



Understanding Local Governments in Practice *

Yerel Yönetimleri Uygulamalı Anlamak

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the contribution of applied education in the case of Local Government, a Department of Political Science and Public Administration course. The study included role-playing-based practices that develop creativity skills within the scope of workshops. In this framework, the study question was "What is the contribution of local government course workshops on students' understanding and learning?" Qualitative research, which adopts the constructivist paradigm and argues that perspectives are essential, was adopted as the method, and action research was used as the design of this study. The study group of this research consists of 45 third-year students in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. The data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of eight open-ended questions and a semi-structured interview. Data analysis was conducted through descriptive analysis. The study revealed that the participants showed improvement in understanding and learning on the subjects of the municipal council, the council in particular provincial administrations, and village bodies. In-service training in workshops was recommended for instructors teaching local government courses.

Keywords: Workshop, Local governments, Practical Training, Action Research, Simulation in Education, Applied Education

ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi bölümü derslerinden biri olan yerel yönetimler dersi kapsamında uygulamalı eğitimin katkısını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, atölye çalışmaları kapsamında yaratıcılık becerilerini geliştiren rol yapma temelli uygulamaları içermektedir. Bu çerçevede araştırma sorusu şu şekilde belirlenmiştir: "Yerel yönetimler dersi atölyelerinin öğrencilerin anlama ve öğrenmeleri üzerindeki katkısı nedir?" Yöntem olarak, yapılandırmacı paradigmayı benimseyen ve bakış açılarının önemli olduğunu savunan nitel araştırma tercih edilmiş; araştırma deseni olarak ise eylem araştırması kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi bölümünde öğrenim gören 45 üçüncü sınıf öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Veriler, sekiz açık uçlu sorudan oluşan bir anket ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme yoluyla toplanmıştır. Veri analizi betimsel analiz yöntemiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda katılımcıların özellikle belediye meclisi, il özel idaresi meclisi ve köy organları konularında anlama ve öğrenme düzeylerinde gelişme gösterdikleri ortaya konulmuştur. Yerel yönetimler dersi veren öğretim elemanlarına, atölye çalışmaları kapsamında hizmet içi eğitim verilmesi önerilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Atölye (çalışması), yerel yönetimler, uygulamalı eğitim, eylem araştırması, eğitimde simülasyon ve uygulamalı eğitim.

INTRODUCTION

Today, it is accepted by almost everyone worldwide that education should not be limited to the theoretical dimension; learning by living, seeing, and practicing is more permanent and qualified. For example, many academics and authors have drawn attention to the importance of developing an application based on the workshop model for professional and personal development, involving appropriate participants in goal setting, implementation, evaluation and decision making, etc., in a successful learning development program (Bönsch, 1999; Horsley, 1987; Kalina & Powell, 2009; Öztürk, 2019). However, Horsley (1987) stated that problem-solving, collaboration, and ways of accessing information sources will be learned together, and appropriate strategies for setting goals, implementing, evaluating, and making decisions will be identified by developing and evaluating an application based on a workshop model for professional and personal development. Similarly, Yadav (2022) stated that creative learning models such as workshops support social, emotional, and personal growth, strengthen memory, and increase interest and motivation in the lesson. These and similar studies show that the workshop

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model is an effective and efficient learning model suitable for our age. For this reason, this study argues that local government subjects will be learned meaningfully with the workshop model and aims to eliminate the problem of rote learning.

Constructivism, which provides structuring of processes such as problem-solving, collaboration, goal setting, and decision-making, is the theoretically guided approach of this study. Constructivism is an approach that adopts the active role of students in the learning process, argues that experience is essential in the learning process, and suggests that the learning process will be carried out more meaningfully through collaboration (Cobern, 1993; Amineh & Asl, 2015). This study theoretically adopted constructivism because students will actively learn, manage the process through collaboration, and learn through experience.

