

Fostering Propensities for Reflective Practice at Undergraduate Methodology and Practicum Courses

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Abstract

Problem Statement: This paper reports on a study of whether student teachers in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher education course perceive themselves to have learned from teacher education via early development of reflective practice.

Purpose of the Study: The study aimed to demonstrate that by employing methodologies characteristic of teacher education, it is possible to inculcate reflective practices during teacher education and not only in field experience during pre-service training.

Methods: Twenty-seven student teachers (all female) initially participated in the study, though numbers dropped to 14 and finally eight over the research period. Qualitative data were gathered via reflective essays and interviews. The data were investigated, first, for evidence that student teachers were learning to teach at an early stage via being reflective, and, second, for evidence of a causal relationship between the design of the courses and the capacity of the student teachers to become reflective learners.

Results and Discussion: The data gathered shows that the design of the methodology and practicum courses enabled the student teachers to learn from teacher practices by adopting a reflective approach, and that the gap described in the literature as one between theories and practice can be overcome by using lesson plans as a springboard for adoption of critical reflection.

Conclusions and Recommendations: As the student teachers move from microteaching to practicum and from there to the teaching profession, they adapt to the new conditions, but still favour the practices initially acquired during their microteaching experiences. They look forward to

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being given the opportunity to use their full potential, skills, abilities and knowledge to fulfil the educational needs of society and the new generation, and to creating an appealing learning climate by critically reflecting on the theories that underpin their teaching practices.

Keywords: Teacher education, reflective teaching practice, lesson plan

The undergraduate teacher education programmes have been criticized for having limited relevance to building the capacity of new teachers to learn from teaching by being reflective. Some of the reasons pointed out for this perception are for example, programmes focusing on acquiring formal knowledge of the subject matter too much (Kagan, 1992; Carter, 1988; Berliner, 1986); theory being overemphasized and therefore the practical realities of classrooms not being adequately addressed (Borko et al., 2006); and the gap between theory and practice (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2007; Imig & Imig, 2007; Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2007; Cochran-Smith, 2005). It is argued that learning from teaching does not take place during pre-service training, but only later in teachers' careers.

However, recognising the daunting challenges that student teachers will go on to face, teacher educators have been searching for ways to help novice teachers develop a lifelong ability to learn from teaching by being reflective as early as possible (Sims & Walsh, 2008). Since a consensus regarding the importance of fostering this in teacher education has emerged many teacher education programmes have now moved away from traditional methods of teacher education to programmes based on the Reflective approach (Wallace, 1999). In the Netherlands, for example, student teachers are employed as paid teachers during their fourth year of training and offered initial in-service training in which practice occupies a prominent place (Buitink, 2008). In England and Wales, student teachers are required to spend almost half of their postgraduate training on placement in schools (Edwards & Protheroe, 2003). The sine qua non of these programmes is learning from one's own experiences of teaching through systematic reflection on classroom practice and exploration of its epistemic basis.

The assumption in this paper is that despite the criticism teacher education can enable student teachers to become reflective practitioners and indeed that it is possible to inculcate reflective practices during the early stages of teacher education itself. The paper reports on a study of whether student teachers at English teacher education course perceive themselves to have learned from teacher education, with the aim of providing evidence that the early development of reflective practice is achieved.

Section 2 of this paper elaborates the notion of reflective teaching practice; section 3 sets out the framework of the research; the results are presented in section 4; and section 5 combines discussion of the results and concluding remarks.

Reflective teaching practice involves observing one's own teaching, thinking about why one works in the particular way that one does, and evaluating whether the

approach is effective or not. It is seen as a process that promotes student teachers' awareness of the need to change (Pennington, 1995), enables them to explore the underlying principles of their practices and beliefs, and improves their teaching (Richards, 1995). Reflection bridges the gap between theory and practice, and enables student teachers to apply their knowledge in a way that is sensitive to context: this is central to their effective learning (Köksal, 2006; Merrill, 2002; Gagné, 1985; Gardner, 1999; Perkins & Unger, 1999).

Supervision by teacher educators in the university and by cooperating teachers in the field has vital importance in fostering reflective practices. The university – school education approaches are jointly necessary, of course: ideally, rather than deploying them sequentially, they would be integrated with each other in a well-balanced manner (Freeman, 1982). Chiang (2008), for example, blended school-based learning with traditional EFL classroom methods as part of the course requirements. This way the enable student teachers were able to test and practice the teaching approaches covered in Methodology, and to provide a school-based opportunity prior to Practicum for them to learn more about authentic settings.

