

Professional Readiness Level of Candidate Teachers: A Qualitative Evaluation

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Received: December 3, 2015 Accepted: December 11, 2015 Online Published: December 22, 2015

doi:10.11114/jets.v4i3.1232

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.11114/jets.v4i3.1232>

Abstract

The study investigates novice teachers' self-perceptions of their professional readiness. The study has a qualitative research design, adopting the phenomenology pattern. The study group comprised subject matter teachers employed at different educational stages (primary, secondary and high schools). The participants were selected according to the criterion sampling within the purposive sampling methods that are frequently used within the qualitative research tradition. Data collection method was focus group discussions. Then, "content analysis" was used to analyze the data. The study showed that the teacher candidates could not practice their theoretical knowledge and, therefore, were not ready to perform their occupation to the expected level. Thus, there is a need for improved training programs that integrate theory with practice to promote the professional readiness of teachers.

Keywords: Level of professional readiness, self-perception, candidate teachers, phenomenology, focus groups

1. Introduction

Any acquired profession satisfies a need in the society and therefore is noteworthy. Among these professions, the teaching profession has a further importance as a people-oriented public service. Historically important figures (Socrates, Plato, Alexander the Great, De Gaulle, Aristotle, Lenin, Ataturk...) have striking views on the teaching profession (Adams, 1969, cited by Sönmez, 2007). These views commonly accentuate the service, invaluableness and critical importance of the teaching profession. Educational science studies point out that the competence of teachers is related to developing qualified individuals (Gözütok, 1995; Gürkan, 2001). Similarly, Buts (cited by Sönmez, 2007) considers developing teachers at the center of preparing people for the future. Ataturk also emphasized the importance of the teaching profession by asserting "those who save nations are only and solely the teachers" (Tekişik, 2003).

The primary duty of a teacher is, by taking into account each individual's needs, to raise individuals who manage the process of education (Ekinci, 2010), who adopt national and universal values and generate solutions to problems, who behave in accordance with the objectives of the programs, and who learn about the process of learning [Ministry of National Education (MNE), 2005]. The duties of teachers show that the profession is a people-oriented, social, and universal service. Teachers have to be professionally ready to undertake the responsibilities to perform this service. This is related to the professional readiness level of teachers.

The level of readiness is connected to the mental schema. Due to the readiness, individuals rapidly code information in accordance with the schema, organize this information and may reach different judgments (Bem, 1981, s.355). In the psychology of learning, the level of readiness is regarded as one of the factors that significantly affect learning (Bacanlı, 2002: 150-153; Koç, 2009: 114-117). In this respect, an individual who is not ready for the teaching profession may withdraw from the process of learning whilst they are in the profession. When the 'attitude' is defined to be a state of emotional readiness observed as acceptance or refusal of an individual, a group, or an institution (Özğüven, 1999), then readiness is also observed to have an impact on the attitude. The capacity to perform a service or a duty, competence (MNE, 2002) and readiness are conceptually related with each other. There is also an evident relation between the level of readiness and self-efficacy, which is defined as the self-judgment or beliefs of individuals about their capabilities to manage future predicaments (Aşkar and Umay, 2002; Azar, 2010).

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Teachers achieve readiness through education and training before entering the profession and during continuous professional education after commencing their profession. The second type of education involves candidate teacher training. The study of Ekinçi (2010) revealed that the guidance of head teachers fails to satisfy the need for in-service training (Ekinçi, 2010). According to Korkmaz et al. (2004: 268), the graduates of pre-professional education programs face the real world of education when they start to perform the profession. Therefore, the candidate teacher period following graduation is considered necessary to gain competence in the profession (Lay et al. 2005: 237). Novice teachers have some difficulties in managing the classroom, providing an education that accommodates individual differences, cooperating with parents, organizing educational activities, using effective teaching and learning materials, and solving personal problems of students (Veenman, 1984: 143), and therefore, are not fully prepared at a cognitive level. Unpreparedness of teachers to perform the profession also raises the issue of professional training.

Teachers and the quality of the teaching profession are on the agenda of not only Turkey, but also several other countries (Seferoğlu, 2004). The need for qualified teachers is also expressed by various organizations in the world (UNESCO, ILO, OECD). It is emphasized that the quality and the number of teachers should be sufficient for the development of countries and the performance of teachers (OECD, 2004; Akyüz, 2003).

