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## A Phenomenological Investigation with Prospective Teachers of Special Education: If It Was Me!

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**Abstract:** The main purpose of this research was to reveal the opinions of prospective teachers of special education teacher education program about special education schools and the special education field. This study was used the phenomenological designed. It involved 14 special education teachers of Harbiye Selman Nasir Eskicak Secondary School. The collected data were subjected to data mining by content analysis. Some results had been obtained regarding the dreams and problems and solutions proposed by prospective teachers in a special education institution and special education. It had been found out that prospective teachers design student-centered and differentiate the disability differences among individuals-oriented design when designing special education schools. In addition, they pointed out that there were some problems related to teachers, teaching environment, curriculum, legislation and parents in the field of special education. It had been seen that prospective teachers who produce solutions to these problems have awareness about the field. With the help of the results obtained from the study, suggestions about the special education field were developed.

**Keywords:** *Special education, prospective teachers, problems, solutions, phenomenology.*

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### Introduction

The basic success of education systems is determined by the opportunities provided for normal individuals and some success criteria that individuals show at the end of these opportunities. National or international indicators are some other means of demonstrating the success of education systems. However, the real success of education systems can be determined by qualified schooling of a person with disabilities in need of special education in the context of equality of opportunity and facility. Otherwise, it is easier for individuals with normal intelligence and physical structure to access and benefit from the education system as compared to individuals who need special education. For this reason, an education system should provide accessible opportunities for a person with persons who need special education. Therefore, education should focus on what students with special needs can do rather than the type of disability (Sucuoglu, 2009).

The term Special Education is specifically expressed for those who have not received education normally. The term Special Education includes all aspects of education for exceptional children, physical, mental, disadvantaged and gifted children. However, these methods are generally not accepted for average children (Jain, 2006). Educational programs and teaching-learning environments designed for persons with normally accepted intelligence and persons with no congenital or subsequent disability cannot meet the actual needs of persons in need of special education. As it is known, persons with physical and mental disabilities and gifted individuals outside the normal group which is called dominant groups, have the right to receive customized education. With this right to education, the field of "special education" was born (Subakan & Koc, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to provide training programs and training environments related to the obstacle area that will facilitate their development. Special education and special education fields are a very important scientific education area that can produce solutions to this situation.

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Special education aims to normalize different aspects of the persons such as intelligence, psychomotor skills, life skills, communication, physical and physical structure, and to improve the existing superior abilities of the gifted ones. In this regard, special education can be defined as education aimed at increasing the level of competence to persons with special needs and individuals with superior characteristics to the best level of competence in line with their capabilities, prevents these situations of i persons with different kinds of disabilities to become a vital obstacle equips disabled persons with skills to support their integration into society and to become independent and productive persons (Ataman, 2005). Structures with a learning-teaching atmosphere where such training is given are called special education institutions.

The person's need for special education is caused by some of the innate characteristics brought about by him/her and the different kinds of events s/he experiences while living a normal life. In other words, the need for special education is a congenital or subsequent condition. At this point, the concepts of injury, disability and obstacles related to special education emerge. The injury is a temporary or permanent disorder of the present structure or function of the person that occurs in the physiological or mental dimension of the person. Disability is the prevention of a person's inability to fulfill the skills s/he performs in normal life as a result of the injury. The obstacle is a person's inability to maintain a normal life because of the inability to adapt to the social environment or is unable to achieve something (Ozsoy, Ozyurek & Eripek, 2000; Ataman, 2005; Usta, 2009). These three situations are factors that cause a person to need special education.

Persons in need of special education have different characteristics than persons with normal intelligence and skills. These differences make them special. Jain (2006) describes the characteristics of different persons as follows:

1. They are significantly different from normal individuals.
2. Differences can be emotional, mental, physical and social. One or more of these may create a difference in the individual.
3. An individual with a disability needs a special environment.
4. The special environment for individuals with diversity can be established in a normal school system or in a special education school. This special environment enables the educational goals it needs.

The obstacles or disabilities of the different persons who need special education and which are given some of the above characteristics should be identified correctly. A full understanding of the place of different persons - students or children in the field of special education plays an important role in the success of their educational activities and their normalization. In order to completely understand the place of persons with these differences in the field of special education, accurate recognition and diagnostic services are needed. At the end of the recognition and identification process, the person is included in one of the different groups given in Figure 1 below. These different groups play an important role in the decision of the education type, level, school and learning-teaching environment and the expert support that the person will receive.