Meanwhile, there are some difficulties in inculcating reflective practices during Practicum, for instance, time constraints, heavy workloads, the limited number of teachers stepping forward to cooperate, and insufficient guidance or understanding of what the university course entails, all impair the student teachers' opportunities to develop reflective practices (Murray et al., 2008; Walkington, 2005; Edwards & Protheroe, 2003, Schick & Nelson, 2001). Some cooperating teachers do not believe that they are fulfilling their roles and responsibilities satisfactorily: they state that they seldom think about or construct strategies to cope with the challenges of supporting student teachers (Şallı-Çopur, 2008; Yalın, 2008; Sağlam, 2007). The support provided to student teachers in developing their skills is not always based on scientific pedagogy, but rather on personal experience and common sense (Sağlam, 2007; Edwards & Protheroe, 2003; Vélez-Rendón, 2002). In sum, it is believed that there is a problem of inadequate guidance and feedback being provided to student teachers (Murray et al., 2008; Risko et al. 2002, cited in Murray et al., 2008). Some of the other factors contributing to this problem are: the limitation of fieldwork experience to only one school, when student teachers need to have experience in a variety of classroom situations; fieldwork's brief duration; the overemphasis on observations in Practicum courses (Şallı-Çopur, 2008; Kagan, 1992); and the reinforcement of open-ended and nonevaluative tasks (Orland-Barak & Yinon, 2007; Rots et al., 2007).

This gap could be a reason why student teachers avoid risky but potentially rewarding activities, and ignore demanding cognitive activities (Edwards & Protheroe, 2003). They tend to prefer more traditional teaching methods, describe the teacher-centred environment as the most effective one and express discomfort with the notion of student-centred learning (Özgün-Koca & Şen, 2006). Clearly, then, some of the factors limiting the ability to learn from teaching are beyond the teacher

educator's control. However it is also the teacher educators' responsibility to design the courses in such a way that the inculcated reflective teaching practice would be effective and efficient.

Method

Broadly speaking, there are two main phases of teacher education courses in Turkey in which reflective teaching practice could be experienced (Yeşilbursa, 2011; Caner, 2010; Şallı-Çopur, 2008; Seferoğlu, 2006). The first is university-based education in teaching methods (methodology), which is the first opportunity to provide prospective teachers with the skills needed for professional life and development. The second is school-based practice teaching supported by an on-site teacher or practicum, which is generally thought to be the most important venue in which habits of critical reflection can be promoted, since it encourages student teachers to activate their theoretical knowledge and link it with practical experiences in a real classroom setting.

This qualitative study was initiated during the 2005/2006 academic year, in the EFL methodology course. It followed the students through their 2006/2007 practicum component, and ended in 2007/2008 during their first year of teaching. The perspectives gathered "in different settings including the natural setting-schools" throughout the teacher education and novice teacher year are crucial to the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). The data are presented through the categories and issues that emerged from the context (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994).

Participants of the Study

Twenty-seven student teachers (all female) in the methodology course participated in the study. As they took the practicum course the following semester, the student teachers were placed in two sections taught by two different instructors. This study was carried out with 14 teachers in the section the researcher was offering. Of these 14 student teachers, eight of them started working as teachers upon graduation, and therefore the interviews were carried out with those novice teachers. Qualitative data were gathered in a range of modes from methodology through to the student's first professional year.

Procedures

Methodology and practicum courses were designed with the belief that the student teachers in the methodology course must begin reflecting on their teaching and embark on practicum while already possessing some teaching experience, and they would have engaged in guided reflection upon it. The procedures followed in each of the courses of interest and the data collection process from the novice teachers are provided below:

Methodology course design

The methodology course was designed for the students to spend time teaching their peers about particular methodologies, and later implement their own methodology during pair-teaching at a cooperating school.

During the previous year's methodology course, the investigator videotaped the student teachers' microteachings as they used various English language teaching methods and approaches. The videos commend themselves as learning tools because, although the people in the video are strangers, they are in a familiar setting. These videos were used to empower student teachers to make comments.

Each week focused on a different English language teaching method and/or approach, and the student teachers were asked to analyze the videotaped microteaching via discussing the underlying principles of each method and preparing a preliminary lesson plan for the microteaching method they viewed in groups of three or four. At the end of the week they wrote a reflective essay focusing on one of the features of the method they liked the best and least which enabled them to develop their own personal teaching method over the semester. They had the opportunity to "pilot test" their own methods at the end of the semester in a real classroom setting. Finally, they were asked to write a reflective essay about what the concept of teaching meant to them in light of what they learned from their experiences in the course.

