# IHEC 2021

PROCEEDINGS / BİLDİRİLER

## The 5th International Higher Education Studies Conference

October 14-16, 2021

## 5. Uluslararası Yükseköğretim Çalışmaları Konferansı

14-16 Ekim 2021

EDITORS - EDİTÖRLER

HAKAN ERGİN & ŞAHABETTİN AKŞAB

YÖÇAD
YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM ÇALIŞMALARI DERNEĞİ • ASSOCIATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES

İSÜ ÖĞREM
Öğrenen Üniversite

# IHEC 2021
# PROCEEDINGS / BİLDİRİLER

İstanbul - Aralık 2021
ISBN: 978-605-5169-92-3
Sertifika No: 48699

**Editors / Editörler:**
Hakan Ergin & Şahabettin Akşab

Copyright © 2021 by Yükseköğretim Çalışmaları Derneği ("YÖÇAD") strictly reserved. No parts of this material may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of YÖÇAD.

Permission has been obtained from the copyright holder, YÖÇAD to publish this document, which is the same in all material respects, as the original unless approved as changed. No parts of this document may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of YÖÇAD.

Telif hakları © 2021, Yükseköğretim Çalışmaları Derneği ("YÖÇAD")'ne aittir ve kesinlikle saklı tutulmuştur. Bu dokümanın hiçbir bölümü, Yükseköğretim Çalışmaları Derneği'nden yazılı izni alınmadan herhangi bir formda çoğaltılamaz.

Onaylanmış değişiklikleri haricinde her bakımdan ve açıdan orijinalinin aynısı olan bu kopyanın yayımlanması için, telif hakkı sahibi olan Yükseköğretim Çalışmaları Derneği'nden gerekli izin alınmıştır. Bu dokümanın hiçbir bölümü, önceden Yükseköğretim Çalışmaları Derneği'nden yazılı izni alınmaksızın elektronik, mekanik, fotokopi, kayıt veya benzerleri de dahil olmak üzere herhangi bir yolla ve araçla çoğaltılamaz, herhangi bir erişim sistemi içinde depolanamaz veya saklanamaz ya da herhangi bir formda iletilemez.

**Yükseköğretim Çalışmaları Derneği**
Batı Mahallesi, Hat Boyu Caddesi, 42/50
Pendik-İstanbul • www.yocad.org.tr

**Caretta Reklam ve Halkla İlişkiler Tic. Ltd. Şti.**
Hrant Dink Sokak, No:106 Onur Apartmanı, Kat: 1, Şişli-İstanbul
Tel: +90 212 230 23 14 • Faks: +90 212 231 30 13
www.carettareklam.com • www.carettabooks.com
facebook.com/carettakitaplari • twitter.com/carettakitap • instagram/carettakitap

## Advisory Committee / Danışma Kurulu

**Prof. Dr. Erdal KARAÖZ**
Istinye University

**Prof. Dr. Peyami ÇELİKCAN**
Istinye University

## Organizing Committee / Düzenleme Kurulu

**Prof. Dr. Ali IŞIK**
Istinye University

**Prof. Dr. Zeynep KIZILTEPE**
Bogazici University/Istinye University

**Prof. Dr. Fatma Nevra SEGGIE**
Boğaziçi University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Serap EMİL**
Middle East Technical University

**Dr. Hakan ERGİN**
Istanbul University

**Dr. Alper ÇALIKOĞLU**
Association for Higher Education Studies

**Res. Assist. Şahabettin AKŞAB**
Gaziantep University

**Talip GÜLLE**
Istinye University

**Melike İŞCAN**
Istinye University

**Özlem SALI**
Istinye University

**Elif VARDAR SOLAK**
Istinye University

## Academic Committee / Bilim Kurulu

**Prof. Dr. Zafer ÇELİK**
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University

**Prof. Dr. Levent ÜRER**
Istinye University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ömer ÇALIŞKAN**
Yozgat Bozok University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Armağan ERDOĞAN**
Beykoz University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murat ESEN**
Izmir Kâtip Celebi University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sıddıka GİZİR**
Mersin University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Enes GÖK**
Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gökçe GÖKALP**
Middle East Technical University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sedat GÜMÜŞ**
Aarhus University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bekir S. GÜR**
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hayal KÖKSAL**
World Council for Total Quality & Excellence in Education

