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How do you know me? How do you look at me? A Study on Teachers' ways of getting to know their students

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Abstract

Getting to know someone is to know what characteristics that person has. Teachers who know their students well and are aware of their individual differences can create quality educational environments designed according to their interests, abilities, needs and characteristics. This study focuses on ways that teachers frequently use to get to know their students. The aim of the study is to reveal what factors primary school teachers consider in order to get to know their students and how they evaluate their students. Participants consist of 307 primary school teachers working in primary schools in Turkey. The teachers were asked what ways they used to get to know their students and what they paid attention to about their students. Content analysis was used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within qualitative data, and appropriate codes and categories were created. Our results demonstrated that the teachers mostly looked at the academic performance, especially the students' past and present grades, to get to know the students, and that teachers neglected the way of looking at student's imagination, needs, wishes and expectations.

Keywords: Getting To Know The Student, Personality, Primary School Teacher, Student Characteristics

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INTRODUCTION

In order to get to know a person, it is necessary to collect information about the person and evaluate this information in a meaningful way. Knowing students means more than merely acquiring social or administrative information — students' names and ages, height, weight, health status, something about their friendship circles, a bit about their family backgrounds, their grades, a few statistics from their academic record. Knowing students means getting to know them in terms of their interests and abilities, success and failures, personal and social adjustment, problems, weaknesses and strengths, interests, attitudes and values, and the environment in which they grow. Getting to know the students, beyond knowing them just as students in the classroom, is to know their likes and dislikes, what they are good at, what they can and cannot do.

Learning about and getting to know the students is significant and necessary to create a safe, respectful learning environment and strong connections with the students. Regardless of the level of education, it is necessary to get to know the students in order to be able to teach effectively. In this way, learning environments become more productive. It is a supportive action to get to know the students and prepare them for the future according to their interests and abilities. In order to improve their students' beliefs about their capabilities, educators should be aware of students' personality antecedents.

In schools this action is the responsibility of the teacher. Effective teachers know their students, and utilize this knowledge to adapt their instruction. In order to get to know the students it is necessary to know and understand their physical and biological characteristics, general and special abilities, interests, academic background, success, attitudes and values, preferences and expectations, self-perception, emotional and social adjustment, family structure, and socioeconomic background. It will be much easier to solve potential problems that may arise in the future if students, who are the main material of education, are well known.

Getting to know students greatly affects the success of both students and teachers. In order to get to know the students, it is necessary to know not only their personal characteristics, but also how they learn. Information of a child's learning traits can also help a teacher more accurately interpret classroom behavior. Teachers who know how their students learn can guide them and lead them to grow in their learning. The more the teachers get to know their students the better they can teach them, in a way that they will learn.

There is a strong belief that considering students' needs is essential for developing a learner-centered curriculum. Students' thoughts, feelings, and attitudes generally determine their level of interest in learning and participation in class. For this reason, getting to know and understand students should be a primary goal in teaching (Fisette, 2010). Teachers should also try to get to know the students in depth in order to implement the curriculum effectively and to make accurate decisions in determining the methods to be used in the lessons. Teachers who know their students well and are aware of individual differences can create quality and effective educational environments designed according to their interests, needs and characteristics. Similarly, the knowledge, skills and values to be gained, the methods to be applied, the materials to be chosen or many other educational contents can be arranged more efficiently.

If teachers know their students' characteristics better, they can support them individually and academically, and can enhance students' learning experiences. They can create opportunities for students to get to know themselves. During the meetings with parents they can give more detailed and objective information about their children.

Knowing about the students is more aligned with the pedagogical side of the professional development efforts. Knowing the students can have a direct and beneficial impact on the students' learning of the course content, in their learning how to learn. But the teachers are limited in their creativity at finding different ways to know about their students (Hawk, 2017).

Teachers consciously use some pedagogical and scientific methods to get to know their students. But sometimes they make some evaluations as a result of experiences without being aware of it. These evaluations affect their perceptions about the students. For this reason, it is very important to reveal what factors teachers consider in order to get to know and evaluate their students in this process.

The aim of this study is to determine what primary school teachers pay attention to get to know their students and which recognition methods they use. In other words, the aim is to examine teachers' behaviors of getting to know students.

METHOD

Research Paradigm

This study employed qualitative research paradigm and the case study design. Case study is an important method of obtaining information because it provides rich and important perspectives on events and behaviors (Brown, 2008). Case study is a method in which a single case or event is analyzed in-depth. In the case study, data is collected systematically and what is happening in the real environment is researched. In this research behaviors of primary teachers about getting to know their students are examined in depth. Therefore, the case of the study is teachers' "getting to know students" behaviors.

Participants

Maximum variation sampling method was used to select the participants of this study. The maximum variation sampling criteria used in social research are generally the social or individual variables such as the profession of the person, teaching experience, age, gender, ethnicity, and health status (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Within the scope of this study, the participants were varied in terms of gender, age, teaching experience and type of school studied. Three hundred and seven primary school teachers working in private schools or public schools in Turkey participated in this research. Of all the participants, 187 were female teachers and 120 were male teachers. The ages of the teachers varied between 24 and 55 and the average age was 39 years. Teachers have at least 2 years of teaching experience and at most 29 years of teaching experience.

Table 1. Distribution of the participants by gender and school type and teaching experience

Teaching experience	Public school		Private school		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Less than 5 years	5	7	8	6	26
5 to 10 years	26	17	18	5	66
10 to 20 years	89	45	10	12	156
Over 20 years	23	28	8	-	59
Total	240		67		307

As shown in Table 1, of all the participants, 240 worked in public schools and 67 worked in private schools. Twenty-six teachers had less than five years of teaching experience, sixty-six teachers had five to ten years of experience, one hundred and fifty-six teachers had ten to twenty years of experience and fifty-nine teachers had more than twenty years of experience.

Data Gathering Procedures

In accordance with the planned data collection procedure, phone and e-mail interviews were scheduled for 246 of 307 primary school teachers, and 61 teachers were interviewed face to face. Teachers were asked which ways they used to get to know their students and what they paid attention

to. The main question of the study directed to teachers was: What are effective and usable ways in which to know more about the students?

