The Use of Literature Circle Technique in Teachers' Professional Development

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Abstract

Supporting teachers for their professional development is important. Literature circle technique has a potential to create and support professional learning communities. The purpose of this research was to examine how the literature circle can be used between teachers in order to enhance their professional development. In this qualitative study the action research approach was employed. The participants of the study were seven teachers working in a vocational high school in İstanbul. The duration of the study was one year. The teachers of different subject areas read nine books using the literature circle technique. They decided which books they were going to read together, read the same book and parts, organized 2-hour discussions weekly and attended the discussions after they had delivered the technical tasks. The research data was collected with focus group interviews, questionnaire form and field notes. The research findings showed that literature circle is suitable for teachers and can be used in professional learning communities. The teachers liked it very much as it provided retentive learning, allowed for learning from each other and made literature more effective. The teachers emphasized that they noticed the individual differences among the students and started to use suitable methods thanks to the technique. The literature circle technique provided teachers with an opportunity to better know each other, share experiences and opinions about day to day teaching practices.

Keywords: Literature circle, Professional learning, Reading habit, In-service training.

Contents

Contribution of this paper to the literature
This study contributes to the existing literature by examining how the literature circle can be used between teachers in order to enhance their professional development.

1. Introduction

Teachers need to improve themselves in order to adapt to the changing environment in teaching practices, teaching philosophies, subject-matter, student profile and technology during their professional careers. The speed of developments today has started to compel teachers to change rapidly. Accordingly, there have been very rapid and important developments and changes in education even in the last 15 years. For instance, constructivism, active learning, multiple-intelligence and student-centered education have affected educational systems through principles, instructional practices and assessment methods, causing radical changes. Social media and changing forms of communication have become an inseparable part of life. People have started to access all kinds of free sources when they want to learn anything. In line with these developments, roles attributed to students and teachers have changed. Teachers now need to prepare themselves cognitively, affectively and operationally for all current developments. They can also improve themselves through methods based on group interaction as well as through individual efforts. Some of the individual learning methods include participation in seminars and courses, online videos, source reading, research, experimentation, and action research. Mutual sharing and discussion of experiences and attainments gained in such ways refer to group learning. Professional learning community (PLC) investigated in this study is a model developed to ensure that teachers learn from each other in groups. Mullen (2009) defines PLC as a school organization model developed to ensure cooperation and learning among teachers for improving the learning of all students. General purpose of PLC is that teachers act as a collective group to improve each other's and students' learning mutually (Hefner, 2011). The point is to ensure the school achievement as a whole (Dufour, 2004). This approach is an effective way of ensuring students' learning and academic achievements (Murphy and Lick, 2005; Mullen and Hutinger, 2008; Mullen, 2009) and enhancing teacher leadership and increasing cooperation among employees (Mullen, 2009). Within the scope of PLC, teachers and school administrators hold meetings together or in small groups (Hord, 1997). Group members exchange opinions and cooperate in areas on which they reach a consensus to try to achieve their goals (Moyer *et al.*, 2006).

No matter which activity is performed PLCs have certain common characteristics: Teachers and school administrators participating in PLC share the mission and vision of the school and act in accordance with a mutual purpose. Participants mainly aim to increase student achievement. They cooperate in all applications. They provide observation, coaching, etc. for improving each other professionally. In the end, they put information and attainments they acquired into practice (Kruse *et al.*, 1994; Louis *et al.*, 1995; Newmann, 1996; Louis and Marks, 1998; Dufour, 2004; Hord, 2004; Stoll *et al.*, 2006). Hord (2004) emphasizes that supportive roles should be attributed to school administrators for PLC. Shared points in studies on defining PLC include improvement of education (Mullen, 2009) ensuring the student learning (Hord, 1997; Burnette, 2002; Bolam *et al.*, 2005; Stoll *et al.*, 2006; Mullen, 2009) professional development of teachers (Hord, 1997; Bolam *et al.*, 2005; DuFour *et al.*, 2006; Stoll *et al.*, 2006; Hord *et al.*, 2009) and cooperation (DuFour *et al.*, 2006).

Professional learning communities focus on learning rather than teaching (Dufour, 2004). Using active learning methods such as discussion, sharing and application is a crucial factor that facilitates teacher participation in the process and increases the success of application (Desimone *et al.*, 2002). PLC is actually a version of constructivism applied to teacher professional development and involves activities of efficient participation, cooperation, reflective thinking, interview, feedback, and application (Hord and Sommers, 2008; Tobia and Hord, 2012; Knowles *et al.*, 2014). With this characteristic of PLC, teachers who take part in PLC transit from teacher-centered to student-centered practices more easily (Vescio *et al.*, 2008; Sai and Siraj, 2015).

