An Action Research on Developing First-Grade Primary School Students' Emotional Literacy Skills [*]

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Abstract

As a first-grade primary school teacher (the first author) in this action research, I aimed to develop my students' emotional literacy skills regarding four emotions, namely "sadness," "fear," "anger," and "anxiety." I conducted the study with my 16 first-grade students at a private primary school in Ankara during the spring term of the 2021-2022 academic year. I first determined my students' emotional literacy skill levels by the "Emotion Regulation Skills Scale." Then, I designed and applied 14 action plans consisting of 55 teaching activities for the three components of emotional literacy (i.e., the sub-skills of emotion recognition, expression, and regulation) for 14 weeks and five hours each week. I designed the teaching activities with the theme "Lili and Zozo's Journey to the Emotions Galaxy." I collected the qualitative data through participant observations, reflective journals, video recordings, and feedback from my students, Validity Committee members, and parents. In addition, I gathered post-measurement scores by re-applying the "Emotion Regulation Skills Scale." I analyzed the qualitative data descriptively while I followed the directions provided in the scale for the quantitative data. As a result of the teaching activities I applied in the research, I identified significant improvements in my students' emotional literacy skills. Regarding the pre- and post-measurement results in recognizing emotions, all the students improved the skill of identifying all four emotions, except for one student for "sadness," one for "anxiety," and two for "fear." Regarding the pre- and post-measurement results in expressing emotions, the most significant improvement happened in feelings of fear and anxiety. While only five students could express "fear" in pre-measurements, this number increased to 15 in post-measurements. Similarly, while only one student could express "anxiety" in pre-measurements, this number increased to 11 in post-measurements. Concerning the pre- and post-measurement scores in regulating emotions, all students

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ultimately improved. All my students acquired the ability to control all four emotions. In addition, using Lili and Zozo dolls in the teaching activities increased students' interest, made their learning more enjoyable, and contributed positively to their emotional literacy skills. Based on my experiences in the study, I provided some suggestions for educators.

Introduction

Humans have communicated with their environment throughout their existence, trying to understand their essence and negotiate with others. Emotions are the most prominent factor affecting the nature of the communication process (Alemdar, 2020). Individuals who recognize, express, and manage emotions can establish healthier relationships (Steiner, 2014) because being compatible with life is only possible through emotions. For example, an individual's fear of a dangerous situation enables them to take precautions against it (Goleman, 2018). However, emotions can complicate individuals' lives if they are not expressed appropriately with suitable words or reactions (Gross & Thompson, 2007). Indeed, there is nothing wrong with being angry at another person (Soykan, 2003); what makes the difference is instead whether the person reflects their anger "at the right time," "justifiably," and "appropriately" (Norris, 2003). In this respect, emotional literacy refers to the ability to understand the emotional state of ourselves and others and to take appropriate actions based on this understanding (Antidote, 2003; Steiner, 2014; Weare, 2003).

The Contemporary Dictionary of the Turkish Language Institution (https://sozluk.gov.tr/) defines "emotion" as "1. Perception with the senses; feeling. 2. The impression that certain objects or events arouse in one's inner world. 3. The ability to evaluate objects or events morally and aesthetically. 4. A unique spiritual movement and mobility." When one examines emotion etymologically, one can reach the meaning of "the spirit that moves people" (Goleman, 2018). Although the importance of emotions in human life is undeniable, the "emotional literacy" phenomenon has only recently attracted researchers' attention. The most notable reason for this is related to the negative meanings attributed to the "emotion" concept, especially in Western culture. For example, "When we say someone is 'emotional,' we usually mean irrational. Emotions, although sometimes thought of as a guide to our true selves, are often thought of as out of control, destructive, primitive, and childish, rather than thoughtful, civilized, and adult" (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 328). Also, because "emotionality" is traditionally associated with women, it is judged as "a distraction from the serious scholarly work of the mind" (Winans, 2012, p. 153).

In the literature, different researchers emphasize different emotions. For example, Ekman (2003) identified six "basic emotions" as anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise based on similar facial expressions in all cultures. Considering feelings in the context of "emotion clusters," Goleman (2018) viewed anger, sadness, fear, pleasure, love, and shame as the core emotion clusters. Plutchik (2003) proposed an emotion circle encompassing eight "primary emotions": joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, and expectation. Also, emotions are grouped differently in the literature. For instance, Goleman (2016) classifies emotions into two groups: "basic emotions," such as anger, fear, and joy, which are innate in humans, and "social emotions," such as shame, trust, and guilt, which are learned later in life. Tarhan (2015) also categorizes emotions into two groups: "positive emotions," such as love, trust, and happiness, and "negative emotions," such as frustration, anger, and hatred. A study conducted with 240 primary school teachers (Çevik & Saban, 2019) reported that teachers experience positive and negative emotions while teaching and that negative emotions (such as frustration, regret, or anger) negatively affect professional attitudes, perceptions, or actions.

Children learn emotions through their experiences from a very young age and reflect the emotional skills they acquire in their social relationships. The attitudes and behaviors of adults are critical in children's emotional learning experiences. For example, Colwell and Hart (2006) examined the contribution of (1) the quality of mother-child communication and (2) emotion framing (emotion expression) styles used in mother-child interaction to children's social and emotional competencies. The participants comprised 61 mothers and 61 children (33 boys and 28 girls) aged around three years (a mean age of 3.15). To this end, each mother-child dyad engaged in a 20-minute book-reading and 10-minute play activities. The researchers videotaped all the activities. In the book reading activity, the researchers asked mothers to narrate "a series of events taking place between a child and various animals" using an illustrated children's book. For the play activity, the researchers gave each mother-child dyad a large container including various toys such as "animals," "blocks," "kitchen utensils," "cars," and "people," asking them to play together for 10 minutes. In the book reading activity, the researchers examined mothers' emotion framing patterns, including "highly positive/negative" and "mildly positive/negative" judgments. For example: "What a happy/sad frog." was considered a "highly positive/negative" framing style, while "I think the dog looks happy/sad." was considered a "mildly positive/negative" framing style. The researchers examined the mother-child harmony in the game-playing activity. For instance, if the mother and child planned the game together, acted harmoniously by considering each other's suggestions, and enjoyed the game, it was considered a "high level of harmony"; however, if the child played with a toy alone while the mother was interested in something else or just watched the child playing, it was considered a "low level of harmony." The findings indicated that the "mildly positive emotion-framing style" positively contributed to children's ability to recognize and understand emotions. In addition, mothers with more harmonious relationships with their children played a decisive role in their social and emotional development.

Therefore, children can recognize emotional changes in others through cues like facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice from around the age of three. However, their ability to fully understand their emotions and those of others they interact with develops at ages 7-8 (Santrock, 1997). This age period is also considered the best time to develop children's ability to express and manage emotions (Denham, 2006; Steiner, 2014). In understanding the relationship between "age" and "emotional literacy," the study of Pons, Harris, and Rosnay (2004) may be helpful. Pons et al. (2004) defined nine emotional competencies ranging from easy to complex. Then, they examined 100 children (20 children each from the age groups of 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11) according to these competencies and found that children made significant progress in each competency with age. In other words, children become more competent in emotional literacy as their age increases. For example, a 3- or 4-year-old child can name basic emotions such as "happiness," "sadness," "fear," and "anger" based on cues in facial expressions. However, the child needs to wait until the ages 7-8 or later to realize why "psychological strategies" (such as denial and distraction) may be more effective than "behavioral strategies" (such as pushing and hitting) for controlling emotions or to understand that negative emotions stem from a morally reprehensible action (such as lying) and positive emotions by a morally praiseworthy action (such as altruism). It is a matter of emotional maturation that comes with age. I conducted this action research based on such an understanding. In this study, I aimed to develop my students' emotional literacy skills through the teaching activities I prepared and implemented as a first-grade teacher.

Components of Emotional Literacy Skill

Although "emotional literacy" is less famous than "emotional intelligence," it is a much older concept (Park, 1999). Also, these two concepts have become well-known in different world regions. While emotional literacy became known more in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom, emotional intelligence is more common in the United States (Carnwell & Baker, 2007). Some researchers (Killick, 2006; Humphrey, Curran, Morris, Farrell, & Woods, 2007; Perry, Lenny, & Humphrey, 2008) argue that "emotional literacy" and "emotional intelligence" are indistinguishable, while others (Dickson &

Burton, 2011; Park, 1999; Weare, 2003) highlight the differences between them. Those who emphasize the difference between the two concepts are generally researchers with an educator identity (Meekums, 2008). According to them, the main difference between these two concepts stems from the etymological roots of the words "intelligence" and "literacy" (Camilleri, Caruana, Falzon, & Muscat, 2012). This understanding conceptualizes "intelligence" as an innate, fixed trait that is not teachable while viewing "literacy" as a skill that people can develop throughout their lives from birth (Park, 1999; Rae, 2012; Weare, 2003). In this regard, "emotional intelligence" is considered as a potential that a person is born with, while "emotional literacy" is regarded as a set of skills that enable its use in daily life (Kandemir & Dündar, 2008). Accordingly, emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for emotional literacy, while emotional literacy reflects emotional intelligence in daily life.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) were the first to use the "emotional intelligence" concept in the literature. Later, Daniel Goleman's 1995 book "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ" made this concept famous. Goleman (1995) suggested that emotional intelligence comprises five essential competency areas.

- *Self-awareness* (being aware of one's own emotions).

- *Self-regulation* (dealing with own feelings appropriately).

- *Intrinsic motivation* (focusing on own goals and acting).

- *Empathy* (understanding how others feel).

- *Social skills* (managing relationships and resolving conflicts).

In the literature, Claude Steiner was the first to use the "emotional literacy" concept in his book "Healing Alcoholism," published in 1979 (Steiner, 2014). Later, it was grounded in scientific studies in American humanistic psychology and especially became famous with the article of psychotherapist Susie Orbach in "The Guardian" newspaper (Park, 1999). Susie Orbach stated that the simplest explanation of emotional literacy was to ask, *"How are you?"* and listen to its answer (Killick, 2006). The "Antidote" organization, Susie Orbach is one of the founders, also associates emotional literacy with an individual's awareness about emotions' impact on their social behaviors (Antidote, 2003). Accordingly, emotional literacy refers to individuals' understanding of their and others' feelings and the capacity to reflect their emotions appropriately in their actions.

The emotional literacy skill consists of three components (sub-skills): "emotion recognition," "emotion expression," and "emotion regulation." These three components are usually interrelated and integrated (Bosacci & Moore, 2004).

- *Emotion recognition* is the ability to recognize an emotion through bodily cues such as a frown, a smile, an accelerated heartbeat, sweating, or a trembling voice and to receive the message conveyed (Gallese, 2003). Children who become aware of their own emotions also begin to recognize the feelings of others. This feature forms the basis of social relationships. Children who freely feel their emotions also learn to control them over time (Acar, 2021).

- *Emotion expression* is conveying feelings to others through verbal or non-verbal messages. Talking about one's feelings is the most fundamental indicator of the emotional expression skill (Gross, 1998). Children who have acquired this skill can reveal their feelings clearly and relate them to an event (such as saying they feel sad due to their pet's death) (Cornwell & Bundy, 2009). This skill is also necessary for initiating and maintaining social interaction (Dunn & Hughes, 1998). For example, friends will no longer want to play or socialize with a child who expresses anger through adverse reactions such as yelling, swearing, or hitting (Denham, 1998).

- *Emotion regulation* is the ability to control a felt emotion, convey it with the right words or reactions, and establish effective social communication with other people (Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004). Harper (2016) considers the "emotion regulation" skill as a prerequisite for a child to interact socially with others. Children who have acquired this skill can recognize their emotions, calm themselves down when they feel negative emotions, and exhibit behaviors compatible with the social environment (Hyson, 2004). In addition, two main factors affect individuals' emotion regulation behaviors (Ford & Gross, 2018, 2019): (1) beliefs about whether emotions are good or bad and (2) beliefs about whether emotions are controllable or not. For example, by conducting a systematic literature review, Hong and Kangas (2022) reported that there is a positive correlation between people's beliefs that "emotions are good and controllable" and their "selection and application of appropriate emotion regulation strategies."

Developing Emotional Literacy Skills

The literature offers different approaches to developing emotional literacy skills. For example, Weare (2003) argues that emotional literacy training covers the following three essential competency areas, which overlap and support each other.

- *Self-understanding* (having a realistic sense of self).

- *Recognizing, expressing, and managing emotions* (understanding what emotions are and their causes, expressing them appropriately, and controlling own behaviors).

- *Understanding social situations and acting appropriately* (building social relationships with others, being empathetic and consistent in actions).

Likewise, Steiner (2014) argues that emotional literacy training includes five core competency areas.

- *Recognizing own feelings* (understanding own feelings and their causes).

- *Having a heartfelt sense of empathy* (recognizing how others feel).

- *Managing emotions* (knowing when and how to disclose own feelings).

- *Repairing emotional damage* (taking responsibility for repairing own mistakes).

- *Becoming emotionally literate* (interacting harmoniously with others' emotional states).

The most prominent difference between the approaches put forward by Weare (2003) and Steiner (2014) is related to our attitude toward repairing the emotional damage we inflict on others. At this point, Steiner (2014) emphasizes that emotional literacy training should consist of three fundamental dimensions: "being open-hearted" (using honest and realistic expressions in communication), "analyzing the emotional state" (understanding the effects of a felt emotion on others) and "taking responsibility" (trying to repair communication mistakes).

