of the research consists of 30 teachers working in different schools in Istanbul, who receive education within the scope of Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education Teacher Academies.

In the selection of teachers, features such as volunteering, willingness, not having received education within the scope of philosophy education for children, and being in different branches and professional experiences were prioritized. Information on the demographic characteristics of the teachers who participated in the interviews conducted in the research is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

		f	%
Gender	Woman	26	86.66
	Male	4	13.33
Branch	Class Instructor	10	33.33
	Pre-school	3	10.00
	English	2	6.66
	Religion Cult and Moral Knowledge	2	6.66
	PDR	4	13.33
	Biology	2	6.66
	Turkish	2	6.66
	information technologies	2	6.66
	Maths	2	6.66
	Physical education	1	3.33
Educational Status	Licence	21	70.00
	Master of Science	7	23.33
	Doctorate	2	6.66
Seniority	0-5 years	4	13.33
	6-10 years	6	20.00
	11-15 years	8	26.66
	16-20 years	5	16.66
	20+ years	7	23.33

As seen in Table 1, the study group of the research consists of 30 teachers, 26 women and 4 men. Of the teachers, 10 are classroom teachers, 3 are preschool teachers, 2 are English teachers, and 2 are teachers from the branch of religious culture and ethics. In addition, 4 of the study group are psychological counselors and guidance, 2 are biology, 2 are Turkish, 2 are information technologies, 2 are mathematics and 1 are physical education teachers.

Twenty-one of the teachers who constituted the study group of the research are undergraduate, 7 graduate and 2 doctorate graduates. In addition, 4 of the teachers have seniority of 0-5 years, 6 of them 6-10 years, 8 of them 11-15 years, 5 of them 16-20 years and 7 of them have seniority over 20 years.

Data Collection and Analysis

In order to collect the data in the study, the opinion of three experts in the field of educational sciences was taken by the researcher. A semi-structured interview form developed was used. The researcher in the development of the semi-structured form 11 questions were prepared by the expert, the prepared questions were presented to the expert opinion, and 5 questions that were not suitable for the purpose of the study were removed and reduced to 6 questions. Interviews were conducted via the Zoom application. Descriptive analysis was carried out using the NVIVO 8 package program, which is one of the qualitative data analysis programs obtained.

The following steps were carried out for the analysis. Concepts were created according to the thematic framework created by the researcher, and the findings were defined by extracting the figures related to the relationships between these concepts. Finally, the obtained findings were interpreted.

In the research, the data obtained from the teachers were coded separately by the researcher and compared and the figures related to the emerging themes were created. In order to protect the confidentiality of the research, the participants were coded as K1, K2

While answering one of the interview questions, the participants expressed their opinions by giving more than one reason. While analyzing the research, direct quotations were made from the answers given by the teachers, taking into account all the opinions expressed. While trying to ensure the validity of the research in this way, another researcher working in the same field was asked to check the consistency of the coding and the content of the figures. It was observed that there was 82% consistency between the opinions.

Application

Before determining the views of teachers on P4C (Philosophy for Children) education carried out with the Distance Education Model, a training program was prepared for the participant group of the research. Within the scope of this program, an application process lasting 9 weeks was carried out with 30 teachers.

Week 1: In the 6-week promotional program, it was aimed that the participants of the circle get to know each other and feel their needs. At the same time, a meeting event was held for community engagement for a safe learning environment. Flirting activities were carried out using web 2.0 tools.

Week 2: An alternative assessment method was used to provide the content of the program, the learning process of the participants and the feedback of the trainers on the process. The flow of the program was shared with the participants. An agreement was reached regarding the implementation process by taking the opinions of the participants on the content of the program.

Week 3: In order to hear the state of those who participated in the circle, it was started with the connection circle. The warm-up game was continued in order to gather the focus and attention of the participants to the circle. A P4C application example was made for the community to experience the P4C workshop. A space was opened for the participants to share their thoughts by using a P4C technique on the questions of what is P4C and what is not. At the end of the day evaluation, the participants were asked to give feedback on the program. Participants were offered a weekly study for a chosen concept by applying the given P4C technique.

Week 4: In order to hear the state of those who participated in the circle, it was started with the connection circle. The warm-up game was continued in order to gather the focus and attention of the participants to the circle. The importance of asking questions in P4C was discussed. A group study was conducted on asking questions. Question types were shared through the question quadrant technique. In the evaluation phase, the opinions of the participants were given by applying the 3-2-1 technique.