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ömür Hakan KUZU**
Selcuk University

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Barış USLU**
Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. M. Cem BABADOĞAN**
Ankara University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. İsa BAHAT**
Ahi Evran University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif BENGÜ**
Abdullah Gul University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif ÇİÇEKLİ**
Istinye University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Nergis DAMA**
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Deniz GÜLMEZ**
Necmettin Erbakan University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Zeliha ZÜHAL GÜVEN**
Necmettin Erbakan University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Ülkü KÖLEMEN**
Istinye University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Harun SERPİL**
Anadolu University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Mustafa SUNDU**
Istinye University

**Assist. Prof. Dr. Yasemin TORUN**
Istinye University

**Instructor Dr. Ebru KILIÇ BEBEK**
Ozyegin University

**Instructor Dr. Muhammet DAMAR**
Dokuz Eylul University

**Dr. Meltem AKBULUT YILDIRMIŞ**

**Dr. Esin Aksay AKSEZER**
Koc University

**Dr. Burcu ERDEMİR**
Middle East Technical University

**Dr. Yusuf İkbal OLDAÇ**
Hong Kong Research Council

**Res. Assist. Dr. Hilal BÜYÜKGÖZE**
Hacettepe University

**Res. Assist. Dr. Betül BULUT ŞAHİN**
Middle East Technical University

**Res. Assist. Dr. Feride ÖKSÜZ GÜL**
Istanbul Medeniyet University

**Res. Assist. Dr. Yakup ÖZ**
Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University

**Res. Assist. Nagehan PAKDAMAR TÜZGEN**
Ibn Haldun University

# Reflections on a Pandemic-related Disruption to a Preparing Future Faculty Pilot Program in Turkey

**Emine Süphan Bakkal**
Sabancı University
suphan.bakkal@sabanciuniv.edu

**Elif Bengü**
Abdullah Gül University
elif.bengu@agu.edu.tr

**Yuki Kaneko**
Sabancı University
yuki.kaneko@sabanciuniv.edu

**Kristin Ann Şendur**
Sabancı University
kristin.sendur@sabanciuniv.edu

**Aslıhan Muazzez Ünsal**
Sabancı University
aslihan.unsal@sabanciuniv.edu

## Abstract

University faculty members simultaneously hold multiple roles in teaching, research and community. One way of preparing graduate students for these roles is through the Preparing Future Faculty program that is commonly found in the US universities. There is, however, little support in Turkey to prepare graduate students for faculty roles and responsibilities.

To address this gap, two mid-sized universities in Turkey modified a Preparing Future Faculty program for the Turkish context. This flagship program was established to focus on teaching and community service since the results of focus groups conducted with graduate students at the two universities primarily indicated interest in these areas. In this paper, we reflect on the initial implementation of this program, the changes made to move this pilot program online and students' experiences with this new mode. We make recommendations for benefitting from these changes in the resulting program.

**Keywords:** Professional Development, Graduate Students, Higher Education, Turkey, Faculty Development

## Introduction

Faculty members at higher education institutions have responsibilities in teaching and service along with their research. Since these roles compete in terms of time and resources, faculty members must find a balance that allows them to successfully fulfill each role. Graduate students in Turkey who intend to pursue a role as a faculty member, however, may need assistance in acculturating to these competing demands, since they receive little support in instructional and personal development (Kabakçi and Odabasi, 2008). One way of preparing graduate students for these roles is through the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program that has been implemented in numerous US higher education institutions (DeNeef, 2002).

Universities worldwide are rapidly building similar support systems to prepare graduate students for their future roles through a combination of seminars, mentoring, and practical experiences (Rozaitis et al., 2020). Students at Turkish universities also seek such support (Çolak, 2015; Uğuz Arsu et al., 2020; Yalçınkaya et al., 2016). To address this gap, a mid-sized foundation university located in Istanbul, and a mid-sized public university located in Anatolia modified a PFF program for the Turkish context. The program was established to focus on teaching and service since graduate students who participated in focus groups indicated that these areas were particularly important. This program is intended to spur similar support systems at other universities in Turkey since the outcome and the resources developed will be shared in collaboration with other Turkish universities. In this paper, we reflect on the initial implementation of one such program in Turkey and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the program.