Practicum course design

The first step in the practicum schedule designed by the teacher educator and the student teachers was to collect data about their prospective students via Tele's Multiple Intelligence Inventory (1997), Honey and Mumford's Learning Style Questionnaire (2000), and the Attitudes Toward English Language and English language course tests to gather data about the students for more effective and efficient planning of the teaching and learning process.

The second step was to review the plans (curriculum, yearly plan, unit plan, and lesson plans) and observe the teaching process during the first two weeks of their practicum experience. The third step was to observe the students to understand the learning process they engage in again for two weeks. Observation forms were provided to students to standardise the process and enable a common language while carrying out discussions during the two hours of the course carried out at the university.

The following nine weeks were allocated to the students' teaching practice. They had to plan three lessons, meet with the coordinating teacher to discuss the plan and implement them accordingly, then carry out appraisal meetings, videotape their own lessons to evaluate their teaching practice as a stranger, and write weekly reflective essays similar to the ones they wrote during the methodology course. They were then asked to answer the question, "Do you think that the reflective approach employed at the methodology course facilitated your teaching practice at the practicum course?"

Novice Teachers

The novice teachers were contacted during the last month of their first teaching year and they were interviewed at their work place. The interviews specifically asked students to engage in critical analysis of their own teaching methodologies and to reflect on the interplay of theory and practice in their experiences of teaching over the previous three years. Their names and those of the schools where they teach are kept anonymous to prevent any type of stress-generating factor. The state schools where they worked are in Ankara (2), Antalya, Gaziantep, Isparta, İskenderun, Mardin, and Mersin.

The questions asked were as follows:

“What type of change have you observed, if any, in your concept of teaching now that you are working in a natural setting”?

“Do you think that the reflective teaching practice employed in the methodology and practicum courses during the undergraduate teacher education has qualified you to meet the demands of the institution where you work?”

The interviews were tape-recorded upon their consent. After each interview, the recording was transcribed and read twice by the researcher as done in the previous stages.

Data Analysis

The information sources were student teachers’ reflective essays pertaining to their perception of the *teaching* phenomenon and *lesson plan* development and transcripts of semi-structured *interviews* conducted with the novice teachers. The data collected were about the participants’ perception about the concept of teaching, lesson plan development and whether they have learned from the reflective practice employed previously.

The data gathered from each group were reviewed holistically and studied in detail to come up with critical aspects or significant quotes from participants. Then they were blended together to understand the similarities and differences in terms of the aspects mentioned (Gillham, 2000; Heaton, 2004). The following categories emerged from reading of the data:

- Positive—description(s) of the classroom pedagogical practice
- Negative—description(s) of the classroom pedagogical practice
- NReasons—negative aspect(s) of the pedagogical practice
- PReasons—positive aspect(s) of the pedagogical practice
- Personalization—linkage of their experiences with their personal learning-teaching experiences
- Miscellaneous—reflection of personal opinion about issues regarding education and language learning

Accordingly, the data were investigated for perceptions for and against the existence of causal connection, either masked by institutional constraints or not. Specifically, the data was coded for statements (i) that the methodology/practicum course did not cause reflective practice; (ii) that the methodology/practicum course would have caused reflective practice except for institutional constraints; and (iii) that the methodology/practicum course did cause reflective practice.

During the analysis of the data and the themes within were reviewed again with a colleague for cross-check purposes. The content analysis generated an inter-coder reliability of .76 across all themes and consistency among the coders in how they segmented coded text. The findings suggest that these procedures may be useful for validating the conclusions drawn from other qualitative studies using textual data.

Results

The results are presented in three stages. The first stage reports the developments in the perceived conceptions of teaching of student teachers as they move from the methodology course to the practicum course. The focus is on the changes in the concepts. The next stage reports the student teachers' perceptions of the lesson plans they have generated. The focus is specifically on their constructed understanding of the functional and notional use of the lesson plans. The final stage examines the perceptions of novice teachers regarding the impact of the teacher education on their teaching performance.

The perceived concepts of teaching

The evolution of the student teachers' concepts of teaching emerges as a strong and persistent theme across the three years of the study (see Table 1). In the methodology year, the bulk of comments regarding the student teachers' concepts of teaching focus on the teacher's qualifications, abilities and effectiveness (27 instances). From this perspective, the teacher is seen as someone who creates an entertaining environment while teaching the most boring topics, uses techniques other than the traditional ones (the latter being the ones that student teachers perceived themselves to have been exposed earlier in their lives), and is unique rather than being a "typical" teacher—their role-models were the John Keating character in the movie "Dead Poets Society" or Roberta Guaspari in "Music of the Heart." The model here is of the teacher as stand-up showman whose skill lies in the ability to use language effectively.