If PLC is used efficiently, student learning is primarily enhanced which is the main purpose (Hord and Rutherford, 1998; Bryk *et al.*, 1999; Reyes *et al.*, 1999; DuFour *et al.*, 2004). Additionally, participants' motivation, knowledge level and teaching skills is improved (Marks and Printy, 2003; Shellard, 2003). Teachers participating in PLC perform more authentic and challenging practices in their classes to ensure students' retentive learning (Louis and Marks, 1998). Professional learning communities have numerous styles of application. Caine and Caine (2010) defines five techniques: study groups, action research teams, communities of practice, discussion groups, and learning cycles. Cordingley *et al.* (2004) states that PLC includes peer coaching, mutual preparation of materials, mutual development of plans, and professional discussion groups. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) argue that teachers can discuss course contents, materials, teaching methods and colleague observations. The researchers also suggest that teachers should conduct and publish scientific research on the instructional process. In addition to these techniques, literature cycle is a teaching technique that can be used within the scope of professional learning community (Church and Swain, 2009). Although the technique was initially developed for and have been applied to students, it is also suitable for adult education (Furr, 2003).

Literature circle is a teaching method in which participants read a book they have chosen in parts and by organizing weekly discussions (Daniels, 2002). This method helps achieve quite successful results for instilling reading habit to the students, making them enjoy reading book and improving their reading comprehension skills (Mizerka, 1999; Chiang and Huang, 2005; Olsen, 2007; Stabile, 2009; Avcı and Yüksel, 2011). Literature circle is based on the constructivist theory just like PLC (Avcı and Yüksel, 2014). In discussion, how individuals can express what they have learned from the book, learning different perspectives, doing research on a given part of the book (Tracey and Morrow, 2006) and actualization of social learning (Hsu, 2004) can be provided as evidence that literature circle is about constructivist learning. Literature circle is composed of the combination of individual learning and cooperative learning methods (Hsu, 2004; Tracey and Morrow, 2006). As can be seen above, cooperation, utilizing past experience, featuring not teaching but learning, and theoretical foundations based on constructivism are among common characteristics of PLC and literature circle. All these similarities can be presented as evidence that literature circle can be used in PLC.

Only study on the use of literature circle in PLC or that it can be used in PLC was performed by Monroe-Baillargeon and Shema (2010). That research is also the only study regarding the use of literature circle by

teachers as a technique. As mentioned above, although literature circle is deemed theoretically suitable for application in PLC, there are no sufficient data on its practical suitability, experienced problems and gained benefits. This study will provide benefit to fill the current gap in the field and offer essential information on the use of literature circle among practicing teachers.

In order to address the research problem following research questions were addressed:

1. In what ways the literature circle technique supports teachers' professional development?
2. Can literature circle be used as a teaching technique in professional learning communities?

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Model

This research utilized the action research technique which is a qualitative research model. Action research is performed by teachers and with the support of universities as occasion requires to improve their teaching and their schools as a whole (Johnson, 2012). In this study, the literature circle method was implemented by the researcher-teacher who is a co-author in accordance with action research.

As action research is among qualitative research (Johnson, 2012) principles of qualitative research model were utilized in the design, sample selection, development of data collection instruments, data collection and data analysis.

2.2. Research Group

The research was conducted in a vocational high school in an area with low socioeconomic level in Istanbul. The study started with eight teachers in the spring term of 2016-2017 academic year. Two of them left the group as they were assigned to another school in summer. One teacher replaced them in the academic year of 2017-2018. Subject-matter areas of the teachers were Health Information, Office Management, Food Technology (2), Textile, History, and Graphic and Design. All the teachers are women and had teaching experience of 5-to-27 years. The teachers participated in the study voluntarily.