Week 5: Studies were carried out to improve the questioning skills of the participants using various stimuli. At the end of the day evaluation, the participants were asked to give feedback on the program. Participants were offered a weekly study for a chosen concept by applying the given P4C technique.

Week 6: In order to hear the state of those who participated in the circle, it was started with the connection circle. The warm-up game was continued in order to gather the focus and attention of the participants to the circle. An example of P4C workshop design was shown by asking the community to create questions through a stimulus and choosing one of the questions. Information about the 10 steps required in a P4C workshop was shared. At the end of the day evaluation, the participants were asked to give feedback on the program. Participants were offered a weekly study for a chosen concept by applying the given P4C technique.

Week 7: In order to hear the state of those who participated in the circle, it was started with the connection circle. With the thinking game, the community was enabled to notice and express the reasons behind a thought. A method on how to use children's books as stimuli was shared. A space was opened for the community to practice children's books. The role of the teacher as a facilitator was mentioned. Facilitator techniques were exemplified through applications. With the end of the day evaluation, the participants were asked to give feedback on the program.

Week 8: The last step of the alternative evaluation method used was completed and shared in the big circle. A question-and-answer area was opened for the community's curiosity about this program and what they want to share. Weekly work was given feedback. A list of suggestions for children's and philosophy books was shared with teachers in order to contribute to the development in the field of P4C.

Week 9: Within the scope of the research, data were collected by taking the opinions of the researchers with a semi-structured interview form.

RESULTS

In this section, the findings obtained from the opinions of the teachers who participated in the research on P4C education are presented.

Findings Related to Curiosities Before P4C Teacher Training

The findings regarding the features that the teachers who participated in the research were curious about P4C before the application are presented in Figure 1 below.

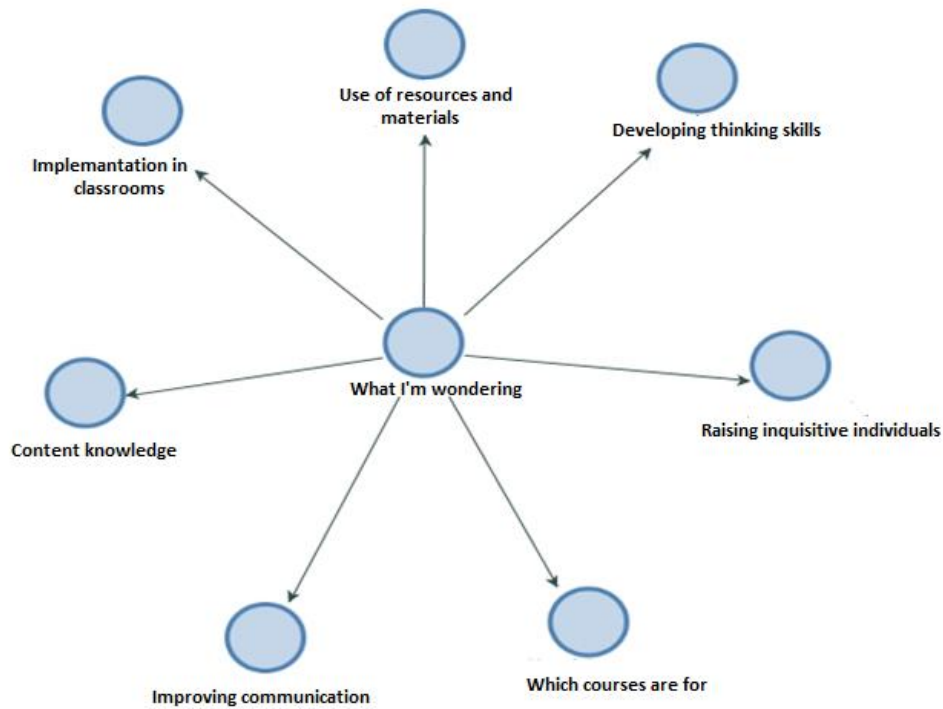


Figure 1. Curiosities about P4C training

The frequencies of the answers given by the teachers to the research findings obtained before the P4C training carried out with the distance education model in the figure 1 presented above are as follows:

How P4C education is implemented in classrooms (f=12), How it supports the development of thinking skills (f=7), What resources or materials can we use (f=5), How can we master P4C training content knowledge (f=4), How can we ensure that inquiring students are raised in our classrooms (f=3), How does P4C education improve communication in classrooms (f=2), P4C education is applied in the teaching of which courses (f=1).

