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## INTRODUCING A NEW DATA COLLECTION TOOL IN EDUCATION: THE STORAGE TECHNIQUE

*Research article*

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# INTRODUCING A NEW DATA COLLECTION TOOL IN EDUCATION: THE STORAGE TECHNIQUE

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## Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study, based on the Survey Method, was to introduce a new technique to collect data on educational practices. For this purpose, a sample practice was designed to implement with a volunteer study group comprising 36 editors in a publishing company. The task details of the sample practice were determined via DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) method in order to analyze the tasks and the job description of editors in a publishing company. In that way, thirteen tasks were determined for the participant editors. During the implementation phase of the new technique called “Storage Technique”, a sheet of colorful paper was delivered to each participant, they were invited to think and write down whatever came uppermost as a task of an editor, and to fold the paper. The papers folded were put in to a fishbowl. After all participants put their folded papers in the bowl, they were invited to pick a paper in the color other than theirs, and to write the task written in that paper if it was different from their own. The process was repeated for three rounds, and consequently, three different task descriptions were obtained from each participant editor. Finally, 7 out of 36 participants were interviewed to get their viewpoints about the technique administered in the process. For the analysis of the data, the descriptive analysis was utilized. The result of the study revealed that the Storage Technique could be applied effectively for the collection of the data in the fields of Education and Teaching.

*Key words:* DACUM method, data collection, editors in publishing companies, tasks of editors, Storage Technique, Education and teaching

## 1. Introduction

Since the early history of humanity, man has been in an effort to make sense out of the world and environment surrounding him and his life. The effort to understand existence and make sense of life has shaped the adventure of mankind on earth. In an effort to facilitate life on earth and to make sense of the past and the future, the human being has always strived to learn and gain knowledge. As a result of this effort, accumulation of scientific knowledge has always continued increasingly. Efforts to increase the accumulation of scientific knowledge have developed the researches of human being to obtain new information, methods and products over time. The fact that the researches gain a scientific dimension with the developing information, methods and products revealed the concept of scientific research and provided more systematic responses to the feeling of curiosity. For this reason, the concept of scientific research is qualified as an effort to produce or compile information that includes a specific purpose, steps and method to obtain new information, methods or products (MEGEP, 2006).

A scientific research can be conducted for developing a new method in addition to the purposes such as bringing innovation to science, finding a solution to a problem, applying a known method to a different area or determining an existing situation (Er, 2011; Kaya & Şahin, 2014; Resmi Gazete, 2016). The increase in scientific researches in order to develop a new method can be seen as valuable because of adding diversity and variety of methods to science.

The way to produce science is by obtaining provable information using scientific processes. The use of methods and processes that are believed to contribute science will be possible through scientific means and scientific research process (Erişti, Kuzu, Yurdagül, Akbulut & Kurt, 2013). Developments in scientific research process, methods and techniques have led to the development of different ways for different problems and contributed to the rapid increase of knowledge. Since the use of a new data collection technique that has never been used before will not show that this new data collection technique is scientific, the scientific research process should also be employed for this new data collection technique. In this research study, the quality of the storage technique, which is a data collection method that has never been used before, is aimed to be revealed.

Studies focused on groups have been used by sociologists and psychologists for more than half a century (Merton & Kendall, 1946; Merton, Fiske & Kendall 1956). In fact, group works, in their simplest form, are the works that sharing of ideas is carried out among selected people on certain topics. Although there are many possible variations on the basic method (Kitzinger 1990, Krueger 1998), it involves one or more group discussions where the participants are collectively focused to a topic chosen by the researcher. Participants (usually 6-8 and rarely more than 12) can be pre-existing groups of people (for example, family members, colleagues) or can be drawn specifically for research. In this case, groups are generally homogeneous in relation to 'status' factors such as occupation, social class or age (Carey, 1994). The data analysis sections of group work manuals are often very short, and most commentators suggest that appropriate techniques for analyzing one-to-one interview data are equally valid for use with focus group data. Many researchers make one-on-one interviews and focus group data alternately (Wilkinson, 1998).

Focus groups are used in three main ways. They were first used as a part of multi-method research design in addition to other methods. Second, perhaps most commonly used as a primary research method to conduct phenomenological research on people's own views and understandings. Third, it was used as a kind of participatory action research to empower participants and promote social and political change (Wilkinson, 1998).