## Method

The data collection of the study was done in mixed methods. We have used both quantitative and qualitative data to be able to understand the students' experiences with the pilot programs I and II. Surveys were given to the participants in which the questions were asked with a numerical Likert scale. Surveys were conducted for both pilots I and II. A post-program survey was conducted with pilot I and a mid-program survey was conducted with pilot II. Frequency counts were provided both for pilot I and pilot II because of the small number of participants. Qualitative data were collected through critical reflection after each seminar. Since one of our aims was to understand the students' experience with the training program, we have asked them to write critical reflection after each seminar. Mezirow (1990) defined critical reflection as a transformative tool for learning. Both Ash and Clayton (2009) and Eames and Coll (2010) emphasized in their studies that critical reflection can be used as a tool to develop students' meta-cognitive skills.

### The Pilot Programs (Teaching Seminar Program)

***Pilot I***

Under the scope of the PFF Turkey project, we first organized a small-scale pilot program at a foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey, designed to address some of the teaching-related needs of the graduate students based on the focus group outcomes. This 'Teaching Seminar Program' (TSP), consisted of a total of six participatory seminars (2-2.5 hours each) between November 2019 and August 2020 (see Table 1). Ten graduate students from two faculties were selected to participate in the program, and received certificates upon successful completion of the program. All participants concurrently taught or otherwise supported large first-year courses. Participants completed a reflection after each seminar that connected the seminar contents to their teaching practices. All seminars except Inclusive Classroom and Teaching Portfolio were facilitated by one of the authors of this paper.

Table 1

*Pilot I and Pilot II Teaching Seminar Program Seminar Titles*

| Pilot I | Teaching Seminar Program (between November, 2019 and August, 2020) |
|---|---|
| 1 | Teaching at an English-Medium University* |
| 2 | Inclusive Classroom* |
| 3 | Active Learning* |
| 4 | Assessments |
| 5 | Online Teaching |
| 6 | Workshop on Creating Teaching Portfolio Chart |
| **Pilot II** | **Teaching Seminar Program (between April - August, 2021)** |
| 1 | Online Teaching |
| 2 | Teaching at English-Medium Universities |
| 3 | Learner-Centered Teaching / Active Learning |
| 4 | Wellbeing of Teachers |
| 5 | Inclusive Classrooms |
| 6 | Assessment |
| 7 | Course Design |
| 8 | Practicing Your Communication |
| 9 | Teaching Portfolio |
| 10 | Higher Education in Turkey |
| 11 | Higher Education in USA |

*Stars (*) indicate face-to-face seminars*

The first three seminars were given on campus in a face-to-face setting. However, the university's abrupt shift to online teaching in March 2020 due to the pandemic prompted the Program to be adapted and continue online. Despite the challenges brought forward by the online shift, there were several noteworthy advantages of online seminars, such as the broadened flexibility in seminar speaker selections and scheduling, as well as accommodating larger seminar audiences which was also noted in Bottanelli et al. (2020).

In the pre-pandemic physical settings, inviting a seminar speaker from outside of the presenting university or Turkey was challenging. However, with online seminars, we were able to invite presenters from outside of the university hosting the pilot seminars. In one case, we added an "Online Teaching" seminar to support the TSP participants on the shift to online education. In the last workshop on "Creating a Teaching Portfolio Chart", we were able to invite an internationally renowned scholar as the speaker and open up the seminar to more graduate students and faculty members from both the foundation university and the public university. This change, which was made possible by the online format, more than doubled participation.

***Pilot II***

The second pilot was conducted entirely online with Zoom because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This pilot was extended to the public university in Anatolia. Out of 68 applicants, a total of 31 participants were selected based on their experience level and motivation statement to attend the second pilot, 25 of whom were from the foundation university and six from the public university. The number of participants in the second pilot was kept relatively small so that they would be able to interact with each other and form a cohesive group in the Zoom environment. The second TSP consisted of a total of eleven participatory seminars between April - August, 2021 (see Table 1). In addition, we started the program with an orientation session in order to clarify expectations and begin to form a cohesive group.