Excerpts from the statements of the teachers participating in the research regarding the questions about P4C education are presented in the section below.

“I had just heard and read a few articles and some books. I wanted to learn the methods of mastering the content”.....K4

“ I wanted to have information about how to use P4C with children, what resources can be used, how to develop creative thinking skills”..... .K17

Findings Related to Learning After P4C Teacher Training

The findings related to what the teachers who participated in the research learned in the P4C training after the application are presented in Figure 2 below.

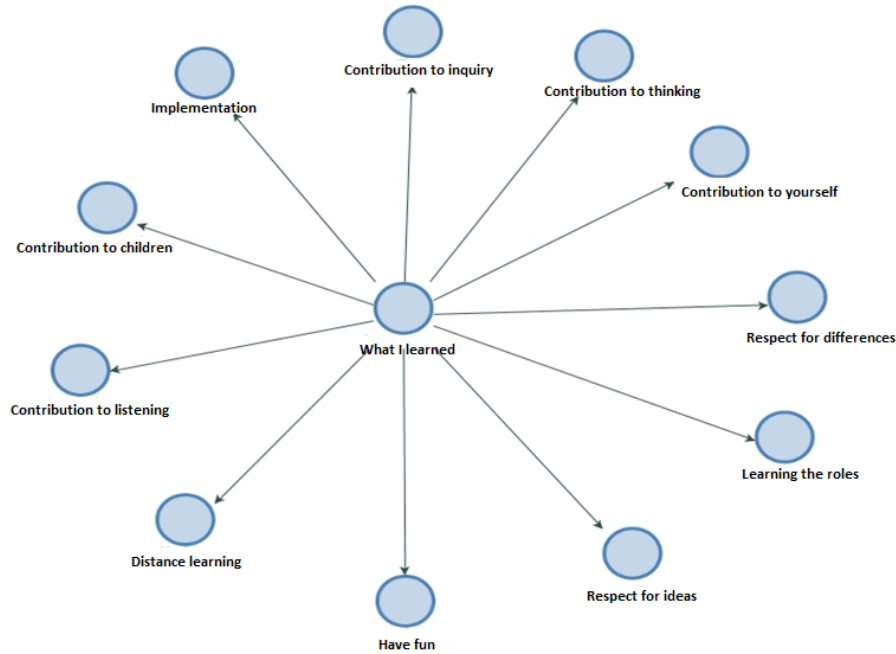


Figure 2. Learned after P4C training

The frequencies of the answers given by the teachers to the research findings obtained after the P4C training carried out with the distance education model in Figure 2 presented above are as follows:

How it is implemented in classroom settings (f= 16), children's contributions to different developmental areas (f= 9), the importance of listening to others without prejudice (f= 6), can be realized with distance learning model (f= 5), providing an enjoyable learning experience (f=5), realizing that our ideas are not our character (f= 5), learning that ideas can change with different perspectives (f=4), the roles of teacher and student in practice (f= 3), learning to absorb differences (f=2), Contributing to my personal development (f=2), Realizing the importance of thinking (f=2)

Excerpts from the statements of the teachers participating in the research about what was learned after the P4C training are presented in the section below.

“ How do we think about an idea even if we don't accept it, I learned to think about concepts such as critical thinking, questioning and acceptance ”.... . K9

“ I learned how to ask questions, what purpose the answers given to the questions serve, that there are members with different ideas in the group, that it is important to blend these ideas with my own thoughts, and how to conduct concept investigations with children through a story”.....K23

“I learned that people who are aware of this process can continue their education in any condition. I learned what P4c is. I learned the importance of critical thinking and that p4c will support academic success”....K18

Findings on the areas where they plan to use the knowledge learned after P4C teacher training

The findings regarding the areas where the teachers participating in the research plan to use the knowledge they learned after the application are presented in Figure 3 below .