Table 1
Changes of Concepts about Teaching in Terms of Frequency

	Focus on teacher qualifications	Focus on act of teaching	Focus on learning process and outcomes	Focus on profession
Context				
Methodology course	27	15	0	0
Practicum course	3	14	12	0
1st year teaching	0	8	6	8

The following comment captures the responsibility these new student teachers placed on the role of the teacher:

Teaching is an art and a teacher is an artist. Everybody can teach but only the ones who use language effectively can be an artist-teacher.

A much smaller number of comments (15 instances) reflected a concept of teaching that focused not on the personal qualities of the teacher but on the act of teaching and the types of activities used. Therefore, the ultimate goal in teaching is for students to actively participate in activities, and in order to do this the activity needs to be fun, entertaining, visual, etc. The teacher who uses these types of activities is perceived as a good teacher. This could well be a reaction to the student teachers' own experiences in school; as one participant said, "Some of our teachers tended to follow the book as if it was a holy book. The teaching method, the activities, and the material—the holy book—never changed. That was boring for us and most importantly we do not remember anything."

However, by the end of the practicum year, the focus on teacher qualifications had all but been abandoned (three instances) and the act-concept of teaching (14 instances) was vying for dominance with a concept that focused on how the teacher could enrich the teaching-learning process (12 instances). One of the participants said, "the important thing is whether the learning objectives have been reached rather than how well I have presented."

As one participant said, "we have been observing teachers as students for a long time. We won't understand what we have to undertake as a teacher. Isn't this the aim of the course?" Some of the cooperating teachers were assigning student teachers responsibilities such as hall monitoring and painting pictures and posters, and the student teachers perceived these as deliberately intended to keep them away from the classroom. There were some teachers who, informally, allowed the students to teach for more than one hour per semester, but some of these teaching sessions were instigated without any prior notice or preparation. Another theme related to barriers involved the infrastructure of the classes (14 instances)—student teachers could not,

for example, change the seating plan or project their PowerPoint displays onto the screen.

What the student teachers encountered was a gap between theory and practice—precisely the gap (13 instances) that reflective practice is intended to bridge (Edwards & Protheroe, 2003). The students were cognizant of this gap, as illustrated by this comment:

The teaching practice had a negative impact on me. I realized none of the methods or approaches we studied were being used. There is a big chaos in the classrooms caused either by the teacher or the classroom setting or the students.

Another comment was even more poignant:

I wonder what this teacher thought about methods and approaches when she was a student teacher. Is she my future reflection? This frightens me because I do not want to lose my energy.

At the end of the first year of teaching, a new theme arises—nearly all the student teachers stated that they had started to learn what teaching is, and a new concept of teaching emerges that is seen as membership in the teaching profession. This concept prioritises the institutional position of the teacher: although the teacher faces the class alone, behind her there are regional directors of education, school principals, heads of teaching units, peers, parents, janitorial staff and many more. Simply put, a teacher is never really left alone to work with the students. As one participant said:

Administration definitely plays a very important role in a teacher's life. It practically shapes the teacher's role and success. All the chains in a school—teacher, student, parent, administration—are linked tightly and one loose link can have domino effect on the others.

And another:

While taking courses in teacher education everything seems to centre around the two hours of teaching that we will do per week. But now it is twenty-six hours of teaching per week and believe me there are a lot of individuals that hold you accountable for every action. So, we learn that teaching is a profession and we have to learn the rules of the politics of this profession.

By the end of the study period, the early, optimistic, emphasis on the qualities of the teacher have disappeared, and concepts are more or less evenly spread between a focus on the act of teaching, learning process and outcomes, and the teaching profession.

The lesson plans

It was not difficult for the student teachers to fill out the lesson plans for the videos they watched. However, they did encounter difficulty when asked to match the activities and instructional objectives in the methodology course. The taxonomy, instructional objectives and activities concepts as a whole had a symbolic meaning for them and they had difficulty deriving meaning in order to construct their own understanding. They knew what they were, but they did not know how they functioned since the information had not been internalized. Therefore, the reflection practice became a challenge for them.

Their lesson plan experiment during the practicum course somewhat contradicted their experiences in the methodology course since they needed to analyze it in terms of its impact on student learning. Since their previous experience did not fully espouse this approach, it was hard for them to make it a part of them. Therefore, they found them time consuming, especially when they could not fully implement their detailed plans.