In the implementation of the Storage Technique, which can also be used as an active learning technique, it is aimed to ensure the interaction of the participants to share the experiences. A fishbowl and four, five or six different colors of paper are required to apply this technique. The implementation stages of the Storage Technique can be stated as follows respectively:

- Participants are informed about the purpose and application stages of the technique.
- Papers in different colors are delivered to each participant.
- Each participant is invited to write down the first important task of an editor that comes to their mind on the paper in front of them. This practice can also be repeated as a teaching technique in the learning-teaching process by writing their most important achievement at the end of a lesson.

- After the writing process is completed, the participants are invited to fold the papers and throw them into the fishbowl (storage) in front of them. While doing this application, the participants are told to keep in mind the color of their own paper.
- Then, while the fishbowl (storage) is circulated again in the group, each participant is reminded to pull a folded piece of paper from the fishbowl (storage) other than the color of their own paper.
- Each participant is asked to unfold the paper and read what is written on it, and to write the third important information he/she deems important apart from this paper and what he/she has written first, then to re-fold the paper.
- The fishbowl (storage) is circulated again in the group and the papers that are written and folded are thrown into it.
- The fishbowl (storage) is re-circulated in the group and the participants are asked to pull out a paper in a color other than the colors of the papers they wrote in the previous two rounds, and read two items written, then to write another information that they consider important other than the two information they read and the two information they wrote.
- Later, the fishbowl (storage) is circulated again and all the papers are thrown into it.
- All papers are pulled out one by one from the storage and read in a way that the whole group can hear, and each item is discussed and evaluated one by one.
- Eventually, all of the information collected in the fishbowl (storage) is combined and the common product of the group is created.

### **1.1. Problem**

Cultural, social, economic, technologic changes in life requires a global approach in the education system of every country. As a consequence, these changes and the needs for a global approach to education require deeper and wider researches in education to discover or to evaluate the new ways of practices in education. Collecting data is one of the most important stages of scientific researches because all the findings, discussions and conclusion are based on the data collected and the analysis of the collected data. At this point, each and every functional method or technique to collect the data is appreciated by researchers.

In this study, it was assumed that the technique, named Storage Technique, was considered to be a new and effective implementation to collect data in studies related to Education and teaching. Based on this assumption, the research question of the study was formulated as in the following:

**What are the viewpoints of the editors of publishing companies about the “Storage Technique” after the implementations of writing down the tasks of an editor?”**

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of the research is to examine, observe and evaluate the effectiveness of the "Storage Technique" implementation as a data collection tool conducted with participant editors of a publishing company in the meeting held regarding the "Editor's Job Description" .

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1. Research Model**

The research was based on the Survey Method via an interview and utilizing the qualitative analysis techniques.

#### **3.2. Participants**

The participants of the research consisted of 36 editors who participated in the meeting held with the aim of determining the job description and professional standards of editors in publishing companies.

#### **3.3. Data collection**

The meetings with the editors were conducted mutually and one-to-one basis by the researcher. The interviews were first recorded with a voice recorder, and then these recordings were transcribed and converted into a written form. Themes were created via classifying the recorded data using the qualitative research method.

There were a total of number of 4 questions in the interview form addressing to the participant editors. The questions were as follows:

Question 1: How did you find the “Technique” in terms of the objectives and content of the meeting about “Editor's Job Description”?

Question 2: What are your opinions about the impressions in the setting of the “Storage Technique” about determination of editor’s job description?

Question 3: How did you find the “Storage Technique” and the meeting in terms of evaluation dimension?

Question 4: What are your opinions and suggestions about “Storage Technique” and its application process?

#### **3.3. Data analysis**

Descriptive analysis, one of the qualitative research data analysis methods, was used to analyze the data obtained.

*Descriptive analysis:* According to this method, the data are summarized and interpreted according to the previously determined themes. In the descriptive analysis, direct quotations are often included to reflect the views of the individuals interviewed or observed. In such analyzes, the aim is to present the findings to the reader in an organized and interpreted manner. The data obtained for this purpose are first described systematically and clearly. Later, these descriptions are explained, interpreted, cause-effect relationships are examined and some conclusions are reached. Associating, interpreting and making forward predictions of the emerging themes may also be among the dimensions of the researcher's comments (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008: 224).