Ministry of National Education, the department in charge of the education system in Turkey, categorizes the constituents of teacher competence under three pillars: “Competence in Education and Training”, “General Knowledge and Skills” and “Knowledge and Skills on the Subject Matter” (MNE, 2002). The “Competence in Education and Training” title comprises 14 sub-sections: 1. Knowing the student 2. Planning the curriculum 3. Preparing the teaching materials 4. Teaching 5. Managing the teaching process 6. Assessing and evaluating the student performance 7. Providing guidance 8. Improving basic skills 9. Providing service for students with special needs 10. Training adults 11. Engaging in extra-curricular activities 12. Achieving self-development 13. Improving and developing the school 14. Improving school-environment relations. McNair and Galanouli (2002) listed the competencies required from a teacher of the information era as: *Individual competency* - capability to utilize the tools of information and communication technologies; *subject field competency* - capability to integrate education technologies into their subject field; *teaching competency* - capability to plan, prepare, teach, and evaluate lessons using education technologies.

The real question is: “To what extent are candidate teachers ready to transfer the required competencies to practice?” This question also originated the subject of this study. Education of teachers involves candidate selection, pre-service education, practice period, monitoring and evaluation studies in the practice period, and in-service training (Çelikten, Şanal, Yeni, 2005). Despite the importance placed on training classroom teachers in Turkey since the establishment of the Turkish Republic, many issues of the teaching profession are yet to be solved (Doğan, 2005). In this respect, the education of teachers has been one of the most frequently discussed issues throughout the history of formal education (Ekinçi, 2010). Some of the problems in professional training and education of teachers after their graduation are highlighted as follows: incompetence of trainers, unserious applications, theoretical training and consequently none or insufficient practical training, unsuitable timing of the programs, insufficient physical and technological facilities (Özen, 2006).

In this research, teachers’ professional readiness states are evaluated by focusing on novice teachers. The aim of the research is to examine the professional readiness state of novice teachers in terms of their own views (i.e. self-perceptions). Accordingly, answers were investigated for the following questions: For the teachers that have recently started their professional career,

- What are their thoughts on the state of readiness for the teaching profession?
- What areas do they feel ready (competent) within the teaching profession?
- What areas do they feel not ready (incompetent) within the teaching profession?
- What are the teachers' suggestions for professional readiness?

2. Method

2.1 Research Design

This study was designed in accordance with the qualitative research approach and consequently, the phenomenology pattern was used as part of the methodology. In the phenomenology pattern, the focus is on the cases that are realized without an in-depth understanding and the individuals' lives regarding the case (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). Additionally, according to the phenomenologists, phenomenology believes in the importance of the subjective cognition and accepts it as the basis (Balci, 2005: 38). In the study, the teachers' readiness for profession was examined taking into account their own perceptions of readiness. Accordingly, 24 novice teachers from various branches were interviewed.

2.2 Study Group

The study group comprised subject teachers employed at different stages of the education system (primary, secondary,

and high schools). The teachers were selected in line with the criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposive sampling methods suitable for the qualitative research tradition. The researcher forms “a series of predetermined topics” in criterion sampling to decide on the eligibility criteria for participants to be included in the study (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008; 112). The eligibility criteria set out in this study are: 1. Being a graduate of education faculties of universities that graduate teachers 2. Being a 2014 graduate 3. Having started their duty in 2014 and not having worked as a teacher for more than six months. Accordingly, participants of the study were teachers from different branches (Classroom, Turkish, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Music, Religion, Kindergarten, Art, History). Participation was voluntary, there were no positive or negative consequences of participating in the research. The study group comprised 24 teachers from 12 different branches. Descriptive information of the study group is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers in the Study Group

Teacher Subject	Gender		Educational Stage			
	Female	Male	Preschool	Primary School	Secondary School	High School
T1	Turkish	x			x	
T2	Turkish		x		x	
T3	English	x			x	
T4	English		x			x
T5	Classroom	x		x		
T6	Classroom		x	x		
T7	Mathematics	x			x	
T8	Mathematics		x			x
T9	Science	x			x	
T10	Science		x		x	
T11	Social studies	x			x	
T12	Social studies		x		x	
T13	Music	x			x	
T14	Music		x			x
T15	Physical Education	x			x	
T16	Physical Education		x			x
T17	Religion	x			x	
T18	Religion		x	x		
T19	Preschool	x	x			
T20	Preschool		x	x		
T21	Painting	x			x	
T22	Painting		x	x		
T23	History	x				x
T24	History		x			x