Purpose of the Study

In this action research that I conducted as a first-grade teacher, I aimed to develop my students' emotional literacy skills regarding the emotions of "sadness," "fear," "anger," and "anxiety." To achieve this aim, I sought answers to the following three questions:

1. How can I improve my first-grade students' emotional literacy skills?

2. How do the teaching activities I prepared and implemented for my students contribute to their emotional literacy skills?

3. What are my students', the Validity Committee members', and parents' opinions about the contribution of the teaching activities?

Importance of the Study

Many studies in the literature aimed to improve students' emotional literacy skills. Some researchers addressed the "emotion recognition skill" (Bosacci & Moore, 2004; Colwell & Hart, 2006), the "emotion expression skill" (Kuzucu, 2006; Zentner, 1999), the "emotion regulation skill" (Bilmez, 2023; Cantekin & Gültekin Akduman, 2020; Ender Sarıçalı, 2020; Tatlı Harmancı, 2021; Topal, 2021; Vatan, 2020) separately, while others examined the relationships between emotional literacy and "social capital" (Alemdar, 2019), "well-being" (Roffey, 2008), "academic stress" (Balta Özkan, 2019) or "emotional intelligence" (Coşkun, 2015). An analysis of the studies on emotional literacy in the Turkish context indicates that experimental studies concentrating on preschool students are prevalent (Acar, 2021; Durmuşoğlu Saltalı, 2010; Karakuş Özdemir, 2023). In this respect, this action research differs from previous studies by focusing on first-grade students and simultaneously addressing all three emotional literacy skills (i.e., recognizing, expressing, and regulating emotions).

In addition, there are some package programs such as RULER (Recognizing-Understanding-Labeling-Expressing-Regulating Emotions), PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies), and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) to improve students' emotional literacy skills. While some researchers applied such package programs (Arda & Ocak, 2012; Brackett, Bailey, Hoffmann, & Simmons, 2019; Hageslkamp, Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2013; Lynch, Geller, & Schmidt, 2004), others used their teaching activities (Karakuş Özdemir, 2023; Kuru Şevik & Aktan Acar, 2021). I also prepared the teaching activities I implemented myself. I designed the dolls named "Lili" (female) and "Zozo" (male), as well as games, worksheets, drawings, and posters that I used in the activities.

This study also responds to the Ministry of National Education's (MoNE) call for Turkish educators to develop students' social-emotional learning skills. The term "social-emotional learning skills" is considered one of the five components (1. conceptual skills, 2. social-emotional learning skills, 3. literacy skills, 4. tendencies, and 5. field skills) defined by MoNE within the "K12 Skills Framework" (Özhan, Taşgın, & Kandırmaz, 2023). The "social-emotional learning component" also consists of three sub-skills: (1) *self-skills* (self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-reflection), (2) *social life skills* (communication, cooperation, and social awareness), and (3) *common skills* (adaptability, flexibility, and responsible decision-making). Accordingly, this study will guide my colleagues who intend to develop their students' social-emotional learning skills for different activity designs.

Method

I designed my study using the "action research" design and conducted it in my classroom. Gürgür (2017) conceptualizes action research as "a scientific research process in which the main focus is on providing change and improvement by investigating individual practices, collecting data systematically and conducting reflective inquiries, and preparing and implementing new action plans based on them with cyclical or spiral steps" (p. 39). Figure 1 visualizes the stages of the action research process I applied in this study.
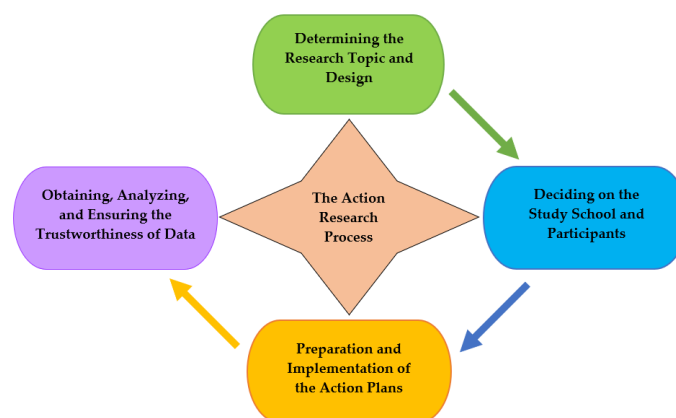

Figure 1. The Action Research Process Applied in the Study

Determining the of Research Topic and Design

During my six years of teaching, I observed that many students I taught were unaware of their emotions. I realized students generally had significant difficulties recognizing, expressing, and regulating their emotions. For example, when I would ask students what emotions they felt about the events they experienced, why they felt the way they did, and what kind of reactions they gave to their feelings, they would say something like this: *"I do not have emotions. I do not do anything. I merely stand still."* I also witnessed that some students hesitated to talk about their emotions, tried to define different feelings with a single emotion, or experienced "emotional confusion" in the face of an event. For example: *"I just get angry. I do not feel sad, I have no sadness. I get angry, I am not afraid of anything."*

I tried to increase my knowledge about the "action research" design by reading about it in the "Qualitative Research Designs and Applications" course I took during my doctoral education. I also wrote my doctoral seminar on the "Emotional Intelligence Theory." While examining the literature about it, I came across the "emotional literacy" concept. Then, I increased my theoretical knowledge about this concept by reviewing the related literature in depth. As a result of these readings, I thought a thesis study on emotional literacy would benefit my students. Thus, I conducted action research to improve my first-grade students' emotional literacy skills.

When I shared this decision with my advisor (the second author of this article), I first stated that the emotions I would address in the study would be "sadness," "fear," "anger," and "happiness." However, my advisor stated that it would be more appropriate to focus only on "emotions that disturb people." Although my advisor thought that positive emotions that relax people (such as "happiness"), could also be regulated, he stated that it would be more beneficial for me to focus on emotions students have difficulty with. Thus, I replaced the emotion "happiness" with "anxiety" and decided that my research would be about the feelings of "sadness," "fear," "anger," and "anxiety."

Deciding the Study School and Participants

During the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year, I had the opportunity to observe and get to know my first-year students closely. During this time, I witnessed them struggle to recognize their emotions and prefer not to express them. When they felt an emotion that bothered them, they tried to avoid it or took actions that harmed themselves or others. Also, my students' lack of emotional literacy skills sometimes negatively affected the course flow in the classroom. Therefore, I saw this study as necessary for my students and found it appropriate to conduct it in my classroom. In this respect, my students became the "natural participants" of my research.

After identifying the study school and participants, I submitted my research proposal to my university's ethics committee for approval. Subsequently, I applied for research permission from the Ankara Provincial Directorate of National Education and the school administration. In addition, I also informed my parents about the topic, purpose, and importance of my research and asked for their permission (especially for video recording and photography in the classroom). After obtaining the necessary permissions and approvals for my research, I conducted the study in my classroom (classroom 1A of a private primary school in Ankara) in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year.

The primary school where I work provides full-day education. The school has five floors, including the ground floor and two below the ground floor. It has six classrooms, a teachers' room, a guidance service, a conference hall, a cafeteria, a library, a computer lab, a science and technology lab, a painting workshop, a gymnasium, and a school garden. My classroom (1A) is on the school's first floor. It has a smart board, a teacher's desk and chair, student desks, student lockers, a bookshelf, and clipboards.

I have 16 students (10 boys and six girls) in my classroom. They are generally eager to learn, responsible, and cheerful. My parents are mostly university graduates. Therefore, there is good communication between us. Table 1 summarizes my students' characteristics.

Table 1. Personal Information about the Students*

Code	Gender	Characteristics
S1	Male	He is the first child of a family with two children. His parents are university graduates. He is very interested in space sciences, loves reading books, and has a well-developed imagination.
S2	Female	She is the third child of a family with three children. Her parents are university graduates. She is interested in music and theater. She has a cheerful nature. She likes to participate in events actively.
S3	Female	She is the third child of a family with three children. Her parents are university graduates. She is timid. She loves painting.
S4	Male	He is the third child of a family with three children. His mother graduated from university, whereas his father from high school. He is talkative and cheerful. He loves group games.
S5	Male	He is the second child of a family with two children. His parents are university graduates. He is responsible and calm. He enjoys computer games tremendously.
S6	Female	She is the first child of a family with two children. Her mother graduated from middle school, and her father from high school. She loves painting very much. She has a cheerful nature. Her peer mediation skills are well-developed.
S7	Male	He is the family's only child, and his parents are university graduates. He is active and talkative. He has a great interest in soccer. He loves student-centered activities.
S8	Male	He is the second child of a family with two children. His mother graduated from high school, and his father from university. He has a responsible and calm nature. He has a well-developed talent for painting.
S9	Male	He is the family's only child, and his parents are university graduates. He loves reading books and playing computer games. He is curious, active, and talkative. His analysis and synthesis skills are well-developed.
S10	Male	He is the first child of a family with two children. His parents are university graduates. He has a great interest in automobiles. He is very active and talkative.
S11	Female	She is the second child of a family with two children. Her parents are university graduates. She loves music and singing. She enjoys group activities very much.
S12	Male	He is the family's only child, and his parents are university graduates. He has a great interest in theater and well-developed acting skills. He also has a rich sense of humor.
S13	Male	He is the third child of a family with three children. His parents are university graduates. He loves reading books and computer games. He prefers individual studies.
S14	Female	She is the second child of a family with two children. Her parents are university graduates. She has a very organized personality. She enjoys working individually.
S15	Female	She is the second child of three. Her mother graduated from high school, and her father from university. She loves painting a lot and has a calm nature.
S16	Male	He is the second child of a family with two children. Her parents are university graduates. He has a very active personality. He greatly enjoys educational games.

* Students are listed alphabetically by their last names and coded as "S1=Student 1."

Preparation and Implementation of the Action Plans

To prepare my action plans, I first thoroughly examined the studies in the literature. In addition, I considered my observations about my students in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year and their emotional literacy skill levels as revealed in the pre-assessments. Furthermore, during the research process, I received professional training in "Philosophy for Children," "Emotion Language and Management," and "Emotional Literacy." I put the knowledge I gained from these trainings into practice while designing my teaching activities.

Additionally, I benefited from the opinions of the Validity Committee, which I formed from the school counselor and the 1B Classroom Teacher, on how to address emotions in action plans. For example, at the beginning of my research, I had a dilemma about designing the teaching activities "according to four emotions" or "according to three sub-skills," respectively. I decided to seek the Validity Committee's opinion on this issue. Based on the Validity Committee's suggestion regarding this dilemma that "it would not be appropriate to focus on a single emotion for weeks and address the same emotion in terms of all sub-skills," I designed and implemented the teaching activities "according to three sub-skills respectively" (first emotion recognition, then emotion expression, and finally emotion regulation). Similarly, in the 10th action plan's second activity, "My Brain is a Bicycle", which discussed the relationship between the lower and upper brains, I decided to use "bicycle" per the Validity Committee's suggestion. Again, in the 12th and 13th action plans, I first considered using "hats" to concretize students' ability to look at events from positive and negative perspectives. However, I used "glasses" and "frames" considering the Validity Committee's suggestion.

Each action plan I implemented in the study consisted of various teaching activities. I designed 55 activities within the scope of the 14 action plans I prepared to develop my students' emotional literacy skills and implemented them for 14 weeks between 14.02.2022 and 03.06.2022. I made pre- and post-measurements in the weeks outside the implementation period (pre-measurements in the week before and post-measurements in the week after the implementation). I implemented each action plan in the "Free Activities" course on Wednesdays (two hours) and Fridays (three hours) in a period covering five class hours per week.

During the implementation of the teaching activities, I used many teaching strategies, such as games, stories, pictures, posters, models, and worksheets. In addition, in line with the content of each teaching activity, I held many dialogues in the classroom to help students internalize what they had learned. I planned these dialogues as part of the teaching activities, but some happened spontaneously during the lesson. For example, the dialogue I present a short excerpt of below took place in the first activity of the third action plan after reading "Me and My Fear" (Sanna, 2021) and based on S16's explanation. This dialogue also symbolizes a typical dialogic process in the research.

S16: Teacher, I killed my fear. Since I was not fearful, it died. I have no fear anymore.

Me: Do you think it is terrible to be afraid of something, S16?

S16: (Remains silent.)

Me: Children, it is good to be scared because it protects us from danger. Let us say we are going to cross the street. It is dangerous to cross the road when cars are speeding by. In this situation, our fear protects us. When do you feel fear, kids?

S9: When I am alone.

S13: In the dark.

S5: When I have nightmares.

S14: Teacher, when do you get scared?

Me: When I see a spider.

S12: Me also, of snakes.

Me: Do you remember when you felt a fear, S16?

S16: Yes. I would fall coming down from a place as high as a mountain.

Me: We may feel fear when we are about to fall. It is normal.

Zozo: I, too, feel fear when I go to a high place.

Lili: Me also in the elevator.

S2: Oh! So am I.