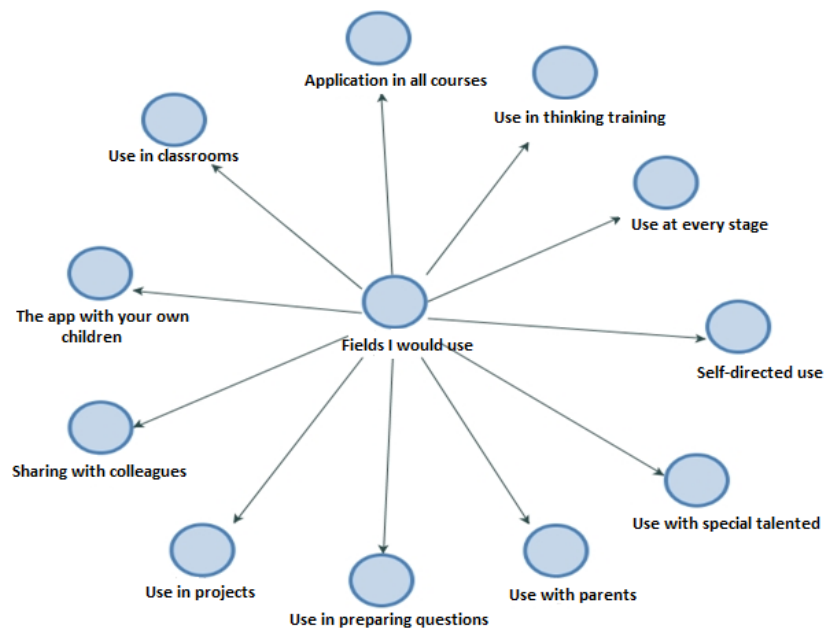


Figure 3. Areas where the knowledge gained in P4C Training is planned to be used

The frequencies of the answers given by the teachers to the research findings regarding the areas they plan to use what they learned after the P4C training carried out with the distance education model in Figure 3 above are as follows:

It is used in their own classrooms (f=23), used in their own children's education (f=7), shared with colleagues (f= 5), used in projects (f=5), used in preparing questions (f=4), used in trainings for parents (f=4), used in the education of gifted students (f=3), used in self-directed applications (f=2), used in all lessons (f=2), used in thinking education (f=1), used in all stages (f= one).

Excerpts from the statements of the teachers participating in the research regarding the areas where the knowledge gained in the P4C training is planned to be used are presented in the section below.

“I will share and use it in my projects, with my students at school and in my social life ” ...
Ö21

“As an English teacher at unit entrances, I plan to use it in warm-up activities”... S5

“I plan to use information with children at school and in my daily life to accompany them in their questioning”... S1

Findings on the Effects of P4C Teacher Training on Daily Life During the Pandemic Period

The findings regarding the areas where the teachers participating in the research plan to use the knowledge they learned after the application are presented in Figure 4 below

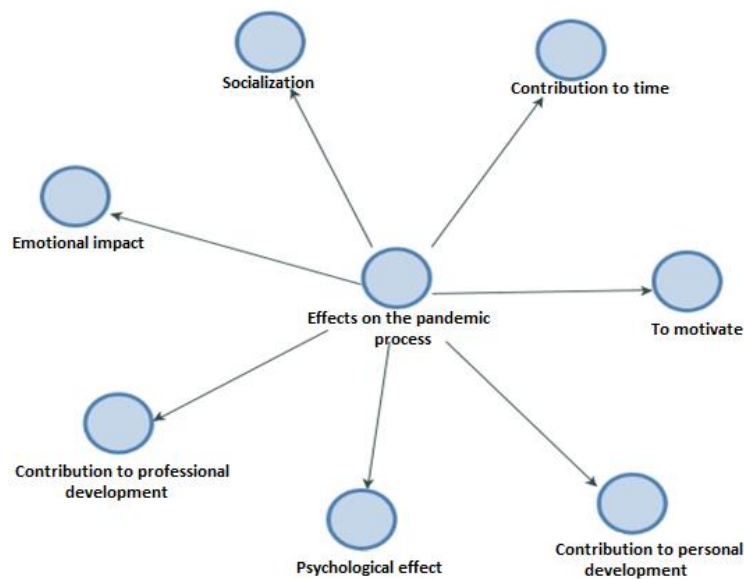


Figure 4. Effects of P4C Teacher Training on the pandemic process

The frequencies of the answers given to the research findings regarding the effects of P4C training, which is carried out with the distance education model, on the daily life of teachers during the pandemic period in Figure 4 presented above are as follows:

Provided socialization by meeting new people (f=14), being happy to learn new things (f=11), Contribution to professional development (f=7), Making you feel good psychologically (f=6), Contributing to personal development (F=4), Increasing motivation (f= 3), benefit in using time effectively (f=3), it seems like a medicine to the pandemic period (f=3), Contributing to self-development in different fields (f=2), happiness to see people making an effort (f=1), the comfort of easy access to trainings (f=1).

Excerpts from the statements of the teachers participating in the research regarding the effects of P4C training on the pandemic process are presented in the section below.