Online teaching tools such as Padlet, Jamboard and Mentimeter allowed participants and facilitators to communicate, collaborate, and share resources even in between the seminars. Other tools like Edpuzzle allowed participants to reflect on what they had learned. This second pilot was intentionally made adaptable to participants' needs. For example, in mid-program feedback, participants indicated a need for more communication skills. Because adaptability was built into the program, facilitators were

able to offer a communication skills seminar almost immediately. In order to design our program, we collaborated with two universities in the United States that have well-established and active PFF Programs. We first collaborated with one of the universities through in person and online visits to design the first pilot. The second pilot was further refined with the collaboration of the second university.

## Findings

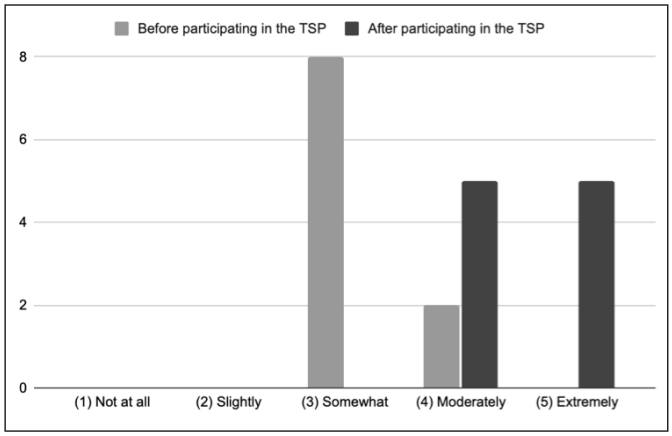
### Reflections by Pilot Program Participants

***Pilot I***

At the end of the first pilot program, the participants completed a questionnaire to reflect on the program. It consisted of open-ended and Likert scale questions (N=10). The Likert scale questions were on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating not at all prepared and 5 indicating very well prepared. When asked about their degree of preparation to teach at the university level before participating in the TSP, 80% indicated that they were somewhat prepared (mean 3.2; see Figure). In contrast, when asked the same question after completing the TSP, all respondents indicated that they were either moderately well or extremely well prepared (mean 4.5).

Figure 1

*Pilot I Post-Program Evaluation Questionnaire: "How well prepared were the participants before and after participating in the Teaching Seminar Program (TSP)?"*




Participants were also asked to rate the usefulness of session topics for their current teaching assistant position and future career. The results indicate that the vast majority of the participants found all of the seminars very useful for their current positions (4.4 mean) and future careers (4.5 mean).

Another question the participants were asked was to choose the topics that should be included in the PFF Program in Turkey. The following were ranked as the top choices: (1) Operations of university and faculties with the roles and responsibilities of the faculty members (80%), (2) pedagogy and teaching techniques (70%), and (3) the structure of higher education in Turkey and abroad and discussing sensitive topics (60%).

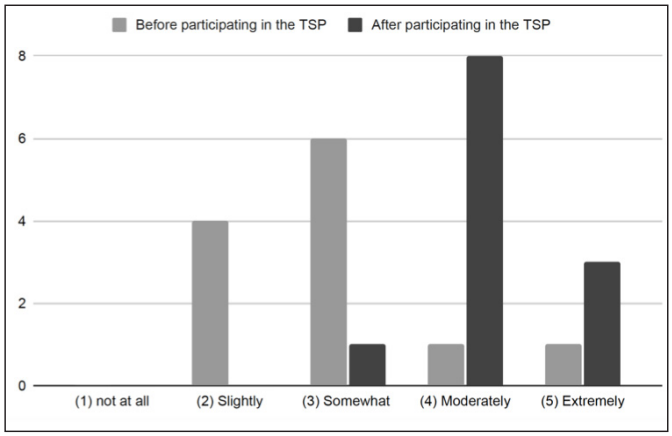
The last two questions were open-ended. First, they were asked what they liked about the pilot program and then whether they had any additional comments they would recommend for the program. All of the attendees shared comments, including ones such as " the program gave me a new perspective" and they " enjoyed not just being a listener but also an active participant in the lectures". They suggested adding "mock-teaching to test out what we learned before the actual classroom and get actual feedback" and work on "case studies to learn how to communicate with students".