The novice teacher participants stated that they did not have to prepare any lesson plan since the Ministry of Education (MoNE) sends all plans, including lesson plans. Interestingly though they said, "it's me, the one in charge alone in the classroom and I feel competent enough to decide how optimal learning can be achieved. So, I do make changes over the plan and it turns into being my plan. I can very explicitly explain why something won't work in this class and what needs to be done." Comments in this category said that methodology would have done better to focus on assessment and evaluation skills, and they added that worksheet-development training, instead of detailed lesson plan development, would have been helpful.

Table 2

Novice Teachers' Perception about Reflective Practice

Content of the problem	Main theme	Basic statements obtained via reflections	Number of instances
	Caused later Reflective video practice	Methodology course did via viewing, systematic discovery learning, microteaching in natural settings, Settings, no prescription on how to teach, learning to listen to each other, and to collaborate	8
Did methodology/practicum courses cause later reflective practice?	Could have Caused later Reflective Practice	if there was less emphasis on detailed lesson plan development, more discussions on classroom management and assessment and evaluation	6
	Did not Cause Later Reflective Practice	Practicum course did not cause later reflective practice as much as the methodology course due reluctance in being provided the opportunity to practice teaching as a student teacher; institutional constraints faced as novice teachers; test-oriented attitude vs. learning	8

Novice teachers' perception about the methodology and practicum courses

Certainly, there were strongly positive attitudes towards the methodology and practicum courses. However, comments made by the eight novice teachers explicitly link current reflective practice to the methodology course (see Table 2). First, the

video viewing was unanimously welcomed (positive comments about video viewing: 27 instances; negative comments: 0 instances). One of the students said, "the video viewing enabled us to carry out an intellectual discussion in a stress-free environment." The microteaching experiences in real classroom settings were also strongly welcomed (positive comments about microteaching: 27 instances; negative comments: 0 instances). Then they said the fact that the methodology course had not provided a prescription about how to teach was directly beneficial to their reflective practice in working life. One participant said:

You made us use the discovery learning approach since you did not provide feedback or say what is wrong or what is right. You made us discuss each case among us, then compare cases with each other, and question some issues, and finally come up with coherent framework. It was all very systematic and it is exactly what we are doing right now, although freedom in speech is not always appreciated.

Some of them said that the strength of the methodology course was that it provided guidance on how to work constructively and reflectively as a team. One participant said:

Now that I look back I realize that we had actually worked as identified in the "Community Language Learning" method. We first observed, and then analyzed and synthesized a teaching practice then evaluated each others' and our own practices. As we were doing these, we learned to listen which I see as our weakest skill.

Meanwhile, some novice teachers said the heavy emphasis on lesson plans kept the methodology course from causing full later reflective practice (six instances). They especially discussed the need for more emphasis on classroom management skills rather than the use of visual aids during the practicum course. The novice teachers said the practicum course did not cause later reflective practice as much as the methodology course due to institutional constraints (8 instances). Comments in this category are evidence of new teachers who have developed their capacity for reflective practice but are unable to implement it due to the conditions of professional life. As one participant said:

There is a gap between theory and practice in terms of assessment and evaluation stemming from teaching and learning vs. tests in our country. The national exams have a very strong impact on the students' high school and tertiary education... The head of the teaching unit wants us to test the reliability and validity of our tests based on classroom observations and the criterion is whether the students are able to answer the questions correctly or not. We keep or take out a question based on this criterion. You always told us that testing was a means of teaching as well. But, in the school, testing is a means to pass. How can we deal with these politics?

Discussion

In the methodology course, the bulk of comments regarding the student teachers' concepts of teaching focused on the teacher's qualifications, abilities and effectiveness. However, a powerful theme in the data gathered during the practicum concerned the ways in which various difficulties such as administrative matters, classroom management issues, and the approaches of the cooperating teachers undermined the effectiveness of the teaching experience as pointed out in the studies carried out by Murray et al., (2008), Şallı-Çopur (2008), Walkington (2005), Edwards & Protheroe (2003), and Schick & Nelson (2001). The most discouraging issue was the school administration refraining from having student teachers practice teaching every week for fear, it was said, of impairing the teaching-learning process, leaving the students behind and facing parental complaints; accordingly, they maintained that one hour of full teaching in a semester would be enough.

Therefore, the collision of naïve optimism of methodology with the practical realities of teaching during the practicum year resulted in a conceptual evolution. The focus was now on "how the teacher can enrich the teaching-learning environment" rather than the teacher's qualifications. From this perspective, the teacher is no longer the sole and central agent of teaching, but a component of a wider system that encompasses the learning climate of the classroom and the school more generally as reported in Chiang's study (1982).