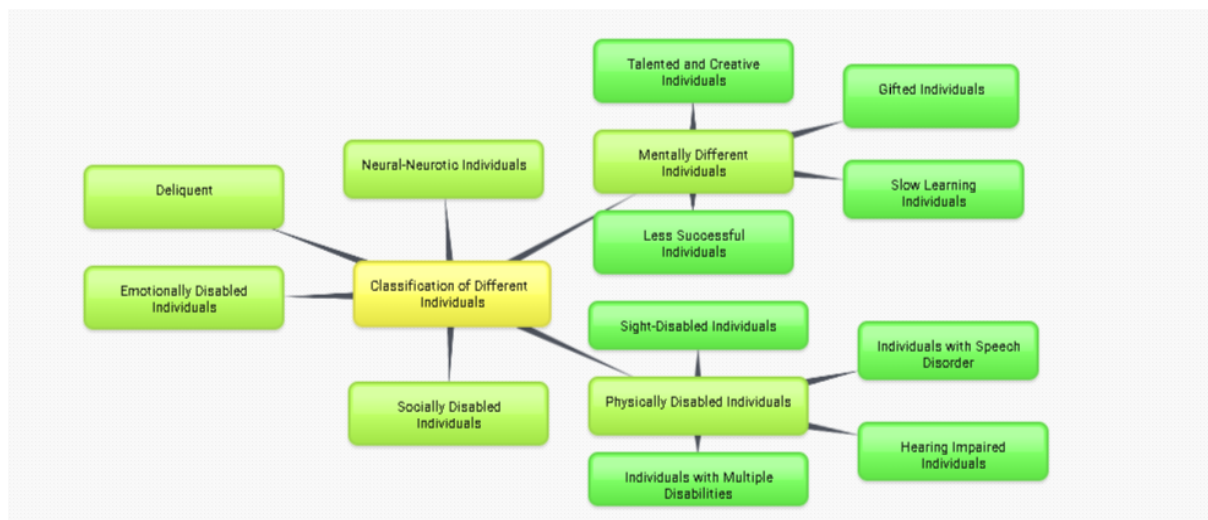


Figure 1. Classification of Different Individuals (Jain, 2006)

It is known that persons with special needs have different needs from their peers in terms of their physical, mental, emotional and social characteristics (Orhan & Genc, 2015). Obstacles that prevent the proper identification of persons with special needs need to be overcome. The first step in developing and creating solutions to problems in each of these areas of disability is to accept and examine them (Metzger, Simpson & Bakken, 2010). Thus, the individual can be identified correctly and special teaching needs can be planned correctly.

Education programs that will enable persons with special needs to gain competencies that will bring him closer to life, special education programs, individualized learning mechanisms and learning-teaching environments should be designed by considering the needs and disability area of the individual. The un-designed teaching atmosphere for the persons in need of special education will not help him/her overcome her vital and social barriers. This will slow-walk or prevent their normalization. The same applies to gifted persons who need special education. Their existing capabilities should be maximized, not their normalization. In this case, arrangements should be also made for gifted persons in the context of programs and teaching-learning process-environments (Bolat & Tekin, 2017). Because special education students in both groups are outside the dominant group. Special education teachers and prospective teachers should be able to realize this distinction and design programs and learning environments that can meet the special needs of persons in need of special education. For this reason, in this study, the opinions of the prospective teachers of special education teaching who were consulted with phenomenological research design about special education institutions and special education field were tried to be examined. In order to realize the main purpose of the research, the following sub-objectives were determined:

1. What are the participants' views on the learning-teaching environment they experience during the institutional experience practices?
2. What kind of learning environment would prospective teachers design?
3. What problems do prospective teachers identify in the field of special education based on observations of institutional experience?
4. What are the solutions for the problems that the prospective teachers identify in the field of special education?

## Method

### *Research Model*

The research is a qualitative study, and it was designed in phenomenology. Phenomenology helps to identify or interpret the experiences and observations of individuals about a case. This research is a phenomenological study and takes into account the Husserl approach which explains the present situation (Creswell, 2007). In this study, phenomenology was chosen as the research design in order to reveal the opinions of prospective teachers of special education teaching about special education institutions and special education field in a diagnostic and interpretive manner.

### *Target Population of the Study*

The target population of this study consists of 14 prospective teachers at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level who took 14 weeks of Institutional Experience course in the 2018-2019 Spring semester. The participants were coded as (P). Information about these teachers are given in Table 1.

*Table 1. Target Population of the Study*

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13	P14	N	%
Female		x		x	x		x				x	X	x	x	8	57
Male	x		X			x		x	x	x					6	43
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Procedure*

The Institution Experience course given to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year prospective teachers in the special education department in the spring term of 2018-2019 was planned as 4 credits per week, 3 credits are application and 1 credit is theoretical. The course that lasts 14 weeks consists of 12 weeks course, 2 weeks of midterm and final exams. 15 students who are involved in the research universe registered for this course, but one student was not able to complete the course as an absence. Each of these 14 students met for one hour on Tuesdays and presented information, question-answer and discussion about the experiences of the institution. In addition, the groundwork of this study was prepared and the cognitive preparation and awareness of prospective teachers were created. In the 12<sup>th</sup> week, a semi-structured interview form consisting of 4 questions prepared by the researcher was distributed to the prospective teachers and they were asked to answer the questions. It was seen that some students transferred their designs to the drawings for the second question.