Obtaining, Analyzing, and Ensuring the Trustworthiness of Data
Obtaining the Data

In my research, I questioned qualitative and quantitative data together. I obtained qualitative data through participant observations, reflective diaries, video recordings, verbal and written feedback from my students, Validity Committee members, and parents, and quantitative data through the "Emotion Regulation Skills Scale" (Acar, 2021). In this case, the data sources of my research included me as the researcher, my students, the Validity Committee members, and my parents.

- *Participant observations* are based on recording and sharing the participants' narratives, habits, or behaviors by focusing on their actions and interactions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). I conducted my participant observations in this study as both a classroom teacher and a researcher. My participant observations were limited to the duration of the action plans, which lasted five class hours per week. During my observations, I mainly focused on students' reactions to the teaching activities I implemented in the classroom.

- *Reflective journals* include the written records of the researcher's thoughts about the research process (e.g., the problems encountered and the solutions to them) (Johnson, 2014). I kept reflective journals about my experiences while implementing the teaching activities. My journal writing process continued throughout the research, starting from the pre-measurements to the post-measurements, and I used them to interpret the findings.

- *Video recordings* allow the researcher to confirm observation notes and describe the implementation process in detail (Mills, 2003). In this study, I videotaped the implementation process by positioning the camera on student lockers at the back of the classroom. I used the video recordings to describe the teaching activities I implemented.

- I received *verbal and written feedback* from my students, the Validity Committee members, and parents about the contribution of the teaching activities I implemented in this study. I obtained my students' views through face-to-face interviews, the Validity Committee members' opinions in writing, and the parents' opinions through their feedback via WhatsApp.

- In this study, I used the ***"Emotion Regulation Skills Scale"*** developed by Acar (2021) within the scope of her doctoral dissertation with her written permission. Acar (2021) reported the scale to be a "valid" and "reliable" measurement tool. Although developed for preschool students, I found it appropriate to use this scale since my students were about to read and write. I also questioned the approvals of my academic advisor, the scale owner (Acar, 2021), and the Validity Committee members regarding the scale's appropriateness. The scale measures six emotions: "sadness," "fear," "anger," "disappointment," "anxiety," and "shame," but one can use it to measure each emotion independently. The scale includes pictured faces about these six emotions; three narrated pictured questions for each emotion (e.g., *"Your beloved toy dog disappeared. How do you feel?"*), as well as four positive and four negative pictured emotion regulation strategies for each question (e.g., *"shares feelings"* or *"yells"*). Students verbalize their answers through these pictures. Through this scale, I tried to reveal how my students' abilities changed in recognizing, expressing, and regulating the emotions of sadness, fear, anger, and anxiety.

Analyzing the Data

I analyzed the qualitative data I obtained in my research with the "descriptive analysis" method (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In addition, I conducted the data collection and analysis processes simultaneously. For this purpose, I repeatedly watched the video recordings I created during the implementation process and described the teaching activities in detail. At the end of the implementation process, I classified and described the verbal and written opinions I obtained from my students, the Validity Committee members, and parents under three sub-headings.

I analyzed the quantitative data I obtained in my research in line with the instructions provided in the measurement tool. One can *calculate emotion recognition and emotion expression skills* using a similar process. There are three questions for each skill area. The student receives a score of one for each correct answer and zero for each incorrect answer. The highest score obtained from the sections on emotion recognition and expression is three, and the lowest is zero. Accordingly, when a student receives a score of two or three for each skill area, it means that the student has the skill; however, if a child obtains a score of zero or one, it means that the student lacks the skill. There are three questions for each emotion on the scale to *calculate the emotion regulation skill*. Each question has eight strategies (action options), four of which are positive, and the remaining four are negative. The students can choose as many strategies as they want, regardless of whether they are positive or negative. The student receives two points for each positive strategy choice and one for each negative strategy choice. In determining the emotion regulation skill, one may examine whether the positive strategy score is higher or lower than the negative strategy score for each question. Accordingly, if the student's positive strategy score is high in two of the three questions, the student can regulate the emotion and vice versa.

I organized the findings from the data analysis process under the following three main headings, associating them with the study's sub-questions.

- *Action Plans I Implemented in the Study*. In this section, I described in detail the 14 action plans I applied in the research and the 55 teaching activities I implemented within the framework of these action plans (i.e., *the first sub-question*).

- *Comparison of Pre- and Post-Measurement Results*. In this section, I addressed the contribution of the teaching activities to my students' emotional literacy skills (i.e., *the second sub-question*).

- *General Opinions on the Contribution of the Teaching Activities*. Under this section, I presented my students' opinions, the Validity Committee members, and parents about the teaching activities' contribution (i.e., *the third sub-question*).

Ensuring the Trustworthiness of Data
I applied the following strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of the data:

- I submitted all the teaching activities in action plans to the Validity Committee for review and approval. For example, I consulted the Validity Committee members before implementing the teaching activities in the first action plan and shared my observations with them after implementation.

- I videotaped all the teaching activities I implemented, providing detailed information about these activities in the findings.

- I documented all the teaching activities with photographs, which I used to support my comments about the activities.

- I diversified the data sources (myself, my students, the Validity Committee members, and my parents).

- I explained my data collection and analysis processes in detail.

- I included all the teaching activities I implemented in the findings and supported my comments with direct quotations, using codes such as "S1" (Student 1) in the quotations.

- I sought the expertise of my thesis advisor and received feedback from him at every stage, from designing and implementing my action plans to collecting and analyzing data and interpreting and reporting findings.

Results

Action Plans I Implemented in the Study
Action Plan 1: Creating a Positive Classroom Environment

With this action plan, which I implemented between 14.02.2022 and 18.02.2022, I aimed to inform students about the teaching activities, establish the "Emotions Galaxy" rules, and draw attention to recognizing, expressing, and regulating emotions. For this purpose, I pasted the planets of sadness, fear, anger, and anxiety, which I prepared from colored cardboard representing the four emotions, on the board and brought the door model for the "Guest Emotions" activity to the classroom. In this action plan, I implemented the following three activities.

- In the first activity, *"Lili and Zozo in the Emotions Galaxy,"* I informed the students about the work we will do throughout the semester to recognize, express, and regulate emotions. I also introduced the dolls named "Lili" (girl) and "Zozo" (boy) to the students *(Photograph 1)*. During this time, there was giggling in the classroom. The students found the dolls' names hilarious and compared them to people they knew in terms of their physical appearances. For example: *"Teacher, Zozo's name is hilarious."* (S10). *"Teacher, Zozo's hair looks like S1's hair."* (S8). Also, some students insisted that Lili and Zozo sit next to them. Afterward, we discussed the importance of being aware of emotions and that emotions may bother us. The students were thrilled to meet Lili and Zozo.

- In the second activity, *"The Rules of the Emotions Galaxy,"* we created the rules of the Emotions Galaxy (such as speaking by asking for permission, coming to class prepared, and protecting the materials in the classroom). We pasted them on the space shuttle image. We painted our hands with acrylic paint, printed our handprints under these rules, and promised to follow the rules together. The students seemed curious and excited because they were about to journey into their emotions. Afterward, I explained that the star astronaut child of the week would be selected by lot every week from a box with the students' names in the class. I showed the students the name badge I had prepared for this purpose *(Photograph 2)*. I pointed out that the selected students would help me for a week, and when they completed their time, the class would take turns to say something positive about them. I also stated that the star astronauts of the week would thank each of their friends, select a new student from the box, and give the name badge to the newly selected student.

- In the third activity, *"Guest Emotions,"* I read the book titled "Visiting Feelings" (Rubenstein, 2021) interactively by sitting together on the cushions we spread in a circle in the middle of the classroom. Afterward, we shared ideas about the content of the book. We discussed that emotions, while powerful, are temporary visitors, much like guests who eventually leave. Afterward, I asked the students to draw an emotion that came to see them today. To trigger students' thoughts, I asked, *"How are you feeling today? What does this feeling look like? Is it tall, short, round, or square? If you had a picture of it, what would it look like? What would it smell like? What would it taste like?"* Students made drawings about concrete concepts such as ice cream, paper, pencil, sunflower, and sun *(Photograph 3)*. Then, I placed the model door in the center of the classroom, asked students whether they accepted the emotion they drew to be their guests, and told them to pass through the door if they agreed *(Photograph 4)*. The students had much fun using the model door. With this activity, they understood that no matter the emotion, one should not judge it and accept it as it is.

| Photograph 1 | Photograph 2 | Photograph 3 | Photograph 4 |

Action Plan 2: Recognizing the Emotion of Sadness

With this action plan, which I implemented between 21.02.2022 and 25.02.2022, I aimed for the students to recognize the emotion of sadness, comprehend its non-verbal expressions, and notice the physiological changes related to it. For this purpose, I pasted a blue cardboard I prepared for the Sadness Planet on the board. I inflated a blue balloon to represent the emotion of sadness. I prepared the needed work for the Emotions Galaxy notebooks. I drew six pictures for the activity called "When Do I Feel Sad?" I drew blank face molds of Lili and Zozo for the activity "Lili and Zozo on the Sadness Planet." I drew mouths and eyes suitable for sad facial expressions to paste on Lili and Zozo's blank face molds. I placed the model door in the middle of the classroom for the activity called "Sadness at My Door." In this action plan, I implemented the following five activities.

- In the first activity, **"When Sadness Knocks on Your Door,"** I read the book titled "When Sadness Is at Your Door" (Eland, 2018) interactively by sitting together on the cushions we spread in a circle in the middle of the classroom *(Photograph 5)*. Afterward, we shared ideas about the content of the book. The students loved the book and could not take their eyes off it until the reading ended. Through this activity, students realized that it is wrong to ignore the feeling of sadness.

- In the second activity, **"When Do I Feel Sad?"** I asked the students to choose the pictures that made them feel sad and paste them into their Emotions Galaxy notebooks. For this purpose, the star astronaut of the week distributed the papers containing the six pictures to the class *(Photograph 6)*. The first picture shows a teddy bear: *"My favorite toy has disappeared."* The second picture shows a car loaded with goods: *"My favorite friend is moving to another city."* The third picture shows a game of hopscotch: *"My friends do not let me play."* The fourth picture shows a bird in a cage: *"My pet died."* The fifth picture shows a torn t-shirt: *"My favorite t-shirt is damaged."* The sixth picture shows it is raining outside: *"I wanted to go out, but I could not."* I asked the students to choose the images that made them sad and paste them into their Emotions Galaxy notebooks. With this activity, the students reflected on the situations in which they felt "sad."

- In the third activity, **"Lili and Zozo on the Sadness Planet,"** students chose the mouth and eyes corresponding to the emotion of sadness and glued them on the blank face molds of Lili and Zozo. Beforehand, the star astronaut of the week handed out a sheet of paper with a mix of mouth and eye drawings of the four emotions. I worked with the students to give Lili and Zozo dolls mouths and eyes corresponding to sad facial expressions *(Photograph 7)*. With this activity, students realized that facial expressions are a clue to recognizing emotions.

- In the fourth activity, **"Sadness in My Body,"** the students worked on a drawing within the question, *"How does our body change when we feel sad? In which part of our body do we feel sadness the most?"* In the discussion we held in the classroom beforehand, Lili said, *"My throat is in knots. I feel pain in my head."* S12 said, *"I feel it in my stomach. I feel nauseous."* With this activity, the students realized that sadness has an aspect reflected in their bodies.

- In the fifth activity, **"Sadness at My Door,"** I told the students that sadness came for a visit and asked what they wanted to do with it. Then, each student passed the blue balloon over the model door *(Photograph 8)*. The students found it fun to use the model door and were happy that their sadness flew away like a balloon.

| Photograph 5 | Photograph 6 | Photograph 7 | Photograph 8 |

Action Plan 3: Recognizing the Emotion of Fear

With this action plan, which I implemented between 28.02.2022 and 04.03.2022, I aimed for students to recognize the emotion of fear, comprehend its non-verbal expressions, and notice its physiological changes. For this purpose, I pasted the planet of fear on the board, which I prepared from orange cardboard. I inflated an orange balloon to represent the emotion of fear. I drew pictures of eight words for the "Scared Words" activity. I prepared the work for the Emotions Galaxy notebooks. For the "Lili and Zozo on the Fear Planet" activity, I drew mouths and eyes suitable for a frightened facial expression to glue on Lili and Zozo's blank face molds. For the activity, "Lili and the Crocodile," I drew Lili as scared of the crocodile and wrote the expressions with and without the effects of fear on the body around the picture. For the "Fear at My Door" activity, I placed the model door in the middle of the classroom. In this action plan, I implemented the following five activities.

- In the first activity, **"My Friend Fear,"** I read the book "Me and My Fear" (Sanna, 2021) interactively by sitting together on the cushions we spread in a circle in the middle of the classroom. Later, we had a discussion where the students shared their ideas about the book's content. We then had a dialogue about situations that frighten us in daily life (such as *"staying in the dark," "looking down from a high place," "seeing a ghost," "encountering a dangerous animal,"* and *"seeing an insect"*). With this activity, students learned that they should not avoid fear.

- We started the second activity, **"Scared Words,"** with a game. Before the activity, I put the pictures I had drawn of the words "dog," "insect," "darkness," "bicycle," "monster," "needle," "bee," and "pool" in a box *(Photograph 9)*. I asked each student to take a picture from the box and describe what s/he saw in the picture with frightened body language (with a fearful facial expression, body posture, and voice). All students raised their fingers excitedly to be selected for the game as soon as possible. Through this activity, students learned about the clues of fear reflected on the body.