2.3. Application Process

The application process started with the researcher-teacher introducing the method to other teachers and searching for volunteered participants. The volunteered 8-individual group decided to read "Beş Şehir" ("*Five Cities*") for starters. For book reading, a five-week period was determined to read one city each week. A 2-hour meeting was planned for discussion one day a week. In accordance with the literature circle technique, tasks were assigned to the teachers and the tasks were changed weekly. These tasks specified in this research were: investigator, part expert, correlator, artist, summarizer, researcher, word hunter, and character master (Avcı and Yüksel, 2014). All participants had read and delivered their tasks before attending the meetings. On the days of meeting, discussions were made on the part which had been read. Project preparation and presentation tasks which were done when the book was completed were not the only tasks within the scope of literature circle. The teachers also read the following book during the research: *Five Cities* (Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar), *Peace* (Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar), *Yusuf From Kuyucak* (Sabahattin Ali), *Madonna in a Fur Coat* (Sabahattin Ali), *Mind of the Dervish* (Doğan Cüceloğlu), *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (Stefan Zweig), *Schools Without Failure* (William Glasser), *Restlessness* (Zülfü Livaneli), and *Ishmael* (Daniel Quinn). The books were decided with the mutual decision of the group. The books took one to five weeks to read depending on their styles and lengths.

2.4. Data Collection Process

The research data was collected by a focus group interview (Patton, 2014) questionnaire form (Kıncal, 2010) and field notes (Johnson, 2012) techniques in accordance with the qualitative research model. The teachers were asked similar question in the focus group interview and questionnaire form. The purpose for using multiple data collection approach was to achieve triangulation of data in order to increase the reliability of the research. With the field note technique, observations made on points such as what participants go through during the literature circle, reflection of application in the school, and changes in teachers.

The focus group interview and the questionnaire form were applied by the researchers in December 2017. A semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers was used in the focus group interview. Field notes were taken by the researcher-teacher during the entire process.

2.5. Data Analysis

Data collected with three data collection methods was analyzed with content analysis. Content analysis enables the researcher for creating new and original themes that emerge from the data (Miles *et al.*, 2014). First, subthemes and concepts were extracted from the data, and then, these subthemes were combined to construct the main themes.

3. Findings

The findings of the data analysis is presented in two categories that correspond to the research questions: literature circle's suitability for teachers and evaluation of literature circle within the scope of professional learning communities.

3.1. Evaluation of Literature Circle Method for Suitability for Teachers

The first research question is whether literature circle technique is suitable for teachers' professional development. The best indicator of the effectiveness of the technique was after participating in the literature circle for about a year, teachers were willing to continue the practice in coming years. Indeed, the teachers decided three books they would read next during the data collection process. They also reflected about and mentioned how much they like reading book with literature circle in the interviews and the questionnaire books. Shortly, it is possible to

say that literature circle is a teaching method that can be easily used for teachers' self-learning. Teacher opinions supporting this finding were addressed in three themes.

3.2. Literature Circle Attitude

Although the teachers were not asked whether they liked the literature circle, it can be understood from their written and spoken statements that they enjoyed the technique and were pleased with reading book with this technique. Especially the statement "I have become a happy reader and researcher" is a striking and summative example of this pleasure. The researcher-teacher reported in the field notes that all the teacher participated in the application voluntarily and willingly. Indeed, the researcher-teacher emphasized that other teachers urged him/her to continue when he/she felt unwilling to participate due to administrative duty from time to time. Based on the fact that an adult individual will not take part in any activity when he/she does not want to Knowles *et al.* (2014) all participants liked the intervention. Furthermore, almost all of the school teachers told the researcher-teacher about their willingness to join the literature circle, but they could not for the reasons such as lack of time, failing to come together, and lack of a suitable place. The statements supporting these findings are shown in Table 1.

Table-1. Teachers' attitudes toward literature circle method.

Data Type	Statements	Frequency
Q	An enjoyable application.	1
Q	I have become a happy reader and researcher.	1
Q	I started reading books again.	1
I	It makes reading enjoyable.	1
I	It makes you like reading.	1

*I=Interview Q=Questionnaire.

3.3. Importance of Literature Circle Method to Book Reading Habit

It is understood from the teacher statements that literature circle has several benefits in fostering the reading habit. The first benefit of literature circle for the teachers is the skill of productive book reading. The statement of a teacher "I learned how to read book" sums up the attainments of the technique. The participants stated that they primarily acquired the skills of thinking the time, space and people in the book multi-dimensionally, doing research on what is unknown during the reading, and taking notes when reading book. Moreover, they performed in-depth reading, noticed all the details in the book and gained retentive attainments from the book. Another important attainment was that the teachers noticed their shortcomings in individual book reading thanks to literature circle. The statements supporting these findings are shown in Table 2.

Table-2. Benefits of literature circle method in terms of book reading habit.