### *Data Collection*

The data source of the research was composed of 14 prospective teachers from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who took Institution Experience course in 2018-2019 Spring semester. 14 prospective teachers participated in the research, 8 of them were female, and 6 of them were male. In this qualitative research, an interview form consisting of four questions was used to collect data. In the preparation of the semi-structured interview form, the academic objectives of the Institution

Experience course were taken into consideration. The first questionnaire was sent to the academicians who were experts in two different special education fields. These field experts suggested that the two questions should be excluded from the discussion on the grounds that they do not overlap with the objectives of the course. These two items, which could not be reconciled, were removed from the interview form and the remaining four questions were rearranged in terms of language and expression and the interview form was finalized. The questions posed to prospective teachers in the interview form are given below:

1. What are your views on the learning-teaching environment in which you experience during the institution experience practices?
2. If you were, what kind of learning environment would you design?
3. What are the problems you have identified in the field of special education based on your observations in the institution experience?
4. What are your solutions to the problems we have identified in special education?

### *Data Analysis*

As a result of analyzing the data collected in relation to phenomenology, experiences and meanings can be revealed. For this reason, the answers given to the questions in the data collection tool were analyzed by content and categories, sub-categories, and codes were created for the related department. In order to conduct a content analysis, it is the processing of the data coming from the data collection tool, coding according to the meaning of the data, switching from the codes to the themes, interpreting the themes and codes and research (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016).

### *Validity and Reliability of the Study*

One of the most important issues in qualitative research is the reliability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Creswell, 2007; San Jose, Bahket & Al Alsahli, 2017). Reliability in qualitative research is based on the reproducibility of the study (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). For this reason, in order to ensure the reliability of the research, a different field expert other than the researcher read and examined the answers given to the questions and checked whether the phenomena in the context of the research purpose could be measured. The data analysis methods made by the researcher were explained to the field expert so that the transactions performed were controlled impartially. Thus, the reliability of the study was tried to be ensured.

The validity of qualitative research indicates the accuracy of the research findings (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). In order to ensure the validity of the data collection and analysis processes, the collected data were kept consistent and meaningful. In order to ensure validity, the consistency of the data analysis method with the process was checked in the context of internal validity, and the generalizability of the results reached for external validity was studied. In order to increase the external validity of the research, the research methodology and the activities done in this process are explained in detail. Thus, the validity and reliability of the research were ensured. In addition, the data set and codes obtained are protected in such a way as to allow other researchers to review them.

On the other hand, in the context of the ethical foundations of the research, the participants contributed to the study on a voluntary basis. Their drawings and the information they provided were used in the research, without prejudice to their identity. Special education teachers in the school were informed about the research.

## **Findings**

The findings obtained from the data collection tool used in the study are presented according to the sub-objectives of the study respectively.

### *1. Opinions about learning-teaching environment*

Table 2 shows the categories and sub-categories of the prospective teachers of the department of special education teachers' answers to the question "What are your views on the learning-teaching environment in which you experience during the institution experience practices?" in the interview form.

*Table 2. According to prospective teachers, learning-teaching environment:*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
School	Structurally unsuitable for special education purposes	P4, P7, P8, P9, P10, P13, P14	50
	Inadequate infrastructure	P2, P9, P12, P13, P14	37,5
	Inaccessibility for disabled individuals	P3, P6, P8, P9, P12	37,5
	Limited to influence environment	P3, P5	14,2
	Unsafe	P5, P9	14,2

Table 2. Continued

Categories	Sub-categories	f	%
Classroom	Small classrooms	P1, P4, P9, P11, P12, P13	42,8
	Inadequate materials	P2, P3, P8, P10, P11	35,7
	Less number of classrooms	P2, P9, P12, P13, P14	35,7
	Not properly designed	P6, P8, P10	21,4
	Lack of camera	P5, P9	14,2
Social Facilities	Limited social activity area	P1, P5, P7, P10	28,5
	Lack of sport activities	P3 P8, P9	21,4
	Limited access to social environment	P6, P11, P13	21,4
	Lack of nutritional opportunities	P2, P3, P7	21,4
Auxiliary Units	Insufficient number of auxiliary staffs	P5, P9, P11, P13	28,5
	Lack of support rooms	P11, P13	14,2
	Insufficient health units	P11	7,1
Appearance	Not attractive	P3, P4, P7, P9, P12, P13	35,7
	Colors not properly selected	P4, P7, P10, P12	28,5
	No special education differences	P1, P4, P7, P8	28,5
	Look neglected	P6, P8, P11	21,4

When Table 2 was examined, it was seen that 5 different categories have emerged in relation to the teaching-learning environment according to the impressions of prospective teachers of special education teaching during the institution experience. These were “school, classroom, social facilities, auxiliary units and appearance” categories. 21 different subcategories have occurred by these categories. The concept cloud formed by the views of the learning-teaching environment experienced during teacher institution experience practices is given in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Learning-teaching environment according to prospective teachers

The most prominent situation among the categories in Figure 2 is the sub-category of “structurally unsuitable for special education purposes” ( $f=7$ ). Half of the prospective teachers do not see the school as a structure suitable for special education purposes in relation to the learning-teaching environment according to their impressions in the institution experience. A prospective teacher's opinion regarding this situation is given below:

*“Special education institutions are places where individuals with special needs should receive education. If there is special requirement, these schools should be designed accordingly. I think this structure does not reflect the purpose of special education both in terms of education and school structure.” (P7)*