Based on the argument that applied learning methods increase learners' quality and academic performance, this study aims to measure the effect of applied learning in the case of Local Governments, a Department of Political Science and Public Administration course. The study focuses on the problem that students do not sufficiently understand theoretical information, that students do not permanently learn this information, and that the teaching strategy based only on listening is insufficient in the learning process and tries to find a solution to this problem (Mayer, 2002; Yadav, 2022). Accordingly, this study aims to improve the quality of education, prepare students for professional life in a qualified and well-equipped manner, and contribute to their social and personal development. The Political Science and Public Administration departments are the ones that train candidates for public office in general. Public officials are the visible face of the state, a bridge between citizens and the state. Especially in bureaucratically strong countries like Türkiye, public officials, especially senior managers, receive qualified and well-equipped pre-service and in-service training. This is because public administrators and officials will be more efficient and effective in business life with this training. For this reason, a course from the abovementioned department was taken as a sample in this study.

When the literature was reviewed, sample projects, articles, reports, etc., related to the subject of the study (Şimşekcan & Kara, 2015; Turhan & Zoeteweyj-Turhan, 2014; Töre, 2017) were found. No similar study was found, especially in political science and public administration. Some similar but identical studies in different fields and methods are as follows: Töre (2017) conducted a workshop with teachers for their professional development, and the teachers in the institution designed activities, practices, and games on 11 different topics needed in their competence areas. Therefore, this study differs from Töre's (2017) study in working with university students and students taking active roles in these workshops. Similarly, Gülhan (2022) developed activities with teachers through design skills workshops.

On the other hand, a workshop on basic medical practices in medical education was conducted by Ünalın et al. (2006). Communication, research, clinical, field, and outpatient clinic skills of medical students were developed through this workshop. This study differs from Ünalın et al. (2006) regarding the learning model used. In their research, Hammond et al. (2019) tried to measure the impact of hands-on training on student learning and development, and the study's results revealed the positive effects of hands-on training. The study mentioned above was conducted on a sample of primary school students. This study was conducted with a sample of higher education students. Another study on the subject in the literature by Kapur (2020) tried to reveal the importance of workshops only at the theoretical level.

This study included role-playing-based practices that develop creativity skills within the scope of workshops. When we look at this and many similar studies in the literature, it is seen that the qualitative research method needs to be used. Therefore, qualitative research, which adopts the constructivist paradigm and argues that perspectives are essential, was adopted as the method of this study. The study's authors preferred qualitative research because students' perspectives will guide the learning strategies used in the lessons. Based on all these, this study consists of two stages. In the first stage, some topics covered in the local government course were theatrically enacted by designing workshops for the students. In the second stage, the impact of these workshops on student education was measured. Based on all these reasons above, the research question of the study is presented below:

How do local government course workshops contribute to students' understanding and learning? The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

Method: Research Design

This study used an action research design from the qualitative research method. Although action research is used in many fields, it includes a cycle of plays that examine the problems experienced in the learning process and plans to be realized to improve the current practice (O'Brien, 2003). In this study, the action plan planned for the effective

and permanent learning of the local government course given at the third-grade level of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration is explained under the title of the data collection process.

Study Group

The study group of this research consists of 45 third-year students at a state university, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Political Science and Public Administration. Criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling types, was preferred when determining the study group. In criterion sampling, the researcher carries the criteria previously specified by the researcher or examines all issues in line with the existing criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In the current study, the participants having taken the public administration course were determined as a criterion. In this context, a document consisting of open-ended questions was applied to 45 students before and after the workshops within the scope of the TUBITAK 3005 project number 122G027 titled "Political Science and Public Administration Workshop," and interviews were conducted with 18 of them. These 18 students were selected based on their answers to the open-ended questions.

Data Collection Tool

The data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of eight open-ended questions and a semi-structured interview. Eight questions were asked to determine the participants' cognitive state before and after the workshops. These eight questions include measuring the level at which the subjects of "enactment of assembly and council decisions in municipalities," "enactment of assembly and council decisions in special provincial administrations," and "enactment of decisions in villages," which are taught within the scope of the Local Governments course, are learned in the workshops and the impact of the workshops at this point.