As seen in Table 1, all of the teachers interviewed were 2014 graduates and in their first year of teaching. Accordingly, 24 teachers from 12 different branches (Classroom, Turkish, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Music, Religion, Kindergarten, Art, History) were included in the study group. Two teachers from each branch were interviewed. Half of the teachers were female and half of them were male. Two of the teachers worked in kindergarten, four in elementary school, 12 in secondary school, and six in high school.

2.3 Data Collection Process

Research data was collected through focus group interviews. Focus group interviews can be defined as “a series of discussions in a warm environment in order to obtain perceptions of participants on a predetermined topic” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008). The following steps were realized during the focus group interviews: The purpose of the research was primarily determined. As explained before, the aim of the study was to investigate novice teachers’ self-perception of their readiness for the profession. Accordingly, national and foreign literature was reviewed primarily. Following this step, interview questions were prepared in line with the literature. The questions for focus group interviews were prepared with specific attention on the number questions, where the threshold was 3-4 questions. Finally, the focus group interview questions did not exceed three. The prepared questions were evaluated by four academics in the Faculty of Education at Gaziosmanpaşa University and their expert opinions were taken to improve the questions where necessary. In the following step, the location and the technology of the interviews were planned. The location was selected to be one of the classrooms in the Graduate Education Department of the Faculty of Education and a tape recorder was used to record the participants’ responses during the focus group. In the fourth step a pilot trial of the data collection process was conducted. In the pilot study, teachers from eight different branches were interviewed. One of the questions in the pilot study, the last question, was found to be dysfunctional and therefore excluded. Participants were determined in the 5th step. Accordingly, three focus group interviews were planned and conducted with eight teachers,

each from one of the 12 different branches identified. All of the participants were taken to a preliminary interview before the actual interviews and the interview questions were delivered to the participants via e-mail. In the last step interviews were conducted by the researcher. During the interviews there was also an assistant for help. Tape recorder was used for the interviews. Focus group interviews were carried out with 24 teachers in three groups consisting of eight different branches. The focus group interviews lasted a total of five hours, the first one being two hours and the 2nd and the 3rd being 1.5 hours each.

To ensure the validity and the reliability of the research; the study process was detailed with explanation of the preparation for data collection, application and analysis processes, and a sufficient number of teachers were interviewed. Secondly, teachers from different branches were interviewed. Accordingly, teachers from 12 different branches were included in the process. Thirdly, the results of the study were shared with the participants and their opinions were taken. Next, the raw data were submitted to another researcher expert on the subject and this researcher was requested to form coded opinions. It was observed that the contents that the researcher and the investigator had prepared were very similar to each other. Thus, the results were confirmed. Lastly, the results were compared with the results of other studies (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2008).

2.4 Data Analysis

Data obtained from the focus group interviews based on the novice teachers' own opinions regarding their readiness for the teaching profession were analyzed in the study. This study was designed in line with the qualitative research approach and "content analysis" was performed accordingly. For this purpose, the qualitative research analysis software MAXQDA-11 was used. First, the interview records have been transferred to the computer exactly. Then, a total of 55 pages of word document data were collected. Then, the data were described. The opinions of teachers were analyzed in line with the content analysis methodology. Accordingly, in the analysis of opinions, statements were classified according to their similarity with each other. In the analysis stage, the statements of teachers were coded as * GR1, interview Group 1, * GR2, interview Group 2, * GR3, interview group 3 * GR101; Interview Group1 Teacher 1 etc. and the themes were constructed. The opinions of the teachers that participated in the pilot study were excluded from the analysis. The data obtained from interview forms were digitized and frequency counts were calculated.

3. Findings

In this section, the results regarding the opinions of the teachers on the answers given to questions that were prepared in line with the aim of the study are presented.

