

Curriculum Development Competencies of Form Teacher Candidates

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ABSTRACT

It can be stated that education plays a critical role at shaping the future of the nation. Designed curriculum and teachers as a developers and practitioners of the curriculum are accepted as a major drivers to increase the quality of the education. From this perspective, classroom teachers should have necessary competencies to develop curriculum. The current study aims to examine 222 participants in context of curriculum development competencies in the third and fourth forms who are studying in form teacher program at Cyprus International University (CIU), Near East University (NEU), European University of Lefke (EUL) and lastly Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). The current study employed the scale which proposed by Duman (2006) to investigate curriculum development skills of the participants. The data which collected from participants was analyzed through SPSS. Moreover, it could be expressed that curriculum development competencies of the participants was tested by appointing arithmetic mean analysis and Independent Samples T test and One Way Anova Analysis were employed to investigate statistical differences among participants in context of curriculum development competencies with the light of ($p < 0,05$). Study revealed that gender, class and university in which participants are studying were found statistically significant in context of curriculum development competencies. Moreover study recommended to revize the related cources which would increase the competencies of participants thus would be helpful to overcome their incompetencies particularly on preparing the course plans with the light of multi-course theory, capability to use different methods and techniques to increase the capacities of the students at the highest level, diversifying the teaching-learning process by considering individual differences of the students, capability of organizing learning sphere by considering different preliminary experiences. Study also advised to increase sample size and conduct TUKEY analysis for obtaining more accurate results.

KEYWORDS: Education, form teacher candidates, curriculum development competencies

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, educational institutions are considered as one of the key ingredients of education process. However, it could be stressed that education does not only existing in educational institutions. To be more precise, In addition to educational institutions, there are also various institutions that transmit vocational knowledge to the learners.

No doubt that, education t might take place within the family, workplace and in social groups. It could be stated that education is one of the vital tools used to perform “enculturation” within the community. It can be argued that enculturation is shaped through the character tics of the individuals and the culture in which they are born and grown. Moreover, communities convey the culture in which they possess to the new generations. In that sense, community influences individuals with cultural values which is called as enculturation. Therefore, it could be indicated that education is the deliberate way of enculturation (Fidan, 2012).

The term of education is identified by various authors in different ways. Tyler, who is considered as one of the pioneers of educational scholars, described education as a process of changing the behaviors of the individuals (Senemoğlu, 2012). Moreover, Çilenti, (1984) defined the term of education as a process of shaping behaviors of individuals which is desired by society. Education in a broader sense; is described as a process that boosts self-development by improving skills, knowledge, moral values, decision making of the individuals (Öztürk, 2005). Furthermore, Tezcan (1985) expressed the term of education as a process which prepares individuals to adult life and injects them necessary talents and perspectives for the future life.

Besides of these, educators have stressed that education takes place through formal and informal education. Formal education could be indicated that providing education to the learners with the light of the education plan which shaped by the certain purpose. In formal education system, teaching and learning facilities are designed by the teachers from the beginning to the end of the education. It can be mentioned that education which provided to the learners through educational institutions is named as formal education. Informal education, could be indicated as the education which shaped by daily routines. Moreover, in contrast to formal education, informal education is not planned. In informal education context learners learn from their experiences (Fidan, 2012).

Şişman (2007) discussed that education is consisting from various disciplines. These disciplines can be stated as social theories, social strata, ranks, roles and responsibilities, culture and law. Malthus (1820) mentioned that education is one the vital elements for the individuals to live well. Furthermore, Kruguer and Lindahl (2001) have stated that education has a prominent role at declining crime rate and maintaining stability both in political and economic fields.

Baykul (1992) had stressed that education is a system which shaped by certain elements. These elements could be indicated as input, process, output and lastly evaluation. To be more exact, financial resources, educational tools and equipment, qualifications of the learners, educational programs which are designed to inject desired behaviors to the learners, laws and procedures which are appointed for educational purposes, social values and structure of culture which are related with education are constituting the inputs of education whereas; courses which are formed to inject desired behaviors to the learners and educational activities which planned for the learners are constituting process of education. Output consists from the outcomes of the process. Lastly, decisions about students and activities to explore deficiencies and root of these deficiencies could be referred as evaluation.