- In the third activity, **"Lili and Zozo on the Fear Planet,"** students chose the mouth and eyes corresponding to fear's emotion and glued them on Lili and Zozo's blank face molds **(Photograph 10)**. Beforehand, the star astronaut of the week handed out sheets of paper with the mouth and eye drawings of the four emotions mixed. I worked with the students to attach mouths and eyes to Lili and Zozo, corresponding to their scared facial expressions. Through this activity, the students learned that facial expressions are clues to emotions.

- In the fourth activity, **"Lili and the Crocodile,"** students focused on the changes in their bodies (such as "a faster heartbeat," "sweaty hands," or "a flushed face") when they felt fear **(Photograph 10)**. For the activity, I explained the following to the students: *"Lili meets a crocodile. We are in Lili's body. Lili feels scared. Her brain sends fear signals to her body. Let us color Lili's brain orange. Her heart is beating very fast compared to normal. Let us color her heart orange to make it stand out. Let us also color Lili's tense legs orange. Where in your body do the fear hormones circulate when you are scared? Do your hands sweat? Does your face turn red? Do your legs tense? I want you to paint the area where fear circulates in your body orange."* Unlike other students, S16 colored the whole picture orange because he thought that he felt fear all over his body. This activity helped students realize that fear is not a destructive emotion.

- In the fifth activity, **"Fear at My Door,"** I asked the students what they would like to do with the feeling of fear that came to visit them. Then, each student passed the orange balloon over the model door **(Photograph 11)**. The students found it fun to use the model door and were happy to see their fears float away like balloons.

Photograph 9   Photograph 10   Photograph 11

Action Plan 4: Recognizing the Emotion of Anger

With this action plan, which I implemented between 07.03.2022 and 11.03.2022, I aimed for students to recognize the emotion of anger, comprehend its non-verbal expressions, and notice the physiological changes related to it. For this purpose, I pasted the anger planet I prepared from red cardboard on the board. For the "When Do I Feel Angry?" activity, I drew eight space shuttles and wrote an expression under each one. I inflated a red balloon to represent the emotion of anger. I prepared the experimental materials for the "Anger Triggers Experiment" activity. For the "Anger in My Body" activity, I drew a picture of Zozo with an angry expression on his face. Around the picture, I wrote the changes that occur or do not occur in the body when angry and put check boxes next to them. For the "Lili and Zozo on the Anger Planet" activity, I drew mouths and eyes suitable for expressing an angry face to paste on Lili and Zozo's blank face molds. For the "Anger at My Door" activity, I placed the model door in the middle of the classroom. In this action plan, I implemented the following six activities.

- We started the first activity, **"Orchestra of the Angry Birds,"** with a game. For this game, the star astronaut of the week randomly handed out the cards I had previously prepared in the shape of a bird out of red cardboard with the students' names written on them. I then asked the students to find the cardboard with their names and sit down. I also reminded them that they should only show each other the names on the cardboard after the game starts. The students waited with curiosity for the game to start. I asked everyone to come to the center of the classroom by counting to 10. Meanwhile, the students searched for their name cards and attempted to sit down. Those who found their name cards excitedly exclaimed and took their seats. Then, I read the book "The Anger Birds Orchestra" (Yüksel, 2021) interactively by sitting together on the cushions we spread in a circle in the middle of the classroom. Afterward, we shared ideas about the content of the book. Through this activity, students learned that anger is a helpful emotion, and that suppressing anger can increase it even more.

- In the second activity, **"When Do I Feel Angry?"** I asked the students to color the space shuttle above the statements that made them angry. Before the activity, I drew a space shuttle for each statement below: *"If someone takes my stuff without asking," "If I lose in a game," "If someone does something I do not want even though I warned him or her," "If I have to do something I do not want to do," "If someone yells at me," "When I want something I cannot have," "If someone makes fun of me,"* and *"If someone hits me."* With this activity, students focused on the causes of their anger.

- I also designed and implemented the third activity, **"Anger Triggers Experiment,"** in line with the students' requests *(Photograph 12)*. Before the activity, I prepared bottles, water, glass containers, baking soda, vinegar, and liquid detergent. I also tried it once beforehand to prevent any mishaps that might occur during the experiment. Thus, I determined the ratios I would add when using the materials. The students were very excited and curious about the experiment. I also observed that students were very attentive during the experiment. This activity taught students that some causes (such as "feeling excluded," "bored," or "not understood") can trigger anger, just like the materials in the experiment.

- In the fourth activity, **"Lili and Zozo on the Anger Planet,"** students chose the mouth and eyes corresponding to anger and glued them on Lili and Zozo's blank face molds *(Photograph 13)*. Beforehand, the star astronaut of the week distributed a sheet of paper with a mix of mouth and eye drawings of the four emotions to the class. I acted with the students to attach Lili and Zozo's mouths and eyes to match their angry expressions. With this activity, the students realized the reflection of anger in facial expressions.

- In the fifth activity, **"Anger in My Body,"** students focused on the changes in their bodies due to anger based on the angry-looking Zozo. The expressions around the picture of Zozo looking angry *(Photograph 14)* are as follows: *"frowning eyebrows," "red face," "clenched teeth," "hands in fists," "fast beating heart," "tense legs," "tense arms," "soft hair," "soft cheeks,"* and *"shoes."* Using these expressions, students indicated the changes in their bodies when they felt angry by coloring the box next to the expressions in the color of their choice. With this activity, students learned to recognize anger from a different perspective.

- In the sixth activity, **"Anger on My Doorstep,"** I asked students when they felt anger coming to visit them and what they wanted to do with it. Afterward, each student passed the red balloon over the model door. With this activity, students realized that when they feel anger, they should recognize and accept it.

Photograph 12   Photograph 13   Photograph 14

Action Plan 5: Recognizing the Emotion of Anxiety

With this action plan, which I implemented between 14.03.2022 and 18.03.2022, I aimed for students to recognize the feeling of anxiety, comprehend its non-verbal expressions, and notice the physiological changes related to it. For this purpose, I pasted the anxiety planet I prepared from yellow cardboard on the board. I inflated a yellow balloon to represent the feeling of anxiety. For the "Lili and Zozo on the Anxiety Planet" activity, I drew Lili and Zozo's blank face molds. I drew mouths and eyes suitable for anxious facial expressions to paste on the blank face molds. I prepared the activities to do in the Emotions Galaxy notebooks. For the "Anxiety in My Body" activity, I drew a picture of Lili with a worried expression on her face. I wrote around the picture the changes that happen and do not happen in the body when feeling worried and drew a circle next to each expression that the students could color inside. For the "When Do I Feel Anxious?" activity, I drew a space shuttle with a worried expression on the window and clouds. I wrote on the clouds the situations when feeling worried. For the "Anxiety at My Door" activity, I placed the model door in the middle of the classroom. In this action plan, I implemented the following five activities.

- We started the **"Anxious Little Ones"** activity with a game where each student stepped on one of the colored papers on the floor *(Photograph 15)*. When the chosen student says a color, only the student on that colored paper switches his/her location. If the student says "colorful," everyone must change their locations. The students loved the game and wanted to play it again and again. Afterward, I interactively read the book "Good Feelings for Anxious Little Ones" (Brochmann & Bowen, 2021) by sitting together on cushions we spread in a circle in the middle of the classroom. Later, we shared ideas about the content of the book. We also discussed three situations: (1) *"Children, think about the first day you started school. It was not like any other school day. There were many questions in your mind. What if I do not adapt to school? What is my teacher look like? Will my friends and I be able to settle in with each other? Do you remember how you felt on the first day of school?"* (2) *"Kids, we made an appointment with the dentist because Lili has a toothache. It is the first time Lili is going to the dentist. Lili is worried about whether her tooth will hurt, whether they will pull it out, or whether they will fill it. Do you remember how you felt when you went to the dentist?"* (3) *"Children. Lili and Zozo are in the first grade like you. They will go on stage for the Reading Day. All the parents will be watching them. They feel worried about 'what would happen if I made a mistake or mixed up the words.' Do you remember how you felt on the Reading Day?"* With this activity, students realized that anxiety is a natural emotion, like any other feeling.

- In the second activity, **"Lili and Zozo on the Anxiety Planet,"** students selected and pasted worried mouths and eyes on Lili and Zozo's blank face molds *(Photograph 16)*. Beforehand, the star astronaut of the week distributed the papers with the mouth and eye drawings of the four emotions mixed to the class. I worked with the students to attach Lili and Zozo mouths and eyes corresponding to their worried facial expressions. Through this activity, students learned to recognize facial expressions when feeling anxious.

- In the third activity, **"Anxiety is in My Body,"** students focused on the changes that occur in their bodies due to anxiety based on worried-looking Lili *(Photograph 17)*. The expressions around the picture of Lili, who looks anxious, are as follows: *"difficulty in speaking," "difficulty in breathing," "rapid heartbeat," "sweaty hands," "nausea," "soft hair," "nose shape,"* and *"difficulty in standing."* Using these expressions, students indicated the changes in their bodies when they felt anxious by painting the circle next to the expressions in the color of their choice. With this activity, students approached anxiety from a different perspective.

- In the fourth activity, **"When Do I Feel Worried?"** students colored clouds with expressions of anxiety. For this activity, I asked the students to think about the events that cause "anxiety." For this purpose, on the worksheet I prepared *(Photograph 18)*, I drew clouds with the expressions *"standing up on the blackboard," "going on stage," "going to the doctor," "virus,"* and *"starting a new course"* and three empty clouds that they could add to these expressions if they wanted. I asked the students to color the clouds that suited them. With this activity, students focused on different aspects of the emotion of anxiety.

- In the fifth activity, **"Anxiety on My Doorstep,"** I asked the students what they would like to do with the feeling of anxiety that came to visit them. Then, each student passed the yellow balloon over the model door. The students enjoyed that emotions were made tangible by comparing them to balloons and that they flew away like balloons. Through this activity, students realized that anxiety is also an acceptable emotion.

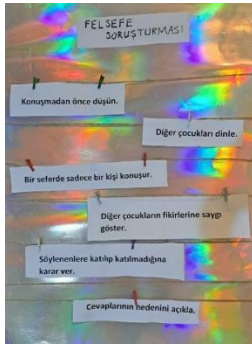Photograph 15   Photograph 16   Photograph 17   Photograph 18

Action Plan 6: Expressing the Emotion of Sadness

Between 21.03.2022 and 25.03.2022, I used this action plan to get students to talk about their sad experiences, communicate them to others, and recognize personal triggers. To this end, I pinned the rules of "Philosophical Inquiry" to the classroom board with clothespins. For the "Sadness from Lili and Zozo's Album" activity, I drew and colored "a grandpa," "a cat," and "a toy robot." For each of them, I wrote the appropriate and inappropriate expressions for the emotion of sadness on sheets of paper large enough to be seen from the board. I attached sad facial expressions to Lili and Zozo. I brought a table to the classroom to use it as a stage. I hung the blue stage curtain I created from paper. I covered a plastic bottle with blue paper and turned it into a microphone. For the "Picture of Sadness" activity, I prepared a photocopy for the number of students and four pieces of background cardboard for each group. I implemented the following four activities in this action plan.

- In the first activity, **"Philosophy for Children-Sorrow,"** I shared the "Philosophical Inquiry" rules with my students. After explaining these rules, I posted them on the class board *(Photograph 19)*. These rules are as follows: *"Think before you speak. Listen to other children. Only one person speaks at a time. Respect other children's opinions. Decide whether you agree or disagree with what is said. Explain the reasons for your answers."* Then, I read the book "What Makes Me Sad?" (Howart, 2020a) interactively by sitting together on the cushions we spread in a circle in the middle of the classroom. Afterward, we shared ideas about the book's content. Based on this book, we studied the question, *"What is sadness?"* Through this activity, students understood the concept of sadness by interacting with each other.

- In the second activity, **"Sadness from Lili and Zozo's Album,"** Lili and Zozo expressed their sadness while talking about three pictures from their albums as follows: *"I felt sad when my grandfather got sick."* (Zozo), *"I felt sad when my cat left home."* (Lili) and *"I felt sad when my toy broke."* (Zozo) Before the activity, I pictured these three events and brought them to the classroom *(Photograph 20)*. As Lili and Zozo talked about the pictures, they also told their short stories. The students found the stories interesting (such as "Dodo" as the name of Lili and Zozo's grandfather) and asked detailed questions about them.

- In the third activity, **"Emotions Stage-Sadness,"** the students took center stage. They shared their personal experiences of sadness, using the expressions "the last time" and "I felt sad" *(Photograph 21)*. This activity was a platform for them to express themselves and engage with the concept of sadness in a fun and interactive way, using a toy microphone.

- In the fourth activity, **"The Picture of Sadness,"** I divided the students into four groups and asked them to express the last time they felt sad by drawing and writing. Then, I put the group members' work on the same cardboard and hung them on the classroom board. With this activity, the students shared their feelings with their friends.