When the status of the sub-categories in Table 2 was examined, the sub-category “small classrooms” in the classroom category reflected the second important situation regarding the learning-teaching environment by prospective teachers ( $f=6$ ). A prospective teacher's opinion regarding this situation is given below:

*"Our students are quite different from other students. There are some obstacles in terms of intelligence and body. They find it difficult to stay in a place where regular students sit in their classrooms. Most of the time, when they want to move, our classes become an event space for us. However, small classrooms limit our educational activities. There should be an area that can carry out additional studies or designed places where we can teach life skills." (P11)*

The sub-categories "limited social activity area" in the social facilities category, "insufficient number of auxiliary staffs" in the auxiliary units category and "not attractive" in the aspect category are the prominent views of the prospective teachers regarding the learning-teaching environment. Some prospective teachers' opinions regarding this situation are given below:

*"It is wrong to say that there is no need for social activities here by separating special education from other types of education because our students need more socialization. The limited social facilities of the school negatively affect the development of individuals benefiting from special education." (P7)*

*"Special education teachers need help while teaching in the classroom. As I have seen in this school, there is a shortage of helpful staff. Teachers spend time on other jobs. This situation interferes with the teachers' training with the students." (P13)*

*"It's not interesting when I look at the school from the outside. However, special educational institutions should make a difference. I don't see that in this school. Special education students should also be interested." (P4)*

The two sub-categories in the classroom category "inadequate materials" and "less number of classrooms" stand out among the opinions of prospective teachers. Two prospective teachers' opinions regarding this situation is given below:

*"When we need to teach skills to special education students, we need to use a lot of tools. But when I looked at the situation in the school, I found that the course materials were inadequate and the ones that are existing are missing!" (P8)*

*"I think the number of teachers is quite inadequate. However, although there are teachers, the number of classrooms in this school is quite insufficient. Different learning classes are required for different disabilities in the field of special education. However, the facilities of this school seem insufficient for this. I had the opportunity to be in several different schools. I can say that for the whole." (P9)*

In addition, the sub-categories "Inadequate infrastructure", "Inaccessibility for disabled individuals", "Limited to influence environment" and "Unsafe" made up the subcategories of the school category. The sub-categories "Inadequate materials", "Less number of classrooms", "Not properly designed" and "Lack of camera" made up the subcategories of the classroom category. The sub-categories "Lack of sports activities", "Limited access to the social environment" and "Lack of nutritional opportunities" made up the subcategories of the social facilities category. The sub-categories of "Lack of support rooms" and "Insufficient health units" constituted other sub-categories that formed according to the opinions of teachers in the auxiliary units category. In the last category, appearance category, there are sub-categories such as "Colors not properly selected", "No special education differences" and "Look neglected".

## 2. Teaching-learning environment design

The prospective teachers of the department of special education teaching answered the question "If you were, what kind of learning environment would you design?" in the interview form of the prospective teachers. Some prospective teachers tried to explain the learning-teaching environment in the special education they designed by drawing. When the answers of prospective teachers to this question were examined, it is seen that there are three important categories. The categories and codes related to this question are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Learning-teaching environment designed by prospective teachers

<b>"If you were, what kind of learning environment would you design?"</b>			
<b>If it was me:</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>%</b>
When building classes as a priority, I would check the students' reports and separate them according to their specific educational needs. (P3)			
I would design a class and education program for the kind of special education the student needs, that is, whatever the disability area is. (P6)			
I would transport according to the field of mental or physical disability shows. We cannot tell if there is a need for special education without knowing its inadequacy! (P7)	Disability/Obstacle Centered	7	50
I prepare a teaching plan for the student based on learning difficulties. Then I arrange the classroom environment according to the teaching. (P9)			

Table 3. Continued

"If you were, what kind of learning environment would you design?"			
If it was me:	Category	f	%
When admission to a special education institution, the level of inadequacy should be considered. The teacher should also provide teaching considering this report. I would help my students by doing this. (P11)			
The situations separating the special education student from the normal student are taken into consideration. I look at the field of learning disability. I check your physical disability. I make programs for him. I arrange my class. That would be my main point of work. (P13)			
For me, my work plan is related to the area of special education. The student is already receiving special education because he is inadequate in that field. I'd consider that. (P14)			
When my student comes to my class, I arrange a teaching class just as easy as he will have to learn. I put the tools in his reach. I make a class for him to reach me. The student should learn comfortably. That would be my class. (P1)			
I'm looking at schools, students with disabilities have difficulty even entering the school. I would design my classroom in his reach. The more easily he reaches school and class, the more he will adopt the school. This should be considered in all areas of the school. (P8)			
The status of the student's learning is important to me. Because if you do not design a classroom or school according to the student, the student has difficulty in learning. Special education students may never learn. It is necessary to pay attention to how comfortable the student is, how easily he can get to the equipment and the toilet. Otherwise, the school becomes torture for the teacher and the student. I would create a school environment by designing these. (P10)	Student-centered	5	35,7
In my class, the student forms the basis. The family entrusts the student with special education. You take more risks than normal students. Something can happen at any moment. An event can happen to you. Therefore, you need to supervise the student. You can get rid of these risks if you do teaching according to him/her. Because you need to get him to the centre. (P12)			
I would arrange my class or even my school according to how easy the student would learn. We need to understand the student and reduce his / her disability to the minimum level s/he can experience. I have to empathize. I have to understand him/her. I need to know where s/he will be forced. Everything must be designed for him/her. That's what I would do. (P14)			
The student's condition is already evident. I have to arrange the class the way I can help him anymore. Because the teacher is very important in special education. You're working hard. You're getting tired. To be successful, you need to master your classroom as a teacher. (P2)	Teacher-centered	2	14,3
In special education, students find it difficult to do something on their own. All work is carried out by the teacher. The teacher should design a classroom where s/he can teach easily. Materials should be within reach. The auxiliary service units should be assisted by the teacher. Otherwise, it seems very difficult to talk about success in special education. (P4)			