It could be emphasized that transmitting necessary knowledge and skills to the individuals are considered as one of the key ingredients to form qualified community which in turn would trigger social development. Moreover, it might be argued that one of the prerequisites of formulating qualified community is to plan an education system which is favoring creative and competitive motives and injecting the importance continuous life learning to the individuals. No doubt that, teachers are one of the most crucial elements of the education. From this framework, degree of success of educations system is closely associated with the skills and competencies of the teachers (Gül, 2004). Moreover, it is believed that skills and competencies of the teachers play important role for achieving educational goals. To be more precise, teachers should have adequate knowledge at designing learning sphere, planning teaching and learning activities to inject desired behaviors to the learners and lastly evaluating the impact of all these facilities on learners (Kuzgun, 1991). Schreglmann (2016) also dictated that form teachers competencies on curriculum development are critical for stimulating the effectiveness of education.

Aim of the Study

It could be lamented that primary education is considered as one of the cornerstones of life and education as it plays a prominent role at shaping the character of the individuals. In that sense, form teachers should have necessary skills and competencies. In other words, the inadequacy of form teachers in educational sphere will negatively influence students which in turn it would be quite difficult to compensate this negativity during the ongoing education process. Moreover, it could be stressed that curriculum development is one of the vital mechanisms for building effective education. Therefore, to trigger influential education for the students, form teacher candidates and form teachers should be trained through pre-service and in-service training programs to advance their competencies towards to the curriculum development. The main objective of the current study is to explore curriculum development competencies of form teacher candidates who will serve as form teachers in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC)

Significance of the Study

The current study can be considered significant in several ways. First, since the present literature fails to provide sufficient research on the curriculum development competencies of form teacher candidates, the findings of the study are expected to help to recognize the level of curriculum development skills of form teacher candidates in the third and fourth forms who are studying in form teacher program at Cyprus International University (CIU), Near East University (NEU), European University of Lefke (EUL) and lastly Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU). Secondly, it may be considered as one of the initial research regarding in North Cyprus in this context. Therefore, the current study is expected to add to the scholarly research and literature about curriculum development competencies of form teacher candidates as well as deepen understanding towards to the efficiency of pre-service training programs.

METHODOLOGY

Research Model (pek gerekmebilir makalelerde)

Descriptive scanning method was employed for the current study. Descriptive scanning is the preferred method for determining the current situation. However, quantitative data collection tools are appointed in descriptive scanning methods. In this context, the descriptive screening method was accepted as the most appropriate research method for the current study as it aimed to discover the curriculum development competencies of the form teacher candidates in the 3rd and 4th grade during the 2017-2018 education periods

Research Questions of the Study

The research questions of the current study could be expressed as follows;

- What is the level of curriculum development competency of form teacher candidates?
- Is there any statistical significance among gender of form teacher candidates and their curriculum development competencies?
- Is there any statistical significance among the grade of form teacher candidates (3rd and 4th form) and their curriculum development competencies?
- Is there any statistical any statistical significance among university which of form teachers are educated and their curriculum development competencies?

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study was constituted from 222 form teacher candidates who are educated in the 3rd and 4th classes of the form teacher department in CIU, NEU, EMU and EUL during 2017-2018 education year. Moreover, sampling method of the study could be stressed as convenience sampling.

Data Collection Tools

It can be discussed that data which is associated with the study would be gathered by executing the Personal Information Form and Curriculum Development Competency Scale

Personal Information Form: The form attempts to collect information about the socio-demographic profile of the participants such as gender, grade and lastly university which form teacher candidates are educated.

Curriculum Development Competency Scale: The current study employed the scale which proposed by Duman (2006) to investigate curriculum development skills of the participants.