The comments by the novice teachers showed that they were clearly engaged in developing the reflective practice that was initiated during the methodology course and continued during the practicum course. The novice teachers were aware of their need to prepare for an exam-oriented system, and they were looking for the means to fulfil them. This is, to some extent, contrary to the argument by Kagan (1992), Carter (1988), Berliner (1986), Cochran-Smith (2005), Winter (2005), Borko et al., (2006), Anagnostopoulos et al., (2007), Imig & Imig (2007), and Orland-Barak & Yinon (2007) that learning from teaching does not take place in teacher education.

Overall, the participants of this study were happy to explore the methods/approaches and develop their own teaching methods. It was fruitful for them to think about or question their own philosophies and explore how they they learn. The personalization of what they experienced in class improved their self-efficacy. The marked evolution observed in the participants' concepts of teaching demonstrates that teacher education can accelerate the process of learning from teaching by bringing teaching experience forward as far as possible and offering student teachers opportunities for supported reflection.

Conclusion and Recommendations

As the student teachers in this study moved from microteaching to practicum and from there to the teaching profession, they were able to use their previous knowledge. This was one of the significant findings of this study since the literature reviewed suggests otherwise. This is mainly because of the assurance made to them

that unless they do or say something completely inappropriate, what they say or do will not be used against them in assigning grades. This liberty fosters the critical thinking during teacher education. They were aware that their efforts were what counted rather than *just the end product*. This is important since the brain is an information organ whose functional ability is shaped by the environment. In particular, when the environment is not safe, the brain tends to perseverate and release stress hormones, higher-order thinking gives way to slow thinking, and things are done repeatedly for safety purposes, resulting in memorization known as “downshifting” (Dwyer, 2002; Roberts, 2002; Caine & Caine, 2001). Therefore, since grades are an inseparable part of education process-oriented assessment, evaluation means such as a rubric have to be developed and explicitly described to the student teachers at the beginning of the course.

The training needed to become a reflective practitioner does not have to be formal. Dialogues guided by open-ended questions can serve as an instrument of inductive manner: student learn about the reflective practice by doing it, which leads to critical thinking to understand the rationales and underlying principles of “reflectivity” in teaching.

The gap exists between the teaching practice regulation developed by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education Council and what is being exercised in schools, rather than between teacher education and practice as implied in the studies of Şallı-Çopur (2008), Yalçın (2008) and Sağlam (2007). Although this is beyond the scope of this paper, two suggestions need to be made. First, as a long-term solution, the novice teacher internship could be administered jointly by teacher education faculties and cooperating teachers as in the medical schools. Second, as a short-term solution the appointment of student teachers to practice teaching during the practicum course could be done via systematic planning with a joint effort such as focusing on the cooperating teacher/practicing student teacher ratio by the Ministry of National Education. This way neither the cooperating teachers, student teachers nor the teacher educator will face burn-out while trying to meet the deadlines. The sine qua non of these programmes is learning from one’s own experiences of teaching through systematic reflection on classroom practice and exploration of its epistemic basis.

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Yansıtıcı Yaklaşım Odaklı Öğretmenlik Uygulamalarının Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğrenme Becerilerine olan Etkisi

(Özet)

Problem Durumu

Eğitim Fakültelerinin öğrencilerinin öğretmenlik becerilerini istenilen düzeyde zenginleştirmediği ve de yansıtıcı yaklaşımın bu sorunu çözebileceği bir çok alan yazında belirtilmektedir. Bu çalışmada, İngilizce öğretmen eğitimi programında yer alan “İngilizce Öğretiminde Yaklaşımlar” ile “Öğretmenlik Uygulaması” derslerinde geleceğin İngilizce öğretmenlerinin “öğretirken öğrenmelerini” sağlamak amacıyla yansıtıcı yaklaşım odaklı uygulamalar ele alınmıştır.

Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı, geleceğin İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yansıtıcı yaklaşım odaklı öğretmenlik uygulamalarının onların öğretirken öğrenme becerilerini ne derece geliştirdiğine ilişkin görüşlerinin saptanmasıdır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Öğretmen eğitimi programlarında öğrenim gören öğrenciler öğretmenlik uygulamalarını ağırlıklı olarak “İngilizce Öğretiminde Yaklaşımlar” ve “Okullarda Uygulama” derslerinde yaparlar. Bu araştırmada söz konusu derslerde yürütülmüştür. 2005-2006 eğitim-öğretim yılında İngilizce öğretiminde yaklaşımlar dersinde başlatılan bu çalışma, 2006-2007 eğitim-öğretim yılında Okullarda Uygulama dersinde devam etmiş ve 2007-2008 yılında öğretmenlik mesleğine giren öğrencilerle tamamlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın ilk yılında 27 olan öğrenci sayısı ikinci yılda 14'e son yılında ise 8'e düşmüştür.