After the data obtained in the interview process of the research were evaluated in line with the explanations given above, themes related to the purpose of the research were created as follows:

- Storage technique from the perspective of the editors
- Likes in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique
- Criticized aspects in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique

- Likes of editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting
- Criticism from editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting
- Suggestions of editors about the application process

Findings were interpreted according to the themes created. All of the data obtained by data collection were placed in the tables and those tables are used while making interpretations.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

##### 4.1. Interviews with participants about the storage technique

As a result of the interviews with the editors, the sound recordings were transcribed and transferred to the written form, and the opinions of the editors were examined. Seven of the participant editors were interviewed face-to-face to create the 6 themes identified, and an average interview was carried out in 312 seconds (about 5 minutes and 20 seconds). The interview periods for each of the 7 interviews are given in Table 1.

Table 1. *Interview periods with the participants*

Interviews	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Interview 6	Interview 7
Period (Seconds)	300	244	313	302	418	237	371

##### 4.2. Theme 1: Storage technique from the perspective of the editors

The responses of the editorial staff to the question of how they found the storage technique used in the editor's job description were themed and coded as indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. *Storage technique from the perspective of the editors*

Themes, Codes and Sub-Codes	N	Opinions
Storage technique from the perspective of the editors	5	Storage technique was a technique that I first encountered.
- Data Collection Tool	4	It was fun.
- Likes in terms of time and usage	3	It was in an order that everyone could easily express their opinions.
	3	It was a useful application.
	2	It wasn't very long; it was very nice in this sense.
	1	Storage technique was successful.
	1	It was interesting.
	1	I think it was an important and good technique for gathering information.

More than half of the editorial staff interviewed stated that they encountered the storage technique for the first time. More than 50% also stated that this technique is a very fun application. When Table 2 is examined, almost half of the interviewed respondents evaluated the application of the storage technique as an application that everyone can easily communicate. Nearly half of the interviewees stated that the application is useful. It is also an important finding that there are participants who think that storage technique is quite pleasant in terms of short duration.

While one participant found the storage technique successful, another participant found it interesting. In addition, another participant stated that it is a good technique for gathering information. In general, when Table 2 is examined, it is seen that there are ideas that the storage technique is evaluated in terms of data collection tool and the likes about the technique are expressed.

#### 4.3. Theme 2: Likes in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique

At the end of the coding and theming process of the content analysis performed on the data obtained as a result of the interviews, the theme of “likes in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique” was created. Findings and comments obtained in the light of this theme are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *Likes in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique*

Themes, Codes and Sub-Codes	N	Opinions
Likes in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique	5	It was a very democratic attitude to have editors' job description determined by editors.
- Quality of the technique	4	It was a developing (useful) activity.
- Quality of the information	1	I think it was extremely creative.
	1	I have clearly seen that such a technique is a useful technique in defining the tasks of the editor, in terms of uncovering the right things.

Table 3 shows the likes of interviewed editorial staff regarding the application of the storage technique applied to make the job descriptions of the editors. More than half of the respondents (71.43%) find it very democratic for the editors to make editor's job description by themselves. One participant expressed his opinion as follows:

*Interviewee 1: “...The resulting product was everyone's thoughts and I found it successful”.*

*Interviewee 2: “The most important aspect of the technique is that everyone’s common idea is created”.*

In addition to these opinions, another participant's opinion, who stated that he did not meet his expectation but found the technique useful in a similar way, is as follows:

*Interviewee 3: "If we question its usefulness, it did not meet my expectation, but it is useful for people to express their opinions.*

In addition, more than half (57.15%) of the interviewed participants defined the storage technique as a developer during the job description process. In this sense, a participant stated his opinion as follows:

*Interviewee 1: "I had a frame before the meeting. At least I felt that I had to improve this framework, even I would improve continuously".*

One participant found the technique creative when he evaluated it in terms of the task definition, while another participant described it as a useful technique. The participant, who described it as useful, described this benefit in terms of more accurate definition and determination of the tasks of the editors.

#### **4.4. Theme 3: Criticized aspects in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique**

At the end of the coding and theming process of the content analysis performed on the data obtained as a result of the interviews, the theme of "criticized aspects in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique" was created. Findings and comments obtained in the light of this theme are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *Criticized aspects in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique*

Themes, Codes and Sub-Codes	N	Opinions
Criticized aspects in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique	1	I think it did not reach the goal in terms of my expectations.
- Job Description	1	There is a situation like assigning duties to the editor.
- Evaluation according to the purpose	1	At the end of the meeting, an evaluation was made by reading the papers on which everyone wrote their opinions. It was as if it was only read, a full evaluation was not made. Then a form comprised of a list was sent to us.