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the learning-teaching environment designed by prospective teachers of special education teaching is formed according to three different criteria. In the design of a learning-teaching environment, prospective teachers mostly made a "disability/obstacle centered" ( $f = 7$ ) design. The area of disability of the learner has come to the forefront at the point of the design. "Student-centered" design ( $f = 5$ ) was the second design concept preferred by prospective teachers. A small number of prospective teachers participated in the study wants to make a "teacher-centered" ( $f=2$ ) learning-teaching environment design. Prospective teachers of special education teaching have made some drawings related to the learning-teaching environment they design. Some of these drawings are given below.

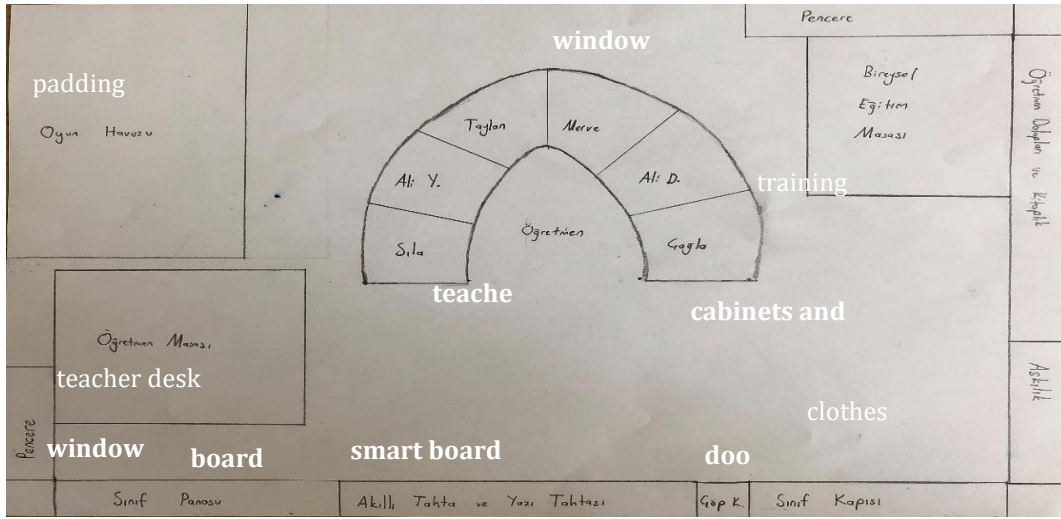


Figure 3. Learning-Teaching Environment with Special Education Teacher Candidate Designs

In Figure 3, student names in the learning and teaching environment, which are drawn by prospective teacher P10, are fictionalized. The prospective teacher designed the learning-teaching environment as student-centered. The design included a game pool, a u-shaped classroom, individual activity table, activity boards, teacher's desk and smart board.