Data Type	Statements	Frequency
I	It made me notice my shortcomings in terms of reading technique.	3
I	It provided me with habit of doing research about the book.	1
I	It provided me with habit of thinking about the time and people in the book multi-dimensionally.	1
I	I noticed how much a thought could expand.	1
I	My reading style has improved: I am paying attention the characters; date place of the case and layers of the construct.	1
I	It provided me with habit of taking notes when reading book.	1
I	It makes reading book easier.	1
Q	It gives the chance to read deeply.	2
Q	I achieved retentive learning.	2
Q	Detailed discussion of the book was useful.	1
Q	I am now reading the book without missing any detail.	1
Q	My multi-dimensional book reading ability has improved.	1
Q	I am reading the book by thinking in detail.	1
Q	I learned how to read book.	1

*I=Interview Q=Questionnaire.

3.4. Benefits of Practices in Literature Circle Method

In literature circle, weekly discussions are organized; everyone has delivered the task of their assigned roles before coming to the discussion and does research within the scope of their roles (Avcı and Yüksel, 2014). This section of the study addresses the teacher opinions on the abovementioned characteristics of literature circle. The teachers provided intensive feedbacks especially on discussion. In the discussion stage of the technique, participants express their opinions on the subject they are reading with the help of the "investigator" who manages the discussion. The investigator prepares critical questions for the discussion beforehand, which makes the discussion productive. Participants express themselves and hear others' opinions in the discussion setting (Avcı and Yüksel, 2014). According to the research data, the teachers think that it was useful to see different perspectives during the discussion. Noticing the differences improved their skills of multi-dimensional thinking and seeing things from different perspectives. Discussion also ensured that they comprehended the incoherent points and noticed the unnoticed details in the book. Hence, the teachers learned from each other. In the literature circle, all group members had roles such as investigator, correlator, artist which they exchanged every week. For instance, artists express the emotion, which certain part aroused in them through artistic elements like pictures and poems (Avcı and Yüksel, 2014). The researcher-teacher reported that numerous poems were written during the book reading process. Two of the teachers stated that they just noticed their ability to write poem. These teachers particularly asked for the artist role even though the roles were exchanged and provided quite beautiful poems. One of the teachers accordingly said, "My ability to produce about book improved. Poems, pictures…" In addition to the

abovementioned, the teachers acquired the skills of teamwork and giving feedback to each other. They also stated that they acquired a lot of knowledge about different aspects of the culture and liberal arts. The statements supporting these findings are given in Table 3.

Table-3. Opinions on the practices of literature circle method.

Data Type	Statements	Frequency
	Opinions on Discussion	
Q	It is useful to see different perspectives.	2
Q	Multi-dimensional thinking occurred.	1
Q	I am learning unnoticed details from others when reading.	1
Q	Different perspectives helped me improve myself.	1
Q	It taught me to address and interpret things from different perspectives.	1
Q	It was useful to express my opinion on the matter.	1
I	It helps me see different perspectives of cases.	1
I	Seeing different perspectives of cases opens up my horizon and expands my perspective.	1
I	I can notice details which cannot be noticed when alone.	1
I	It is easier to understand incoherent points.	1
	Opinions on Roles	
Q	Reading with literature circle means examining, discussion and researching as well as reading.	1
Q	I learned so much other than the book itself when reading.	1
Q	I expressed myself in diverse ways through roles.	1
Q	My ability to produce about book improved. Poems, pictures...	1
	Other Attainments	
Q	It taught to meet in a common ground.	1
Q	My skill of working with team harmoniously improved.	1
Q	My skill of feed backing improved.	1
I	My culture of history and literature improved.	1
I	Now I know more matters that I can share with others.	1
I	I used conversation-opening effect of the book I read in communication.	1
I	My children started reading book.	1

*I=Interview Q=Questionnaire.

3.5. Evaluation of Literature Circle Technique in the Scope of Professional Learning Communities

Whether reading circle is a technique suitable for professional learning communities was addressed in two themes.