***Pilot II***

A mid-program evaluation questionnaire was given to the participants of the second pilot program (N=12) after completing 7 out of 11 seminars in the program. When they were asked about their degree of preparation to teach at the university level before participating in the TSP, about 83% of the participants who responded to the survey indicated that they were either slightly (33.3%) or somewhat (50%) prepared (mean 2.9; Figure 2). After participating in the TSP, the majority of the participants (91.7%) stated that they were either moderately (66.7%) or extremely (25%) well prepared (mean 4.2).

Figure 2

*Pilot II Mid-Program Evaluation Questionnaire: "How well prepared were the participants before and after participating in the Teaching Seminar Program (TSP)?"*




Additionally, two open-ended questions were asked to the participants of pilot 2. First, they were asked to share at least one thing they learned as a result of the seminars and then whether they had any additional comments they would recommend for the program. All of the participants who filled out the survey shared comments to both questions. Online teaching tools, active learning, writing learning objectives, effective communication and instructional design are among the learned topics listed by the participants. They stated that "the content of the program is thorough and well-prepared", and "fulfilled my expectations". They also suggested to "organize one face-to-face event or a meet up", "talking about different preparation strategies for courses (which might not be in our specialty)", and "grouping the sessions by their subjects -e.g. "communication" period of the program -teaching in EMI, inclusive classrooms".

Finally, the participants provided additional comments indicating that they have applied what they have learned from the seminars into their own classrooms and have gotten positive feedback from their students. Two participants included the following example:

> I am a teaching assistant, and this semester I got very positive feedback from my students. I did not make any deliberate changes to how I teach (same subjects, same course material ...), but I think I have been applying what I have learned in this seminar in an intuitive way. Just a change in mindset and attitude goes a long way, students were much more interested and engaged in the lecture compared to previous semesters. So, thanks a lot for organizing this seminar! I think I really benefited from it. (p2.5)
>
> Fantastic content! I am applying (experimenting) what I am learning here on my interns that I have around for the summer. So far it is going great, but we have to wait and see if they achieve what is expected from them. (p2.1)

Applicability was one of the objectives of the TSP design, and we intentionally selected graduate students who were concurrently working with undergraduate students or would soon be involved in teaching. The feedback from the participants provides evidence that the objective was accomplished.

## Discussion and Conclusion

### Conclusions from the Pilot I

The findings of our pilot program indicate that there is substantial demand for such a program and the graduate students found these seminars valuable for their future roles. They also provided several recommendations that can be adapted to the program.

During the program, the participants found the chance to reflect on their teaching experience as stated by one of the fellows:

... it was quite nice for me to think about how I teach and how I would like to be taught during this program. It gave me a lot of room and ideas to improve and become a better presenter (and hopefully lecturer) in my future career towards academia. (p1.3)

While the conclusions we can draw are limited by the scale of the pilot, we have observed the positive impact on the participants. One stated that: "... I had no idea how much I will learn at the beginning, now, I feel really different and much more prepared for the rest of my academic journey". Another noted that "It is not only improving my knowledge, it also gives a perspective how to be better at teaching".

The COVID-19 pandemic hit in the middle of the TSP, resulting in adaptations to the seminar plans. One modification was changing the focus of a communication seminar to Online Teaching. In this seminar, we discussed the challenges of remote learning from both teachers' and students' perspectives, and shared tips for effective online teaching.

The sudden changes due to the pandemic caused a time gap in our pre-planned program which may have lowered the effectiveness of the program. One fellow noted that, "it was because of the pandemic but gaps between the sessions decreased the program efficiency". However, we were able to turn this challenge into a series of opportunities. Firstly, we were able to host an international guest speaker for the very last workshop on Creating Teaching Portfolio Chart. This opportunity would have been unlikely in-person face to face physical setting. In addition to our participants, other graduate students from the public university participated in this final workshop. This workshop also served as the first step of creating a community (for now, only online) between members of these two universities. We are considering keeping the online component of the program in the future since it can increase the number of participating graduate students from Turkish universities and further enhance interaction between them.