3 aşamada tamamlanan bu çalışmada izlenen yöntem aşağıda sunulmaktadır.

1. 3 saati kuram, 2 saati uygulama olmak üzere hafta da 5 saat olan “İngilizce Öğretiminde Yaklaşımlar” dersinde her hafta bir öğretim yöntemi incelenmiştir. Diğer bir deyişle her yöntem 5 saatlik süreçte işlenmiştir. Gene her hafta bir yöntem incelenen önceki yıllarda yapılan derslerde öğrencilerden söz konusu yöntemi kullanarak bir saatlik bir ders vermeleri istenmiştir. Söz konusu dersler videoya çekilmiş ve öğrenme aracı olarak kullanılmıştır. Öğrencilerin önce bu videoları seyretmeleri ardından da 3-4 kişilik gruplar halinde seyrettikleri dersin planını geliştirmeleri istenmiştir. Ardından da geliştirdikleri ders planlarını gerekçelendirerek anlatmaları istenmiştir. Bu sunumların ardından da her öğrencinin

o hafta işlenen yöntemin en beğendikleri 1 ya da 2 iki özelliğini gene gerekçelendirerek yazılı olarak belirtmeleri talep edilmiştir.

Yıl sonuna doğru ise bu beğendikleri özellikleri harmanlayarak kendi adlarını taşıyan yöntemi geliştirmeleri ve istedikleri bir okulda uygulamaları istenmiştir. Kaydettikleri derslerini seyrederek öğretirken ne öğrendiklerini belirtmeleri söylenmiştir. Ayrıca, geliştirdikleri ders planlarında hedefleri neye göre saptadıkları ve hazırladıkları faaliyetlerin hangi öğrencilere nasıl faydalı olacağını açıklamaları öngörülmüştür.

2. “Öğretmenlik Uygulaması” dersinde ise ilk iki hafta öğrencilerin derslere ilişkin okulda bulunan çeşitli planları incelemeleri ve öğretmenlerin öğretme yöntemlerini izlemeleri istenmiştir. Daha sonraki 2 hafta boyunca da öğrencilerin öğrenmeye yönelik faaliyetlerini incelemeleri beklenmiştir. Geri kalan 9 hafta boyunca da en az 24 saat bizzat ders vermeleri belirtilmiştir. Söz konusu derslerini videoya çekilmeleri ve gene kendi videolarını seyrederek öğretirken ne öğrendiklerini belirtmeleri söylenmiştir. Ayrıca, geliştirdikleri ders planlarında hedefleri neye göre saptadıkları ve hazırladıkları faaliyetlerin hangi öğrencilere nasıl faydalı olacağını açıklamaları istenmiştir.

3. Öğretmenliğe başlayan öğrencilerle önceden belirlenen tarihlerde yüz yüze görüşme yapılmıştır. Bu görüşmelerde öğrencilere “İngilizce Öğretiminde Yaklaşımlar” ve “Okullarda Uygulama” derslerinde ki yansıtıcı yaklaşım odaklı öğretmenlik uygulamalarının onların öğretirken öğrenme becerilerini ne derece geliştirdiğine ilişkin görüşleri irdelenmiştir.

Elde edilen nitelikli veriler *içerik çözümle yöntemi* kullanılarak incelenirken “öğretme” konusuna ilişkin algılar derinlemesine ele alınmış ardından tema/kavramlar geliştirilmiş ve kavramların söz konusu derslerin uygulamaları ile ne derece örtüştüğü analiz edilmiştir.

Araştırmanın Bulguları

Bu araştırmada yer alan katılımcılardan elde edilen bulgular, onların İngilizce öğretim yaklaşımları ve okullarda uygulama derslerinde uygulanan yansıtıcı yaklaşım odaklı öğretmenlik uygulamalarını öğretici bulduklarını göstermiştir. Video gibi görsel araç yoluyla derslerin işlenmesinin ve geliştirdikleri ders planlarının sorgulama yoluyla derinlemesine incelenmesinin de oldukça yararlı buldukları görülmüştür.