Photograph 19   Photograph 20   Photograph 21

Action Plan 7: Expressing the Emotion of Fear

With this action plan, which I implemented between 28.03.2022 and 01.04.2022, I aimed for students to talk about their own experiences of feeling fear, communicate fear to others, and recognize the personal triggers of "fear." For this purpose, I made drawings for the activity "Fear from Lili and Zozo's Album." I wrote expressions of fear (appropriate and inappropriate) on paper for each drawing, visible on the board. I gave Lili and Zozo scared facial expressions. I brought a table to the classroom to use as a stage for the "Emotions Stage-Fear" activity. I hung the orange stage curtain I created from paper. I covered a plastic bottle with orange paper and turned it into a microphone. I prepared two banners for the students to use when they went on stage, one for "the last time" and one for "I felt scared." I prepared a copy of the rocket I drew for the activity "Rocket Launched from the Fear Planet" for each group. I cut strips of orange cardboard to glue under the rocket. I implemented the following four activities in this action plan.

- We started the first activity, **"Philosophy for Children-Fear,"** with a game in which I asked the students to imagine that they were on a spaceship and that each could take only one item with them. I told them there was a rule for taking the item, but instead of telling the students this rule, they should find it using the clues in my examples. For example, "I am Zeynep, I take a stapler (*meaning "zımba" in Turkish*) with me, I am Lili, I take a lamp with me, I am Zozo, I take an envelope (*meaning "zarf" in Turkish*) with me." Based on these examples, the students who discovered the rule said an item starting with their names' initials. We continued the game until everyone said an item corresponding to the rule. The fact that the students discovered the game's rules made them very happy and aroused their curiosity. Then, I read the book "What Scares Me?" (Howart, 2020b) interactively by sitting together on the cushions we spread in a circle in the middle of the classroom. Afterward, we shared ideas about the content of the book.

In addition, based on this book, we discussed questions such as *"Can we live without fear? What is fear?"* The students gave answers such as *"seeing a bear," "a pinprick," "a parrot," "the dark," "a zombie," "lava," "carnivorous animals," "an exam," "animals that look like ghosts,"* and *"an ad for a horror game on the phone."* We first grouped these answers under four headings: *"animals," "obscurity," "sudden events,"* and *"being in danger."* Then, we grouped them under two headings: *"sudden events"* and *"being in danger."* This activity helped students develop their ability to express their fears.

- In the second activity, **"Fear from Lili and Zozo's Album,"** we examined the pictures *"Lili lying in her bed at night," "a dog on a leash,"* and *"lost Zozo"* that Lili and Zozo brought from their family album (and which I had previously drawn) **(Photograph 22)**. As Lili and Zozo talked about the pictures, they shared short stories about them. For example, Lili explained one story kike this: *"Zozo pressed my father to get a dog. He and my father went to get a dog. Then they took the dog and went into our yard. The dog was on a leash but barking so much that I felt terrified. It opened its mouth. That made me feel scared. Then I got used to it. My mom took this photo the day we got the dog."* The illustrated stories in this activity aroused students' curiosity and enabled them to participate actively.

- In the third activity, **"Stage of Emotions-Fear,"** students went on stage and shared the last time they felt scared with placards that read "last time" in one hand and "I felt scared" in the other **(Photograph 23)**. For example: *"The last time I felt scared was when I was locked in the toilet."* (S2). *"The last time I felt scared was in the dark."* (S6). *"The last time I felt scared was when I had a nightmare in my dream."* (S7). *"The last time I felt scared was when I was behind on the trip."* (S16). The students enjoyed expressing their feelings freely and participated in the activity willingly.

- In the fourth activity, **"Rocket Launched from the Fear Planet,"** students wrote a memory of feeling scared and pasted it on the rockets they painted as a group **(Photograph 24)**. With this activity, students shared their feelings about each other's emotions in groups.

Photograph 22   Photograph 23   Photograph 24

Action Plan 8: Expressing the Emotion of Anger

With this action plan, which I implemented between 04.04.2022 and 08.04.2022, I aimed for students to talk about their own experiences of anger, communicate anger to others, and recognize personal triggers of anger. To this end, I gave Lili a mouth and eyes to match her angry facial expression and encouraged students to ask questions based on Lili's facial expression. I prepared and drew three fictional events for the "Anger from Lili and Zozo's Album" activity. For each drawing, I wrote appropriate and inappropriate expressions for the emotion of anger on paper that could seen from the board. I brought a table to the classroom to use as a stage and hung the red stage curtain, which I had created from paper. I covered the plastic bottle with red paper and turned it into a microphone. For the "Clouds of Anger" activity, I wrote appropriate and inappropriate expressions for the feeling of anger on the clouds. In this action plan, I implemented the following four activities.

- In the first activity, **"Philosophy for Children-Anger,"** we discussed such philosophical questions as *"Is it possible not to get angry? Is there a reason for the feeling of anger?"* **(Photograph 25)**. At the end of this discussion, we decided that *"it is not possible not to get angry."* The students exemplified some of the reasons for anger as follows: *"When my brother hid my toy somewhere."* (S2), *"When someone took my stuff without permission."* (S4), *"When I could not win in a game."* (S8), *"When my sister hit me."* (S15). With this activity, students formed an understanding of the possible causes (triggers) of anger.

- I prepared and drew three fictional events for the **"Anger from Lili and Zozo's Album"** activity. Beforehand, I made drawings for the events that were the subject of these pictures: (1) *"Lili standing in her room because she was not allowed to wear the clothes she wanted,"* (2) *"Zozo with an angry face because Lili took Zozo's remote-controlled car without permission,"* and (3) *"Zozo being angry because he could not find the missing piece of the puzzle."* As Lili and Zozo talked about each picture, they also expressed anger. The students enjoyed listening to the stories about Lili and Zozo's lives and participated in the activity.

- In the third activity, **"Stage of Emotions-Anger,"** students took turns on stage to express the last time they felt angry with banners that say "the last time" in one hand and "I felt angry" in the other **(Photograph 26)**. The students enjoyed being on stage and participating in the activity joyfully.

- In the fourth activity, **"Clouds of Anger,"** students looked at the expressions written in the clouds and colored the sentences that correctly expressed the emotion of anger **(Photograph 27)**. These expressions are as follows: *"I feel angry when you spoil my game," "I feel angry when you do not listen to me," "You are terrible," "I feel angry when you call me names," "I do not love you anymore," "You are not my friend anymore."* With this activity, students comprehended the right and wrong ways of expressing anger.

Photograph 25   Photograph 26   Photograph 27

Action Plan 9: Expressing the Emotion of Anxiety

With this action plan, which I implemented between 18.04.2022 and 22.04.2022, I aimed for students to talk about their own experiences of anxiety, communicate anxiety to others, and recognize the personal triggers of "anxiety." For this purpose, I prepared four separate notes wrapped in four pieces of glittery paper for the "Philosophy for Children-Anxiety" activity. I pinned one of the papers on Zozo. I wrote instructions on the documents, one after the other. Before the activity, I placed each paper in a drawer, cupboard, or bookcase. On the paper the students will reach at the end of the instructions, I put the text in which Zozo writes about a concern. For the "Anxiety from Lili and Zozo's Album" activity, I painted Lili and Zozo feeling worried on the first day of school and Lili on stage with her microphone. For each of them, I wrote the appropriate and inappropriate expressions for the feeling of anxiety on pieces of paper large enough to be seen from the board. I put worried facial expressions on Lili and Zozo. I brought a table to the classroom to use as a stage. I hung the yellow stage curtain made of paper. I covered a plastic bottle with yellow paper and turned it into a microphone. I prepared yellow cardboard papers and staples for the "Anxiety Dictionary" activity. I implemented the following five activities in this action plan.

- We started the first activity, **"Philosophy for Children-Anxiety,"** with a game. In this game, I asked the students to follow sequential instructions (such as *"Look in the teacher's drawer," "Look in the cupboard,"* or *"Look in the bookcase"*) to reach the following letter from Zozo. According to the letter: *"Lili and Zozo's classmate Mimi was talking about her trip to America with her family on vacation. The whole class was laughing at the funny parts. After Mimi, it was Zozo's turn to tell his holiday memories. His lips tightened, and his face fell because all he did on holiday was play in the park in front of the house. It was nowhere near as exciting as Mimi's holiday. As Mimi neared the end of her speech, Zozo's palms sweated. He bit his lower lip. Zozo did not know what to say. Because all he remembered was falling off the swings. Everyone would laugh at him. Zozo started to feel nauseous. When Mimi almost finished speaking, Zozo asked permission to go to the restroom."* Later, some of the opinions expressed in the class discussion on the question *"Why was Zozo worried?"* are as follows: *"Because he would talk in front of everyone."* (S2), *"Because all he did was play in the park."* (S15) and *"Because he thought his friends could laugh at him."* (S3). In addition, some students (S11, S13, and S14) stated that if they were Zozo, they would be worried, too. The students liked the use of instructions in the game. Then, we held a discussion around the question *"What do you worry about?"* and questioned the triggers of anxiety and grouped the answers given in the class under three headings: *"the possibility of being locked somewhere," "the thought of being harmed"* and *"the symptom of getting sick."* With this activity, students raised awareness about the causes of anxiety.

- In the second activity, *"Anxiety Dictionary,"* students worked together to create a "Pictorial Anxiety Dictionary" in which they expressed their feelings of anxiety both in pictures and in writing *(Photograph 28)*. In this activity, students enjoyed creating a product as a group.

- In the third activity, **"Anxiety from Lili and Zozo's Album,"** students discussed the pictures I brought from Lili and Zozo's album (which I drew before the activity) and the stories I prepared about these pictures. For example: *"Children, here is a picture of Lili and Zozo on their first day at school. Lili and Zozo look very nervous in this photo. Do you have a photo of yourself starting school? Do you remember how you felt on the first day of school?"* With this activity, students shared their feelings about different events that could cause them to feel anxious.

- In the fourth activity, **"Emotions Stage-Anxiety,"** students expressed their worries on the yellow-colored stage *(Photograph 29)*. Using the microphone enabled students to participate with joy.

- In the fifth activity, **"Fingers Speak,"** students wrote their answers to the instructions on the fingers of a hand drawing. For this purpose, I drew a picture of a hand *(Photograph 30)*. Starting from the thumb, I wrote instructions for each finger as *"Something I enjoyed a lot," "Something I would like to mention," "Something I did not like," "Something I gained from the activity,"* and *"Something I would like to add."* I asked the students to write the appropriate answers to these instructions on their fingers. Here is what some students wrote about these instructions respectively: *"Going on stage"* (S7), *"I burned my hand yesterday"* (S4), *"Not being able to take Lili home"* (S14), *"I learned about anxiety"* (S9) and *"I have much fun in the Emotions Galaxy lesson"* (S3).

| Photograph 28 | Photograph 29 | Photograph 30 |

Action Plan 10: Emotion Regulation Strategies 1

With this action plan, which I implemented between 25.04.2022 and 29.04.2022, I aimed for students to realize the functioning of emotions in the brain and to understand how they can control their feelings through strategies such as body and breathing exercises. For this purpose, I prepared a model for the "Traffic Light" activity. I also created a calming station in the classroom. I covered the area between the classroom cabinet and the wall with green cardboard to represent calmness. I placed toys inside the cabinet to use as calming tools. For the "My Brain is a Bicycle" activity, I drew a bicycle picture on a large cardboard box. For the "I am Discovering Myself" activity, I prepared visuals and worksheets on breathing and body exercises. In this action plan, I implemented the following three activities.

- In the first activity, **"Traffic Light,"** I prepared a "traffic light model" to represent the emotion regulation process *(Photograph 31)*. For this purpose, I bought three battery-operated lanterns that flash white and light up when pressing the glass. I glued red transparent paper to the glass of one of the lanterns and yellow transparent paper and green transparent paper to the others, respectively. I explained that the red light means *"stop and calm down,"* the yellow light *"slow down and think,"* and the green light *"take action."* In this activity, students experienced the process of emotion regulation concretely. They were curious about the traffic light model and wanted to use it immediately.

- With the second activity, **"My Brain is a Bicycle,"** I aimed to help students comprehend the working principle of the human brain by relating the lower and upper brains together using the bicycle analogy. For this purpose, I hung the bicycle picture I drew on the board *(Photograph 32)* and asked students to think of this picture as a "brain." I divided the bicycle into two parts by drawing a transverse line on transparent paper representing the lower and upper brains. I also created four emotion faces in four colors that looked like bicycle wheel ornaments, cut them into circles, and placed them on the bicycle's wheels. I put two pieces of paper with the word "thinking" on the bicycle brakes. With this activity, students understood that there are upper and lower parts of the brain and that emotions can be regulated by controlling the feelings that arise in the lower brain by the upper brain.

- In the third activity, **"Discovering Myself,"** we did various body and breathing exercises suggested by Canan and Şahin (2021), such as "five-finger breathing," "elephant breathing," "dragon breathing," "tree pose," and "airplane pose" *(Photograph 33)*. For example, for the "five-finger exercise," the star astronaut of the week handed out a piece of paper to the class. I asked everyone to draw their hand on the paper. The students placed one hand on the paper and drew a picture of the hand with the other. Meanwhile, I drew a picture of a hand on the board. On the left side of the fingers, I wrote "inhale," and on the right side, "exhale." I asked the students to move around their fingers with a pencil. I told them to inhale on the way up through the fingers and exhale on the way down. Moreover, I showed students how to do this exercise without a pen and paper when they felt uncomfortable (i.e., I moved around the fingers of my left hand with the index finger of my right hand, first up and then down). Then, we did the other exercises in the light of the instructions in Canan and Şahin's (2021) book. Through this activity, students learned to stay in the moment and regulate their emotions by taking control of their bodies through different breathing and body exercises.