It could be mentioned that while Duman (2006) was proposing the scale, expert opinions were obtained from the academicians working in the faculty of education. Furthermore, reliability analysis of the developed scale relies within accepted limits ($\alpha = 0,91$). In that sense, it could be stressed that there is no obstacle for the use of the scale used in the study in academic researches

In addition to that, sample statements which the curriculum development scale outlines could be stated as "knowledge and the skill required for the curriculum development", "understanding the importance knowledge and skill which are required for developing a curriculum, "ability to determine content of the courses by considering the competencies and learning styles of the students" " having a knowledge on the basic characteristics of teaching methods", " having a knowledge to perform assessment and evaluation for the education" etc

Moreover, it could be mentioned that 4-point scale was appointed for the current study. 1 = "Weak"; 2 = "Medium", 3 = "Good", 4 = "Very Good". The weight range which appointed for the present study was computed as 0.75. The Rating scale and their expressions could be indicated by the following table.

Table 1. Ranges and competency of curriculum development

| Ranges | Competency of Curriculum Development |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.00-1.74 | Poor |
| 1.75-2.49 | Moderate |
| 2.50-3.24 | Good |
| 3.24-4.00 | Very Good |

Data Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences 24,0 software program was used to analyze the data. Moreover, frequency, cornbach alpha, desriptive, Independent Samples t test, and lastly One-Way Anova analysis were conducted to interpret findings of the study.

Conclusion and Discussion

It could be mentioned that education is one of the most critical driving force to accelerate economic growth. Therefore, education plays an important role to inject qualified individuals to the workforce. In that sense, it is believed that teachers have a great responsibility at creating qualified communities.

Furthermore, it might be stressed that from their birth to a certain age individuals are educated by their parents then they attend to the educational institutions to learn social values. Form teachers could be identified as an educators who are inoculating the basis of teaching and learning to the students. Therefore, their competency to transmit information to their students plays critical role at educational context.

In addition to these, form teachers should have competency to develop a curriculum for effective education. In other words, form teachers should have necessary skills to formulate curriculum by considering the needs and area of interests of their students while shaping the contents and assesing the curriculum. Besides of these, form teachers are expected to have competency to evaluate and revize the curriculum in case of necessity.

As previously indicated, the current research has been conducted with 222 form teacher candidates. The most remarkable findings of the research are listed below

- Findings of the study revealed that cirruculum development competency of form teacher candidates were poor at "preparing course plans which are paralel to the multi-course theory", "determining course contents by considering the students", "special education needs", "using various approaches to accelerate capacities of the students," "diversifying the teaching and learning process by considering individual differences", "being able to arrange learning sphere by considering various previous experiences".
- Apart from these, result of the study also showed that form teacher candidates had a moderate competency on "having a knowledge to develop a curriculum "having a knowledge of measurement and evaluation in educational context", "having a knowledge on social-historical-philosophical foundations of curriculum development for education", "having a knowledge to evaluate curriculum development process", "having a knowledge on learning and teaching by considering - collaborative learning and constructivist learning philosophies etc.) and lastly "preparing a unitized annual plan" From this framework, it could be mentioned that the findings of the study was partially compatible with the findings of Duman (2006). Duman (2006) found that form teacher candidates determined the having a knowledge to develop curriculum is weak.
- Beside of these current study also signified that , participants were good at "determining the content of the courses by considering the skills and learning styles of the students", "formulating a measurement tool by relying contemporary approaches", "Adapting teaching strategies for the students with specific learning difficulties", "having a knowledge on the basic features of teaching methods" "to be able to identify appropriate measuring instruments for purpose"; "designing the course contents by relying readiness of the students"; "having a knowledge on instructional strategies","arranging the course objectives with the light of the level of students. ", "rearranging teaching-learning process by considering the outcomes of measurement and evaluation", "determining the limits of content of courses by considering regional characteristics", "preparing learning centered course plans", "formulating goals for the educational program", "matching the content of the courses with the features of the course, "content order, analysis knowledge" "can match the level of the education program with the needs of the students; "critically evaluating educational programs"; "Having an adequate knowledge and skill to develop curriculum" and lastly "having an ability to prepare table of specifications", They were found to be at a good level in curriculum development issues such as "preparing table of specifications". This finding of the current study was partially parallel with the study of Duman (2006). In other words, Duman (2006) also found particularly on methodological issues, competency of form teacher candidates were at good level.
- Results of the study also signaled that participants' curriculum development competencies were very good on "establishing relationship among educational program items (purpose, content, teaching process, evaluation)", "formulating goals at different levels during curriculum development process" (Cognitive, Affective, Psychomotor), "understanding of the importance of knowledge and skill which required for curriculum development ", "using technology (overhead, data show etc.) which is necessary for learning-teaching process".