A structured interviewing form with the purpose of the study was sent to 246 teachers and their answers were collected in writing. Face to face interviews were held in the schools where the teachers work or in the researcher's office. Additional questions were used during face-to-face interviews, in a sense, evidence was sought for data collected from 246 teachers. Content analysis was conducted for all data, and appropriate codes and categories were created. Below are the process steps of the study.

- Creating a research plan and preparing interview questions
- Identifying participants
- Accessing participants' contact information
- Collecting data via e-mail or phone call
- Organizing the collected data, identifying the typical issues
- Collecting data via face-to-face interviews and seeking evidences about previous data
- Reorganizing all data, creating codes and categories
- Content analysis and reporting

Validity, Reliability and Credibility of the Study

To increase the internal validity of the study peer examination was used. During peer examination the researchers discussed this research process, data gathering tool and findings with neutral colleagues who have experience of qualitative research. The data, which was gathered via phone calls and e-mail, was checked by the data source (sixty-one teachers) during face to face interviews. This member checks ensured that the data, which was gathered via phone calls and e-mail, and interpretations were tested by other teachers of from which data are solicited. Researchers stated their opinions and thoughts at the beginning of the study. To enhance external validity in this study, the procedures in which using rich description and typicality category techniques were followed. The chain of evidence created through face to face interviews was used to increase the construct validity of the study. Planning was done and the steps were determined before starting the study. For reliability, the researchers developed the study step by step in a certain system and explained each step in detail. During the face-to-face interviews, new issues regarding the case examined were noted, and were discussed with the teachers during the next interview. The first author of this study conducted the analysis, and the second author also checked the findings. The research report was shared with the reader in as much detail as possible.

Findings and Interpretation

As shown in Figure 1, teachers' behaviors of getting to know students were categorized in nine themes. The most frequently mentioned way of getting to know students among the teachers participating in the study was (1) to follow the students' school success. It was followed by the (2) "works created by the students". Other getting to know methods mentioned by the teachers were as follows: (3) examining students' interests and hobbies, (4) observing students' relationships, (5) looking at students' attitudes and behaviors, (6) observing students' life skills, (7) collecting information about the student's family, (8) learning students' wishes, needs and expectations, (9) listening to students' dreams and observing their imagination. In Figure 1 there are codes and categories created from what teachers say about getting to know their students.

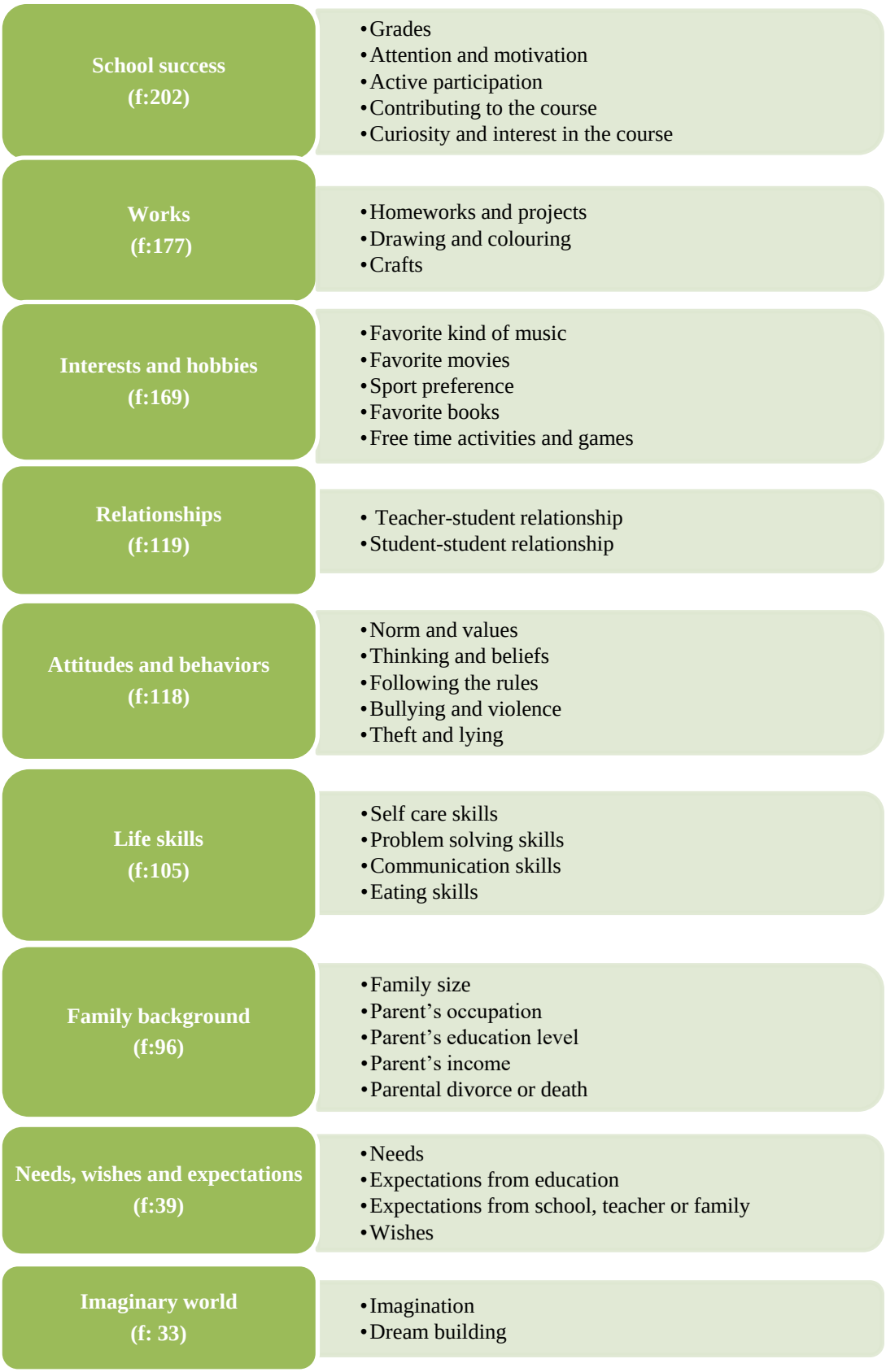

Figure 1. Categories and codes related to teachers' ways of getting to know the student

Two hundred and two teachers answered saying "school success" to the question about what is the most effective way to get to know students. One hundred and seventy-seven teachers talked about the works created by the students and one hundred and sixty-nine teachers talked about the students' interests and hobbies. Only thirty-nine teachers mentioned about the necessity of learning students' needs, wishes and expectations. Another striking finding was that very few teachers stated that students' imaginations is one of the primary ways to get to know them. Categories shown in Figure 1 was discussed below in order of frequency.