3.1 Thoughts on the Professional Readiness Level of Teachers

Table 2. Thoughts on the professional readiness level of teachers

S.N	Themes	Sub-Themes	Sub-Themes	f	
1	Cognitive readiness	Field Competence	Knowledge on the Field (G1,G2,G3)	3	
2			Information on the Concept (G1,G2)	2	
3			Context of the field	1	
4		Professional qualifications		Classroom management (G1, G2, G3)	3
5				Material preparation (G1, G3)	2
6				Teaching methods (G1, G2)	2
7				Assessment and evaluation (G2, G3)	2
8				Creating a classroom environment (G2)	1
9				Special education (G1, G2, G3)	3
10				Discovering the world we live in (G1, G2, G3)	3
	General cultural competence				
11	Psychological readiness	Educational technology competence	Technology-assisted learning (G1, G2, G3)	3	
12			Internet-assisted learning (G1, G2, G3)	3	
13		Roles for Occupation (G1, G2, G3)	Leadership	3	
14		Attitudes towards the occupation (G1, G3)	Patience, love	2	
15		Fears and concerns regarding profession (G1)	Failure	1	
16		Professional liability (G1, G2, G3)		3	
17		Physical readiness	Being Healthy	Being Physically Healthy (G1,G2,G3)	3
18				Being Mentally Healthy (G1,G2,G3)	3
19				Attendance in school and classroom on time and in the right place (G1,G3)	2

According to the participants who were interviewed as part of the research, teachers should be ready cognitively, psychologically and physically. Three sub-themes of cognitive readiness were determined as field competence,

professional competence, general cultural competence, and education technologies competence. Psychological readiness themes were Roles for profession, concerns and fears regarding profession and responsibility. Sub-themes of the physical readiness were determined as mental and physical readiness, attendance in school and classroom on time and in the right place. According to the responses of the participants, there are three themes and 19 sub-themes of professional readiness. Some of the views of the participants are as follows:

- "One should be ready for teaching profession in terms of knowledge and psychology (GR1O2)".
- "One should be psychologically ready for anything as he/she does not know what he/she could face (GR2O4)".
- "Readiness means being ready to transfer the knowledge on the field and attending the class as expected (GR3O3)".
- "Knowledge is not enough for complete readiness, mental and physical readiness are also necessary (GR2O6)".
- "It is necessary to know the life, know the students, know yourself, know the field, school and the neighborhood for being ready to teach professionally (GR1O7)"

3.2 The fields that They Feel Ready (Competent) for the Teaching Profession

Table 3. The Fields That They Feel Ready (Competent) for the Teaching Profession

S.N.	Themes	Sub-Themes	f
1	Physical readiness	General knowledge on the field (G1, G2, G3)	3
2		Partial professional knowledge (G1,G2,G3)	3
3	Psychological readiness	Professional liability conscience (G1, G2, G3)	3
4	Psychological readiness	Attendance in school and classroom on time and in the place (G1,G3)	3

According to the teacher candidates (participants) it is seen that they feel ready/competent in general knowledge on the field (G1, G2, G3), and although partially in professional knowledge (G1, G2, G3), professional responsibility (G1, G2, G3), attendance in school and classroom on time and in the right place (G1, G2, G3). The number of sub-themes for which the teacher candidates felt ready were found to be four although the professional readiness was defined under 19 sub-themes by the teachers. As is clear from this statement, teacher candidates (19-4=15) do not feel ready for the teaching profession. Some of the views of the participants are as follows:

- I feel partially ready for the knowledge on the field, and knowledge on the profession (GR1O8)
- We attend at the school and the classroom physically but I do not know if we are mentally ready (GR3O5)
- I feel ready in terms of knowledge and professionally (GR2O6).
- I am psychologically ready; however, I have fears in transferring my knowledge (GR2O4).
- I love my job and this is psychologically reassuring however I do not feel ready in terms of knowledge on the profession (GR3O7).