- Independent samples T test were employed to discover statistical significances among curriculum development competencies of form teacher candidates and their gender. Gender and curriculum development competencies were found statistically significant on “understanding the importance of skills and knowledge which is required curriculum development”, “matching the level of the curriculum with the needs of the students”, “determining the contents of the curriculum by relying the talents and learning styles of the student”, “capability of organizing learning sphere by considering different preliminary experiences“. To create better understanding, results revealed curriculum development competencies of male form teacher candidates were very good at “understanding the importance of skills and knowledge which is required curriculum development”, “matching the level of the curriculum with the needs of the students” whereas female form teachers candidates’ curriculum development competencies were found moderate at “capability of organizing learning sphere by considering different preliminary experiences” This finding of the current study is parallel with the findings of several scholarly researches on relevant field (Yıldız and Baycan, 2012; Baş, 2016).
- As previously mentioned independent samples t test was employed to determine statistical significance among grade of form teacher candidate and their curriculum development competencies. Results revealed that statistical significance was existed on “having knowledge on social-historical-philosophical foundations of curriculum development in educational context”, " having knowledge on teaching-learning approaches", " identifying the most appropriate measurement tools for objectives", "re-arranging teaching and learning process with the light of the outcomes of measurement and evaluation". To be more precise, it was found that form teacher candidates in the last grade had a good level of competence, whereas grade 3 form teacher candidates had moderate competency. This finding of the current study is consistent with the Duman (2006) study. One of the reasons for this result may be indicated as that form teacher candidates who are studying in the 4th grade are having chance to deepen their understanding about curriculum development through courses and have opportunities to have internship.
- One Way Anova test was conducted to investigate statistical significances among university of participants’ and their curriculum development competency. It was found that participants were statistically significant particularly on “ having knowledge and skill which are required for curriculum development”, “ understanding the importance of knowledge and skill which are required for curriculum development”, “ knowledge on the main philosophies which are closely related with curriculum development”, “having a knowledge on social-historical-philosophical foundations of curriculum development in educational context”, “having ability to match the level of curriculum with the needs of the students”, " establishing relationship among educational program items (purpose, content, teaching process, evaluation”, “organizing learning sphere by considering different preliminary experiences”, “having sufficient information on the features of teaching approaches”, preparing learning centered course plans”, ”having a knowledge to evaluate critically the education programs”. The findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of Duman (2006). One of the reasons behind of this finding could be signified as a depth of knowledge and experience that academicians obtained through attending various symposiums / seminars or having publications on the related field effects the way of transmitting necessary information to the form teacher candidates to promote their curriculum development competencies.

Recommendations

The fundamental aim of this part of the study is to provide recommendations with the light of the findings.

Recommendations to departments of participants

With the light of the findings it could be stressed that participants of the study are poor below-mentioned curriculum development competencies;

- preparing course plans which are parallel to the multi-course theory,
- determining course contents by considering the students’ special education needs,
- Using various approaches to accelerate capacities of the students,
- Diversifying the teaching and learning process by considering individual differences.
- Being able to arrange learning sphere by considering various previous experiences

Therefore, courses that related with curriculum development should be revised in a way to mitigate with the shortcomings which were mentioned above.

Moreover, it is necessary to diversify curriculum development sources that are taught so that the form teacher candidates could be equipped on the following competencies

- Knowledge of measuring and evaluating the quality of education
- Knowledge of social-historical and philosophical foundations of curriculum development in educational context.

- Knowledge to evaluate curriculum which had been developed.
- Knowledge to prepare united annual plan
- Knowledge to design learning and teaching approaches by considering collaborative learning and constructivist philosophies.

Recommendations for the Future- Related Studies

Future related studies could be designed as comparative basis to create better understanding in terms of similarities and differences among curriculum development competencies of form teacher candidates in different nations. Moreover, comparative studies could also generate opportunities to present different perspectives on curriculum development courses and activities thus will add the different insights to the relevant literature besides of these, increasing the sample size and employing post hoc. tests such as TUKEY could generate chances to obtain more reliable findings.

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