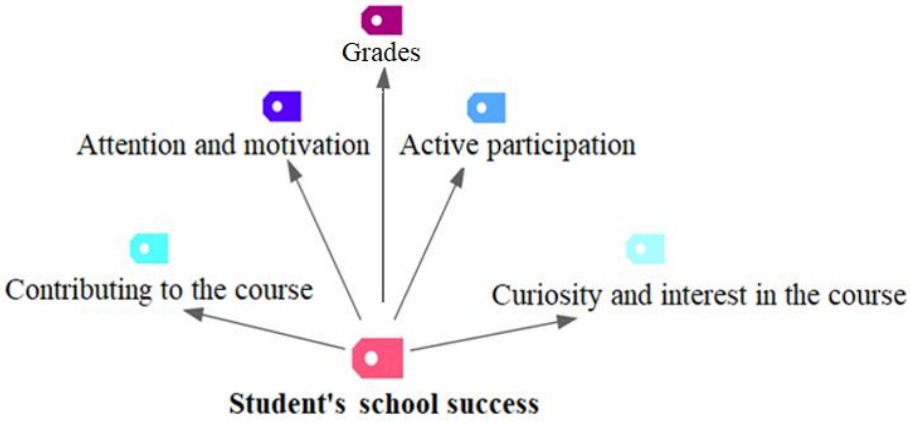

Figure 2. Codes related to school success

Academic success was one of the primary ways of the teachers to have an opinion about students' personality traits and to discover their characteristics that distinguish them from others. Five codes emerged for the school success category: Grades, attention and motivation, active participation, contributing to the course, curiosity and interest in the course. It was understood that the most common thing that two hundred and two teachers do about getting to know their students is to look their curiosity and interest in the course, their contribution and participation to the course, their attention and motivation, and as a natural result of all of them, engagement, academic success or academic performance. In addition, the grades that students got now and in the past were valid recognition tool for teachers. The teachers' emphasis on grades was the most striking finding in this category.

According to the teachers, the student who actively participates or contributes to the course can be described as a "responsible person". Students' interest in the course, curiosity and motivation can give indirect information about their interests. High academic performance and school success can give clues about the student's positive personal characteristics. This finding is consistent with the results of the prior researches that think there is a relationship between personal characteristics and academic performance (Bipp, Steinmayr, & Spinath, 2008; Caprara, Vecchione, Alessandri, Gerbino, & Barbaranelli, 2011; De Raad, & Schouwenburg, 1996; Di Giunta, Alessandri, Gerbino, Kanacri, Zuffiano, & Caprara, 2013; Hair & Graziano, 2003; Ivcevic, & Brackett, 2014; Jensen, 2015; Kim and Schniederjans, 2004; Laidra, Pullmann, & Allik, 2007; Marsh, Trautwein, Ludtke, Koller, & Baumert, 2006; Poropat, 2009; Schniederjans, & Kim, 2005; Zimmerman, & Schunk, 2011; Zuffianò, Alessandri, Gerbino, Luengo Kanacri, Di Giunta, Milioni, & Caprara, 2013).

According to Ivcevic and Brackett (2014), school success is an ideal criterion in personality research, where broad and relatively stable attributes are used to predict complex outcomes. Hakimi, Hejazi and Lavasani (2011) studied the relationships between personality traits and academic achievement among students. Results revealed personality traits were significantly related to academic achievement. Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, and Kelly (2007), tested the importance of grit for success. Their research's findings suggested that the achievement of difficult goals entails not only talent but also the sustained and focused application of talent over time. According to them conscientious individuals are characteristically thorough, careful, reliable, organized, industrious, and self-controlled.

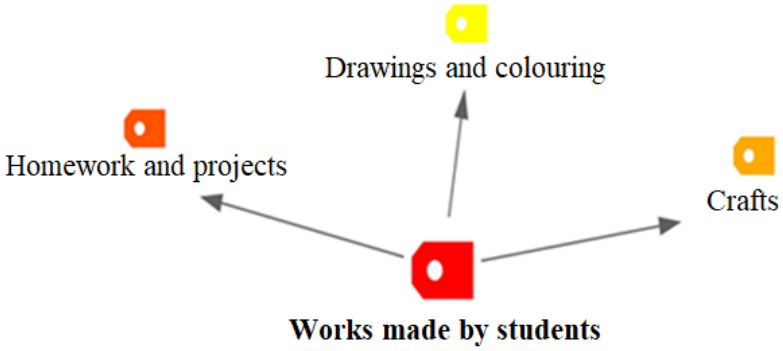

Figure 3. Codes related to the works created by students

One hundred and seventy-seven teachers stated that they looked at the works created by the students to get to know their students. Three codes emerged for the school success category: Homeworks and projects, drawing and colouring and crafts. But the teachers mostly talked about students' homework and projects.

As shown in Figure 3, the teachers believed that the quality of homework, crafts or the pictures drawn by the students could provide information about students' working habits and their other characteristics. The fact that the students created quality products or made great efforts to achieve this made teachers think that the students had positive personality traits.

Teachers tend to attribute differences in homework effort to what they perceive to be students' personality traits, carefulness, conscientiousness, and laziness (Trautwein & Lüdtke, 2009). The model proposed by Trautwein, Lüdtke, Schnyder and Niggli, (2006) showed a strong relationship between homework effort and student's characteristics. Similarly, in the research conducted by Trautwein and Lüdtke (2009) they found conscientiousness, expectancy beliefs, and value beliefs to significantly predict homework effort. There are also many studies that find a relationship between homework and student's characteristics as self-regulation, self-control, intrinsic interest, self-efficacy, perceived responsibility for learning, conscientious, effort, setting goals, self-reflection, managing time, procrastination (Bembenutty, 2009; Göllner, Damian, Rose, Spengler, Trautwein, Nagengast, & Roberts, 2017; Katz, Eilot, & Nevo, 2014; Ramdass, & Zimmerman, 2011; Stoeger, & Ziegler, 2008; Trautwein, 2007; Trautwein & Lüdtke, 2007; Xu, 2008; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2005).