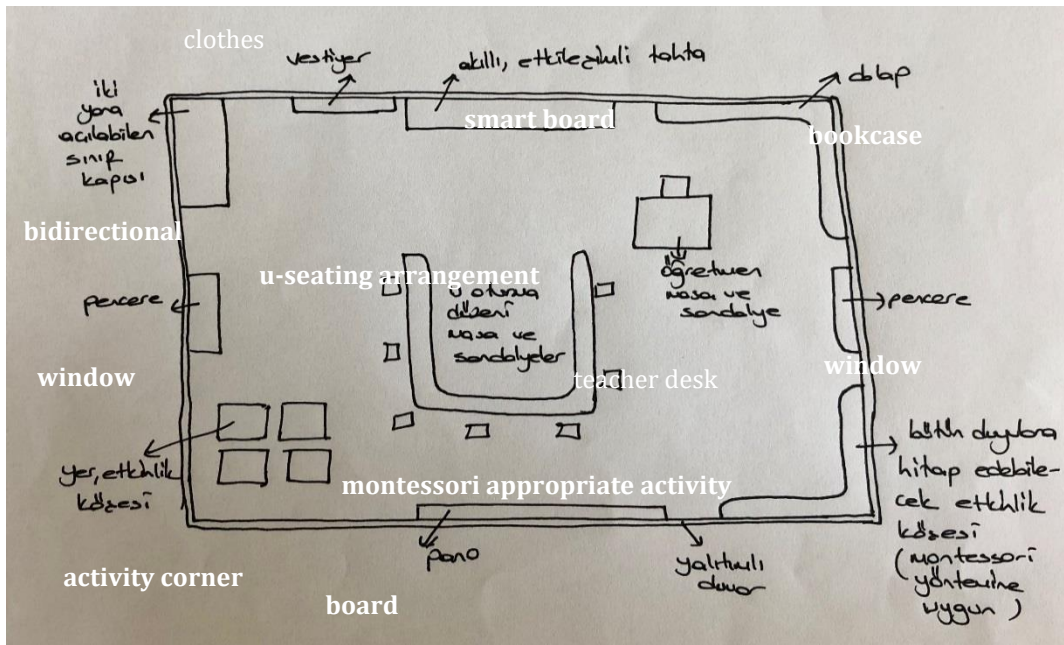


Figure 4. Learning-teaching environment with special education prospective teacher designs

In Figure 4, the learning and teaching environment, which was drawn by prospective teacher P12, was designed as student-centered. The basis of this design is the u-shape. Smartboard, activity corner, floor activity corner, teacher desk-chair, cloakroom and panels are the elements of the learning-teaching environment within the design. It is seen that the teacher trainee reflects Montessori teaching in the classroom. In the above two drawings, we see student-centered learning-teaching environment designs.

In Figure 5, in a design made by the prospective teacher P6, it is seen that a learning-teacher environment with a disability/obstacle centered and a settlement design of a special education institution is made. The prospective teacher has made a class department according to the needs of the individuals who need special education. Disability classes were created and their class levels were differentiated. The prospective teacher who designed the playground has designed a special educational institution. The learning-teaching environment design by the prospective teacher P6 is presented in Figure 5.



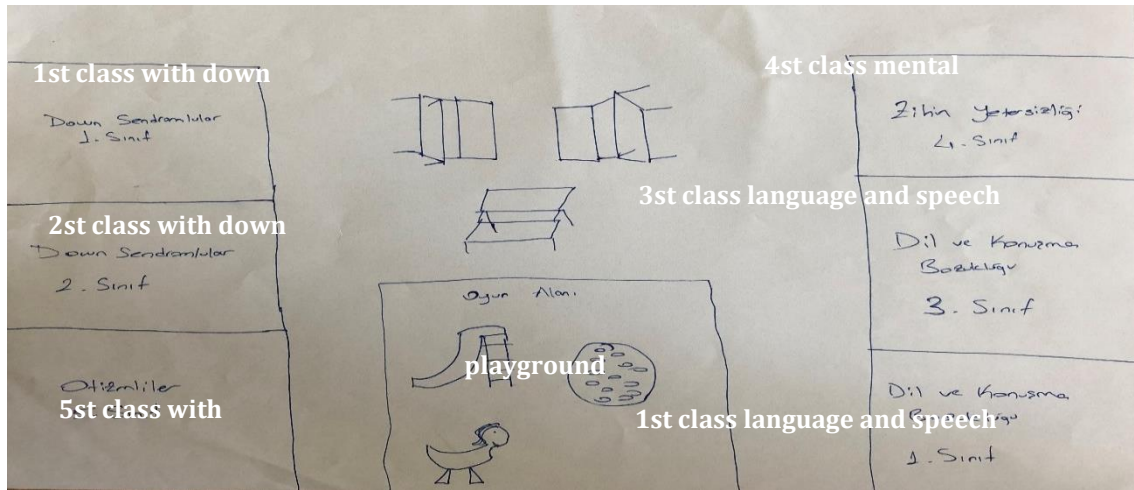


Figure 5. Learning-teaching environment with special education prospective teacher's designs

When the designs of the prospective teachers participated in the study are examined, the elements that should be in the special education environment are given in Table 4.

Table 4. According to the prospective teachers, what should be in the special education environment

	f		f
Interactive board	14	Projector	14
Laptop	12	U sitting order	10
Tablet PC	10	Floor activity corner	11
Internet Connectivity	14	Printer	14
Sound System	8	Camera	7
Cabinets	14	Teaching materials	12
Library	11	Eating place	7
Board	14	Fridge	7
First aid kit	6	Lavabo and toilet	5
Stand blackboard	5	Cloakroom	10

### 3. Problems in the field of special education

Table 5 shows the categories and sub-categories of the prospective teachers of the department of special education teaching answers to the question "What are the problems you have identified in the field of special education based on your observations in the institution experience?"