While the likes in the creation of the editor's job description using the storage technique, the opinions of the individuals who expressed their criticisms about the application were arranged in Table 4. In this sense, when Table 4 is examined, different criticisms have been expressed by one person and a general criticism of 43% has been realized.

The interviewee, who mentioned his expectation in Table 3, also expressed this here. He stated that he had an existing expectation before entering the meeting and that this expectation could not be met because he could not reach his goal. Another participant stated that a situation such as assigning duties to the editor instead of a job description occurred in the



meeting. Another participant stated that the evaluations made at the end of the storage technique application process are not complete.

Determining the task description and presenting these tasks to the participants in a list which is the purpose of this application were regarded to be a negative situation by an interviewee. It can be said that this situation aroused from the fact that the statements made to all participants before starting the application were not sufficient.

**4.5. Theme 4: Likes of editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting**

After the meeting and the storage technique applied, the job description of the editors was determined by the authorized persons and a document containing the job description of the editors was prepared and distributed to the editorial unit. Thus, editors were informed. This was also addressed in the interview held with the editorial staff, and the opinions of the participants regarding this assessment and the document were interviewed, and the likes of the participants were compiled in Table 5.

Table 5. *Likes of editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting*

Themes, Codes and Sub-Codes	N	Opinions
Likes of editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting	3	It was a good, proper evaluation.
	1	I found it creative

Almost half of the participants who participated in the interview after the meeting regarding the job description of editors found the evaluation appropriate and good, while another person described it as creative. The opinions of a participant who found the application good are as follows:

*Interviewee 1: "I did not expect it to be in such a short time. It seems that it has been carefully read, evaluated, studied. This is a very effective method. It is pretty good to do this way."*

On the other hand, the person who qualifies the assessment as creative has conveyed the rationale for this quality as follows:

*Interviewee 2: "I found it creative. I learned what I should not do. I learned to take what should be a burden on me and throw extra loads".*

**4.6. Theme 5: Criticism from editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting**

At the end of the coding and theming process of the content analysis performed on the data obtained as a result of the interviews, the theme of "criticism from editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting" was created. Findings and comments obtained in the light of this theme are given in Table 6.

Table 6. *Criticism from editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting*

Themes, Codes and Sub-Codes	N	Opinions
Criticism from editors about the final draft of the document containing the editor's job description after the meeting - Single definition - Final decision mechanism - Time constraint	1	The ones discussed in general are reflected in the form. But I think there must be a single definition filtered from all opinions.
	1	I do not know how the opinions there (in the document) are determined. What are the opinions in the documents determined according to? Is there a voting done? Or did the management decide this? I do not know.
	1	I don't think it's enough to make a final decision.
	1	It was very nice. The following aspect may have been overlooked: At first they were all read (all of the ideas written on papers). But then, in terms of time, we are told "If there are similar things, skip them".

In Table 6, there are the points criticized by the interviewed participants regarding the evaluation process of the document in which the editor job descriptions are made. Since the criticisms are different from each other, the exact views of the individuals are presented in the table.

While one participant argued that many definitions were made, but only one definition including these items could be made; another participant criticized the decision mechanism of these definitions and questioned whether the decision was made by voting. He also questioned whether the management decided the final draft of the document. Yet another participant expressed his opinion based on the decision mechanism and stated that the evaluation was not a final decision. Another participant criticized that similar views were omitted in the document.

#### 4.7. Theme 6: Suggestions of editors about the application process

At the end of the coding and theming process of the content analysis performed on the data obtained as a result of the interviews, the theme of "suggestions of editors about the application process" was created. Findings and comments obtained in the light of this theme are given in Table 7.

Table 7. *Suggestions of editors about the application process*

Themes, Codes and Sub-Codes	N	Opinions
Suggestions of editors about the application process - Continuity - Duration of application - The relationship of job	1	In order to better meet my expectations and to achieve the purpose of the applied storage technique, the editorial profession can be evaluated by comparing it with the editorial definitions previously done in other jobs.