Some teachers think that crafts, drawing or coloring activities will make it easier to learn about students. These teachers stated that they made inferences about the personal characteristics of the students based on their drawings. This view of the teachers also has been questioned through scientific studies. There are some studies in the literature claiming that there is a relationship between child drawings and their personality traits (Cantlay, 1996; Cherney, Seiwert, Dickey, & Flichtbeil, 2006; Einarsdottir, Dockett, & Perry, 2009; Harrison, Clarke, & Ungerer, 2007; Longobardi, Pasta, Gastaldi, Prino, 2017; McGrath, Bergen, & Sweller, 2017; Merriman & Guerin, 2006). The pictures provide teachers with descriptive information about their students' feelings and thoughts. Children's drawings are actively used to understand and analyze the emotional thoughts of the child. With drawings children reflect their inner worlds that they cannot explain to other people in verbal language (Melekoğlu, Tunç Paftalı & Melekoğlu, 2015; Türkcan, 2013; Ulutaş ve Ersoy, 2004; Yavuzer, 2012). Children feel and think freely when they are drawing the picture. Children see the world as they perceive it and reflect what they see to the external environment. Pictures give information about the attitudes and behaviors of the person (Halmatov, 2015).

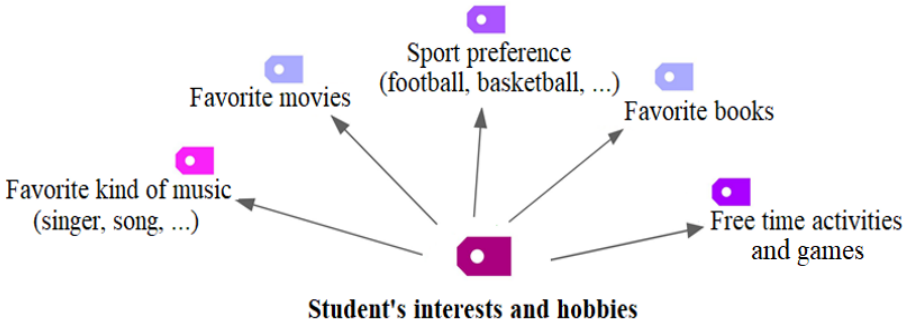

Figure 4. Codes related to the interests and hobbies

Five codes emerged for the interests and hobbies category: Interests and hobbies, favorite kind of music, favorite movies, sport preference, favorite books, free time activities and games. The teachers stated that one of the things they do most about getting to know their students is to look at the students' interests and hobbies. The remarkable finding about the interests and hobbies category was that the teachers stated that they focused mostly on books. They said that they believe personality type influences the interests and kinds of hobbies people engage in. According to them, for example, social students like group sports, while others may like individual or solo sports. While some students like science fiction, thriller, or adventure movies, emotional students may like drama movies. Some kids may like popular rap music, others like metalic music. Some children like adventure books with plenty of pictures, some children like fairy tale books with prince and princess. Some of the students like indoor games, but the others like outdoor games. Teachers expressed that knowing and understanding the students' interests, hobbies, and what are important to them is necessary not only to get to know their students but also to treat them with kindness and respect. Do the students have a hobby? Which of the leisure activities do students prefer, such as riding a bike, surfing the internet, going to the cinema, and why? Who is their favorite song or singer? What are their favorite movies? What books do they enjoy reading? What type of sport do they like? Which games do they like, such as computer game, indoor game, outdoor game, individual game, group game, intelligence game? The answers to these questions are one of the primary ways for teachers to have a view about their student's personality traits and to discover their characteristics that are distinguish them from others.

According to one hundred and sixty-nine teachers, students' interests and hobbies give some clues about their personality traits. There are some studies in the literature that support teachers' thoughts. For example, some psychological studies have shown that personality traits are associated with media and book content preferences (Annalyn, Bos, Sigal, & Li, 2018; Kraaykamp, 2001). There are also some studies claiming a relationship between personal characteristics and the type of music listened, the type of movies watched, the preferred sports type, the games played and the hobbies (Bean, & Groth-Marnat, 2016; Boynton, 1940; Chamorro-Premuzic, & Furnham, 2007; Collins, & Freeman, 2013; Dobersek, & Bartling, 2008; Hegde, 2016; Rentfrow, & Gosling, 2003; Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin, 2011; Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Zilca, 2011; Sharma, 2015; Tirre, & Dixit, 1995). People's hobbies indicate to their personality type and that in turn would indicate as to which professions or job type would suit their personality. It is significant to understand hobby or a leisure activity as one of the factors influencing human personality (Morgan, King, Wiesz, & Schopler, 1986).

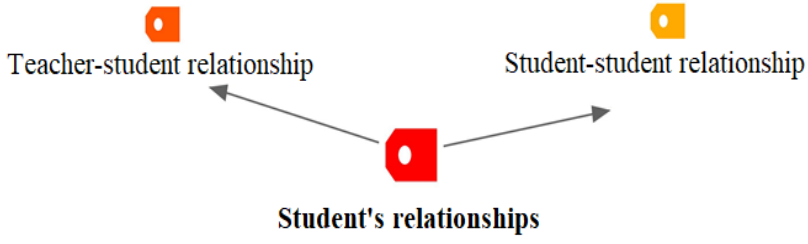

Figure 5. Codes related to the student's relationships

As shown in Figure 5, two codes emerged for the student's relationships category: Teacher-student relationship and student-student relationship. According to the teachers, observing the students' relationships was a good way to get to know them. The remarkable finding about the relationships category was that the teachers stated that they focused mostly on close friendships. One hundred and nineteen teachers stated that they watched the children while playing games, listening to courses or doing any work at any time. Because the students' relationships with friends or classmates can give important clues about whether they are social, extraverted, introverted, gentle, friendly or helpful. Also the teachers said that they think that the importance of individual characteristics varies with the type of relationship. For example, friends choose each other because of particular characteristics that they like. Therefore, teachers had the opinion that students who love each other have similar characteristics or students who conflict with each other have different personality traits. The findings of this study showed that the relationships with friends, classmates, classroom teachers or the other teachers at school are a method used by teachers to learn about the personality traits of students.