Çalışmanın üç aşamasında elde edilen veriler sonucunda “öğretme” kavramına ilişkin algılarında değişiklik olduğu saptanmıştır. İngilizce öğretiminde yaklaşımlar dersinde öğrenciler “öğretme” kavramını öğretmenin nitelikleri ile ilintilendirmişlerdir. Geleneksel yöntemler yerine çağdaş yaklaşımlar kullanarak

öğrencilerin dersten zevk almaları öğretilmede öncelik olarak görülmüştür. Ölü Ozanlar Derneği filminde ki John Keating karakterini onlar için rol model olarak benimsediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bu nedenle de *“öğretmenlik bir sanattır. Herkes öğretmen olabilir ancak herkes öğretmenlik sanatını sergileyemez”* görüşünün oldukça yaygın olduğu da saptanmıştır. Okullarda uygulama dersi sonrasında ise, *“öğretme”* kavramına ilişkin algılarının, öğretmenin niteliklerinden ziyade sınıf ortamı, öğrenci yaklaşımlarını ve öğrencilerin bireysel farklılıklarını da kapsadığı görülmüştür. Bir öğrenci *“önemli olan öğrenme hedeflerine ulaşılabilmesi yoksa benim ne kadar eğlenceli ders anlattığım değıildir”* diyerek bir anlamda olayı özetlemiştir.

Okullarda Uygulama dersinde öğrenciler bazı sorunlar yaşamışlardır. Bu sorunların başında ise en az 24 saat bizzat ders vermelerine olanak tanınmaması, nöbetçi öğretmenlik yapmaları ya da uygulama öğretmenin geliştiirdiği materyalleri yazma ya da boyama gibi görevlerin ağırlıklı olarak istenmesi gelmektedir. Ancak, öğrenciler bu sorunlar karşısında bile olaylara eleştirel bakabilme ve gelecekte karşılaçacakları sorunlarla baş edebilme becerilerini geliştirdikleri ortaya çıkmıştır.

Kendilerine sunulan şablonu kullanarak ders planı geliştirmede öğrencilerin zorlanmadığı görülmüştür. Ancak, detaylı olarak geliştirdikleri ders planlarında neyi neden yaptıklarını açıklamalarının istenmesini oldukça zorlayıcı olarak algılamışlardır. Çünkü bu açıklamalar ancak bilgilerin içselleştirilmesi ile yapılabilir. Diğer bir deyişle, yüzeysel bilgilerle neyin neden yapıldığından ziyade sadece nasıl yapılması gerektiği açıklanabilir. Bilgilerin içselleştirilmesi ise ancak sürekli sorgulayıcı yaklaşımın tekrarı sonucu gerçekleşebildiğini ise gene öğrencilerden elde edilen veriler göstermişlerdir. Bir öğrenci *“eğer ders anlatırken yaptıklarımızı gerekçelendiremezsek, açıklayamazsak bu uygulamalarımız bilgiye değilde sağ duyuya dayalı demektir. Bu durumda ne öğrenciye ne de bize bir fayda sağlar”*. Öğrencilerin vurguladıkları bir diğer konu ise yaptıkları açıklamaların kendilerine karşı kullanılmayacağını bilmeleri durumunda ancak yansıtma eyleminin etkili ve verimli olacağıdır.

Bu çalışmada yer alan öğrencilerle öğretmen olmalarından sonra yapılan görüşmelerde hemen hemen hepsi ders planlarının hazır gelmesine rağmen, bu planları rahatlıkla eleştirel gözle inceyebildiklerini ve gerekli iyileştirmeyi yapabildiklerini, ve bu becerilerinde öğretmen eğitimi uygulamalarından kazandıkları beceriler sayesinde yapabildiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca, öğrencilik yıllarında bilgilerin hazır olarak sunulması yerine bilgilere bizzat kendilerinin ulaşması ve deneyimlerini bu bilgiler ışığında değerlendirmelerinin istenmesini oldukça faydalı olduğunu vurgulamışlardır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Öneriler

“İngilizce Öğretiminde Yaklaşımlar” ve “Okullarda Uygulama” derslerinde benimsenen yansıtıcı odaklı uygulamaların öğretmen adaylarının öğretirken nasıl öğreneceklerini anlamaları açısından oldukça faydalı olduğu görülmüştür. Çünkü bir öğretmenin öğrencilerinin nasıl öğrendiklerini ve de öğrenmeyi destekleyen ya da engelleyen unsurların neler olduğu belirleyebilmelidir. Bu becerinin geliştirilmesi öğretmen eğitimcilerinin sorumluluğundadır. Bu nedenle de öğretmen adayların tüm beceri ve bilgilerini uygulayabilecekleri gerekli ortamların yaratılmasını talep etmektedirler. Bu çalışmada elde edilen veriler ışığında bu amacın gerçekleştirildiği sanılmaktadır. Ancak diğer taraftan ise okullarda uygulama derslerinde özellikle okul yönetimlerinin öğretmen adaylarının öğretme uygulamalarını yönetmeliklere aykırı olarak engellemeleri için gerekli önlemlerin alınması gereklidir.