“It was very good and it had a great impact on us to think about a subject from different perspectives, to discuss, to share ideas, to reinforce existing information, and to acquire new information together with teachers from different branches.”....K19

“The connections I made at these meetings during the pandemic period kept me alive, my enthusiasm for learning and curiosity gave me a new focus of purpose”.....K 6

“Apart from the technical problems I experienced, it was a training I attended with pleasure. It was very effective in terms of filling the time with quality during the pandemic process. I think it feels good to create an in-group relationship dynamic and meet new people”.....K14

Findings on the Positive Contributions of Distance Education

The findings of the teachers participating in the research regarding the positive contributions of distance education are presented in Figure 5 below.

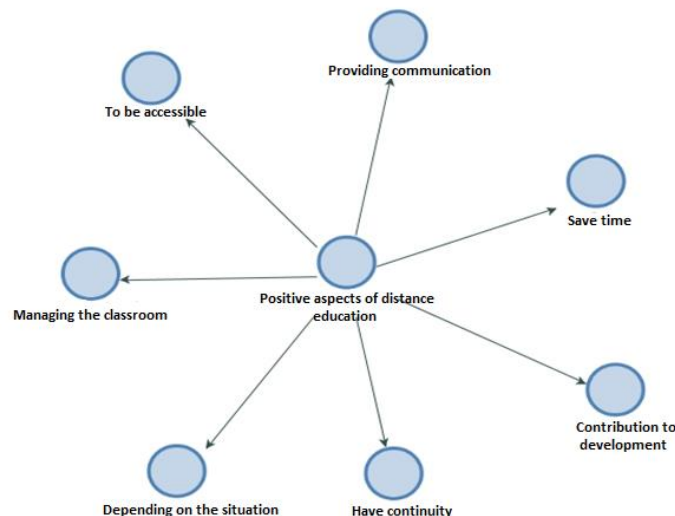


Figure 5. Positive contributions of distance education

In Figure 5 presented above, the frequencies of their responses to the research findings regarding the positive contributions of distance education are as follows:

Enabling communication with people in different places (f=14) being accessible to more people (f=9), facilitating classroom management (f=7), providing accessibility in all situations (f=5), non-interruption of studies (f =3), Contributing to the development of the person (f=2), saving time (f=2), saving space (f=1).

Excerpts from the statements of the teachers participating in the research regarding the positive contributions of distance education are presented in the section below.

“Having friends from different provinces added a different color. It saved time. We received training in a more comfortable and safe environment. Some activities might have been different face-to-face, but the planned and programmed work of both our coordinators and educators in distance education reflected on us positively”....Ö 8

“No activity can replace face-to-face education, but I think that distance education is very productive in general, as long as there is enthusiasm for learning”....Ö 3“

I think that digital platforms have been very beneficial in the distance education process in terms of being easily accessible”.....Ö 11

Findings on Limitations of Distance Education

The findings of the teachers participating in the research regarding the limited aspects of distance education are presented in Figure 6 below.

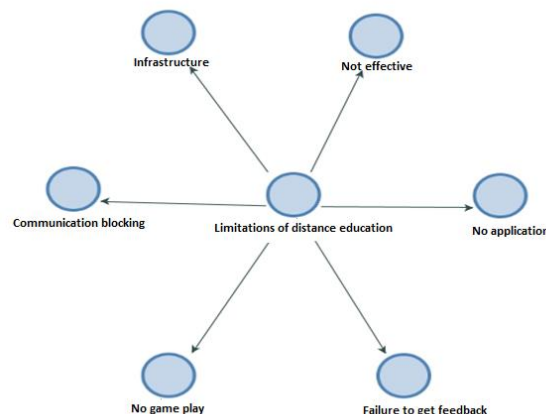


Figure 6. Limitations of distance education

In Figure 6 presented above, the frequencies of their responses to the research findings regarding the positive contributions of distance education are as follows:

Experiencing technical and infrastructure problems (f=17), having social distance between people (f=9), inability to perform game activities (f=4), not getting immediate feedback (f=4), having difficulty in organizing practical activities (f=3), not as effective as face-to-face (f=2).

Excerpts from the statements of the teachers participating in the research regarding the limitations of distance education are presented in the section below.

“There were some technical problems with the internet infrastructure. There were interruptions. Sometimes some sites could not be reached due to system density”....K28

“The limitations of distance education are not being able to express yourself as you want, not being able to intervene immediately. Receiving feedback at the same time is also among its limitations”....K20

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this research, it is aimed to determine the views of teachers about P4C education, which is applied as a distance education model.