According to Goldberg (1990) personality affect how a person acts in a social context. Similarly, there are many studies in the literature examining the effect of personality traits in teacher-student and student-student relationships (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998; Auhagen & Hinde, 1997; Goldberg, 1990; Hartup, & Van Lieshout, 1995; Kokkinos, 2007; Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001; Reis, Capobianco, & Tsai, 2002).

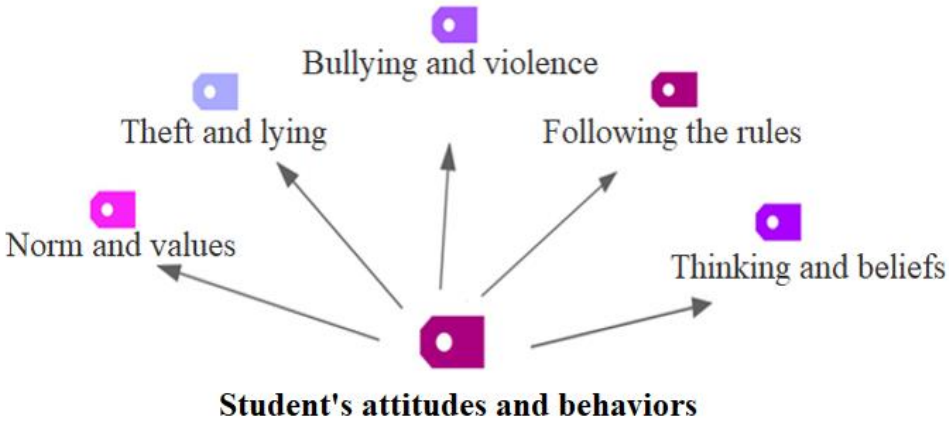

Figure 6. Codes related to the attitudes and behaviors

As shown in Figure 6, five codes emerged for the student's attitudes and behaviors category: Norm and values, theft and lying, bullying and violence, following the rules and thinking and beliefs. The teachers who participated in this study stated that they observed students' positive or negative attitudes and behaviors to get to know the students. According to one hundred and eighteen teachers, attitudes and behaviors depend on the person's caharactesistics. Do the students have a desire to achieve? How passionate and enthusiastic are the students when doing a task assigned to them? Does student follow school and classroom rules? Is student optimistic or pessimistic? Is student goal oriented? Does the student have positive thoughts? Is student prone to violence? Does the student steal? Does the student lie? The answers to all these questions can give teachers important clues to get to know their students in depth. After the interviews, the researchers found that the teachers were able to identify and focus more on students' negative attitudes and behaviors. In the literature, there are some studies examining the relationship between personality traits and bullying (Book, Volk, Hosker, 2012; van Geel, Goemans, Toprak, and Vedder, 2017), lying (Dobrow, 2016; Elaad, & Reizer, 2015), social goals and social failure (Erdley, Loomis, Cain, & Dumas-Hines, 1997).

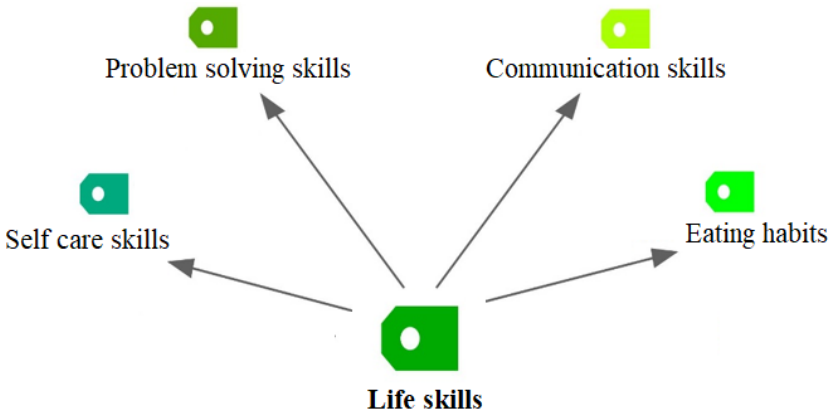

Figure 7. Codes related to the life skills

As shown in Figure 7, four codes emerged for the student's life skills category: Self care skills, problem solving skills, communication skills, eating skills. The teachers said that they observed the students' life skills to learn about them. Observing eating habits can help to get to know the students. What are the students' favorite foods? What are the foods they have never eaten or liked? Are the students eating healthy? What do they bring in their lunchbag? Similarly, observing of communication skills such as self-expression, using body language, preferred words and vocabulary was also a method used by teachers to get to know their students. Is the student a good listener? Is the student weak or strong in group work? In addition, problem solving skills such as defining the problem, gathering the information, generating possible solutions and evaluating were also an important recognition tool for teachers.

Finally, the teachers talked about self-care skills under this category. There were teachers who care about their students' smells as well as their self-care skills such as dressing, eating, and cleaning teeth. The most striking finding in this category was that teachers stated that they used the smell of students as a recognition tool. Although the idea of getting to know the students by their smell is interesting, the teachers stated that the student's smell provided them with information about whether the students regularly took a bath, their family's cleaning attitudes, their day-time wetting behaviors, and how often their clothes were changed. Scent was considered by researchers as the most remarkable result for the category of life skills.

In the literature there are some studies that examine the relationship between personality traits and life skills such as problem solving, working with group, and communication (Bommelje, Houston, & Smither, 2003; Daly, 2002; Drotar, & Sturm, 1992; D'Zurilla, Maydeu-Olivares, & Gallardo-Pujol, 2011; Forrester and Tashchian, 2010; Reiter-Palmon, Mumford, & Threlfall, 1998) and eating habits and personality traits (Goldberg & Stycker, 2002; Mõttus, Realo, Allik, Deary, Esko, & Metspalu, 2012; Wen, Tchong, & Ching, 2015).