Table 5. Problems in the field of special education according to prospective teachers

Categories	Sub-categories	F	%
Teacher	Quality of teacher training	P2, P3, P4, P5, P8, P10, P12, P14	57,1
	Out-of-field assignments	P1, P2, P5, P7, P12, P14	42,8
	Low number of teachers	P2, P5, P6, P8, P10	35,7
	Lack of knowledge of teachers	P2, P5, P6, P10	28,5
	Preference of prospective teachers	P2, P4, P8, P10	28,5
	Second university problem	P1, P2, P8, P9	28,5
	Lack of in-service training	P2, P3, P8	21,4
	Inability to use appropriate methods and techniques	P4, P5, P12	21,4

Table 5. Continued

Categories	Sub-categories	F	%
Teaching Environment	Lack of infrastructure	P1, P2, P3, P10, P11, P12, P14	50
	Small classes	P2, P4, P9, P11, P14	35,7
	Limited educational material	P1, P3, P5, P11	28,5
	Individuals with different disabilities in the same class	P7, P8, P12, P14	28,5
	Less number of classrooms	P2, P4, P5, P11	28,5
	Lack of sport activities	P2, P6, P7, P8	28,5
	Lack of social environment	P1, P3, P7, P11	28,5
	Insufficient number of auxiliary staffs	P3, P9, P11	21,4
	Lack of nutritional opportunities	P4, P5,	14,2
	Lack of support rooms	P11	7,1
Legislation	Insufficient health units	P11	7,1
	Regulation of special education institutions	P2, P3, P7, P12	28,5
	Lack of appropriation	P14	7,1
Program	Personal rights of teachers	P11	7,1
	Inadequate training programs	P2, P3, P5, P10, P11	35,7
Family	Problems in planning situations	P3, P10, P11	21,4
	Lack of information	P1, P2, P3, P8, P12, P14	42,8
	Social acceptance	P3, P6, P8, P11, P13, P14	42,8
	Neglect	P3, P11, P13, P14	28,5
Student	Refusing communication	P4, P8, P11, P13	28,5
	Inadequate social living spaces	P2, P3, P5, P11	28,5
	Different levels of disability and obstacle	P3, P5, P12,	21,4
Recognition and orientation	Non-attendance to school	P6, P8, P10	21,4
	Inadequate family guidance	P2, P3, P5, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13	57,1
	Student recognition problem	P2, P3, P5, P8, P12, P13, P14	50
	Insufficient Counseling and Research Center services	P11, P12, P13, P14	28,5

When Table 5 was examined, it is seen that prospective teachers stated that there are 7 different problem areas in the field of special education. These problems created the categories of “teacher, teaching environment, legislation, program, students, recognition and orientation”. The concept cloud formed by the problems identified by the prospective teachers in the field of special education is given in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Problems in the field of special education according to prospective teachers

It is seen that the categories given in Figure 6 create 34 different sub-categories in Table 6. The category of "teaching environments" appears as the area where they indicate that there are the most problems according to the prospective teachers with 11 different sub-categories. The two most important problems that were prominent in these sub-categories were "quality of teacher training" and "inadequate family guidance" (f=8). These problems were mentioned by more than half of the prospective teachers who participated in the research. The opinions of the two prospective teachers regarding these two situations were given as follows:

*"The most important problem in special education is that the family cannot act consciously. The reason for this is that families are not adequately directed by experts. Undirected families have difficulties in participating in special education processes. The educational status of the student is affected by this." (P8)*

*"There are not enough academicians in special education departments in the faculty of education. Lessons are given by out-of-field academics. This prevents us from being taught in a quality manner in the field. It is an important problem in our field of teacher training." (P5)*

Within the sub-categories, "lack of infrastructure" and "student recognition problem" were seen as the second most important problem in the field of special education by prospective teachers. A prospective teacher expresses the situation as follows:

*"It is possible to encounter problems from time to time in special education. The primary problem is the misdiagnosis of individuals with special education. This can be done deliberately and sometimes accidentally. However, it is very important that the student is identified and guided accordingly. I see this as a very important problem." (P13)*

The "out-of-field appointments" in the teacher category and the "lack of knowledge" and "social acceptance" sub-categories in the family category are seen as the third most important problem identified by prospective teachers in the field of special education (f=6). Regarding these problems, prospective teachers expressed the following:

*"There are graduates of classroom teaching who come to the special education department outside the field. In our four-year faculty of education, they become special education teachers with 540 hours of training. While it is obvious that these teachers do not have enough information about our field, making appointments outside the field will cause great problems." (P2)*

*"I think there are problems with the student family. The family does not know much about the process. The goals set at the beginning of the year are shared with the parents, but the parents do not know what to do. I see family education as a condition for special education. Sustainable education cannot be provided when the family cannot participate and is not involved." (P8)*

*"Individuals in need of special education do not receive acceptance in society. How can others accept the situation of their own children while others cannot accept them? They're prejudicing these kids! Unfortunately, there are problems in accepting that the existence of these individuals in society is a social entity." (P14)*

Other sub-categories that prospective teachers see as a problem in the field of special education are "low number of teachers", "lack of knowledge of teachers", "preference of prospective teachers", "second university problem", "lack of in-service training" and "inability to use appropriate methods and techniques". An example of participant opinion in this category is given below:

*"Another problem is the students of the special education teaching department. Since the number of appointments in the department is higher, it is full of graduates from other departments and students who leave school and are exempt from some courses. They prefer teaching special education. In this case, some are married and have children. They're having trouble coming to class. Some people can't learn. There are those on the second or third university. Class and department structure is quite complicated." (P8)*

In the teaching media category, problems of "small classes", "limited educational material", "individuals with different disabilities in the same class", "less number of classrooms", "lack of sport activities", "lack of social environment", "insufficient number of auxiliary staffs", "lack of nutritional opportunities" "lack of support rooms", "insufficient health units" have created sub-categories.