The interview form consists of introductory questions and five questions about the purpose of the research. The researchers developed questions based on the relevant literature (Şengül, 2019; Bönsch, 1999; as cited in Öztürk, 2019). The interview form questions are as follows:

1. What is your knowledge about local governments so far? Please explain.
2. In which ways and how did you learn the information you mentioned in the first question? Please explain.
3. Do you think the local government course you will take this semester will add more information to your knowledge? Why?
4. How would you like the content of the local government course to improve your current knowledge? Please explain.
5. Which practices should be included in the local government's course to transform your knowledge into practice? Why?

Data Collection Process

Determination of the research problem

First of all, an ethics committee report was obtained from University for the study. Then a document consisting of eight open-ended questions was administered to 45 students to determine the extent to which students learned the theoretical learning outcomes in the local government course. After this administration, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 18 students. The preliminary data revealed that different learning models are needed for permanent and effective learning of the related course.

Preparation of the action plan

As a solution to the problem identified as a result of due diligence and needs analysis, the relevant literature was reviewed, and it was predicted that applied workshops would solve this problem.

Implementation of the action plan

In this study, within the scope of the local governments' course, the topics of the formation and decision-making process of the Municipal Council, the formation and decision-making process of the Provincial Council, the formation and decision-making process of the provincial general assembly, and the decision-making process in the provincial Council and villages were theatrically enacted by the students in the workshops designed with the guidance of the course instructor. In the workshops, the authors noted that the students could understand the course topics by hearing and experiencing them, that the lessons would be more effective and efficient, and that the students would develop individually and socially.

First Workshop: Enforcement of Assembly Decisions in Municipalities

In terms of functioning and procedure, municipalities are based on Law No. 5393, which entered into force in 2005. According to the abovementioned law, municipalities have three organs: the Mayor, the Municipal Assembly, and the Municipal Council. According to the law, the decision-making body is the municipal council. The municipal council is formed through elections, as the Turkish Constitution states. The president of the municipal council is the mayor, who is also directly elected by the people. The municipal council is the executive and advisory body.

In some cases, it has the authority to make decisions. Within the scope of the study, Workshop 1 of the local governments' course was determined to be the enforcement of council decisions in municipalities. For this purpose, the formation of the presidency council in municipalities, determination of the agenda, meeting, and decision quorum, and finalization of the council's decisions were covered in stages in the workshop. These topics were simulated by the students who took the course and participated in the course under the guidance of the course instructor. The workshops were held in the conference hall in the faculty building during class hours. The workshop is described below with a photograph.

Figure 1: First Workshop



Within the scope of the study, the instructor in charge predetermined the fiction related to the workshop to be implemented in the course. At the time of the workshop, some students were determined by the lecturer to provide coordination, and the lecturer provided the participants with theoretical information and instructions on how to perform reenactments. Accordingly, the students taking the course were present in the conference hall at the relevant time to realize the first workshop of the local government's course. After the instructor gave brief theoretical information about the workshop, the workshop was simulated by the students who took the course and participated with the guidance of the course instructor. The workshop was simulated in these stages: Formation of the Presidium, Setting the Agenda, Finalization of Assembly Decisions.

Second Workshop: Formation of the Council of Municipalities and Enforcement of Council Decisions

In terms of functioning and procedure, municipalities are based on Law No. 5393, which entered into force in 2005. According to this law, municipalities have three organs: the Mayor, the Municipal Assembly, and the Municipal Council. The municipal council is an advisory and executive body. It also has the authority to make decisions on some issues. For example, the municipal council makes essential decisions such as expropriation. Within the scope of the study, the subject of Workshop 2 of the local governments' course was determined to be the formation of the council in municipalities and the entry into force of the council's decisions. These topics were simulated by the students who took the course and participated in the course with the guidance of the course instructor. The workshops were held during class hours in the conference room of the faculty building. The workshops are described below, with photographs.

Figure 2: Second Workshop



Accordingly, to realize the course's second workshop, the students attended the conference hall at the relevant class time. After the instructor gave brief theoretical information about the workshop, the students simulated the workshop in these stages: Formation of the Municipal Council, Council Meeting, and Finalization of Council Decisions.