3.6. Literature Circle on Student and Teacher Achievements

Professional learning communities have an indirect rather than direct impact on students' academic achievements. Teachers improve their own teaching skills, make more effective plans, and develop teaching materials, therefore improving students' academic achievements. In this study, effect of literature circle on students' academic achievements was not assessed; however, there were developments in teachers' teaching skills, which would affect student achievements. One of these developments was that three of the teachers in the group started to use the literature circle technique in their classes and that the remaining four teachers would start to use it soon. Literature circle is a practice of which effectiveness has been proven in areas such as enhancing students' reading attitudes, improving their reading comprehension and enhancing the communication (Mizerka, 1999; Blum *et al.*, 2002; Chiang and Huang, 2005; Avcı and Yüksel, 2011; Avcı *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, comparable results can be anticipated in the classrooms where the application is performed. Especially increasing the reading comprehension skill is a factor directly enhancing the academic achievement (Kutlu *et al.*, 2011; Bayat *et al.*, 2014).

According to the teacher statements, there were several changes in their teaching practices. One of these changes is that they noticed differences among their students with the literature circle technique. Two of the teachers stated that they opened up themselves for students' different perspectives and started to use different instructional methods. One of the teachers reported that her skills of using the Q&A method increased while another one stated that she uses what she learned from the books as examples in the class. One of the teachers who use literature circle in her class said that she also uses opportunity training for the technique. The statements supporting these findings are shown in Table 4.

Table-4. Participants' responses to the questions about the literature circle on their achievements.

Data Type	Statements	Frequency
Q	It made me understood student differences.	2
Q	Noticing different perspectives.	1
Q	Being open to alternative comments.	1
Q	Applying different methods.	1
Q	My skill of using the Q&A method improved.	1
Q	I can recommend the books I read more comfortably.	1
Q	I use what I learn from books and researches in the class as examples.	1
Q	I use the technique as a tool of opportunity training.	1

*I=Interview Q=Questionnaire.

3.7. Literature Circle on Teacher Cooperation

Literature circle and professional learning communities are theoretically based on constructivism (Hord and Sommers, 2008; Avcı and Yüksel, 2014). In constructivism, prior knowledge of individuals is regarded as richness and the best learning is achieved by benefiting from each other's knowledge and experiences through social

interaction. Thus, each difference is considered an element of richness (Glasersfeld, 2013). In literature circle, participants share what they understand from a book with each other in discussions. According to the reader-response theory, individuals make sense of a book by their own experiences, and everyone focuses on different points and gains different things. Therefore, each participant attends discussion with different attainments although they have read the same book (Avcı and Yüksel, 2014). Multitude of part experiences among adults ensures that differences are put forth more distinctively. The most emphasized matter specified by the participant teachers was that they noticed their colleagues' perspectives of cases and recognized their characteristics, which make them different. All of the participants provided different statements on the matter in the interview and the questionnaire form. On the other hand, two teachers reported that they utilized others' opinions in terms of learning. According to the field notes of the researcher-teacher, the fact that seven teachers gathered once a week even without being encouraged and they urged the researcher-teacher to organize meetings for about a year can be shown as the evidence of cooperation. The statements supporting these findings are shown in Table 5.

Table-5. Contribution of literature circle to teacher cooperation.

Data Type	Statements	Frequency
Q	I recognized different characteristics of my colleagues.	3
Q	I saw my colleagues' perspectives of cases.	2
Q	I have to know my colleagues closely.	2
Q	I benefited from others' ideas.	2
Q	My communication with my colleagues improved.	2
I	I learned about how the group members see the life.	5
I	I have to know the friends at the school better.	3

*I=Interview Q=Questionnaire.

4. Discussion

The discussion of the findings of this action research is organized around two themes.

4.1. Literature Circle Technique Supports Teachers' Professional Development

Literature circle is a technique successfully used in all educational levels starting from the primary school third grade (Knowles and Smith, 2003) to the adult education (Furr, 2003). The fact that it has been successfully applied to adults in language education (Furr, 2003) indicates teachers can make use of and benefit from titerature circle technique. Moreover, in the research conducted by Monroe-Baillargeon and Shema (2010) literature circle was applied to teachers effectively. Along with the applications in the literature, this study show that teachers can easily use the literature circle and achieve similar accomplishments reported in findings of this study . The participant teachers found book reading enjoyable with this technique and reported that they learned how to read books more effectively. How the teachers continued the application not with any encouragement and external motivation but by their own will or with internal motivation for about a year is the evidence that they liked reading book with the technique. The most important reason why the teachers liked literature circle so much may be that it is compatible with the principles of adult education. Adults want to share their experience in the education setting; they want to learn from each other in an interaction rather than from a teacher, they only participate in learning through internal motivation, they want the outcome of learning to be useful for them, they want the learning setting to be compatible with their life, and they expected the education setting to be designed to tolerate their individual differences (Tennant, 2006; Knowles *et al.*, 2014). All adults' learning characteristics are found in literature circle. The reason why the participants provided positive opinions especially on the discussion process may be that they expressed their experiences freely. There is not any teacher in the application that they joined willingly, but each group member benefits from others' experiences. This way, they share their own experience as well as enhancing their knowledge. Literature circle being a reading activity itself makes it a natural part of life.

