Evaluation of 2018 initial teacher training programs

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the initial teacher training programs updated in 2018 in Turkey. In the study, the basic interpretive research design was used. Participants of the study were 32 faculty members from different programs in a faculty of education of a university in the western part of Turkey. Data were collected via face to face interviews using semi-structured interview form. Findings of the study generally revealed that 2018 initial teacher training programs were not prepared in line with curriculum development principles. The faculty members think that the changes in the programs cannot meet the needs of qualified teacher training. They recommended updating the teacher training programs in line with the curriculum development principles, increasing the weekly course hours, adding the implementation hours in the courses and adding the school experience course back to the programs.

2018 öğretmen yetiştirme lisans programlarının değerlendirilmesi

Öz

Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de 2018 yılında güncellenen öğretmen yetiştirme lisans programlarının değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden temel yorumlayıcı desen kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, Türkiye'nin batı bölgesinde yer alan bir üniversitenin eğitim fakültesinde farklı programlarında görevli 32 öğretim üyesidir. Veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formunun kullanıldığı yüz yüze görüşmeler ile toplanmıştır. Öğretim üyelerinden elde edilen veriler tümevarımsal içerik analizi yaklaşımı ile çözümlenmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları 2018 öğretmen yetiştirme lisans programlarının genel olarak program geliştirme ilkelerine uygun bir şekilde hazırlanmadığı göstermiştir. Öğretim üyeleri, programlardaki değişikliklerin nitelikli öğretmen yetiştirme ile ilgili ihtiyaçları karşılayamayacağını düşünmektedirler. Programların program geliştirme ilkeleri gözetilerek güncellenmesini, haftalık ders saatlerinin arttırılmasını, derslere uygulama saatlerinin eklenmesini ve okul deneyimi dersinin programa geri eklenmesini önermektedirler.

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Introduction

It can be said that the scientific, economic and cultural development of societies and the quality of the trained teachers are mutually dependent (Cruickshank et al., 1996; Darling-Hammond, 2006; TEDMEM, 2014; Yıldırım, 2013). Training qualified teachers is among the major objectives of the Republic of Turkey in the field of education as in other countries. To do so, initial teacher training programs are revised and updated according to the requirements of the current period. Apart from Village Institutes, which were practice-oriented and educated teachers for the development of the society, it is not possible to say that this aim has been achieved fully (Atanur-Baskan, 2001; Safran, 2014; Yıldırım 2011).

Prior to 1982 primary school teachers were trained at First Teacher Training Schools, Education Institutes, Village Teacher Training Courses, Village Teacher Schools and Village Institutes (Altunya, 2005; Ataünal, 1987; Ataünal, 1994; Cicioğlu, 1983; Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 1995; Öztürk, 1996; Öztürk, 1998; Öztürk, 2005; Özalp and Ataünal, 1977; Higher Education Council [HEC], 1998). Middle school teachers were trained at Education Institutes, Higher Teacher Schools, Trial Higher Teacher Schools and universities (Kavcar, 2002; Oğuzkan, 1983; Şahin, 2006; Tambağ, 2007; Uçan, 1982; HEC, 1998). Prior to education faculties being the sole responsible for teacher training there were differing teacher training sources. With the transfer of the duty of teacher training to universities in 1982, academic studies on educational sciences and teacher training have started to be carried out in faculties of education (HEC, 2007).

Being the sole source of teacher training faculties of education initiated comprehensive updates and restructuring of the system was initiated in 1997 via the National Education Development Project supported by the World Bank. In this restructuring endeavour, some undergraduate programs of educational sciences were closed on the grounds that they were dysfunctional. With the transition to the eight-year compulsory education, school levels were organized as eight-year primary and three-year secondary education. The faculties of education and the curricula were reviewed and restructured to meet the requirements of compulsory primary education. Teacher competencies were emphasized and practices were added to courses. By this way pre-service teachers were expected to reinforce their knowledge and skills related to teaching in a real environment. With the minor programs, pre-service teachers were provided with opportunities to gain competences in different fields of teaching (HEC, 1998, 2007, 2018). However, these programs were not accepted due to the lack of emphasis on theoretical courses and the fact that they caused pre-service teachers to be qualified only about general culture and content knowledge. Eşme (1998), evaluating the 1997 structuring, did not find the departmental structures realistic and criticized the program by stating that the quality of the faculties of education would decrease, that the content of the courses would be dysfunctional due to the non-thesis master's degree programs and that the degrees from minor programs would create difficulties in employment. Kavcar (2003) stated that the new structuring would cause problems in training field teachers and urgent measures should be taken in this regard. Ataman (1998) stated that longitudinal teacher training experiences were not taken into consideration in these revisions.

The teacher training undergraduate programs were revised again so as to fulfil the needs in 2006. The structure of the education faculties changed and professional knowledge courses were embedded to the curricula. The number of general culture courses in the programs was increased and education faculties were authorized to determine 25% of the courses they deemed necessary. The 50-60% of the program was allocated to content knowledge, 25-30% to pedagogical content knowledge and 15-20% to general culture. This meant increase of general culture and elective courses and decrease of practice-oriented courses (HEC, 2007, 2018). The goal was to equip teacher candidates with intellectual qualifications that teachers need to possess. It was also stated that the new programs coincided with the European Union teacher training programs (HEC, 2007b). Teacher training undergraduate programs implemented as of 2006-2007 academic year were revised again in 2018. As a result of the evaluations, it was stated that the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge courses should be redesigned and more emphasis should be given to them in the programs. It was also pointed out that the undergraduate programs training middle school field teachers showed differences among faculties. Great emphasis was put on ensuring the compliance of the programs with official documents such as General Competencies of Teaching Profession and Teacher Strategy, the 10th Development Plan, Ministry of National Education (MoNE) 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, Turkey Higher Education Qualifications Framework (THEQF), Teacher Training and Educational Sciences Content Competences. It was stated that there was a need for further reforms in line with Bologna guidelines especially via accreditation studies in the faculties of education. The objectives such as forming common elective courses pool to be offered in different

teacher training programs, training of pre-service teachers ready for versatile roles and qualified enough to be good researcher teachers (HEC, 2018).