Third Workshop: Enforcement of Provincial General Assembly Decisions in Special Provincial Administrations

Within the scope of the study, the subject of the third workshop of the local governments' course was determined as the entry into force of the decisions of the provincial general assembly in extraordinary provincial administrations. These topics were simulated by the students who took the course and participated in the course with the guidance of the course instructor. To ensure students' participation in the course, incentive methods such as additional points in midterm and final exams, not including midterm topics in the final issues, etc., were used. The workshops were held during class hours in the conference room of the faculty building. The workshop is described below, with a photograph.

Figure 3: Third Workshop



In terms of functioning and procedure, extraordinary provincial administrations are based on Law No. 5302 on Special Provincial Administration, which entered into force in 2005. According to this law, extraordinary provincial administrations have three organs: the Governor, the Provincial General Assembly, and the Provincial Council; the decision-making body is the Provincial General Assembly. As the Turkish Constitution states, the provincial general assembly is formed through elections. The president of the provincial assembly is the governor appointed by the President of the Republic. The provincial council is the executive and advisory body. In some cases, it has the authority to make decisions. In this framework, the decision-making process of the provincial general assembly was transferred to practice according to Law No. 5302 on Special Provincial Administration in the Third Workshop of the 2022-2023 Fall Term. Within the scope of the study, the fiction related to the workshop to be applied in the course was predetermined by the responsible instructor of the course. During the workshop hour, the designated students provided the coordination, and the lecturer provided the participants with theoretical information and guidance on role-playing.

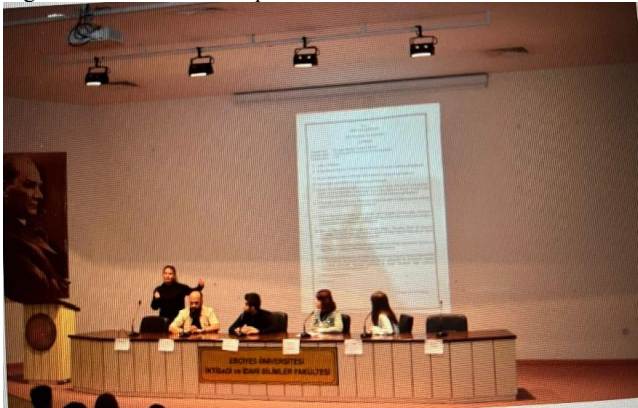
Accordingly, to realize the third workshop of the local government course, the students who took the course were present in the conference hall at the relevant time. After the instructor gave brief theoretical information about the

workshop, the students simulated the workshop in these stages: Formation of the Presidium of the Assembly, Provincial General Assembly Meeting, Agenda Formation, and Finalization of Assembly Decisions.

Fourth Workshop: Entry into Force of Provincial Council Decisions in Special Provincial Administrations and Villages

In the study, the subject of the fourth workshop of the local governments' course was determined to be the formation of the provincial council in extraordinary provincial administrations, the entry into force of its decisions, and the entry into force of decisions in villages. These topics were simulated by the students who took the course, with the guidance of the instructor in charge. To ensure students' participation in the course, incentives such as additional points in midterm and final exams, not including midterm topics in the final issues, etc., were used. The workshops were held during class hours in the conference room of the faculty building. The workshops are described below, with a photograph.

Figure 4: Fourth Workshop



In terms of functioning and procedure, extraordinary provincial administrations are based on Law No. 5302 on Special Provincial Administration, which entered into force in 2005. According to this law, extraordinary provincial administrations have three organs: the Governor, the Provincial General Assembly, and the Provincial Council; the decision-making body is the Provincial General Assembly. As the Turkish Constitution states, the provincial general assembly is formed through elections. The president of the provincial assembly is the governor appointed by the President of the Republic. The provincial council is the executive and advisory body. In some cases, it has the authority to make decisions.

Within the scope of the study, the workshop's setup was predetermined by the instructor in charge of the course. During the workshop hour, certain students provided coordination, and the instructor provided the participants with theoretical information and instructions on how to role-play.