Literature circle is one of the most effective and efficient ways of book reading. In this implementation, the teachers stated that they liked literature circle very much as *"it provided them with ways of proper reading, retentive learning and taught them to read in detail"*. These findings indicate that the literature circle technique provided the anticipated benefit among the teachers.

4.2. The Final Evaluation of Literature Circle Technique in Supporting Professional Learning Communities

The point with professional learning communities is to improve teachers' learning from each other and student learning (Hefner, 2011). Professional learning communities involve supporting each other's learning (Dufour, 2004; Stoll *et al.*, 2006) employee cooperation (Mullen, 2009) working towards a common goal, Moyer *et al.* (2006) working in small groups (Moyer *et al.*, 2006) and support of school administration (Hord, 2004). The findings achieved in the research were discussed regarding to what extent literature circle was suitable for the characteristics of professional learning community. The first characteristic addressed in this scope was whether literature circle contributes to teacher and student learning. It can be said according to the findings that literature circle provided the teachers with several attainments so that they can practice their profession more effectively. This is preliminary to *"how the teachers start to notice individual differences (and apply the student-centered education"* thanks to literature circle. Subject-centered education is based on the idea that all students have similar interests and needs. On the contrary, student-centered education is based on the idea that students are individuals and have different interests and needs (Jonassen and Easter, 2012). Student-centered education increases students' academic achievement and learning motivation and help them to develop positive attitude towards course and teacher. The participant teachers started to approach different opinions expressed by the students more positively. Helping students put forth their opinions rather than silencing them would contribute to the development of their personalities. Supporting these findings, Sai and Siraj (2015) and Vescio *et al.* (2008) emphasized that PLC facilitates transition to student-centered education.

Another case that can be considered a contribution to academic achievement is that three of the teachers started to apply the literature circle technique in their classes and the remaining four teachers were planning to do so. This indicates that the teachers learned the literature circle technique. The important thing is the attainment of students who started to read book with literature circle. According to the research on the matter, students who read book with literature circle have increased reading comprehension levels (Mizerka, 1999; Blum *et al.,* 2002; Avcı *et al.,* 2013) increased reading attitudes (Blum *et al.,* 2002; Chiang and Huang, 2005; Stabile, 2009; Avcı and Yüksel, 2011) improved reading habits (Chiang and Huang, 2005; Avcı and Yüksel, 2011). Furthermore, several social skills such as expressing oneself, communicating, speaking before a group, expression one's emotions and group work are improved (Alwood, 2000; Culli, 2002; Stabile, 2009). As a consequence of this application, it can be anticipated that the students who participate in the literature circle application would acquire the before mentioned skills after a certain time. Literature circle is theoretically an applicable technique in professional learning communities as it is based on constructivism. This study achieved evidence of the theoretical relationship between literature circle and PLC. The most important evidence in this sense is that group members learn from each other and see each other's perspective of life. Constructivism has the principle that learning is a social phenomenon in its essence (Glasersfeld, 2013). An environment where individuals share their experiences by discussion in a social and free setting reflects the implementation style of professional learning communities.

How teachers decide the reading books, for how many weeks they would be read, what roles will be played, the date, time and duration of discussions together indicates that they are in cooperation with each other. Making an effort together for improving themselves to contribute to students proves that they have a common purpose. Each teacher committed himself or herself to relay their attainments to their students during the research. The fact that all the teachers wanted to implement the literature circle in their classes refers to another common purpose. Literature circle, after all, is a guiding technique to make book reading more enjoyable and productive, therefore making book reading popular. The participant teachers want to bring the book reading habit to all teachers and students and increase the reading frequency. The research findings also show that the teachers influenced their colleagues and students and were planning to continue doing so.

The literature circle technique is suitable for working in small groups, which is one of the principles of professional learning communities. Not all the teachers in the school but only one group participated in the study. However, if required, it can be implemented with the participation of the entire school. In accordance with the rules of literature circle technique, it should be applied in groups of six individuals. Consequently, teachers for their professional learning and to contribute their personal and professional development can easily use literature circle.

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