Following are the subjects that the participants do not feel ready/competent about the teaching profession:

3.3 What Are the Fields That They Do Not Feel Ready (Incompetent) for the Teaching Profession?

Table 4. The Fields that They do not Feel Ready (Incompetent) for the Teaching Profession

S.N.	Themes	Coded Sub-Themes	f
1	Knowledge in the field	No complete knowledge on the basic concepts (G1,G2,G3)	3
2		Knowledge on the basic concepts, but inability to transfer (G1,G2,G3)	3
3		No complete knowledge on the field (G1,G2)	2
4		Knowledge on the field, but inability to transfer (G1,G2,G3)	3
5		Inability to attract the attention of students to the field (G1, G3).	2
6		Uncertainty for the knowledge source of the field (G1,G3)	2
7		Having troubles in preparing material for the field	1
8		Inability to relate the field with the real world (G2,G3)	2
9		Uncertainty of field with the other courses (G3)	1
10		Lack of knowledge for the position of the field in the curriculum (G2)	1
11	Education notion	Lack of knowledge on how to prepare students for life (G1,G3)	2
12		Incomplete understanding of the era in which we live in (G1,G2)	2
13		Basic understanding issues in education (Which one is correct, traditional or contemporary?) (G1,G2)	2
14	Education psychology	Not acting according to the developmental characteristics of students (G1,G2,G3)	3
15		Misjudging the students (G1,G2,G3)	3
16		Inability to motivate students (G1, G2, G3)	3

17		Inability to implement student discipline models (G1,G3)	2
18	Classroom management	Inability to manage teaching in the classroom (G2,G3)	2
19		Having problems in communication (G1,G2)	2
20		Inability to use the time appropriately (G1,G2,G3)	3
21		Communication problems with parents (G1,G2,G3)	3
22		Incomplete knowledge on technical method subjects (G2,G3)	2
23		Difficulty in applying known method techniques (G1,G2,G3)	3
24		Problems in anger-management (G1,G3)	2
25		Having application problems with senior management (G1)	1
26		Inability to attract attention in classroom (G1,G3)	2
27		Difficulty in implementing different strategies, techniques (G1, G2, G3)	3
28	Difficulty in transferring the knowledge (G1,G3)	2	
29	Incompetence in using technology (G1,G2,G3)	3	
30		Inability organize physical order in the classroom (G2,G3)	2
31	Assessment and evaluation	Difficulty in preparing assessment tools (G1,G2,G3)	3
32		Difficulty in assessing (G1)	1
33		Difficulty in designing homework (G1,G2,G3)	3
34		Difficulty in designing research homework (G2,G3)	2
35	Special education	Lack of knowledge on what to do with students with learning difficulties (G1,G2,G3)	3
36		Lack of knowledge on what to do with very intelligent students (G1,G2,G3)	3

Examining the fields that the teacher candidates (participants) do not feel ready, in other words incompetent, (Table 4), the teachers who recently started their duty feel incompetent in six themes and in 36 sub-themes related to these themes; namely, knowledge on the field, the notion of education, the psychology of education, classroom management, assessment and evaluation, and special education. Examining the themes and the sub-themes, they mostly feel incompetent in terms of the knowledge on the field and the classroom management subjects. Examining the sub-themes related to the knowledge on the field, the most common subjects were the incomplete training of the knowledge during education, incomplete transfer of theory to application, inability to form the notion of the knowledge in real life. Additionally, the teachers emphasized that knowledge was not fully understood conceptually, there were classroom incompetency, and they felt not ready for assessment and evaluation as well as special students. Some of the views of the participants are as follows:

- I cannot transfer theory into practice (GR1O2, GR1O4, GR1O5, GR1O7, GR2O4, GR2O6, GR3O1,GR3O6).
- I realized I knew nothing when I entered the classroom (GR3O4).
- The children's looks made me agitated when I was lecturing on the field. They did not understand anything. Then I learned the concept of readiness when I was reviewing the books (GR2O6).
- I feel like I have never learned anything in four years (GR2O5)
- It turns out that I was not prepared for the teaching profession when I was a student in the faculty of education. I only prepared for the exams (GR2O5, GR3O2)
- The courses at the university were quite theoretical. Also, practical courses were inefficient. Therefore I'm having a lot of trouble (GR1O3, GR2O7, GR3O1)
- I have trouble in assessment. I have difficulty in preparing assessment tools (GR1O2, GR1O5, GR2O6, GR2O7, GR3O3, GR3O5).
- I do not think I learned the teaching profession. I will learn it in the practice (GR2O5, GR3O6)
- As if I did not receive any training, I imitate the teachers I had during my primary school (GR2O4).
- I have difficulty figuring out how to manage the classroom. I cannot take students' attention (GR2O6).
- I don't know what to say to the parents (GR2O4, GR3O7)
- I do not use any techniques other than lecturing. I actually theoretically know different methods and techniques however I have trouble in application (GR1O3, GR2O6, GR3O1).
- I have difficulty in getting to know the students (GR3O2).
- I don't know how to reflect the students' diversities according to my profession (GR2O5).
- In terms of using technology in the classroom, I cannot do anything except a power point presentation (GR2O5).
- I have trouble about the knowledge on the field. I realized that I forgot the subjects that I knew (GR1O3).
- I do not know how to treat students with learning disabilities (GR2O6).