Accordingly, the students taking the course were present in the conference hall at the relevant class time to realize the fourth and final workshop of the local government's course. After the instructor gave brief theoretical information about the workshop, the students simulated the workshop in these stages: Formation of the Provincial Council, Provincial Council Meeting and Finalization of Decisions, Enforcement of Decisions in Villages and Towns.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from the research were analyzed with descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis summarizes and interprets data within the framework of determined themes (Patton, 2018). Two experts in measurement and evaluation analyzed the data separately and examined the participants' responses based on the questions. They then sent it to two different experts. These four experts conducted repeated interviews and agreed on the results of the analysis. Examples of the participants' original statements in the interview were given for each finding to contribute to the validity and reliability of the analyses. The findings are presented in subheadings and tables within the framework of the themes obtained from the study. In addition, the participants' responses to the eight questions asked before and after the workshops were evaluated based on rubrics as entirely correct, partially correct, incorrect, and blank answers. The rubrics were created due to repeated interviews between the field experts teaching the local government course and the measurement and evaluation field experts.

The students' answers were evaluated according to the rubrics within the framework of the questions and answer key created by the field expert teaching the course. The answer key was formed as follows:

- ✓ In typical municipalities, the municipal council is formed according to the results of local administration elections. Accordingly, district populations are effective in the formation of the council. On the other hand, metropolitan district municipality council members form the council in metropolitan municipalities. Accordingly, according to the rate of votes, the first one-fifth of the district municipality council members are also members of the metropolitan municipality council.
- ✓ In municipalities, the municipal council is the decision-making body. The assembly convenes with the majority of the members and makes decisions with most of those attending the meeting. The decisions are submitted to the mayor for approval. Decisions approved by the mayor become final. Decisions that the mayor does not approve are sent back to the council. The mayor may send the decision back in cases of violation of the law. Suppose the assembly decides on the returned decision with the absolute majority of the total number of members. In that case, the mayor has to approve the decision, but in this case, the mayor can go to administrative jurisdiction. Decisions must be sent to the highest local administrative authority to enter into force.
- ✓ The Council is an advisory body. In some cases, the Council may also make decisions. In provincial municipalities and municipalities with a population over 100,000, the council consists of a total of seven members, including three members elected by secret ballot by the municipal council for one year from among its members, the chief of the financial services unit, and two members elected by the mayor for one year from among the unit chiefs,
- ✓ In other municipalities, it is composed of a total of five members: two members to be elected by the municipal council for one year by secret ballot from among its members, the chief of the financial services unit, and one member to be elected by the mayor for one year from among the unit chiefs.
- ✓ The municipal council convenes at least once a week. It convenes with the majority of the members and makes decisions with most of those attending the meeting. In case of equality of votes, the chairman's side shall be considered the majority.
- ✓ The assembly of extraordinary provincial administrations is elected. The assembly is the decision-making body. The president of the assembly is elected from within the assembly. The governor chairs the provincial council, and consists of the general secretary, three members elected annually by the provincial general assembly from among its members, and two members elected annually by the governor from among unit chiefs.
- ✓ The assembly of extraordinary provincial administrations is the provincial general assembly. The provincial general assembly is elected. It convenes with the majority of the members and makes decisions with most of those attending the meeting. The decision is sent to the Governor for approval. Decisions that the governor does not ask for reconsideration are final. The Governor has absolute veto power over the decisions.
- ✓ The special provincial administration council convenes at least once a week. The Council convenes with the absolute majority of the total number of its members and takes decisions with the absolute majority of those attending the meeting. In case of equality of votes, the chairman's side shall be considered the majority.
- ✓ The organs of the village are the mukhtar, the board of elders, and the village association. The mukhtar is elected and is the representative of the village legal entity. The village association elects the council of elders. The village association refers to the voters in the village. Decisions are taken by majority vote. The district governor can overturn the decisions taken by the village headman because they are outside the village's best interest.

Accordingly, the answers to the questions above were evaluated as entirely correct; incomplete answers were evaluated as partially correct, and incorrect and blank answers were not scored. The data obtained from these open-ended questions were also used to support and elaborate the qualitative data.