It was stated that the updated teacher training undergraduate programs were prepared in three stages: creation of program development commissions, conducting field surveys and carrying out the program updating process. It was stated that during the program development process, commissions consisting of three to five members were formed for each undergraduate program. Further commissions were also formed for Pedagogical Content Knowledge and General Culture Courses. The commissions had meetings with alumni, parents, school principals, teachers and faculty members. It was emphasized that the qualifications stated under the Teacher Training and Educational Sciences field of Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework and Teacher Competencies developed by the MoNE were examined. It was stated that firstly the courses that would be removed from, combined with and added to the 2006 teacher training programs were determined, and then the names, content, weekly course hours and credits (local credits and ECTS) of the courses to be included in the new programs were updated. The opinions of the MoNE were first received about the draft programs and then submitted to the Teacher Training Working Group and finally approved by the Higher Education Council (HEC). During the updating process of the programs, workshops and meetings were organized with the stakeholders of education from different parts of Turkey. The innovations in the 2018 undergraduate programs can be summarized as follows: In the programs, 30-35% of the curriculum was allocated to pedagogical content knowledge courses, 15-20% to general culture courses and 45-50% to content knowledge courses (HEC; 2018). A core program common to different teacher training programs was formed and pedagogical content knowledge courses were revised. The names of the courses such as "Introduction to Education, Scientific Research Methods were changed but the names of the courses such as Classroom Management, Teaching Principles and Methods, Educational Psychology have remained the same but weekly hours have been decreased. School Experience course was removed from the programs and extended to two terms as Teaching Practice Course I and II. Sociology of Education, History of Turkish Education, and Philosophy of Education were included as common courses in all the teacher training programs. It was also stated that in addition to the elective courses stated in the programs, depending on the interests, wishes and requirements of the students a maximum of six courses could be added to the elective courses pool of pedagogical content knowledge and content knowledge with the approval of the HEC and courses could be added to the general culture elective courses by the approval of the university senate. The updated teacher training programs were put into effect in the 2018-2019 academic year with first-year students.

Education programs enable the determination of the characteristics of individuals to be educated for a society. Quality of the programs is one of the most important requirements for the quality of education because poor quality programs cannot ensure a quality education (Gözütok, 2001). It is possible to ensure high quality of the programs via evaluations carried out at regular intervals (Erden, 1998). Program evaluation is defined as "a process in which information about the effectiveness of a designed and implemented training program is collected, analyzed and interpreted and ultimately a decision to continue, develop or terminate the program is made" (Sağlam & Yüksel, 2007: p. 176). During the program evaluation process, the objectives of the program, the appropriateness of the content to the student level, the correct selection of the teaching methods, techniques and materials, and the extent to which the determined goals are achieved are examined (Saylor & Alexander, 1974). Program evaluation may result in the decisions about the continuation of the program, review and development of the program, or the termination and replacement with a new program (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004).

Knowing the opinions of those who implement the programs in the evaluation of the programs is important for the implementation of the programs as planned. Obtaining the views of faculty members as practitioners is important in terms of the acceptance of the programs and their implementation and success as planned. In the introductory document, the statement of the chairman of the HEC "I hope that these opinions of ours as HEC will be carried to and implemented in classroom environments by faculty members taking an active role in the training of teachers and by teachers who will provide guidance in our schools" explicitly pinpoints the key role taken by faculty members.

It is thought to be useful to evaluate the programs that were put into effect in the 2018-2019 academic year on the basis of the perspectives and experiences of faculty members. It is foreseen that the results will be useful in the renewal of the programs in the future. Therefore, the current study aimed to evaluate the 2018 initial teacher training programs. To this end, answers to the following questions were sought.

1. What are the faculty members' opinions about the development process of the 2018 initial teacher training programs?

2. What are the faculty members' opinions about the changes made in the 2018 initial teacher training programs?

3. What are the faculty members' opinions about the contribution of the 2018 initial teacher training programs to the quality teacher training?

4. What are the faculty members' opinions about the teaching practices opportunities in the 2018 initial teacher training programs?

Method

Research Design

The basic interpretive qualitative research design (Merriam, 2013) was used in this study. In this design, it is attempted to make sense of the experiences of the participants, their perceptions of the subject or process being investigated and their experiences while interacting with the world. In other words, the meanings and reflections created by the participants about the research process are taken into consideration. The aim of the research process in the basic interpretive design is to determine how the participant, who is the data source, makes sense of a situation or event (Altheide & Johnson, 2011). In the current study, the basic interpretive qualitative research design was preferred as it was aimed to evaluate the renewed initial teacher training programs put into effect in the 2018-2019 academic year in education faculties on the basis of the perspectives and experiences of the faculty members. To this end, in line with their experiences about the initial teacher training programs in-depth examination of the faculty members' opinions about the 2018 initial teacher training programs and a detailed description of the meanings and interpretations they developed in this context were made.

Study Group

The study group of the current research is comprised of faculty members working in the Education Faculty of a university located in the western part of Turkey. Participants of the study are 32 faculty members who are working in the science, pre-school, elementary school, special education, computer and instructional technology, mathematics, Turkish, social studies, music, art, English, German initial teacher training programs, guidance and counseling, educational management and curriculum and instruction programs and participating in the current study on a volunteer basis. In the selection of the faculty members, maximum variation sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. Great care was taken to include faculty members from different professional seniorities (3 to 25 years) and with different academic titles from each department. As a result, the study group, 18 of which were males, consisted of 12 doctor instructors, 10 associate professors.

Data Collection Method and Tool

In order to determine the opinions of the faculty members a semi-structured interview form was developed. The interview items were prepared in such a way as to determine the faculty members' opinions about the updated programs, what these programs mean to them and to collect in-depth information about the new programs on the basis of their experiences and to make sense of this information. For the purposes of the current study, an item pool was generated and the interview form was formed by selecting items from this pool. Expert opinions were sought about the form and then it was revised on the basis of the feedbacks from the experts. The interview form was piloted on three faculty members. After this piloting, its final form was given to the data collection instrument. In the final version of the interview form, there are five items. Two of these items are given as samples below: "What are your opinions about the development process of the 2018 initial teacher training programs?" and "What are your opinions about the changes made in the 2018 initial teacher training programs?"

Data Collection Process

In order to collect the data, first, permission was obtained from the dean of the faculty where the research would be conducted, then, the interview process was started. The researchers gave information about the purpose and scope of the research to the faculty members who were planned to be interviewed. They were asked whether they were voluntary for the study. With the faculty members who had accepted to participate in interviews, date and time for the interview were set. Then, interviews were conducted with the faculty members. Before the interviews, permission of the participants was taken for tape-recording. The interviews were conducted in the faculty members' own offices so that they could feel comfortable and each interview lasted for 20-30 minutes. The interviews were tape recorded. After giving a code each audio recording was transcribed into written documents. Audio Recordings and their written forms are kept in a file in a computer requiring a password to enter.

Data Analysis

The interview recordings were analyzed by strictly adhering to the participants' opinions. The data were analyzed by using the inductive content analysis. Written documents read few times and coded in two cycles. In the first cycle, open and in-vivo coding was performed on the data and axis coding was performed in the second cycle. Then, the relationships between the codes under the themes identified were explained and interpreted, and direct quotations were used to analyze the cause and effect relationships.