Photograph 31   Photograph 32   Photograph 33

Action Plan 11: Emotion Regulation Strategies 2

With this action plan, which I implemented between 09.05.2022 and 13.05.2022, I aimed for students to generate alternative thoughts in the face of situations/events and to practice the "Situation-Thought-Emotion-Action" strategy. For this purpose, for the activity "What Do You Do with a Pencil?" I drew a pencil picture and added empty thought bubbles around the pencil. For the "Detectives" activity, I prepared four detective hats made of black cardboard. I designed four different mysterious events involving Lili and Zozo. I wrote clue sentences for each mysterious event and gave students paper and pencils to take notes about the events. I prepared a PowerPoint presentation file to organize the events and clues sequentially. For the "My Emotion Observation" activity, I drew four magnifying glasses and wrote "What happened? What did you think? What did you feel? What did you do?" on them, respectively. I implemented the following three activities in this action plan.

- In the first activity, **"What Can You Do with a Pencil?,"** I asked the students to generate thoughts about the question, *"How many ways can we use a pencil other than writing?,"* I mentioned that thoughts are our ideas about events, so generating as many thoughts as possible is essential. When thoughts are diversified, it is possible to have a broader perspective on a subject. I also stated that thoughts can be triggers of emotions. For this activity, I drew a picture of a pencil with empty thought bubbles around it **(Photograph 34)**. I then demonstrated how to use the pencil as a buckle, and the students exemplified its use as a fork, a nail, and a minute hand. Through this activity, students realized that there can be various ideas about a particular situation.

- In the second activity, **"Detectives,"** students played detectives and tried to solve four mysterious cases. For each mystery, we selected four different students by lottery. Students wore the detective hats I prepared for this activity **(Photograph 35)** and worked in groups. In the meantime, I played the detective and gave the students some clues about the events. The mysterious events represented uncertain situations that may arise in students' lives (Southam Gerow, 2020). I prepared the four mysterious events for the activity as follows. (1) The phone call mystery: *"Lili and Kiki become friends at school. One Saturday morning, Lili calls Kiki but gets no answer. Lili sends Kiki a text message. An hour passes, and still no answer. Why did not Kiki call back? What do you think?"* (2) The teacher mystery: *"The teacher frowned at Zozo in class. She said she wanted to see Zozo at break time. Why did the teacher want to see Zozo?"* (3) The lateness mystery: *"Lili and Zozo were always picked up after school on time by their father. One day, their father was very late. By any chance, why he was late?"* (4) The cafeteria mystery: *"When we were eating in the cafeteria at school, children from another class looked at Lili carefully. Wonder why?"* In this activity, students enjoyed wearing detective hats and trying to solve mysteries.

- In the third activity, **"Observing My Emotions,"** students gave examples from their life experiences using a worksheet **(Photograph 36)** depicting magnifying glasses with the questions *"What happened? What did you think? What did you feel? What did you do?"* respectively, to practice the "Situation-Thought-Feeling-Action" strategy.
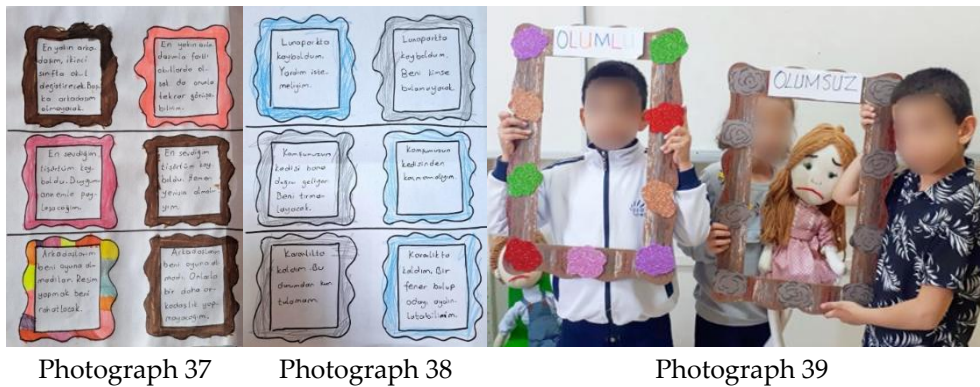
Photograph 34   Photograph 35   Photograph 36

Action Plan 12: Emotion Regulation Strategies 3

With this action plan, which I implemented between 16.05.2022 and 20.05.2022, I aimed for the students to look at situations/events from positive and negative frames and regulate their feelings of sadness and fear. For this purpose, I drew frames for these feelings on separate sheets of paper and wrote expressions for them. I asked the students to paint the frame containing the appropriate emotion regulation strategy in a color of their choice and the other frame in black. In addition, I brought two wooden frames to the classroom and glued colored clouds on one frame and gray clouds on the other. I wrote "positive" on the top edge of the frame with colored clouds and "negative" on the top edge with gray clouds. I also hung the planets of sadness and fear on the board with blue- and orange-colored strings and prepared a separate poster with regulation strategies for both emotions. In this action plan, I implemented the following three activities.

- In the first activity, **"Frame Painting-Sadness,"** I asked the students to think about how we should regulate our emotions based on the expressions in the frames related to the feeling of sadness *(Photograph 37)*. I also told them that they could paint the frames of expressions with a negative perspective in black and those with a positive perspective in another color of their choice. In this activity, students compared the statements in each item with each other: (1) *"My best friend will change schools in the second grade. I will not have any other friends."* and *"I can see my best friend again even if we are in different schools."* (2) *"My favorite T-shirt is lost. I should buy a new one right away."* and *"My favorite T-shirt is lost. I will share my sadness with my mother."* (3) *"My friends did not pick me for the game. I will never be friends with them again."* and *"My friends did not pick me for the game. Painting will relax me."* Afterward, I asked the students to explain their statement preferences. In this activity, the students enjoyed painting the frames according to the instructions.

- In the second activity, **"Frame Painting-Fear,"** I asked the students to think about how we should organize our emotions based on the expressions in the frames related to the feeling of fear *(Photograph 38)*. I also told them that they could paint the frames of expressions with a negative perspective in black and those with a positive perspective in another color of their choice. In this activity, students compared the statements in each item with each other: (1) *"I got lost in the amusement park; no one will find me."* and *"I got lost in the amusement park; I should ask for help."* (2) *"Our neighbor's cat is coming towards me; it will scratch me."* and *"I should not run away from our neighbor's cat."* (3) *"I am in the dark; I cannot get out of this situation."* and *"I am in the dark; I can find a flashlight and light the room."* Afterward, I asked the students to explain their choice of expression. In this activity, the students enjoyed coloring the frames according to the instructions.

- In the third activity, **"Looking through the Frame,"** the students used wooden frames to replace Lili and Zozo's short stories about feelings of sadness and fear with a new perspective *(Photograph 39)*. Through the wooden frames, students shared their ideas about controlling feelings of sorrow and fear better and commented on each other's ideas.

Photograph 37　　　　Photograph 38　　　　　　　　　Photograph 39

Action Plan 13: Emotion Regulation Strategies 4

With this action plan, which I implemented between 23.05.2022 and 27.05.2022, I aimed for students to look at situations/events from positive and negative frames and to regulate their anger and anxiety. For this purpose, I drew eyeglass frames on separate sheets of paper for "anger" and "anxiety" and wrote expressions for these emotions. I asked students to paint the eyeglass frame with the appropriate emotion regulation strategy in a color they chose and the other eyeglass frame with the inappropriate emotion regulation strategy in black. In addition to this, I brought two wooden frames to the classroom. I pasted colored clouds on one frame and gray clouds on the other. I wrote "positive" on the top edge of the frame with colored clouds and "negative" on the top edge with gray clouds. I also hung the planets of sadness and fear on the board with red and yellow strings and prepared a poster with emotion regulation strategies for both emotions. In this action plan, I implemented the following three activities.

- In the first activity, **"Painting with Glasses-Anger,"** I asked the students to compare their expressions of anger and think about which glasses help us regulate our emotions *(Photograph 40)*. The students compared the emotion regulation strategies in the glasses and painted colors to indicate the appropriate ways and black to indicate the inappropriate ways. For this purpose, students compared the two statements in each item with one another: (1) *"My friend took my glue without permission. I should take my glue away from my friend."* and *"My friend took my glue without permission. I should tell my friend that this is wrong."* (2) *"My father told me that my time to play on the tablet was up. I cried."* and *"My father told me that my time to play on the tablet was over. My father is right about this."* (3) *"When I was painting, my painting did not turn out the way. I do not want to paint again."* and *"When I was painting, my painting did not turn out the way I wanted. I can do it again."* Afterward, I asked the students to explain their expression preferences.

- In the second activity, **"Painting with Glasses-Anxiety,"** I asked the students to compare their expressions of anxiety and think about which glasses help us regulate our emotions *(Photograph 41)*. The students compared the emotion regulation strategies in the glasses and painted colors to indicate the appropriate ways and black to indicate the inappropriate ways. For the feeling of anxiety, students compared the two statements in each item with one another: (1) *"I will sing in front of everyone in class. My friends will make fun of me."* and *"I will sing in front of everyone in class. I visualize that moment in my eyes."* (2) *"I started a new school. I do not want to go to school because I do not know anyone."* and *"I started a new school. I do not know anyone, but I think everything will be fine."* (3) *"I started a new course. I feel anxious because there are people I do not know."* and *"I started a new course. Although I felt anxious because there were people I did not know, I calmed myself down by taking deep breaths."* Afterward, I asked the students to explain their choice of statement.

- In the third activity, **"I am Looking through the Frame,"** the students used wooden frames to modify the short stories about Lili and Zozo, which included feelings of anger and anxiety, into a new perspective *(Photograph 42)*. Through the wooden frames, students shared their ideas about better controlling their "anger" and "anxiety" and commented on each other's ideas.

Photograph 40   Photograph 41   Photograph 42

Action Plan 14: Overview of Emotions and the Emotional Party

With this action plan, which I implemented between 30.05.2022 and 03.06.2022, I aimed to assess students' emotional literacy skills and organize an emotional party. For this purpose, I prepared a worksheet for each emotion. I also prepared a special certificate for each student. I brought each student a small cake and juice for the emotional party. I decorated the classroom, inflated balloons in the colors of emotion, and asked students to choose one of the four colors of emotion and come to school that day dressed in that color. I wore a blue dress to represent sadness and a red scarf to represent anger. In this action plan, I implemented the following two activities.

- In the first activity, **"Overview of Emotions,"** the students practiced recognizing, expressing, and organizing emotions through worksheets and received a certificate. I prepared a separate worksheet for each emotion and drew a facial expression in the upper left corner of the worksheet *(Photograph 43)*. I asked the students to indicate which emotion this facial expression reflected, what event made them feel such emotion, and which emotion regulation strategy they used. At the end of the activity, I gave the students their certificates *(Photograph 44)*. The students were thrilled to receive a certificate personalized to their names.

- In the second activity, **"The Emotional Party,"** we ate cake with the students accompanied by music and flew different-colored balloons, each representing a different emotion *(Photograph 45)*.
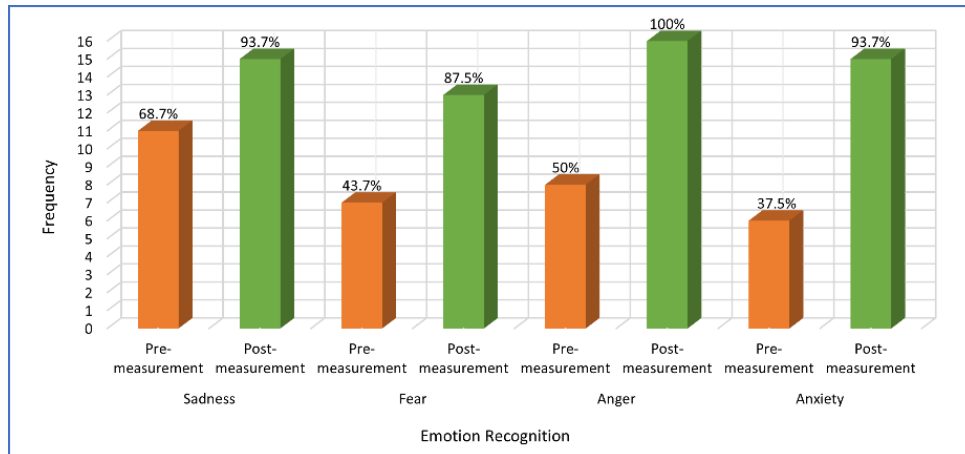

Photograph 43   Photograph 44   Photograph 45

Comparing Pre- and Post-Measurement Results
Pre- and Post-Measurement Results for the Emotion Recognition Skill

Graph 1 shows students' pre- and post-measurement results for the emotion recognition skill. *According to the pre-measurement results*, 11 students (68.7%) were able to recognize the emotion of sadness, eight students (50%) the emotion of anger, seven students (43.7%) the emotion of fear, and six students (37.5%) the emotion of anxiety. Students recognized the emotion of sadness the most, while the emotion they had the most difficulty recognizing was anxiety. Notably, *the post-measurement results* revealed that all students (100%) could recognize the emotion of anger, a significant improvement from the pre-measurement. Similarly, 15 students (93.7%) were able to recognize the

emotion of sadness, 14 students (87.5%) the emotion of fear, and 15 students (93.7%) the emotion of anxiety. ***Comparing pre- and post-measurements*** demonstrates substantial progress in the students' emotion recognition skills. Impressively, all but a few students (one for sadness and anxiety and two for fear) have improved their ability to recognize all four emotions. The most remarkable advancement was in the recognition of anxiety. Only six students could identify this emotion in the pre-measurement, but in the post-measurement, this number soared to 15, a testament to the students' significant growth.