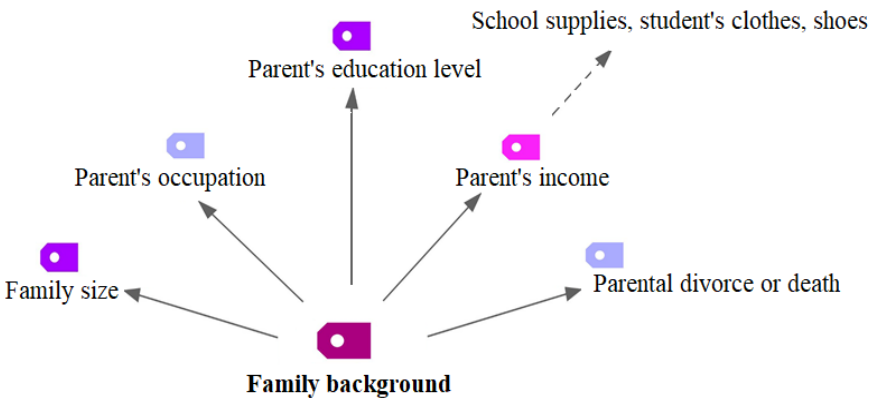

Figure 8. Codes related to family backround

As shown in Figure 8, five codes emerged for the family backround category: Family size, parent's occupation, parent's education level, parent's income and parental divorce or death. Family structure, family history, recent change or loss in the family, a family member's illness, a violent altercation between mother and father can affect the students emotionally. Ninety-six teachers who participated in the study thought that the family have very important genetic codes to getting to know the child, so the family size, parental socio-economic status, parental divorce and parental death affects the child's personality traits. Some of those teachers said they believed that there is a direct relationship between the profession of the mother and the father and the characteristics of the children. Some teachers said they thought that the education level of the family as well as the profession have important effects on the child's personality traits. There were teachers who think that children of well-educated families are more honest, respectful and friendly. On the contrary, there were also teachers who state that children of well-educated family are more selfish, asocial and aggressive. However, in both cases, the teachers claimed that the education level of the family affects the child's personality traits.

Some teachers stated that they believed that family size has an impact on the child's personality traits. According to them, children grown up with grand mother and grand father in big families and children grown in nuclear families show different characteristics. The teachers thought that the parents' divorce or death also has an impact on the student's character. And all of these were issues that must be emphasized in order to get to know the students.

However, what is interesting among findings examined in the context of this category is that some teachers stated that they can get to know the students through their clothes, shoes or school supplies. Those teachers come to a conclusion about the student's personality traits based on their family's income. Although occupational status and education level which are both of the indicators of parental socioeconomic status have been examined in some studies (Ayoub, Gosling, Potter, Shanahan, & Roberts, 2018; Salami, 2008; Slobodskaya, & Akhmetova, 2010; Spengler, Brunner, Damian, Lüdtke, Martin, & Roberts, 2015), no study directly examining the relationship between family's income and child's personality traits was found. Moreover, there wasn't a study investigating the relationship between the students' school supplies, clothes, shoes and their personality. However, there are some studies examining the relationship between family background and student's personality traits (Batool, & Aziz, 2018; Brennan, & Shaver, 1998; Eysenck, & Cookson, 1970; Lamb, 1978; Shah, 2018).

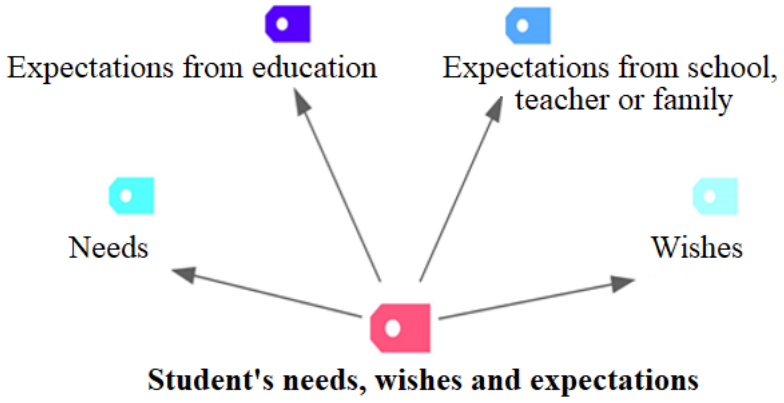

Figure 9. Codes related to needs, wishes and expectations

As shown in Figure 9, four codes emerged for the student's needs, wishes and expectations category: Needs, expectations from education, expectations from school, teacher or family and wishes. Some of the teachers who participated in the study said that they examine their needs, wishes and expectations in order to get to know their students. What kind of learning environment do the students desire? What are their expectations from the school, their teachers or their families? What are the students' wishes? According to thirty-nine teachers, with students should be chatted and their needs,

wishes and expectations should be asked. As Maslow proposed in his hierarchy of human needs, basic wants must be met before students can turn their attention to learning (Lester, 1990).

There are some studies in the literature examining the relationship of wishes, needs and expectations with personality (Dill, Anderson, Anderson, & Deuser, 1997; Kakhnovets, 2011; Lester, 1990; Nishimura, & Suzuki, 2016; Ryan, & Deci, 2008). In these studies, the necessity of considering the needs, wishes and expectations of the students was emphasized.

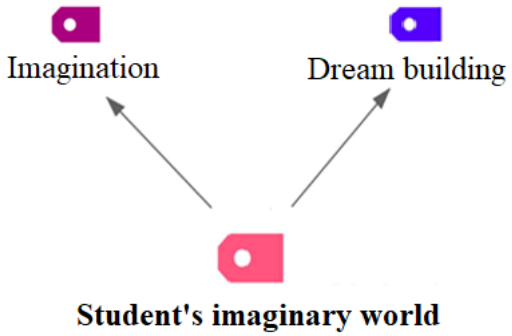

Figure 10. Codes related to student's imaginary world

As shown in Figure 10, two codes emerged for the student's imaginary world category: Imagination and dream building. The teachers stated that one of the best ways to get to know the children is to observe their imagination and whether they can dream or not. What are the characteristics of the students' imagination? How are the development of the students' imagination? Do the students dream? What kind of dreams do they have? Thirty-three teachers who participated in this study explained that they believe that children's imagination can give clues about their personality traits.