Validity and Reliability Studies

The strategies of expert review, detailed description, and formation of a study group and confirmation of the results were used to strengthen the credibility, transferability, confirmability and consistency of the current research (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Linkoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2014; Tedlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Within the context of the current study, a meeting was held with a researcher specialized in qualitative research methods and information was given about the research process. The results of the research were shared with this particular expert and the validity of the approaches and thinking styles of the researchers were evaluated together with him. Detailed description was used to ensure the transferability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Meriam, 2013; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The participant selection process and the characteristics of the participants, data collection and analysis processes and the role of the researcher were explained in detail under the title of method; thus, transferability was ensured. In addition, in order to ensure variety in the selection of individuals to be interviewed, faculty members with different seniorities and titles were selected from each department. Moreover, the findings of the research were presented without comment and themes were supported with direct quotations. In the data analysis process, assistance was also received from another qualitative research specialist and the results were confirmed to ensure consistency. In this context, the expert was asked to comment on the relevance of the themes and sub-themes created for each data text. A consensus was reached by discussing the themes and codes on which there had been disagreement.

Role of the Researcher

The researchers carrying out the study have been working as faculty members in the education faculty for a long time. Both researchers have studies on teacher education and qualitative research. Therefore, it can be said that they are experienced in the research subject and qualitative research. After the teacher training programs were updated and this was announced to education faculties, preparations of the current study were started. First, the framework of the study was determined, then the related literature was reviewed and the data collection tool was developed. The process from the preparation of interview items to the reporting of the research was carried out by the researchers who are experts in qualitative research.

Results

In the current research evaluating the 2018 initial teacher training programs, the findings were gathered under the following headings: the faculty members' opinions about the development of the initial teacher training programs; their opinions about the contributions of these programs to the quality teacher training; their opinions about the innovations brought about by them and their opinions about the teaching practices in these programs. The details of the opinions are given below in tables. The faculty members' opinions about the development of the initial teacher training programs are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Opinions about the Development of the 2018 Initial Teacher Training Programs

Themes/Codes	f
Opinions about the Development of the Programs	**75**
General Opinions about the Program Development Process	**14**
The programs were not prepared in exact compliance with the program development process	4
The programs were not developed in line with the requirements of the program development process	4
The program development works were not systematically conducted	3
A centralized program development process was followed	3
Opinions about the Commissions in the Program Development Process	**31**
Invitations to the commissions were not transparent	7
Decisions made in the commissions were not reflected in the programs	6
Some commission members were not invited to the symposium	5
Decisions made in the commissions were changed in the symposium	4
Some decisions made by the commissions were not supported by the majority of the commission members	3
Opinions of educational scientists were not much taken into consideration in the commissions	3
The number of subject-area educators was high	1
The opinions of subject area educators were dominant	1
Subject area educators were resistant to change	1
Opinions about HEC in the Program Development Process	**24**
Academic autonomy is not granted to education faculties	7
The main focus is training of prototype teachers	5
The main focus is on centralized teacher training	4
Contents found to be suitable by HEC are imposed	3
HEC does not seek for the detailed opinions of stakeholders	2
The opinions of stakeholders do not find reflections in the programs	1
Not enough consideration is given to main schools of teacher training	1
Centralized program development process is not functional	1
Suggestions about Program Preparation Process	**6**
Draft programs should be prepared at universities	1
Education faculties should be allowed to make their own changes	1
Opinions of stakeholders should be sought in a more comprehensive manner	1
Programs should be evaluated through pilot applications	1
Data should be provided for the program development process by detecting the deficiencies in the programs	1
There should be program development experts recruited at universities and they should check the application of the programs	1

In Table 1, the faculty members' opinions on the preparation of the 2018 initial teacher training programs are presented. These opinions are accumulated under the themes of; the program development process, commissions in the program development process, HEC and suggestions for the program development process.

It was seen that the opinions of the faculty members about the preparation process of the teacher training undergraduate programs were negative in general. The faculty members stated that the programs were not prepared according to the program development process (f=4) and its requirements (f=4). They criticized the lack of planning in the works done in the program development process (f=3) and centralized development of the programs (f=3). Some related quotations are given below.

K8: The understanding of program development has not been internalized in our country. If the programs had been prepared in compliance with the real program development process, the problems experienced at schools (in the programs) could have been revealed better.

K11: HEC centrally updated the undergraduate programs yet what did we do for two months? We wrote contents for the courses they imposed on us.

K9: If the opinions were really taken into account ... Opinions may be elicited just to find justification to the centrally imposed ideas; thus, our opinions do not find reflections in the programs. I had been asked for my opinions about the former programs, and they were not very influential on the programs.

K2: There are few prominent figures in the field. None of them leading the field were involved in the program development process.

The faculty members who took part in different program commissions stated that their opinions were not taken into consideration sufficiently. The faculty members stated that there was no transparency in the invitations to the program commissions (f=7), the decisions taken in the commission were not reflected in the programs (f=6), some commission members were not invited to some subsequent meetings (f=5) and some of the decisions taken at the commissions were changed in the symposium (f=4). In addition, they stated that some decisions taken in the commissions were not by the majority vote (f=3) and the opinions of education scientists were not taken into consideration (f=3). The reason for this according to them was the high number of subject area educators in the commissions, their dominance on the programs and their being resistant to change. Some related quotations are given below.

K9: In a symposium held in Eskişehir, some reaction came from somewhere or something happened in HEC. A change was made on that program. Different results from the ones we though in the first commission came out.

K8: What emerged at the end was different from what had been discussed in the commissions; the views expressed in the commissions were not reflected in the programs. It is not certain which criteria were used to invite the people into these commissions.

K11: Usually the things defended by the majority were taken into consideration; my personal opinions were a bit overlooked.

K5: We expressed our opinions about some courses. No change was made in relation to these courses.

K11: It was very clear that they (subject area educators) did not want to listen to. According to them, what is important is the inclusion of an adequate number of content knowledge courses in the programs; pedagogical content courses and educational sciences courses are not very important. Therefore, I do not think that my views were taken into consideration.

The faculty members levelled criticisms against the preparation of the programs by HEC. In this connection, they stated that as the programs were centrally developed, not much autonomy was granted to education faculties (f=7), which led to training of prototype teachers (f=5) and that too much emphasis was put on centralized training of teachers (f=4). They also stated that the contents of the programs were prepared as stipulated by HEC (f=3), that the opinions of stakeholders were not much sought (f=2), that few opinions received from stakeholders were reflected in the programs (f=1) and that this led to ignorance of the successful teacher training approaches (f=1) and that autonomy in teacher training was not achieved. They also emphasized that programs developed in this way would not be functional (f=1). Some relevant quotations are given below.

K7: Prototype ... what I mean in a single framework. This does not work of course, expectations in each discipline are different; they have different teacher profiles so if you try to train prototype teachers; can this be a solution as each discipline has different requirements? Of course not ...