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description and participant - Making more useful applications - Adding different techniques to the process	1	I think, in order for the storage technique to be applied more comfortably, it would be more useful to have the application managed by any experienced person among us other than by the management.
	1	Actually, I do not have much technical advice, but the application could be more systematic. For example, the type of paper used in the application could be more diverse.
	1	In the application, there were some people who had other job descriptions like compiler, assistant editor ... They had no effect there. There could be only editors.
	1	Not all ideas were written on the board. If all ideas were written, it could be more productive for everyone to see. But that would be a waste of time too. Actually there was no problem in terms of time; the technique could be fully applied.
	1	By taking suggestions and criticism, the technique will be more developed.
	1	The storage technique should be explained a little more and I think that such meetings should be applied to the groups again from time to time without interruption.
	1	It should be continued. It should be repeated and if there are more advanced techniques suitable for our academy and they might be more useful, I would like them to be taught to us too.
	1	The application should be continued. I think it's useful. This technique can be applied very well in line with the application of quality circles. It can also have a very positive effect on solving problems in this way.
	1	This technique can also be useful in many different areas beyond the topic. This can be used in every area that the people have difficulties in definitions or how they can take it further. This technique can be an important tool for our everyday discussions such as "What is the teacher? What is success? What is promotion?" I think it has a creative contribution.

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In Table 7, the suggestions of the editorial staff regarding the implementation process have been presented. When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that the views are mostly related to the continuity of the implementation process. According to this finding, it can be said that the participants found the application effective. In addition, as stated in the sub-codes, suggestions were made regarding the duration of the application, the implementation of the application more accurately and the use of different techniques in such processes, and that the participants should be persons related to the subject of the meeting.

## **5. Results and Suggestions**

### **5.1. Results**

Based on the findings of the study, the results of the research are as follows:

- Storage technique can be seen as an appropriate technique for data collection and teaching and generally positive thoughts about the application have been conveyed. It is also understood from the views that the meetings have become more fun with such activities. Such practices keep employees away from the boring and monotonous meeting atmospheres; it enables them to be more efficient and to be more sensitive. It is determined that the storage technique, which is thought to be very useful, can be used not only in such definitions but also in other internal decisions and applications.
- It has been determined that the storage technique is a creative information gathering application that the participants enjoy and participate in by having fun and also provides personal development. It was clearly seen that decision-making processes based on stakeholder opinions were perceived as a positive and appropriate practice by the editors.
- It can be assumed that the storage technique is an interesting, beneficial and democratic application completed in a short time in which participants can easily convey their opinions. It is determined that it is a new and unknown application and therefore the steps should be explained in detail before starting the application. Only one of the 7 editors interviewed stated that this technique is a new technique, while the rest of the group stated that they did not know anything about it. Thus, if this new technique is to be used for any reason, providing more detailed information about this technique to the audience will eliminate anxiety.
- Carrying out a process evaluation by taking the opinions of everyone at the meeting can be positively received by the editors. If the required time were not allocated to the evaluation made at the end of the application, it was found that the responsibility of the participants in the decision-making process decreased. The editorial document created by evaluating the meeting was delivered to the editors, and there are positive and negative opinions about this document. Negative opinions about the document containing the job descriptions of the editors should not be ignored.
- It has been determined that adopting an authoritarian management style in the application process was found disturbing by the participants.

### **5.2. Suggestions**

Following suggestions were made to researchers and practitioners based on the findings and results of the study:

- Storage technique can be used in data collection and teaching, especially when it is desired to get away from a boring meeting atmosphere, to create a fun environment and when time

is limited. Storage technique can be used not only in job descriptions, but also in other institutional decisions and teaching practices.

- Storage technique can be used when it is requested to take responsibility for decision-making and the participation of stakeholders, participants or learners is required.
- The evaluation process in the application of storage technique can be more effective by allocating enough time required. Paying attention to stakeholder views in the decision-making processes regarding the editorial units will be a more appropriate attitude in trying to finalize the decisions and making the decisions to be seen appropriate and acceptable by the relevant unit.
- Since it is a new and unknown application, a detailed description and a written instruction can be provided before starting the application.
- Instead of being managed by an authoritarian form of management or an individual representing authority, the attitudes and behaviors that make the participants feel more comfortable can be adopted during the implementation process. In addition, care can be taken that the person who conducts the meeting is not a senior manager or a person representing authority.
- In the application process, the color of the papers on which the opinions are written can be increased.
- A similar qualitative research can be carried out on the application of the storage technique in active learning.

## **6. Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

## **7. Ethics Committee Approval**

The authors confirm that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country.

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