There are studies in the literature claiming that imagination is particularly related to creativity and creativity is a product of an executed imagination (Dziedziewicz, & Karwowski, 2015; Magno, 2009). Smolucha and Smolucha (1986) summarized Vygotsky's theory of creative imagination: 1) Imagination is the internalization of children's play. 2) Imagination is a higher mental function of as such is a consciously directed thought process. 3) Creative thinking involves the collaboration of imagination and thinking in concepts, which occurs first in adolescence but mature in adulthood. 4) Both artistic and scientific creativity require the collaboration of imagination and thinking in concepts (p. 3). Creativity is an important capacity for students to possess in order to face this fast-changing world. Gonzalez Garcia and Mukhopadhyay (2019) found creative imagination causes variations in specific aspects of creativity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personality is a very comprehensive concept and includes biological, psychological and hereditary characteristics, motives, thoughts, emotions, desires and behavior patterns. For this reason, it is essential to conduct comprehensive examinations and evaluations for the getting to know the person in guidance services. If the student is well known, the level of knowledge, skills, habits and values to be acquired, the method to be applied, the tools to be used, and the evaluation program to be applied can be determined more effectively.

For getting to know the person, there are many valid, reliable, useful tests such as anecdotes, information inventories, rating scales, achievement tests, personality tests, attitude scales, and non-test methods such as home visits, psychodrama. These methods are currently used professionally by both classroom teachers and counselors. Moreover, the necessity and importance of this has been emphasized for a very long time. But, the main thing that is not emphasized is the own tendencies of teachers use to get to know their students. It is a very important problem that the teacher applying the

methods of get to know the person is not be objective. Therefore, the important point to be emphasized should be to reveal the prejudices or personal evaluations of the teachers and to inform them about their prejudices. This study was carried out with this belief.

According to the findings of this study, it was understood that the teachers tried to get to know the students in a variety of ways. The most frequently used way by teachers is monitoring and observation -random or systematic. Although some teachers stated that they were acting with their feelings, it was understood that visible actions, products and behaviors were more frequently used to get to know the students.

The most important point for the various techniques and tools used to know the person is to refer to the person as a source of information. However, the finding of this study indicate that teachers preferred indirect ways instead of asking the students. Among the teachers who participated in the study, there were a few teachers who stated that they tried to get to know them by chatting with their students. Some teachers also explained that they obtained a lot of information from families and the student's immediate environment.

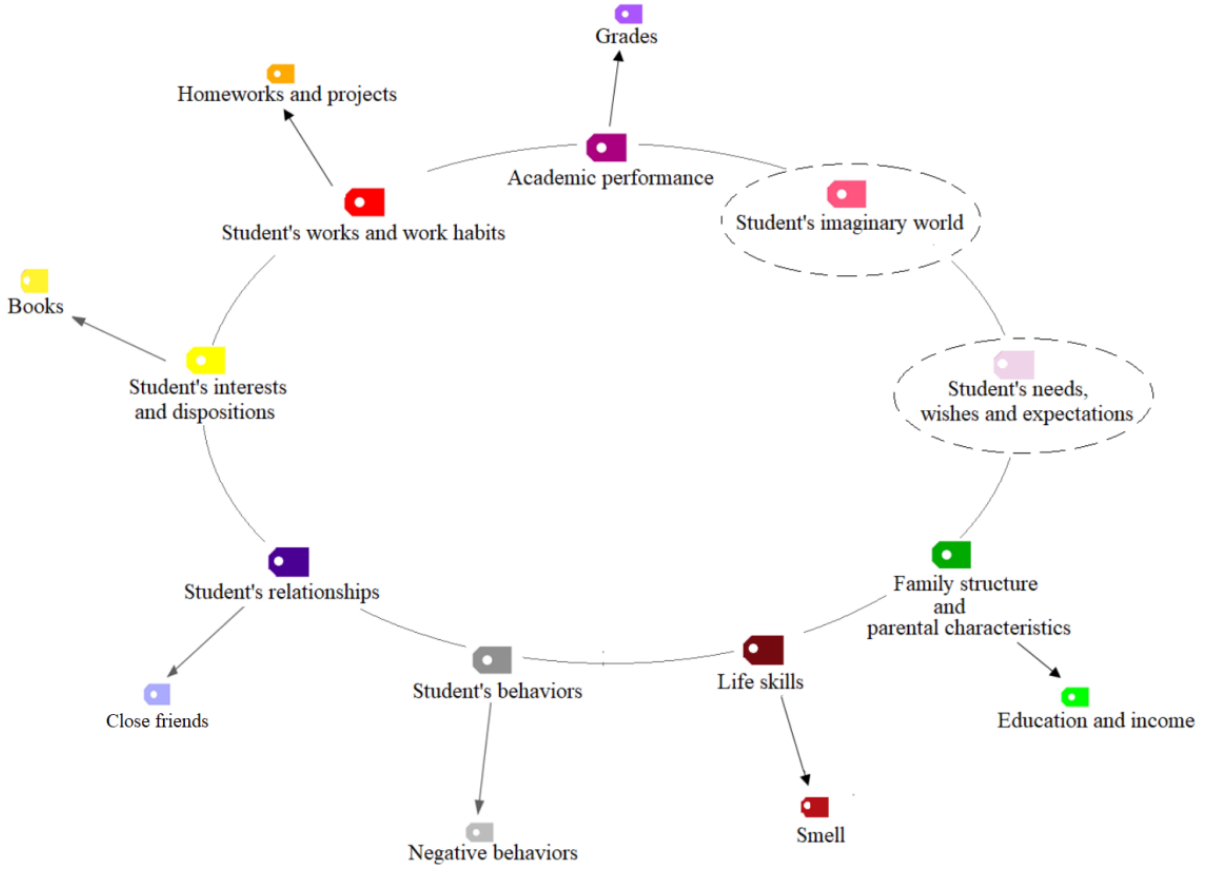

Figure 11. Teachers' ways of getting to know their students

In Figure 11, nine ways that teachers applied to get to know the students were shown collectively. Also the most remarkable codes took place for this ways in Figure 11. According to the findings, teachers are more concerned with what students do at school than what they do outside of school. The results of this study showed that teachers considered the most academic performance, especially the students' past and present grades, to get to know the students. Academic performance includes evidence of student's thinking skills, reading skills, attentional focus, past success, oral language development, written language, proficiency with sequencing, proficiency with categorization, and proficiency in identifying logical arguments (Powell, Kusuma-Powell, 2011). The teachers' effort to get to know their students by considering all of these means cognitive empathy. Cognitive emphaty requires trying to get inside the cognition of the student to see what is being

understood and what is being misunderstood. Trying to get to know students can improve teachers' cognitive empathy and this is very valuable for an efficient educational environment. The effort to come to know students is often accompanied by increased teacher emotional intelligence. As teachers learn about their students as individuals, they should enjoy greater flexibility of thought, greater empathy, greater patience, and more accurate attribution of responsibility (Powell, Kusuma-Powell, 2011).