K11: The teacher training undergraduate programs were centrally changed by HEC. In the first meeting, I was able to express my opinions at least; yet, in the second meeting, I wasn't even informed about it

K17: The general framework of the programs was enforced by the central authority, which decreased the functionality. If the revisions were made taking the local opinions much into consideration, then the programs would be much more functional and effective in terms of meeting the needs of students.

The faculty members made suggestions for solving the problems in the program preparation process. In this regard, they suggested that draft programs should be prepared at universities (f=1), that education faculties should be allowed to make their own changes (f=1), that opinions of stakeholders should be sought in a more comprehensive manner (f=1), that programs should be evaluated through pilot studies (f=1), that data should be provided for the program development process by detecting the deficiencies in the programs (f=1), that there should be program development experts recruited at universities and they should check the implementation of the programs (f=1). In this regard, some related quotations are given below.

K8: Rather than centralized attempts, at schools for example at universities draft programs should be developed at departments and then these draft programs should be sent to universities and then be discussed in meetings including concerned officials from HEC.

K25: Opinions should be certainly sought and the process should proceed from bottom to top.

K16: First, deficiencies should be determined by taking the evaluations of universities about the program. In light of the opinions expressed by universities, problems should be discussed and then more comprehensive discussions should be conducted in congresses. Results of scientific research, opinions of students and teachers should be used to shape the program development process, which would be healthier. We immediately implement the program, and then we do not evaluate it for years. We can only evaluate it 10-20 years later. On the contrary, whenever we see a shortcoming in the program, we should look for ways of correcting it.

The faculty members' opinions about the changes made in the 2018 initial teacher training programs are given in Table 2.

The opinions of the faculty members about changes made in the 2018 initial teacher training programs are related to the content, elective courses and harmony between content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and general culture courses. The faculty members levelled criticisms against the reduction of class periods in the programs (f=20), lack of balance between the time periods allocated to theoretical classes and practice classes (f=16), the high number of courses (f=15), keeping the content the same in general (f=14), overlapping contents of some courses (f=9) and restriction put on the proposing a different elective course (f=1). On the other hand, they considered the addition of educational sociology and philosophy of education into the programs as must courses (f=1) is positive development. Some related quotations are given below.

K11: In the first class period, you can deliver the lesson just for 10 or 15 minutes. In the second class period, the students enter the class and then the lesson is wrapped up and then the class is over, nothing efficient can be done ... when the course used to be four class hours a week in the past, it was more efficient as we could spend some time doing practice; students used to enjoy it more.

K2: The class periods were not reduced in our course, remaining three class hours a week. What we expected was an increase in the class hours of this course.

K10: In my department, it is very difficult to cover the content. For some courses, decreasing the number of class hours is good while for some others, it is not good. For instance, the class hours of the course I am teaching were reduced from three class hours to two class hours a week; it is not possible to cover the content. Contents of most courses overlap …

K22: In some departments, there is no problem but in our department, course load is too intense.

K2: Teaching inclusive classes was a required course. This course is not required any more. This might have been decided by the MoNE or HEC but 30% of the classes in Turkey are inclusive classes ... 30 out of 100 classes are inclusive classes...

K4: Addition of the educational sociology and philosophy of education courses into the programs is good. Students need to learn these. They need to learn the theory, foundation and social content well.

Table 2

Opinions about the Changes Made in the Initial Teacher Training Programs

Themes/Codes	f
General Opinions about the Content	**75**
Class periods have been decreased	20
There is a lack of balance between the time periods allocated to theoretical classes and	16
practices	15
The number of courses is high	14
Course contents have remained the same in general	9
Contents of some courses are overlapping	1
Addition of education sociology and education philosophy courses has been found to be	**35**
useful	**17**
Opinions about Elective Courses	10
Positive Opinions about Elective Courses	
The number of elective courses has been increased	7
The high number of elective courses indicates the existence of more autonomy-	**17**
oriented approach	5
Negative Opinions about Elective Courses	4
The number of instructors is not enough for elective courses	3
HEC approval for opening elective courses is restrictive	2
Deciding which field experts will give elective courses is problematic	1
There are applications not consistent with the reality	1
The possibility of offering a different elective course is limited	1
The amount of practice in courses has been decreased	
Only the names of some courses have been changed	
Harmony between Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Culture Courses	**39**
Opinions about Content Knowledge Courses	**16**
Number of content knowledge courses is high (According to educational scientists)	6
Basic content knowledge courses have been removed	5
HEC approval is needed for opening a new elective content knowledge course	4
Content knowledge courses are not determined according to needs	1
Opinions about Pedagogical Content Knowledge Courses	**17**
Class periods allocated to pedagogical content knowledge courses have been reduced	7
Pedagogical content knowledge courses are too many (According to subject area educators)	5
HEC approval is needed for opening a new elective pedagogical content knowledge course	5
Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge and General Culture Courses are Balanced	**5**
Decreasing the Number of General Culture Courses	**1**
Suggestions toward the Content	**33**
Contents should be determined according to students' needs	7
There should not be required elective courses	5
Laboratory courses should be opened again	4
Practice periods should be added to theoretical class periods	4
There should be courses that can be adapted to any given subject area	3
Courses should be practice-oriented	3
The number of content knowledge courses should be increased	2
Courses specially tailored for the qualifications of a faulty member should not be opened	2
The characteristics of the region where the faculty is located should be taken into	1
consideration	1
Students should be able to select courses according to their needs	1
Courses should be instructed by the instructors specialized on their contents	

The faculty members evaluated the increase in the number of elective courses in the programs (f = 10) and the high number of elective courses as an indication of a more-autonomy-oriented approach (f = 7). However, they see the lack of faculty members for elective courses (f = 5) and the approval of HEC for adding elective

pedagogical content knowledge courses (f = 4) as a limiting approach. They expressed negative opinions about the uncertainty of which field experts will teach some elective courses (f=3), the decrease in the amount of practice in the programs (f=1) and only changing the names of some courses (f=1). Some related quotations are given below.

K18: Offering elective courses to students each term and students' being able to take the courses they like seemed to be an indication of a liberating approach initially but then during the development process it has been turned to highly restrictive.

K6: Elective courses are a little more liberating, we can open courses at any time, but I would like it to be more liberating in terms of being able to open the courses we want.

K7: The number of elective courses has been increased a lot. Different viewpoints, enrichment; thus, seems to be more functional for directing students.

K1: The low number of experts in each field, or the low level of proficiency of teachers who do not have much experience in the related field may of course lead to the problem that irrelevant courses can be opened here.

The faculty members expressed their different opinions regarding the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge courses. The faculty members working in the field of educational sciences stated that the courses related to the content knowledge were dominant in the programs (f=6). The faculty members working in the field of subject area education stated that they were uncomfortable with the removal of the basic content knowledge courses (f=5). They stated that submission of elective content knowledge courses for the approval of the HEC would be a challenge (f=4). Another criticism in this regard was that content knowledge courses were not determined according to needs (f=1). Some relevant quotations are given below.