### Conclusions from the Pilot II

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted our first pilot and forced us to move it online. While this event was initially challenging, as we learned how to teach online, it resulted in significant and long-lasting benefits to the program, as we continued the second pilot program online.

First, this change gave both us and the participants the experience of effective and reflective online teaching. Since this modality is increasing in its use in higher education, this is an important skill for graduate students who intend to pursue an academic career. In our initial face-to-face pilot, we were very limited in how much students from the participating universities could interact. The COVID-19 pandemic changed that. Once we moved online, we were able to open up the second pilot program to students from both universities. Because the number of participants remained small, this opened up the opportunity for close collaboration and networking between students at both universities. Students were able to learn from each other and benefit from the different university contexts and perspectives on teaching.

The online format also increased our adaptability. We were able to add additional seminars based on students' needs. Because we were online, we could not only schedule more easily, but also gather presenters and students from across Turkey at short notice. This allowed us to fulfill the needs of a diverse group of students.

Another major positive effect was the broadening of the presenters we could invite. In our initial pilot, our in-person seminars were offered by our team and others at the university. Once we moved online, we were able to use our connections to invite presenters from around the world, who ordinarily would not have been able to present. This international collaboration was important because it presented different perspectives to the participants and to the program. This collaboration also extended inside of Turkey since we were also able to invite presenters from industry more easily.

As we move forward to the implementation of a full-scale PFF Turkey program, we plan to keep the synergy between the face-to-face and online components. We also plan to apply a thorough program evaluation methodology (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2016) for the full-scale PFF Turkey program, the results of which will help us expand the program to other Turkish universities.

## Acknowledgement

This project is supported by the U.S. Department of State. The content of this reflection does not reflect the official opinion of the U.S. Government. Responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the authors that are mentioned in this proceedings paper.

## References

Ash, S. L. and Clayton, P. H. (2009). Generating, deepening, and documenting learning: The power of critical reflection in applied learning. Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education, 1, 25-48.

Bottanelli, F., Cadot, B., Campelo, F., Curran, S., Davidson, P. M., Dey, G., Raote, I. Straube, A. and Swaffer, M. P. (2020). Science during lockdown – from virtual seminars to sustainable online communities. Journal of Cell Science, 133. https://doi.org/10.1242/jcs.249607.

Çolak, E. (2015). Akademide güvencesiz çalışma: Araştırma görevlilerinin deneyimleri. ViraVerita E-Journal, 2, 23 – 44. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/viraverita/issue/22434/240077

DeNeed, A. L. (2002). The Preparing Future Faculty Program: What Difference Does It Make? (ED471501). ERIC Number: ED471501. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED471501

Eames, C., and Coll, R. K. (2010). Cooperative education: Integrating classroom and workplace learning. In S. Billett (Ed.), Learning through practice (pp. 180-196 ). Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer Science + Business Media B.V.

Kabakçi, I. and Odabasi, F. H. (2008). The organization of the faculty development programs for research assistants: The case of education faculties in Turkey. The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – Tojet, 7(3), 1303-6521.

Kirkpatrick, J. D. and Kirkpatrick, W. (2016). Kirkpatrick's groundbreaking four levels of training evaluation (1st ed.). Alexandria, VA: ATD Press.

Mezirow, J. (1990). How critical reflection triggers transformative learning? In J. Mezirow and associates (Eds.), Fostering critical reflection in adulthood (pp.1-20). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Rozaitis, B., Baepler, P., Gonzalez, A., Ching, P., Wingert, D., and Alexander, I. D. (2020). Preparing future faculty: Pedagogical practice in graduate school. New Directions for Teaching & Learning, 163, 35-43, https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20408.

Uğuz Arsu, Ş., Sunman, G., Oruç, Ş. and Tekindal, M. (2020). Türkiye'de gelişmekte olan üniversitede araştırma görevlisi olma deneyimi: Nitel bir araştırma. Ufkun Ötesi Bilim Dergisi, 20(1) , 109-152. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/uobild/issue/58856/794483

Yalçınkaya, M. , Koşar, D. and Altunay, E. (2016). Araştirma görevlilerinin bilim insani yetiştirme sürecine ilişkin görüşleri. Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi, 22(3) , 1009-1034 . https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/kefdergi/issue/22601/241473