Findings

The findings are reported below respectively. In addition, the frequency values of the open-ended document administered to the participants before and after the workshop are given in Table 1.

Table 1
Number of participants' responses to the open-ended document

Response Level	Test	1 (f)	2 (f)	3 (f)	4 (f)	5 (f)	6 (f)	7 (f)	8 (f)
Correct	Pretest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Post-test	15	4	5	1	4	1	0	7
Partially	Pretest	18	16	8	6	7	5	0	36
	Post-test	13	15	23	11	8	13	7	29
Incorrect	Pretest	17	15	9	3	10	3	2	1
	Posttest	9	15	2	8	5	4	5	0
Blank	Pretest	10	14	28	36	28	37	43	7
	Posttest	5	8	12	22	25	24	30	6

Municipal Council

The first question asked to determine the participants' level of knowledge was about the formation of the municipal council, and the second question was about the stages of enactment of the municipal council's decisions. While none of the students constituting the study sample could explain these two questions correctly, this number increased to 15 for the first question and four for the second question in the post-application. In addition, while 10 students left the first question and 14 left the second question blank in the pre-application, the number of blank answers decreased to 5 and 8 in the post-application. Therefore, students' content knowledge about the municipal council increased after the workshops. For example, Nilüfer partially answered the first question in the pre-application by answering, "Members come to office through local elections," and received only three points. In the post-workshop practice, she answered the same question: "The municipal council convenes spontaneously on the fifth day following the announcement of the election results under the chairmanship of the mayor. One deputy mayor, two deputy mayors, and two clerk members are elected by secret ballot. The council is chaired by the mayor" and received 13 points and answered the question entirely correctly. The findings obtained from the interview with Nilüfer also support this conclusion. Nilüfer's response to the interview question "Did the workshop improve your field knowledge?" was as follows: "I think it did, teacher, completely. I did not know of the first local governments course, but now I think I have improved myself. ...because we learned by seeing, we learned a little bit by experimenting, which improved me. I can explain it, I can explain it because I can see it directly in my mind." We found that he stated that he learned the theoretical concepts better with methods and techniques such as concretization, animation, and discussion.

Municipality Council

The third question asked to determine the participants' level of knowledge was about the formation of councils and councils in municipalities, and the fourth question was about the stages of entry into force of municipal council decisions. While none of the students participating in the research could explain these two questions correctly, this number increased to five for the third question and one for the fourth question in the post-application. In addition, while 28 students left the third question and 36 left the fourth question blank in the pre-application, the number of blank answers decreased to 12 and 22 in the post-application. Therefore, students' content knowledge about the municipal council increased after the workshops. For example, Gökşat scored 17 points in the pre-application and increased this score to 28 points post-application. In the interview, Gökşat said, "I passed the exam without studying extra from the book because I knew that the workshop would also be useful," "I think it was more efficient because we did the fourth workshop...we saw what kind of an environment it was...we gained experience in decision-making...I saw the events in the workshop personally, I mean, we experienced that excitement at that time...it was fun at first, but it can be learned without being noticed, we went for fun, not for a lesson, but it was very effective. Books are not as effective as this," and expressed how practical the workshops were regarding meaningful learning.

Assembly and Council in Special Provincial Administrations

The fifth question asked to determine the participants' knowledge level in the research is about the structure of the assembly and council in extraordinary provincial administrations. The sixth question is about the entry into force of the assembly's decisions in extraordinary provincial administrations, and the seventh is about the entry into force of

the council's decisions in extraordinary provincial administrations. Most students who constituted the study sample could not answer these three questions correctly. However, they were able to explain these questions in the last practice. Therefore, the student's field knowledge of the Assembly and Council in Special Provincial Administrations increased after the workshops. In this context, Sedef, one of the participants, explained his opinion on the question, "Based on the workshop, do you think you can explain the stages of the entry into force of the decisions of the assembly and the council in special provincial administrations?" as "Teacher, I think I have more knowledge about this subject compared to before, you know, I have trouble whether I can reflect it by talking, but I can reflect it by writing, I can think of it, because it is more permanent, teacher, you know, at least I know some of their things. Now I can explain more easily that this is happening, this is happening, this is how decisions are made, this is happening, this is how they work."