K1: The class periods allocated to content knowledge courses such as physics, chemistry, and biology were decreased.

K19: In order to open a course in the field of subject area education, it should be sent to HEC and be approved by it…

K7: On the basis of the decrease in the number of courses, I was expecting that the ratio of our courses would be more but the exact opposite occurred in reality and the number of pedagogical content knowledge courses decreased.

The faculty members who teach pedagogical content knowledge courses stated that they found the removal or reduction of the amount of practice in the pedagogical content knowledge courses as a negative development (f=7). The faculty members teaching content knowledge courses stated that pedagogical content knowledge courses were dominant (f=5). The faculty members think that the submission of elective pedagogical content knowledge courses to the approval of HEC may lead some problems (f=5). In addition, there are faculty members stating that there is a balance in the distribution of pedagogical content knowledge, content knowledge and general culture courses (f=5) and that general culture courses should be reduced (f=1). Some related quotations are given below.

K2: Pedagogical content knowledge and content knowledge courses were set to be required courses by HEC. Thus, it is a must to open these courses. HEC also says "if you offer another course apart from these, then you need our approval." This is a very long process ... In the past, with the approval of the senate, we were able to open that course.

K6: We had a drama course. Two class hours used to be allocated to theory and the other two class hours to practice. Now it is only two class hours to teach just theory…

K21: As stated in the books we read, there should be 50% content knowledge courses, 25% general culture courses, 25% pedagogical knowledge courses.... it was emphasized that this was ideal for the training of good classroom teachers. But now these ratios are very close to each other...

K8: The number of general culture courses was decreased a bit. I think each teacher should have general culture. A teacher who does not enough general culture cannot be successful.

The faculty members made some suggestions about the programs. They believed that the contents should be determined to fulfil the students' needs (f=7), there should not be "must elective" courses in the programs (f=5), laboratory courses should be opened again (f=4), practice periods should be added to theoretical class periods (f=4), there should be courses that can be adapted to any given subject area (f=3), courses should be practice-oriented, the number of content knowledge courses should be increased (f=2), courses specially tailored for the qualifications of a faulty member should not be opened (f=2), the characteristics of the region where the faculty is located should be taken into consideration (f=1), students should be able to select courses according to their needs (f=1), courses should be instructed by the instructors specialized on their contents (f=1). Some related quotations are given below.

K8: What is the need of teachers for future? Is this need adequately met? If not, what is the problem? The issue should be seen from this perspective.

K32: Elective courses are offered to reflect the richness of the instructor but we have required elective courses.

K29: The most problematic part of the programs is the decreased practice opportunities I think that greater emphasis put on theory than practice in the programs is a negative development.

K1: Class periods of the content knowledge courses such as physics, chemistry and biology should be increased and new courses should be opened in this regard …

K17: They can be more effective while developing these programs. Curriculum development experts from different regions may be involved so that better programs more suitable for regional needs can be created. Programs may differ from region to region taking regional needs into consideration.

The faculty members' opinions about the contribution of the teacher training programs to the quality teacher education are given in Table 3.

Table 3

Opinions about the Contribution of the Teacher Training Programs to the Quality Teacher Training

Themes/Codes	f
The Programs' not Contributing to the Training of Qualified Teachers	**42**
Decreasing number of class hours	12
Abolishment or reduction of the time allocated to practice in courses	9
Increase only in the number of theoretical class hours	7
Removal of the school experience course	7
Development of the programs without considering the needs of the field	5
Not increasing the time allocated to teaching practice	2
Suggestions about Qualified Teacher Training Programs	**43**
The amount of time allocated to teaching practice should be increased	7
Needs analysis should be conducted while revising the programs	6
Research findings should be taken into consideration while revising the programs	5
Program evaluation works should be conducted	4
Faculty members who will implement the programs should be qualified	4
Practice schools should be opened	4
Education faculties should be opened in central locations	3
Programs should be oriented to the training of intellectual teachers	3
The number of students in classes of education faculties should be decreased	3
Physical conditions should be improved	2
There should be adequate tools and equipments	1
There should be environments supportive to pre-service teachers' social, cultural development	1

As can be seen in Table 3, some faculty members think that the teacher training undergraduate programs would not contribute to the training of qualified teachers. The reasons proposed by them to support their opinions include decreasing number of class hours (f=12), abolishment or reduction of the time allocated to practice in courses (f=9), increase only in the number of theoretical class hours (f=7), removal of the school

experience course (f=7), development of the programs without considering the needs of the field (f=6), not increasing the time allocated to teaching practice (f=2). Some related quotations are given below.

K8: Rather than training qualified teachers ... Because of the reasons I have just mentioned ... First the number of class hours was decreased especially the ones allocated to practice; training would be more theory-oriented. Another important thing is that the profession of teaching is learned by doing; thus, if you decrease their opportunity of doing practice and interacting with schools, then you will negatively affect the quality in teacher training. It dropped to 7% here. It is not a program which is an outcome of comprehensive thinking, scientific research and consideration of the needs of the field, which will decrease the quality.

The faculty members made some suggestions about the 2018 initial teacher training programs so that more qualified teachers could be trained. According to the faculty members; the amount of time allocated to teaching practice should be increased (f=7), needs analysis should be conducted while revising the programs (f=6), research findings should be taken into consideration while revising the programs (f=5), program evaluation works should be conducted (f=4), faculty members who will implement the programs should be qualified (f=4), practice schools should be opened (f=4), education faculties should be opened in central locations (f=3), programs should be oriented to the training of intellectual teachers (f=3), the number of students in classes of education faculties should be decreased (f=3), physical conditions should be improved (f=2) and there should be adequate tools and equipments to train qualified teachers (f=1). Moreover, there should be environments supportive to pre-service teachers' social and cultural development (f=1). Some related quotations are given below.

K4: I am very sincere that the teaching practice should be given each term because real school and classroom environments are very different; you learn everything by practicing.

K8: The number of students in classes should be decreased. Physical conditions should be improved. It is not possible to practice in classes having 80 students. Teaching materials in the class should be adequate and quality. You see, there are smart boards in many schools. However, there are no smart boards in education faculties. There is not enough equipment in laboratories. There are no environments where students can freely express and discuss their opinions and can participate in social and cultural activities. The more qualified a teacher is, the better it is ... There should be practice schools. It is not good to open education faculties everywhere; they should be established in central locations so that students can go to opera, theatre, take part in artistic activities, social activities. First of all, the program must be good. But the program is not enough on its own. Faculty members must be qualified as well. In which courses are they happy, which courses are more efficient, which courses are inefficient and why? Teachers say that these courses do not make much contribution to the field, why? Faculty members do not teach their classes effectively, just lecturing, no practice in the class. If research findings are taken into consideration, problems can be seen; which courses are needed? What problems are experienced by students? If we increase practice more, then we will be more successful.