3.4 Teachers' Suggestions for Improving Professional Readiness

Table 5. Teachers' Suggestions for Improving Professional Readiness

I.D.	Themes	Sub-Themes	f
1	Training	More coverage of the teaching practice (G1, G2, G3)	3
2		More coordination of area and university teachers in applied courses (G1,G2,G3).	3
3		Giving the courses with an integrity of theory and practice (G1,G2,G3).	3
4		Giving application-oriented courses on the knowledge on the field (G1,G2,G3)	3
5		Reducing the courses and focusing on the courses on teaching (G1,G2,G3)	3
6	Professional development	Practical teaching of technology (G1,G2,G3)	3
7		Mentoring by successful teachers (G1,G2,G3)	3
8		The functionality of the in-service training activities (G1,G2,G3)	3
9		Career applications (G2, G3)	2
10		Reading and understanding scientific papers related to the field.	3
11	Individual	Participation in scientific meetings (G1, G2, G3)	3
12		Enthusiasm about the profession (G1,G2)	2
13		Reading books on teaching (G2)	1
14		Believing in education (G1)	1

Examining the suggestions of teachers to improve the level of professional readiness, it is observed that teachers gave suggestions specific to three themes; namely, teacher training, professional development, and individual development and in fourteen sub-themes related to these main themes. Examining the suggestions, it was emphasized that application-oriented courses should be focused, theory and application integrity should be maintained, and technology should be utilized in teaching. The novice teachers need mentoring by successful teachers, functional in-service training activities, scientific literacy, and attendance to scientific workshops (conferences, panels, symposiums etc.). Some of the views of the participants are as follows:

- We have to realize that we are trained as teachers (GR2O4, GR1O5).
- Education faculties should give application-oriented courses rather than theoretical ones (GR1O1, GR1O7, GR1O5, GR1O6, GR2O5, GR2O6, GR3O1,GR3O6, GR3O7).
- During training, field-specific courses should receive special attention (GR1O6, GR2O3)
- Mentoring applications should be carried out after starting the duty (GR2O5)
- After starting the duty, in-service training activities should be functional (GR2O5).

4. Results, Discussion and Suggestion

The study results on the qualitative analysis for novice teachers' level of professional readiness are presented below. According to the participants, the teachers should be ready in three areas: Cognitive, psychological, and physical readiness. The state of being ready for an individual is considered to be three-dimensional, comprising cognitive, psychological and physical readiness. According to the teacher candidates (participants) it is observed that they feel ready/competent in terms of the general knowledge on the field, however partially ready in professional knowledge (G1,G2,G3), professional responsibility G1,G2,G3), attendance in school and classroom on time and in the right place. These results are parallel to those by Üstüner et al. (2009), in which teachers perceive themselves competent at "moderate" level.

Examining the fields that the teacher candidates (participants) do not feel ready yet, in other words areas where they feel incompetent, the teachers who were recently commenced their duty feel incompetent in six themes and in 36 sub-themes related to these themes; namely, the knowledge on the field, the notion of education, the psychology of education, classroom management, assessment and evaluation, special education. These results are supported by the results of Gelbal and Kelecioğlu (2007) who reports that teachers need training on the preparation and the use of assessment techniques, as well as those reported by Demetriadis et al. (2003) suggesting that teachers are unable to integrate knowledge and communication technologies with their teaching methodologies, and also the conclusions of Akbaşlı (2010) asserting that teachers are competent in terms of knowledge on the field, general culture and pedagogical training, however there are weaknesses in practical aspects. Also, problems are observed with the use of technology. This result is supported by findings of Gündüz and Odabaşı (2004) on the insufficient use of technology by the students. According to Gündüz and Odabaşı (2004), this is associated with insufficient amount and quality of courses on technology assisted teaching provided in education faculties where teacher candidates graduate from this institutes with this insufficient training.