Emre, on the other hand, said: "... There are the organs of the provincial general assembly, the provincial general assembly, the governor, and the provincial council, let me start with the provincial general assembly first. It convenes five days after the election with the election procedures, it is opened by the oldest member, the assembly is opened by the oldest member, this election is again the first and second deputy chairman, two substitute clerks are determined and the institution is formed. Again, the chairman of the provincial general assembly sets the agenda, but the issue that the governor wants to be discussed is brought forward and discussed and resolved at the first meeting."

Village Organs

The eighth question asked to determine the level of knowledge of the participants in the research is "Tell about the organs of the village and explain the stage of enactment of decisions in villages." When the pre- and post-application scores are compared, it is seen that there is a significant difference between the scores of the participants. In addition, when the interview data were analyzed, student opinions stated that the workshops were effective. In this context, Tayyip said, "The workshops had a great effect, for example, when I explain the parliament, those moments come to my mind if it was verbal, I would have been missing, for example, the governor's absolute veto and the veto that makes it difficult, and our teacher told us the same thing last year. I have never remembered the governor's absolute veto and empowering veto until the workshop until this time, before which year and after which year after the workshop."

Emre, on the other hand, expressed his opinion on village organs as follows: "Let me talk about the organs of the village, the organs of the village are the mukhtar, the council of elders, and the village association. The mukhtar is the representative of the village legal entity, a person who has been elected for five years, who has had a salary since 1977, who has the title of a civil servant, and who is judged in any negative development. After that, the head of the village administration in the village, the board of elders, is a committee consisting of eight people, sometimes four full and four substitutes, sometimes 10 people, sometimes five full and five substitutes, depending on the population. Let me move on to the village association, which is made up of male and female voters living in the villages, usually, for example, in villages, the mukhtar has a Say."

Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

This study concluded that workshops in the local governments' course contributed to students' understanding and learning in the municipal council, municipal council, and village bodies in extraordinary provincial administrations. The reasons for this situation are discussed below. While making the discussion, the original contribution of this study is presented by comparing it with the literature. The study is based on constructivism theory. Constructivism is an approach to the learning process in which the learner takes an active role. In the constructivist approach, learning is realized through active participation, such as discussion, defending ideas, questioning, and sharing ideas, not just passive reading and listening. In this context, the interaction of individuals is of immense importance. Students do not accept knowledge as it is; they create or discover knowledge (Perkins, 1999, p.370).

The fact that education and training activities are purposeful and planned is vital for students to learn effectively. Goal setting and decision-making are the central elements in intentional and planned activities (Bilen, 2002, p.10). Students took an active role in implementing the workshops and cooperated in goal-setting and decision-making. For example, municipality and special provincial administration council members were students, and students determined positions such as councilor, clerk, president, etc. In addition, the agenda of the assemblies was created, and decisions were taken by the lecturer and students together.

The active role of students in all these processes contributed to their understanding of the course and their development. In other words, students benefited significantly from the workshops regarding taking an active role, goal setting, decision-making, and collaboration. Interviews and post-tests conducted with students after the

workshops also support this. However, understanding and retaining course topics is vital for theoretical courses. According to many, rote memorization methods and learning styles based only on listening are reasons for failure (Akşar & Olkun, 2005; Savran, 2004). With the workshops, students acted out the course topics theatrically; in other words, they learned the theoretical course topics by listening and practicing. Thus, the course topics were better and permanently understood. The post-test and final interviews conducted within the scope of the study supported this.