Faculty members' opinions about teaching practices are given in Table 4. The faculty members' opinions about the teaching practice and school experience courses are presented in Table 4. The faculty members stated that the time allocated to teaching practice course was not enough (f=9), that they couldn`t focus on teaching practice due to their heavy workload (f=6), that they did not go to school to make observations (f=3), that they did not want to give teaching practice course in these conditions (f=3) and that faculty members were distanced from teaching practice course (f=2). Some related quotations are given below.

K7: A faculty member has classes to teach, needs to do some research and at the same time has some students that need to be monitored in their teaching practice classes. When I try to spare time to all of these, it would not be possible to do all as they should be done ideally... Given that my workload is very high, this does not work.

K8: As many instructors do not go to schools, they cannot observe many teaching practice classes. This is negative. In my opinion, it is possible to go there four times, this is manageable. Yet, the instructor has a problem; he/she has many courses to teach and they are different courses. When we think that he/she goes to observe eight students four times for each, then he/she needs to go 32 times.

Table 4

Opinions about Teaching Practices

Themes/Codes	f
Opinions about Teaching Practice	**23**
Not enough time is allocated to teaching practices	9
High workload of faculty members	6
Inability of making observations at schools due to workload of faculty members	3
Faculty members' not wanting the teaching practice course due to their workload	3
Long-time of practices make faculty members reluctant to take responsibility	2
Opinions about the Teaching Practice Course	**16**
Exclusion of the school experience course from the 2018 programs	8
Getting to know the profession	4
Preparation for the profession	4
Suggestions about Teaching Practice	**32**
Teaching practice should be started at earlier periods of the initial program	10
The time allocated to teaching practice should be increased	9
Initial teacher training programs should be organized to be theoretical for three	3
years and practical for one year	3
Faculty members should be paid for teaching practice classes	3
The workload of faculty members should be decreased	3
What is learned at faculties should be practiced at schools	1
Teaching practice should be taken more seriously	

The faculty members also stated their opinions about the school experience course. The faculty members criticized the exclusion of the school experience courses from the 2018 initial teacher training programs (f=8); they thought that the school experience course is important in terms of getting to know the profession of teaching (f=4) and for preparation for the profession (f=4); thus, it should not have been excluded from the programs. Some related quotations are given below.

K10: Given the experiences lived by students in the school experience and teaching practice courses, the teaching practice course should be started in the first year of the undergraduate program.

K6: I am pondering about two things; I was expecting the school experience course would be started in the second term of the first year of the undergraduate education; instead, it was completely excluded from the programs. It is something like telling a science teacher to start teaching science without having any laboratory experience.

K21: If the school experience course were started in the first year, and then slow transition from observations to practices in the class were realized, students could get to know the teaching profession better and feel more prepared for the profession or decide whether the teaching profession would be suitable for them or not.

The faculty members made suggestions for high quality teaching practices. They believed that teaching practice should start at earlier periods of the initial teacher training programs (f=10), the time allocated to teaching practice should be increased (f=9), initial teacher training programs should be organized to be theoretical for three years and practical for one year (f=3), faculty members should be paid for teaching practice classes (f=3), the workload of faculty members should be decreased (f=3), what is learned at faculties should be practiced at schools (f=3) and teaching practice should be taken more seriously (f=1). Some related quotations are given below.

K7: I want the teaching practice course to be started in the spring term of the first year; students to go to school for observations, then I want such a course to be offered to students each term so that students can see and experience the real school and classroom environment and atmosphere.

K2: I think; it would be better for students to go to school every day. There should be coordinators of faculties to organize this. The only duty of this coordinator should be to control the process by visiting the schools where students are doing their teaching practice. Even each department or program can have a coordinator to do this. This would be healthier.

K27: How should teaching practice be? In my opinion, at the end of the third year, theoretical courses should be ended. The last year should be allocated to practice. Students can spend the whole year at schools doing practice.

K5: Schools should be turned into laboratories which should be visited continuously.

K8: Teaching practice should be taken more seriously.

Discussion, Conclusion and Implications

In the current study, aiming to evaluate the 2018 initial teacher training programs, the results were obtained regarding the opinions of the faculty members on the development of the 2018 initial teacher training programs, changes made in the programs, their contribution to the training of qualified teachers, the school practices and their suggestions for the programs. In this section, these results are further elaborated.

Since the development of training programs is a comprehensive and continuous work, the need for carrying it out through commissions is emphasized. These commissions may consist of three groups: program decision and coordination group, working group and advisory group. Faculty members in the program working groups should be field experts (Demirel, 2015; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2014). For these groups to work effectively, selection process of these experts must be merit-based and transparent. The views of the selected experts should be given importance and reflected in the programs. The faculty members questioning the merits and way of the selection of the experts invited to the 2018 initial teacher training programs development commissions formed the basis of this recommendation. It was seen that the necessary explanations were not made in the introduction sections of the programs. Absence of the necessary explanations about the program development commissions has caused faculty members to develop a negative perspective on initial teacher training programs. This could have made it difficult for faculty members to accept and implement the programs. In addition to the problems that arose during the commissioner's selection process, the selected commissioners also experienced problems. The faculty members in the commissions stated that the proposals they made during the program development process were not taken into consideration, decisions were not taken by majority and that these decisions were changed without informing the concerned individuals. Moreover, majority of the members in the commissions were subject area specialists. This might have resulted in the dominance of subject area specialists in the decisions related to the development of the programs. As the decisions were not taken by majority opinion, the suitability of the programs for quality teacher training becomes disputable.

The faculty members stated that programs should be evaluated before they are developed. In the program evaluation process, questions such as whether the objectives, content, instructional methods and materials of the program are age-level appropriate and reachable are tried to be answered (Saylor & Alexander, 1974). As a result of this evaluation, decisions about the continuation, termination, or reconstruction of the program (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004) could be possible. In order to prepare new programs, it is necessary to evaluate the previously prepared programs and identify the deficiencies in these programs (Demirel, 2018; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). However, when the reasons for replacing the former teacher training programs with the new programs and the opinions of the faculty members about the program development process are examined, it is understood that new programs are prepared without program evaluation studies. In the explanations about the programs, it was stated that the results of the scientific studies and symposiums, panels, workshops, open sessions, conferences organized by the MoNE and non-governmental organizations were taken into consideration during the process of updating the programs. It was stated that the programs were renewed for reasons such as adaptation to the changes made in primary education programs and making the programs suitable for European Higher Education Area (HEC, 2018). In order for the programs to be renewed, they must be thoroughly evaluated and then updated considering the evaluation results. When the explanations made by HEC (2018) about the initial teacher training programs are examined, it is seen that the without any nationwide study, the results of small-scale studies were taken into consideration. Though it is the first year of implementation of the initial teacher training programs MoNe (2018a) was pointed out that they will be revised (MoNe, 2018a). Stating that the programs could be changed again in the first year of their implementation clearly shows the problem of coordination and sustainability in teacher training policies.