Graph 1. Pre- and Post-Measurement Results for the Emotion Recognition Skill

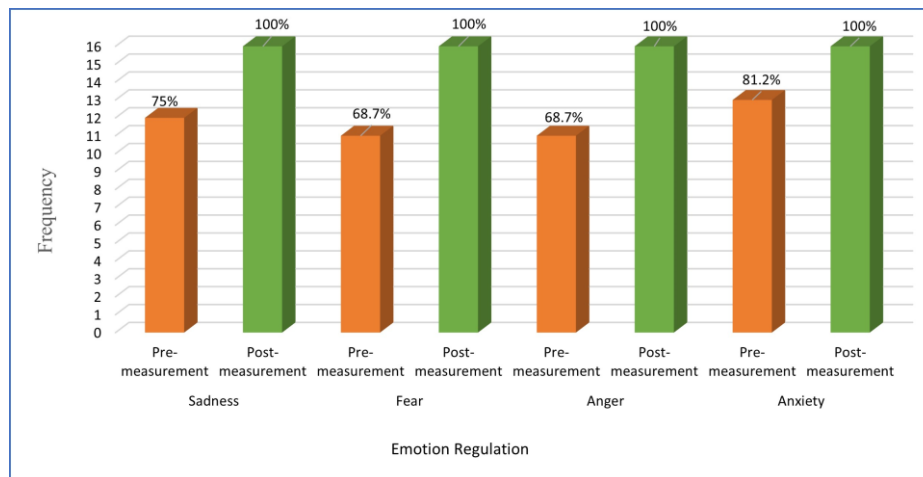### Pre- and Post-Measurement Results for the Emotion Expression Skill

Graph 2 shows students' pre- and post-measurement results for the emotion expression skill. ***According to the pre-measurement results***, 12 students (75%) were able to express the emotion of sadness, seven students (43.7%) the emotion of anger, five students (31.2%) the emotion of fear, and only one student (6.2%) the emotion of anxiety. Students could express sadness the most, and they had the most difficulty in expressing anxiety. Except for one student, no student was able to express anxiety. ***According to the pot-measurement results***, 15 students (93.7%) were able to express the emotion of sadness, 15 students (93.7%) the emotion of fear, 14 students (87.5%) the emotion of anger, and 11 students (68.7%) the emotion of anxiety. ***Comparing pre- and post-measurements*** shows a significant improvement in expressing all emotions. The most crucial improvement students experienced was in their feelings of fear and anxiety. While only five students could express the emotion of fear in the pre-measurement, this number increased to 15 in the post-measurement. Similarly, while only one student could express the emotion of anxiety in the pre-measurement, this number increased to 11 in the post-measurement.
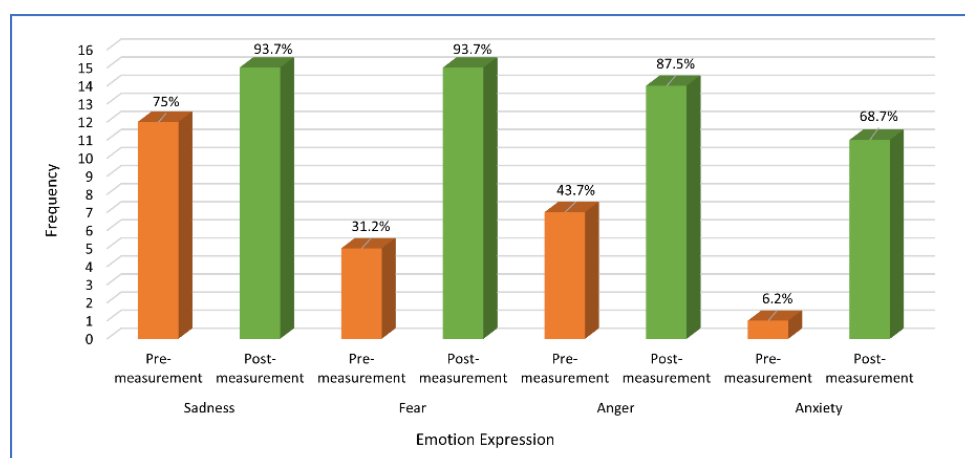
Graph 2. Pre- and Post-Measurement Results for the Emotion Expression Skill

Pre- and Post-Measurement Results for the Emotion Regulation Skill

Graph 3 shows students' pre- and post-measurement results for the emotion recognition skill. ***According to the pre-measurement results***, 13 students (81.2%) regulated the emotion of anxiety, 12 students (75%) the emotion of sadness, 11 students (68.7%) the emotion of fear, and 11 students (68.7%) the emotion of anger. Students were able to regulate the emotion of anxiety the most. ***According to the post-measurement results***, all students could regulate all four emotions. ***Comparing pre- and post-measurements*** shows a complete improvement in regulating all feelings. All students acquired the emotion recognition skill.

Graph 3. Pre- and Post-Measurement Results for the Emotion Regulation Skills

General Opinions Concerning the Contribution of the Activities
Students' Opinions

On June 14, 2022, I questioned my students' general opinions about the value of the teaching activities I implemented in the classroom and analyzed these opinions descriptively. In the face-to-face interviews I conducted with the students regarding the question, *"What do you think about the emotional activities we implemented in the classroom?"* the students generally stated that they got used to Lili and Zozo, loved them very much, and never wanted the activities to end. They also noted that the activities had helped them better regulate their emotions. Below are some of the responses I received from the students. Other students expressed similar views.

> *"The activities were perfect, my teacher. I liked Lili and Zozo very much. Thanks to them, we recognized emotions. We learned what to do with emotions. My favorites were being on stage, breathing exercises, and traffic lights."* (S2)

> *"I can control my emotions now. I enjoyed the activities very much. Such as passing through the door, going on the stage you set up in the classroom, wearing emotional glasses, and doing activities with stickers in notebooks. I liked them all."* (S3)

> *"We get along better with our friends now. We still argue, but we solve it immediately. I have a friend whose bad words bother me. I solve problems using these methods. I enjoyed the notebook activities and going through the model door. The activities where we read books were good."* (S7)

> *"I loved Lili. Her hair is beautiful. I wish the events could go on forever. I felt angry when you did not let me take Lili home. We looked at the photo album of Lili and Zozo and went on stage; it was so beautiful. Getting up on stage and talking was my favorite part. I was thrilled when you let Lili and Zozo sit beside me in the class."* (S15)

The Validity Committee Members' Opinions

On June 6, 2022, during my last meeting with the Validity Committee members, I asked my colleagues to submit their views on the contribution of teaching activities in writing and received generally positive feedback. My colleagues particularly emphasized the positive improvements they noticed in my students' "empathy" and "communication" skills. I share their comments below.

"I receive positive feedback from parents. They say that students include emotions in their conversations at home. I have also seen that they can empathize much more easily now. It is difficult to express negative emotions; I think it is important that they acquire these skills at an early age." (Guidance Counselor)

"Class 1A students who participated in these activities can now express their feelings instead of complaining about their friends. This study positively impacted your students' relationships with each other." (Class 1B Teacher)

Parents' Opinions

I asked my parents to share their views in writing via WhatsApp and analyzed them descriptively. The parents expressed that their children were now more capable of recognizing their emotions, describing them correctly, caring about others' emotions, and empathizing with others' feelings. Below, I present only three of the parents' views; others expressed similar views.

"Our dear teacher. We are grateful for the emotional awareness my son gained with the Emotions Galaxy activities. When I knew he was distraught in one event, I looked for the right sentences to console him. Instead, he consoled himself and me both by saying: 'Mom, sadness is like a balloon; it will fly away now.' I was very touched. By hanging the planet of anger on our living room wall, he told us that he wanted to help us how to manage this emotion. He said that fear protects him, that it is not a bad feeling, and that he recognizes it now. It is precious for us that he knows what he feels and cares about what the person he communicates with might feel." (Mother of S10, June 4, 2022)

"I have noticed a change in my daughter's behavior that impressed me. When she sees someone upset, she tries to support them. Her relationship with her sister has also improved. She now expresses herself when angry, saying, 'I do not want to talk,' and we can discuss things later. When I felt down on my birthday, she said, 'A birthday is special for mothers too because it is when they give birth to their children.' She noticed my feelings, made pictures and decorations on a napkin, and gave it to me as a gift. Your activities have significantly impacted her, and I appreciate them greatly." (Mother of S11, June 4, 2022)

"Zozo has become a common name in our house. My daughter gave her baby brother the name of "Zozo." When our emotions get mixed, she says, 'We are going to the calming station.' I love how she explains it; she loves the activities. Your work is the biggest problem for humanity. All problems in adulthood stem from the inability to express emotions. She expresses her emotions so well that your work was very effective." (Mother of S15, May 14, 2022)

Discussion

"Emotional literacy" is among the 21st-century life skills that need to be developed, like reading, writing, or arithmetic (Park, 1999; Sharp, 2000). Therefore, the question, "What should be the main priority of schools? Is it only to teach academic subjects or to ensure students' social-emotional development simultaneously?" becomes noteworthy. For example, according to FitzPatrick, Twohig, and Morgan (2014), the main priority of primary schools should be ensuring students' social and emotional development (i.e., raising emotionally literate individuals). "Emotional literacy" is an important life skill that manages individuals' social relationships and impacts their academic lives. Individuals need to be aware of their own and others' emotions, make sense of them, express them using appropriate words, and benefit from their power to establish healthy social relationships with others. This skill is considered an important life skill that transforms many negative emotions, such as sadness, fear, anger, and anxiety, into productive energy.

The literature emphasizes that the acquisition of emotional literacy skills at an early age is critical because this skill has a positive effect on "school readiness and adjustment," "academic achievement," and "peer relationships" (Bronson, 2000; Denham, 2006: Domitrovich, Durlak, Staley, & Weissberg, 2017; Norris, 2003; Parker et al, 2004; Qualter, Whiteley, Hutchinson, & Pope, 2007; Watanabe, Motomura, & Saeki, 2022; Whitted, 2011). In addition, this skill positively affects bullying-related behaviors in schools (Knowler & Frederickson, 2013) and eliminates the negativities encountered during the transition to schools at different levels (Qualter et al., 2007). Children who lack this skill are at risk of being victimized by their peers, committing crimes, having difficulty adapting to school, having academic problems, and using drugs (Denham, 2006). For example, in a study examining the impact of a 12-week emotional literacy program on reducing bullying behaviors in 50 elementary school students aged 8-9 years whom their peers identified as being involved in bullying behaviors, Knowler and Frederickson (2013) reported that the program improved students' self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills and reduced bullying behaviors.

Teachers are critical in developing emotional literacy skills (Harper, 2016; Kassem, 2002; Perry et al., 2008). So, I conducted this study in my classroom in line with this awareness and consciousness. In this context, the teaching activities I implemented in this study significantly contributed to developing my first-grade students' emotional literacy skills. I observed that my students, who were quite distant from their emotions at the beginning of my study, became more at peace with their feelings, more easily aware of their emotions, and more comfortable talking about them as the activities progressed. Due to the teaching activities that I have implemented, my students have become individuals who can express themselves with appropriate words when they feel an emotion that bothers them. For example, in an unfortunate incident on March 11, 2022, I saw S16 coming to the classroom in a furious state because of a disagreement between him and S7 in the school's playground. I first hugged S16 and waited for him to calm down a bit. Then, we went to an empty classroom, and I asked him to tell me about the incident. When S16 calmed down more, he said he accidentally crashed S7 while playing, but S7 thought he did it on purpose, so S7 hit S16. I asked, *"So what did you do?"* S16 said that he reacted to S7 in the same way. I asked, *"Did S7 know you crashed him by mistake?"* S16 said, *"The fact that I hurt S7 may have caused him to feel angry. The fact that S7 misunderstood me may have also made me angry."* S16 was aware that he and his classmate S7 experienced "anger." S16 had acquired the skills of recognizing and expressing anger. However, S16 did not know how to react appropriately because we had not yet covered the activities related to the emotion regulation strategies (for example, S16 could have expressed S7 his apology instead of hitting him back).

Thanks to the different emotion regulation strategies we applied during the activities in the following weeks (such as *"traffic lights," "looking at events from positive-negative frames,"* or *"conducting situation-thought-emotion-action analyses"*), my students turned into individuals who can use positive strategies when they feel a disturbing emotion, who are aware of what the correct reaction to a negative situation/event should be, and at the same time, who can give ideas to their friends in choosing a strategy when they feel a disturbing emotion. The final measurement results I obtained in my research also showed that students improved their emotion regulation skills most; all students acquired the ability to regulate all four emotions. In addition, the qualitative data I obtained in the study also supported this finding. I attribute this result to the Validity Committee's suggestion to implement the activities according to three sub-skills, respectively (first *"emotion recognition activities,"* then *"emotion expression activities,"* and finally, *"emotion regulation activities"*). In other words, my students' ability to recognize and express emotions contributed positively to their ability to regulate emotions.