When the literature is examined (Arredondo & Rucinski, 1994; Cilliers & Timmermans, 2014; Şimşekcan & Kara, 2015; Töre, 2017; Turhan & Zoeteweyj-Turhan, 2014), there are studies involving workshop practice, but none involving workshop practice on the municipal council, and village bodies in extraordinary provincial administrations, with which this study deals. Arredondo and Rucinski (1994) evaluated the impact of workshops on undergraduate and graduate student projects. The study included structured small group discussions and presentations of final projects and found that the workshops improved student metacognition and stimulated creativity. On the other hand, Cilliers and Timmermans (2014) tried to reveal the importance of practical teaching of theoretical knowledge about urban areas in a European Union-funded project, and the study showed that practical training improves both practice and theory. Similarly, Gülhan (2022) developed activities with teachers through design skills workshops. On the other hand, a workshop on basic medical practices in medical education was conducted by Ünalın et al. (2006).

Medical students' communication, research, clinical, field, and outpatient skills were developed through this workshop. This study differs from Ünalın et al. (2006) regarding the learning model used. In their research, Hammond et al. (2019) tried to measure the impact of applied education on student learning and development in the case of primary school students, and the study's results revealed the positive effects of applied education. These and similar examples show a gap in the literature on the subject and method of this study. It is essential to fill this gap because the Political Science and Public Administration departments generally train candidates for public office. Public officials embody the state, a bridge between citizens and the state. Public officials must receive a qualified education, especially in bureaucratically strong countries like Türkiye. During the workshops implemented within the scope of the study, students tried to learn the course subjects by role-playing. For example, in the workshop on the formation of the municipal council and the decision-making process, students simulated the municipal council and the decision-making process. Accordingly, the students who took the course became council members, the mayor and the presidential council were formed, the agenda was set, and the agenda items were finalized. All these processes were realized with the guidance of the course instructor and the cooperation and active role of the students.

In the workshop on forming the municipal council and the decision-making process, the students formed a council with the instructor's guidance and skills, such as cooperation, goal setting, decision-making, and taking an active role. The agenda was then set, and the agenda items were voted on and finalized by the Law on Special Provincial Administration. In the workshop on the entry into force of assembly and council decisions in extraordinary provincial administrations, students simulated the provincial general assembly and the provincial council with the guidance of the lecturer. In this framework, the council and the council's presidency council were formed. Then, the agenda was set, and the agenda items were finalized. Likewise, the provincial council was formed, and the agenda items determined by the provincial council were voted on and decided. In all these processes, students took an active role, set goals, and made decisions in cooperation.

In the workshop on village organs, as in the other workshops, students identified village organs and made decisions about the village. Students also actively participated in this workshop, cooperating, setting goals, and making decisions. The theatrical portrayal of village administration as a simulation contributed to their better understanding of the subject and their individual and social development.

The Turkish Constitution defines municipalities, extraordinary provincial administrations, and villages as local government units. Local governments are the units closest to the people, where local and everyday needs are met, and their importance is increasing daily. It is crucial for political science and public administration students who are candidates as public officials and public administrators to know these administrative units' formation and decision-making processes. This study examined the importance of workshops in education and training in the case of local government units, and their positive contribution to education and training was revealed. However, the workshops set an example of presenting the theoretical courses taught by the faculty and other social sciences more memorably and interactively. In addition, it allows lecturers to present lessons with new techniques and materials. Workshop practices will also contribute to the theoretical development of the subject. The positive effect of workshops has been suggested in many studies (Arredondo & Rucinski, 1994; Cilliers & Timmermans, 2014; Şimşekcan & Kara, 2015; Töre, 2017; Turhan & Zoeteweyj-Turhan, 2014).

As a result of the findings obtained from the study, the recommendations that can be given within the scope of the study are as follows:

- ✓ A more effective education and training system can be created by making the theoretical courses taught in social sciences practical.
- ✓ The workshops applied in the example of the local governments' course can set an example for some other courses and can be made continuous.
- ✓ Course curricula can be reorganized for students' individual and academic development by applying them similarly to workshops.
- ✓ In-service training in workshops can be provided to instructors teaching local governments and similar courses.

In this study, the contribution of workshops was determined from a qualitative perspective. Quantitative research methods can be used for generalization, and mixed research methods can generalize and present different perspectives. However, there were some limitations, such as making the students ready during the workshops and students not volunteering to participate in the workshops. At this point, taking attendance during the workshop and incentive practices such as additional points, certificates of participation, etc., will eliminate these limitations.

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