As institutions of higher education, universities are autonomous and universal. Universities must have financial, academic and administrative autonomy. Financial autonomy refers to the management of resources and expenditures of a university by itself (Erdem, 2013). Administrative autonomy refers to the governance and

supervision of the university and safeguarding of rights of its personnel by bodies democratically established by its own members (Aktan, 2008). Finally, academic autonomy refers to the ability of the university to select the research and development areas, the education programs and the course contents, and the scientists (faculty members) by itself, in short, the institution itself can decide what to teach and what to research and by whom (Estermann, Nokkola & Steinel, 2011). One of the most important elements of academic autonomy is the ability of universities to determine their own curricula and course contents. Although the faculties of science, literature, economics and engineering within the same university can form their own programs, faculties of education cannot prepare programs specific to their unique structure. Centrally prepared programs by HEC are implemented in education faculties. Some faculty members criticize this situation and find it against academic autonomy. The central development of the programs poses an obstacle against the development of unique approaches to teacher training and the introduction of creative and original models in teacher training. Thus, it can be said that this situation is not suitable for the academic autonomy of education faculties and that HEC can form a general framework.

It is understood that the opinions about the changes made in the initial teacher training programs are also negative in general. The faculty members stated that they did not find it right to decrease class periods of the courses. They stated that it would be harder to achieve the objectives of the courses when the class periods allocated to the courses were reduced.

The philosophy of education is seen as an effort to determine the things education should do. The philosophy of education tries to explain the problems of education and the concepts and ideas that direct education (Ergün, 2015; Sönmez, 2017). As such, teachers need to think about education and wonder about reality, human nature and society (Gutek, 2016). In order for teachers to mentally question and to make philosophy, there must be a course such as philosophy of education.in initial teacher training programs. The philosophy of education course can be helpful for pre-service teachers to do their profession better by gaining a philosophical perspective towards education (Aslan, 2014). For this reason, it has been stated in the studies that the philosophy of education course should be included in all departments of the faculties of education (Duman & Ulubey, 2008). In the 2018 initial teacher training programs, the required philosophy of education and educational sociology courses were included. The faculty members considered the incorporation of these courses into the programs as a positive development. These courses are important for pre-service teachers to gain philosophical and cultural perspectives (Eskicumalı, 2001). Educational sociology is an important course that will enable pre-service teachers to solve problems that they may encounter in different social structures and cultures or subcultures, to act consciously in solving problems and to understand different relationships in a social structure (Tezcan, 2016). Therefore, the pre-service teachers who actively participated in these courses and internalized their contents would be expected to solve the problems confronted in their profession easily and to meet the requirements of their profession better. However, taking the courses of educational sociology and philosophy of education does not guarantee the acquisition of these features. For this reason, relating theoretical knowledge to real life in these courses could make the lessons much more useful.

While the faculty members consider the increase in the number of elective courses as a liberating approach, they think that the number of instructors to teach these elective courses is not adequate. The inadequate number of instructors may lead to the conversion of elective courses into required elective courses. This may make it difficult for programs to achieve their goals. Küçükahmet (2007) pointed out this problem in teacher training programs and stated that as a limited number of elective courses could be opened, these courses were turned into "compulsory" electives. A similar situation may arise in the 2018 initial teacher training programs. Moreover, the necessity of HEC approval for the opening of elective content and pedagogical content knowledge courses may cause some problems. In this regard, the faculty members stated that they did not find the obligation of seeking the approval of HEC correct. They noted that they might not propose new courses due to the procedure for proposing new courses, and that they might even try to open some courses as general culture courses with the approval of the university senate. Or faculty members may tend to open only elective courses offered by HEC. This can be said to negatively affect faculty members' proposals for new creative courses.

The faculty members stated that the courses in the programs should be given by the instructors who are specialized in their fields. Küçükahmet (2007) evaluated the undergraduate programs and concluded that the courses in the programs were taught by the instructors who have not qualified enough in their fields. The

faculty members had the same concern about the programs put into practice in 2018 since the same issues are valid today as well. It is thought that this application should be solved in order to train qualified teachers.

One of the important changes in the 2018 initial teacher training programs is the abolition of the class periods allocated to practice in some courses. For example, while Instructional Technologies and Materials Design course was four class hours, two of which were theoretical and the other two were applied; in the new programs it changed to Instructional Technologies and the class duration was reduced to two hours of theory. The class periods allocated to the Drama course were generally reduced to two class hours from three or four class hours with no time for practice. Laboratory hours were removed from science courses, but it is stated in the explanations about the programs that practices could be conducted within science classes (HEC, 2018). The best way to prepare for the teaching profession is practice. It is thought that abolishing the applied sections of the courses instead of increasing their number would negatively affect the quality of the teachers. Küçükahmet (2007) criticized the reduction of the practices in the pedagogical content knowledge courses in the 2007 initial teacher training programs. However, while the decrease in the number of classes allocated to practices in the 2007 programs was criticized, it is highly alarming that some of these classes were completely abolished in the 2018 initial teacher training programs. This can be seen as an important deficiency in terms of teaching profession and the quality of the teachers. Therefore, the faculty members may think that these teacher training programs would not contribute to the training of qualified teachers.

The faculty members expressed different opinions about the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge courses. While the faculty members working in the field of educational sciences stated that the number of the content knowledge courses is high in the programs, the faculty members who teach subject-area courses stated that the number of pedagogical content knowledge courses is high. It can be said that in the initial teacher training programs put into force in 1997 and 2006, the ratios of the content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and culture courses were close to each other. For example, 50% of the 1997 initial teacher training programs consisted of content knowledge courses, 30% of pedagogical content knowledge and %20 of general culture courses (HEC, 1997), while in the 2006 initial teacher training programs, these ratios were as follows: 50-60% were content knowledge courses, 25-30% were pedagogical content knowledge courses and 15-20% were general culture courses (HEC, 2007). In the programs put into effect in 2018, 45-50% of the programs are content knowledge courses, 30-35% are pedagogical content knowledge courses and 15-20% are general culture courses (HEC, 2018). When the 1997, 2006 and 2018 programs are examined, it is seen that the ratio of the content knowledge courses occupy about 50% of the programs, pedagogical content knowledge courses occupy nearly 30% of the programs and general culture courses occupy approximately 20%. Though not much change has occurred in the weights of the courses, the faculty members could be thinking that the weights of the courses have changed as the number of class periods allocated to some courses decreased and as they think the courses they specialized on are more important.