For example, in the third activity, "My Emotion Observation," of the 11th action plan I executed from 09.05.2022 to 13.05.2022 as part of our emotion regulation strategies, I aimed to provide the students with a practical understanding of the "Situation-Thought-Emotion-Action" strategy. I facilitated this activity through a worksheet featuring magnifying glasses with four questions: *"What happened? What did you think? What did you feel? What did you do?"* I took this opportunity to address the unfortunate incident between S7 and S16, using Lili and Zozo as examples for the following practice: *"I asked Lili where Zozo was, and she said she and Zozo fought. So, I wrote: 'Lili and Zozo fought.' in the magnifying glass, 'What happened?' I then asked Lili what she thought about this fight. Lili said she thought Zozo hit her on purpose. So, I wrote: 'Lili thinks Zozo hit her on purpose.' in the magnifying glass, 'What did you think?' Then I asked Lili, 'What did you feel?' Lili said she felt angry. So, I wrote: 'Lili felt angry.' in the magnifying glass, 'What did you feel?' Finally, I asked Lili, 'What did you do?' She said that she reacted in the same way to Zozo. So, I wrote: 'Lili also hit Zozo' in the magnifying glass, 'What did you do?'"* Upon Lili's response, S3 was the first to speak and shared her opinion by saying, *"But hitting does not solve the problem."* Afterward, I asked the students to think about the proper reaction in this case and to come up with ideas. The students said it was wrong to fight no matter what and suggested solving disagreements by talking, not fighting.

Again, in the third activity, "Looking through the Frame" of the 12th action plan that I employed between 16.05.2022 and 20.05.2022 within the scope of emotion regulation strategies, the students changed the short stories narrated by Lili and Zozo about the emotions of sadness and fear with a new perspective using wooden frames. In one of these stories, Lili said, *"My best friend will go to another school next year when we pass to the second grade. We will not be in the same class next year. After that, I probably will not have any other friends."* I told the class, *"Lili thinks she would not have any other friends. How can Lili look at this situation from a different perspective and frame?"* I asked the students to think about what they could suggest to Lili. S2 said to Lili: *"Do not worry. Even if your friend leaves the school, your mothers can bring you together whenever you want."* With this reaction, S2 evaluated her friend's situation from her perspective and suggested an appropriate emotion regulation strategy. The other students in the class also told Lili that she should not be sad and could make other friends (in the class or her immediate environment) if she wanted to.

Therefore, the most vital aspect of my study is the instructional activities I implemented. So, the instructional activities I introduced in my action research are essential to the literature. I designed and implemented all the instructional activities in action plans to create integrity with the theme of "Lili and Zozo's Journey to the Emotions Galaxy." For example, I designed and sewn the dolls Lili and Zozo, which I applied for my research. Additionally, I wrote the stories and texts used in the activities, created the illustrations, prepared posters and worksheets, and developed the games. I also ensured that all the teaching activities I implemented were related to each other and emotional literacy skills. In this context, I think that the teaching activities I implemented in my research reflect the following six teaching principles:

- Being interesting for the students,

- Ensuring students' active participation,

- Including visual objects, materials, or models,

- Embodying learning,

- Gamifying learning,

- Enabling individual and group work.

In this context, I think that the children's picture books we read interactively by sitting together on the cushions we spread in a circle in the middle of the classroom, the dialogues we shared as a class about the content of these books and the games we played at the beginning of the activities made a significant contribution to the development of my students' emotional literacy skills. Similar studies in the literature emphasize that "dialogic reading" (Coppock, 2007; Fettig, Cook, Morizio, Gould, & Brodsky, 2018), "circle time activities" (Cefai, Ferrario, Cavioni, Carter, & Grech, 2014; Lown, 2002), "picture books" (Harper, 2016) and "games" (Hromek & Roffey, 2009) are effective in developing children's emotional literacy skills. For example, in a study by Fettig et al. (2018), two kindergarten and two first-grade students participated in "dialogic reading" activities for six months, one hour a week. A picture storybook was read for the first 15-20 minutes of the lesson, followed by a social-emotional development activity for the next 10-15 minutes and a play activity for the last 25-30 minutes. The findings revealed significant improvements in students' communication, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills. Similarly, a study by Cefai et al. (2014) examined the contribution of "group time activities" implemented by five classroom teachers (one teacher from each grade level) in a primary school to students' social and emotional learning. The participants included 37 students (20 boys and 17 girls). The teachers conducted the interventions in 30-45-minute sessions once a week for 10 weeks. Before the implementation, teachers received training on self-awareness, self-esteem, understanding and managing emotions, belonging, friendship, and cooperation. According to the findings, "group time activities" contributed to students' social and emotional learning and positively affected the classroom climate. For example, students experienced fewer behavioral problems in the classroom.

In the literature, there are also studies on "dance-movement therapy" (Meekums, 2008), "outdoor/woodland activities" (Acton & Carter, 2016), "the persona dolls approach" (Kuru Şevik & Aktan Acar, 2021), "peer support/counseling" (Coppock, 2007; Cowie & Hutson, 2005; Lasanen, Maatta, & Uusiautti, 2019; O'Hara, 2011), "the emotional literacy support assistant program" (Krause, Blackwell, & Claridge, 2020; McEwen, 2019; Purcell & Kelly, 2023; Wong et al., 2020) and "the yoga awareness program" (Bilmez, 2023) which are likely to positively contribute to the development of children's emotional literacy skills. For example, Acton and Carter (2016) reported that outdoor activities (such as making fire, cooking, using tools, building shelter, working together, and building trust) carried out in nature for 24 hours and five days had a positive effect on the emotional literacy skills and well-being of eight children aged 9-13 (3 girls and five boys). The exciting element of Acton and Carter's (2016) study is that participating children were also providing support to a parent (with depression, drug addiction, or limited mobility). Children had responsibilities such as providing emotional support to the parents, helping with household chores such as cooking and cleaning, or caring for siblings.

Similarly, a study on "peer support/counseling" conducted in England (O'Hara, 2011) examined the effect of peer support on seventh-grade students' emotional literacy skills. In the study, 16 ninth-grade students (10 girls and six boys) who would serve as counselors were identified voluntarily and subjected to a three-session training on "counseling roles." For instance, peer mentors had roles such as "teaching" (modeling, approving/disapproving, informing, and questioning), "supporting" (protecting and defending), "encouraging" (inspiring and challenging), "guiding" (listening, explaining and advising) and "befriending" (caring and communicating) subsequently. When the trained students as

peer mentors moved on to Grade 10, each took on the role of peer mentor to a seventh-grade student. For this purpose, the counselor and the clients met twice every week in the afternoon for 20 minutes (on the same days and times every week) to discuss issues related to "school life." According to the findings, peer counseling positively affected the emotional literacy competencies of students with low emotional literacy. In another study, Lasanen et al. (2019) examined the experiences of 16 (12 girls, four boys) Finnish children aged 7-17 years with hearing loss regarding peer support group activities. Regarding the question "Can peer support improve the quality of life and social interaction of children with hearing loss?" (Lasanen et al., 2019, p. 1203), the findings showed that peer support (1) provided children with hearing loss with skills to cope with daily life problems/situations (e.g., providing practical solutions, giving information, modeling), (2) made them socially competent (e.g., offering suggestions, helping, encouraging), and (3) empowered them personally (e.g., providing moral support, building close friendships, showing that they are not alone.

Recently, one of the most popular programs in the context of emotional literacy is the school-based "emotional literacy support assistant program." This program aims to support students in understanding, expressing, and managing their emotions (Krause et al., 2020; McEwen, 2019; Purcell & Kelly, 2023; Wong et al., 2020). For this purpose, teaching assistants nominated by schools participate in a five-day training by educational psychologists in such competency areas as "emotional awareness," "self-esteem," "anger management," "friendship relations," "empathy," and "social and communication skills." Upon completing the training, teaching assistants return to their schools to work as "emotional literacy support assistants" and organize individual and group sessions with students in line with the training they received. In addition, educational psychologists continuously supervise school practices and support teaching assistants when necessary. For example, the study by Krause et al. (2020) with 13 students (5 boys and eight girls) between the ages of 5-16 studying in two primary and two secondary schools in England concluded that the "emotional literacy support assistant program" had a positive effect on students' emotional well-being and emotional literacy competencies. Similarly, Wong et al. (2020) examined the experiences of 12 elementary school students between the ages of 7-11 who had participated in an "emotional literacy support assistant" program at their school for at least one month. They found that students had generally positive views about this program. In their systematic literature review, Purcell and Kelly (2023) found that the "emotional literacy support assistant program" improved the "communication skills" (talking about their emotional experiences, expressing themselves, and asking for help from others) of students between the ages of 5-16. They also reported that such programs had positive effects on "emotion regulation skills" (emotional self-awareness, use of different emotion regulation strategies and emotional well-being), "social skills" (relationships with peers and family and conflict management), and "school experiences" (self-confidence, engagement in learning and school attendance). Finally, McEwen (2019) conducted a study with eight teaching assistants and eight students between the ages of 5 and 11. The study emphasized that the most critical factor affecting the success of this program was "the quality of the relationships established between teaching assistants and students."

Suggestions

Considering my experiences in this action research, I offer the following suggestions to educators:

- A positive and trust-based classroom environment is essential for students to open their feelings, share them, and participate willingly in the activities to develop emotional literacy. In addition, during the implementation of the teaching activities, students need to know about the requirements in the activities and how they will contribute to them. In my first action plan, I gave detailed information to my students about the "Emotions Galaxy" activities we would do in the classroom for a semester and created classroom rules with my students.

- The researchers must design the emotional literacy activities in line with students' age levels. It is essential to concretize "emotion," which is an abstract concept, through teaching activities. I used dolls, models, experiments, drawings, stories, children's books, worksheets, and posters to concretize my teaching activities. I also created many games during the implementation of the action plans. I applied all these teaching materials and games to make students more interested and actively participate in them. For example, students can better focus on the topic when the activities start with a game. On the other hand, I have observed that in worksheet-based activities, students get bored or tired more quickly and prefer to present their answers verbally rather than write them down.

- It is essential to make changes in the action plans in line with the interests and wishes of the students during the implementation process. I adapted some of the activities I implemented in my research in line with the interests and wishes of the students during the process or designed them additionally. For example, I designed and implemented the third activity in the fourth action plan, "Anger Triggers Experiment," in line with the students' requests to experiment. I also abandoned some of the materials I had designed at the beginning of my research during the process. For example, I quit using the astronaut helmet-like masks (*Photograph 5*) from the fourth action plan onwards. I had prepared them for the students and used them in the second and third action plans. However, students expressed that although they were excited when they first put on these masks, they were very uncomfortable wearing them because they were also wearing surgical masks (due to the pandemic process). Thus, from the fourth action plan onwards, I changed to not using the astronaut helmet-looking masks in the activities.

- The school curricula implemented in schools should focus on children's cognitive, social, and emotional development (Bibik & Edwards, 1998; Camilleri et al., 2012; Fettig et al., 2018; Kassem, 2002). In other words, the school curricula should address students' minds and hearts. This perspective challenges the traditional view that the primary purpose of education is only to "teach students curricular subjects" (Humphrey et al., 2007, p. 236) and places students' personal development at the center of the curriculum (Park, 1999). In this context, Camilleri et al. (2012), drawing on the Maltese example, suggest the inclusion of a course (called "Personal and Social Development") directly targeting the development of children's emotional literacy skills in the school curricula. A similar call applies to teacher education programs. As Kassem (2002) emphasizes: "It is time for teacher education to incorporate new knowledge about emotion and emotional literacy into its curriculum" (p. 371).

- Raising emotionally literate students depends on the existence of emotionally literate teachers. For this reason, as in the studies of Triliva and Poulou (2006) and Perry et al. (2008), it is essential to examine the perspectives of Turkish teachers working in primary schools regarding emotional literacy and their professional practices related to emotional literacy. The study conducted by Triliva and Poulou (2006) with 24 primary school teachers in Greece focused on teachers' (1) conceptualizations of social and emotional learning, (2) interpretations of the relationship between academic achievement, classroom management, and social-emotional development, (3) integration of social and emotional learning into the curriculum, and (4) perceptions of their role in teaching social and emotional learning. Likewise, the study conducted Perry et al. (2008) with classroom teachers working in a primary school in England sought answers to the following six questions: "(1) What do teachers perceive an emotionally literate teacher to be? (2) How do teachers' values and beliefs influence their emotional literacy? (3) How do teachers demonstrate emotional literacy in the classroom? (4) How does an emotionally literate teacher foster emotional literacy in their pupils? (5) What factors influence the development of emotional literacy in schools? (6) What are the perceived benefits of an emotionally literate school?" (p. 29). In addition to such studies, it would be beneficial for teachers to question their professional experiences related to emotional literacy through self-reflection and share them with others regarding professional development. The perspectives offered by such studies will contribute significantly to enriching the learning experiences designed for students concerning emotional literacy.

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