According to the teachers, the products created by students such as crafts, drawings, homework or projects can give information about the students' work habits and the quality of the work done as well as can give opinion about the students' personality characteristics. The results of the study showed that teachers pay more attention to students' homework and projects to get to know them.

The result of the study showed that the third method that teachers used was to look at the students' interests and hobbies. The teachers said that they mostly focused on the books that their students read. However, the interesting finding here was that these teachers who took into account the students' interests and hobbies, did not care about their needs, wishes and expectations. Very few teachers have mentioned needs, wishes and expectations category. Similarly, looking at their imagination to get to know the students is one of the least talked about ways by teachers. One of the striking finding about these study is that the teachers who participated in the study mentioned little about the students' needs, wishes and expectations and their imagination. For this reason, these two categories are shown in Fig. 11 in dashed ellipses.

The students' relationship with their teachers and other students in the classroom is one of the ways to get opinions about students. The most emphasized subject for this category was close friends. The question of who are their students' close friends was what the teachers paid the most attention to. Another category is students' attitudes and behaviors. Identifying students' attitudes and behaviors, especially negative behaviors, is an important way of recognizing them. The result of the study showed that teachers focused more on students' negative behaviors such as lying, theft, and violence.

In the life skills category, teachers talked about problem solving skills, self-care skills, communication skills and eating habits. The interesting situation about this category was that some teachers stated that they evaluate students based on their scents. There were teachers who emphasize that the student's smell is very important data. Although the teachers observed whether the students were eating healthy foods, they did not use any statement about they were investigating students' general health status. In other words, none of the teachers mentioned that they collect information about students' health status to get to know their students.

Another way teachers used to get to know students was family structure and parental characteristics, especially education level and income. In addition to family size, loss in the family and parent's occupation, teachers stated that they mostly investigated family's education level and income.

Although the teachers stated that they use standardized tests, it was understood that the test results are not accepted as tools that provided valuable information to get to know the students. The teachers found their impressions much more valid and valuable. This can keep teachers away from the necessity to have realistic thoughts about their students' characteristics and make objective decisions. Different ways and strategies can be used to get to know the others as a natural consequence of being human. These ways and strategies can sometimes ensure accurate determinations, but sometimes they can lead to misconceptions about the students. Teachers should be aware of the criteria for getting to know their students and evaluating them. In other words, teachers should be aware of their own evaluations about their students. Therefore, it is necessary to study teachers' perceptions about their students and to determine their metacognitive strategies about getting to know the students. Teachers' awareness about the ways they use while getting to know their students can be used to correct deficiencies and mistakes caused by not detecting correctly. If teachers are made aware of the strategies they use in the process of getting to know the students, the teachers will realize what ways

they use to recognize the students, so they will also know themselves. Therefore, teachers will recognize their students with more objective criteria.

If teachers recognize the student in objective ways and know their peer status and academic status in the classroom, they can help them learn. It is easier to succeed in school if a student is physically able and attractive. In the school students can rank themselves and each other in terms of success (academic status) and perceived attractiveness and popularity (peer status). Low status members of the class talk less than others, and when they do speak up, no one takes their ideas seriously. Low-status group members have trouble getting their hands on materials for the group task. Consequently, low-status children learn less effectively and less efficiently than their high-status classmates (Cohen, 1998). To eliminate all these negativities and to enhance the self-esteem lost by the students with low academic and peer status, it is necessary to get to know the student. If teachers know peer status and academic status, they can help their students learn. Teachers who know their students well and are aware of the ways to get to know them, can also help students get to know themselves. Moreover, they can help their students to be recognized by other people. In this context, offering opportunities for the members of the classroom to get to know each other is one of the essential components of creating a positive classroom environment. When students and teachers know each other well, the greater is the chance that all members of the classroom will support each other and they will learn together.

CONCLUSIONS

Teachers should try to get to know the students in depth in order to make accurate decisions in organizing the programs they will apply to children and choosing the methods. One of the first steps to get to know students is to know what skills they are bringing into the classroom.

According to results of present study, it turned out that there are too many dimensions to get to know the individual. Measurement tools should be prepared in a way to obtain multi-dimensional data.

It is obvious that the student can behave differently in different environments. The student at home, the student at school or the student outside can be different from each other. Therefore, it is necessary to turn to the student from a multiple perspective.

The results of the study showed that students' needs, wishes and emotions were neglected. In the process of getting to know students, a caring and interested teacher can develop concord and trust not just between teacher and student but among students. This positive attitude and behaviors creates a psychologically safe and positive atmosphere in the classroom. In this context, the teacher is expected to be aware of the students' needs, desires and emotions, besides being compassionate.

Students' imaginary world can contain deep information about the students. Chating with children, exploring them, determine their needs, wishes and expectations at all levels, it is a good opportunity to get to know the students. As an alternative way, students may be asked to prepare mind maps of some concepts related to their personality. In this way, the teacher can able to design lessons that meet the needs of all students.

From a technological perspective, with the emergence of on-line and distance education, getting to know the students has become necessary and important for digital environments as well as face-to-face educational environments. In face-to-face teaching teachers can know their students, for instance, by direct questioning, observations, monitoring, psychodrama and communications. However, in digital environments it is more difficult to get to know the students. Future researchers can try to develop new methods for get to know the students in the digital environments, as well as what can be done to get to know the students in face-to-face education.

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