Pre-service teachers find the opportunity to question themselves professionally and realize their shortcomings through the practices they are engaged in in the school experience and teaching practice courses. These courses are very important as they provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to prepare for the profession and school (Akpınar, Çolak & Yiğit, 2012; Kavas & Bugay, 2009). The importance of teaching practices has also been emphasized in the decisions of the National Education Council. For example, at the 18th National Education Council, it was decided that teaching practice should be conducted during an academic year, as in the candidate teacher adaptation process, under the guidance of instructors and teachers (MoNE, 2010). Moreover, in the literature, it was emphasized that the teaching practice course should be extended to a longer period and the time allocated to it is insufficient (Aslan & Sağlam, 2018; Aydın, Selçuk & Yeşilyurt, 2007; Baskan, Aydın & Madden, 2006; Güzel, Cerit-Berber & Oral, 2010; Şimşek, Alkan & Erdem, 2013). In the current study, similarly the faculty members stated that the teaching practice course should be given for one year or in every term. However, when the 2018 initial teacher training programs are examined, it is clearly seen that previous studies and decisions of the Council were not taken into consideration. In the current study, the faculty members stated that the duration of the teaching practice course should be increased or even that students should spend a whole term participating in practices at school or that there should be a teaching practice course every term.

For the teaching practice course to accomplish its objectives, pre-service teachers should be observed by teachers and faculty members, their shortcomings should be corrected and good practices should be reinforced. Teachers stated that they had problems in making observations because they were attending the

lesson together with pre-service teachers. On the other hand, the faculty members stated that they had problems in observing due to their workload and the improper planning of other courses. This result is supported by the literature. Çepni, Aydın and Şahin (2015) reported that pre-service teachers could not be observed sufficiently within the context of the teaching practice course as the time of the teaching practice course overlaps with the class periods of other courses. The faculty members also stated that they could not make observations due to the high course load (Aytaçlı, 2012; Kıyıcı & Horzum, 2015; Kirksekiz, Uysal, İşbulan, Akgün, Kiyici & Horzum, 2015). Due to the high number of pre-service teachers for whom faculty members are responsible, they cannot fulfil their responsibilities adequately (Aslan & Sağlam, 2018; İlin, 2014; Topkaya, Tokcan & Kara, 2012). The faculty members are expected to observe each of the eight students four times which would mean a total of 32 observations (MoNE, 2018b). When the results of the current study and the results of other studies in the literature are considered together with, it is understood that it is difficult for the faculty members to fulfil the requirements of the teaching practice course in the departments where the workload is high. While fees are paid to the mentor teacher and even the school administrators of the school where the teaching practice is conducted, no fees are paid to faculty members, which could cause them to be reluctant to conduct this course.

The school experience course is as important as the teaching practice course since it is the first time that the pre-service teacher meets the profession. The first impressions the pre-service teacher will have in this course shape what kind of teacher he/she will be to a great extent. In a study, it was revealed that the school experience course increased the awareness of pre-service teachers towards the teaching profession and their own fields (Ekinci & Tican-Başaran, 2015). However, many pre-service teachers see this course and the teaching practice course as easy and unimportant. Therefore, they do not fulfil their responsibilities within the scope of school experience course (Akdemir, 2013). In some cases, mentor teachers and faculty members can give high and standard marks to pre-service teachers regardless of the extent to which they have fulfilled their responsibilities. Another example of lack of attention to this course is the reduction of the weight of the course in program update processes. While in the 1997 teacher training programs, there were the School Experience I and II courses, in the 2007 teacher training programs, the School Experience II course was abolished. Küçükahmet (2007) criticized the abolition of the School Experience II course and stated that this course was seen as an opportunity for students to get to know the school. In the 2018 initial teacher training programs, the school experience course was completely abolished. Thus, pre-service teachers' opportunities to get to know and prepare for the profession were reduced. In the current study, the abolition of the school experience course was criticized during the interviews with the faculty members because in the school experience course, students can decide whether they are suitable for the profession and whether to continue or leave the profession. For this reason, it is thought that it would be very beneficial to start the school experience course in the early years of the undergraduate education, let alone to abolish it.

In the current study, which aimed to evaluate the 2018 initial teacher training programs, the faculty members stated that the programs were not prepared in accordance with the principles of curriculum development. This result represents a negative outlook for a country like Turkey having a fairly well-established curriculum development culture. İnitial teacher training programs are the most important tools for training qualified teachers. If these tools are prepared with the right curriculum development process, it will be easier and shorter for the country to achieve its long-term goals in a more desirable manner.

Development of the 2018 initial teacher training programs centrally, lack of full reflection of stakeholders' views on the programs, lack of transparency in the assignment of faculty members to work in the commissions formed during the program development process, and lack of systematic curriculum development approach were criticized. Taking these criticisms into consideration, the opinions of all stakeholders from the lowest to the highest level should be taken into consideration when developing the next teacher training programs. Majority opinion should be dominant in the decisions taken in the commissions. The role of HEC in the curriculum development process should be reduced and the academic expertise of faculty members working in the faculties of education should be reflected in teacher training programs. Faculties should be allowed to form their unique teacher training culture. Through piloting studies, shortcomings of the programs should be corrected. Then they implemented. The programs should undergo a comprehensive evaluation during and at the end of the process.

Other criticized aspects of the 2018 initial teacher training programs are the decrease in the class hours of some courses, the need for the approval of HEC to open a new elective course in content knowledge and

pedagogical content knowledge fields and limitation of these elective courses to six. This makes it difficult for faculty members to propose new courses and to cover the contents of the courses whose class periods have been shortened. Therefore, the requirement of HEC approval to propose a new elective course should be abolished and the class periods allocated to courses can be increased. Another important issue related to the courses is the abolition of the class periods allocated to practice. It is important that the courses be applied in the acquisition of the skills required for the effective rendering of the teaching profession. Pre-service teachers can be provided with the opportunity to practice what they have learned in the theoretical parts of the courses.

Important classes in which teaching profession skills are acquired are teaching practice courses. In the new programs, the school experience course was abolished and the duration of the teaching practice course was doubled. However, the faculty members did not find this adequate. It is thought that this course should be arranged in such a way that pre-service teachers will be engaged in practice throughout a whole term. Within the context of the teaching practice course, one instructor was asked to advice up to eight pre-service teachers and to observe each of them four times. Observing eight students four different times requires the instructor to go to school 32 times. This does not seem realistic considering the workload of instructors. Therefore, the regulation needs to be reviewed. The school experience course is as important as the teaching practice course because in this course, pre-service teachers get to know the profession and decide whether or not to become a teacher. The abolition of the course may lead to problems in terms of getting to know and preparation for the profession. For this reason, the school experience course can be put back into the programs.

The current study was conducted with the participation of faculty members working in the education faculty of a state university located in the western part of Turkey. The study can be repeated with a study group consisting of faculty members from different education faculties from different parts of Turkey. The results to be obtained from program evaluation studies to be conducted in the process of the implementation of the teacher training programs and at the end of the first four years can be compared with the results of the current study.

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