Examining the suggestions of teachers to improve the level of professional readiness, it is observed that teachers

provide suggestions in three themes and in fourteen sub-themes related to these themes; namely, teacher training, professional development and individual development. In particular, teachers suggested to focus on application-oriented courses, to maintain the integrity of theory and application, and to use technology in teaching. As was observed in the teachers' suggestions, there are problems in transferring the theory into practice. There are many studies on the importance of the knowledge on the field and knowledge on teaching, in other words, the integrity of theory and practice. One of the objectives of the reforms in teacher training carried out in many countries in the 1980s and 1990s was to maintain a balance between theory and practice. It was reported that the theoretical courses were reduced and applied courses in schools were increased in teacher training programs in Britain, France, Australia, New Zealand, Turkey, and the USA to some extent, and also in some countries including Germany, France and Japan, a whole year of teacher training is allocated to applied courses (Bonnet, 1996; Wilkin, 1999, cited by Yıldırım, 2011).

As a result of this study, it was observed that teacher candidates cannot use the theoretical knowledge and therefore cannot transfer that knowledge. This situation can be associated with the information literacy of the teachers because information literacy includes information collection, evaluation, organizing and presenting skills (Erdem and Akkoyunlu, 2002). Eric (2004, cited in Başaran, 2005) explains the properties of information literacy as; evaluation of information, organizing information so that it could be used in practice, integration of new knowledge, preliminary learning with other knowledge possessed, and the use of knowledge effectively in critical thinking and decision-making. This shows that teachers' level of professional readiness does not correlate with the information literacy.

The results of the study coincide with the "Workshop on Theory and Practice in Teacher Training, (2013)" organized by Gaziosmanpaşa University. In the workshop, the common statement of the teachers who newly started their duties was as follows: "There are serious adjustment problems between the applications of the lessons we have received theoretically, you strive to train us ideally for various environments however the reality is far from what you said". Hence, it can be concluded that theory and practice integrity could not be provided fully in teacher training.

The review of the related literature reveals that the education of teachers is an issue in every country and different implementations are in place to target this issue. The literature review showed that the investigations over this issue brought criticism to education programs in place. Referring to this concern, countries such as the USA, England, Germany, France, Australia, and New Zealand significantly developed aspects of teacher training such as the supervision of programs, the content of programs, the standards, the accreditation, and the balance between theory and practice (Yıldırım, 2011). Due to the importance of teacher training programs in initiatives to reform the education process (Varış, 1973), teacher training remains a current and relevant issue at hand. Many countries have a process in place that prescribes the postgraduate education. This shows global relevance of teacher training and the teachers' professional readiness level.

It is seen that the teacher training programs in various countries have differences and complexities (Sariboğa-Alagöz, 2006). Like that, complexity in professional development activities has been observed. Cros, Duthilleul, Cox ve Kantasalmi (2004) explain the reason of this complexity as the changing understanding of teacher education in the community. The training of teachers in pre-service is conducted by considering the theory-practice balance in many countries. Ability, attitude, personality etc. test applications can be performed in training period of students in order to investigate the psychological readiness of them. These applications are conducted in USA, Japan and Finland (Abazoğlu, 2014). These applications can be conducted in other counties, as well.

Considering that the teaching profession is a universal service to humanity, the training of teachers should not be left to chance. In this context, it is necessary to improve teaching practices, arrange the courses to be received by teacher candidates in their pre-service training appropriately (Işık, Çiltaş, Baş, 2010), and innovate teacher training continuously in accordance with the changes in the developing world and the basic objectives of education (Ekinci, 2010). Considering that 60% of the teaching profession is know-how (Altan, 2014), teachers should be trained about the methods. As the teachers stated, to ensure the integrity of the theory and practice, theoretical courses can be given in the first two years in the training program. In the last two years the teacher candidates can learn about applications in the guidance of a teacher in consultation with academics. For this purpose, academic offices can be established in schools and the professional developments of the teacher candidates can be monitored and reported. Reports can be used as a criterion in the appointment of teacher candidates.

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