When the findings obtained as a result of the research were analyzed, it was determined that teachers were curious about how P4C applications were applied in the classroom, what their effects were on developing thinking skills, which resources and materials they could use in the classroom application process, and what was included in the content of P4C applications.

However, the teachers participating in the research stated that at the end of the P4C education process implemented as a distance education model, how this method will be applied in the classrooms, what are the contributions of children to different developmental areas, the importance of listening, that it can be realized with the distance education model, that it provides a pleasant learning experience, that there is no relationship between ideas and character. They stated that ideas can be developed from different perspectives, that they realized and learned what the roles of teachers and students should be during the implementation process.

The teachers who participated in the research stated that they would apply what they learned after the P4C education application in their own classrooms, in the education of their own children, and in their project work. However, they stated that they would share what they learned with their

colleagues and parents. At the same time, they plan to use what they have learned in all lessons and in question preparation practices. Studies have shown that the approach to philosophy with children develops skills such as structuring concepts, questioning, reasoning, interpretation, inferring and relating meanings (Fisher 2005). Experimental studies were conducted to determine the effects on variables such as expressive language, social development, listening skills, and emotional intelligence. (Cassidy & Christie 2013; Doherr, 2000; Fields 1995; Giménez-Dasí , Quintanilla) and Daniel 2013; HaImani , Ahghar and Naraghi 2016; Lipman , Sharp and Oscanyan 1980; Ghaedi , Mahdian and Fomani 2015; Naraghi , et al ., 2013; Pourtaghia , Hosseinib and Hejazia 2014)

With the philosophy education for children, the idea that teachers can have more than one correct answer to a question, that there are different perspectives and that this can be carried to the classroom environment, and that philosophy can be used as a method for this purpose has emerged. As a matter of fact, Haynes and Murriss (2011) stated that philosophy education for children encourages them to change their beliefs about knowledge by criticizing the role of the teacher in the classroom during the teacher education process.

The teachers who participated in the research stated that the P4C education carried out with the distance education model has positive contributions to their daily lives during the pandemic periods. They stated that thanks to this training, they met new people and socialized, learning new things made them feel happy and psychologically well. They also stated that this training contributes to both professional and personal development and supports easy access to education.

The teachers who participated in the research stated that distance education enables communication with many people living in different places, facilitates classroom management, and ensures accessibility without interruption in all conditions. In addition, the teachers who participated in the research also stated that distance education supports their personal development and saves space and time. similarly _ Uzoğlu (2017) interviews with prospective teachers - on distance education in positive evaluations of time and space, independence, affordability and access to learning resources again . In addition, another system " students with disabilities who cannot go to school education opportunity and according to the individual pace of the students. as helping to learn. However, Yenilmez, Balbagç, and Turgut (2017) state that distance education is mostly preferred because of the current education. while evaluating it as enabling the education of individuals outside of it; stated the least preferred reason as supporting individual education. Pınar and Akgül (2020), in their study students Pandemic He concluded that he found the distance education applications implemented during his period useful and evaluated it as a good alternative to stay in touch with education.

Contrarily, the teachers who participated in the study reported that limitations were imposed by the technical and infrastructure challenges in distance education, the lack of social interaction, and the ineffective implementation of interactive activities such as games. However, they stated that there were difficulties in the learning-teaching process, not being able to get instant feedback and in the realization of applied studies. As a matter of fact, in studies conducted in literature, it is stated that teachers and students encounter internet and computer inadequacy and technical problems in technology during the distance education process (Özdoğan & Berkan, 2020). In addition, it is stated that it is more difficult for students in rural areas to participate in distance education and they are disadvantaged in participating in distance education compared to their other friends because their opportunities are not sufficient (Ramos- Morcillo et al., 2020).

In addition, the fact that the participation in the lesson is under the control of the students or their parents may lead to a decrease in the participation of the students who do not have sufficient sense of responsibility about the lesson. Kakakuş et al., who reached a similar conclusion that student-teacher interaction decreased in distance education. (2020) concluded in their studies that providing communication only through a technical tool in the distance education process negatively affects the course communication and social skills of teacher candidates.

In addition, they stated that the courses given with the distance education application should be of a quality that will provide interaction and communication between the faculty members and students. Again, in a similar study, it was concluded that because effective communication could not be established between teachers and students, permanent learning could not be achieved in the distance education process (Sığın, 2020). In this case, the limited interaction in the lessons is seen as the most obvious problem in distance education

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The authors declare no competing interest.

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