In relation to one of these situations, a prospective teacher stated:

*"The first thing that caught my attention for me was the number and size of the classes. There are places for students to sit in the classrooms are not large enough to make class activities. Special education classes should be in the dimensions and infrastructure to carry out activities. In addition, the insufficiency of the tools used affects success. The lack of support rooms and health units are problems in my opinion." (P11)*

Prospective teachers stated that there are problems in relation to the current legislation. This has led to the formation of sub-categories of "regulation of special education institutions", "lack of appropriation", "personal rights of teachers". An example of participant opinion for this category is as follows:

*"In special education, legal regulations should pave the way for the field. The regulation of special education institutions is not considered as separate institutions such as primary or secondary education, which restricts the work of the field. This situation creates a perception error about these schools." (P3)*

According to prospective teachers, it is seen that there are problems related to the program in the education process. In this category, "inadequate training programs" and "problems in planning situations" are the sub-categories that occur.

*"Since we cannot prepare different classroom environments for special education students and there are not enough teachers, we have difficulties in preparing and implementing programs that will provide adequate conditions for individuals with different types of disabilities. In addition, we can easily see that the educational programs we have are inadequate in the classroom." (P10)*

The other sub-categories that make up the family category are "neglect" and "refusing communication". Regarding problems in these subcategories, a prospective teacher stated:

*"I see that families have an introvert structure. It's hard to talk to them about their children. This is partly due to their lack of interest in students and school. Maybe boredom might have made them that way!"(P13)*

Prospective teachers see the student category as another problem in the field of special education. In this category, "inadequate social living spaces", "different levels of disability and obstacle", "non-attendance to school" sub-categories were formed. Here is an example of participant opinion on this category:

*"It seems very difficult to create social environments for our students. Their social relations are very weak or seem absent. In addition, it is very difficult to have individuals with different levels of disability in the same class. This situation causes problems to increase."(P5)*

Recognition and orientation category is the last category that emerged according to the opinions of prospective teachers. In this category, the prominent sub-categories were "inadequate family guidance" and "student recognition problem" subcategories. In addition, the problem of "insufficient Counseling and Research Center services" created the last sub-category in this category.

#### 4.Solutions for problems in the field of special education

The prospective teachers who participated in the research put forward solutions for the problems they identified before. Table 6 presents these solutions.

Table 6. Solutions for problems in the field of special education

Categories	Sub-categories	F	%
Teacher	Improving the quality of teacher training	P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P10, P12, P14	64,28
	No non-field assignments	P1, P2, P5, P7, P12, P14	42,8
	Increasing the number of teacher appointments	P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10	42,8
	Increasing in-service training	P2, P5, P6, P10	28,5
	Training academicians	P2, P5, P7	21,4
Teaching environment	Opening new classrooms	P1, P2, P3, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14	57,1
	Equipping classes with educational materials	P2, P3, P4, P9, P11, P14	42,8
	Establishing spaces for sport activities	P1, P3, P5, P11	28,5
	Organizing social activities	P7, P8, P12, P14	28,5
	Increasing the number of auxiliary staff	P2, P4, P5, P11	28,5
	Providing nutritional opportunities	P2, P6, P7, P8	28,5
	Establishing support units	P1, P3, P7, P11	28,5
Legislation	Regulating special education institutions regulations	P2, P3, P7, P12	28,5
	Making appropriation	P14	7,1
	Regulating personal rights of teachers	P11	7,1
Program	Developing teaching programs	P2, P3, P5, P10, P11	35,7
Family	Giving family education	P1, P2, P3, P8, P12, P14	42,8
	Raising public awareness for social acceptance	P3, P6, P8, P11, P13, P14	42,8
Student	Ensuring school attendance	P2, P3, P5, P11	28,5
	Teaching according to the level of disabilities/obstacles	P3, P5, P12	21,4
Recognition and orientation	Guiding family	P2, P3, P5, P8, P9, P10, P11, P13	57,1
	Recognizing the student correctly	P2, P3, P5, P8, P12, P13, P14	50
	Increasing Counseling and Research Center services	P11, P12, P13, P14	28,5



- Guiding family
- Recognizing the student correctly
- Increasing Counseling and Research Center services

### Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, a phenomenological analysis of the opinions of prospective teachers of special education teachers about institution experience and special education phenomenon has been made. It is possible to reach some conclusions about the field by considering the opinions of the prospective teachers who constitute the research universe.

It has been determined that the prospective teachers do not find the school structure suitable for the purpose of special education regarding the learning-teaching environment. As a supporter of this situation, they find the infrastructure inadequate, and the school has difficulties for the access of the disabled. In the study conducted by Karasu and Mutlu (2014), the situation related to the problems of special education schools reached in the field of special ethics supports the eligibility status of schools for special education in this study.

They also emphasized that the security of these institutions is important for the special education institution which they find limited to influence their environment and that they are not safe. It would not be wrong to attribute the reason that prospective teachers emphasize the necessity of having cameras in classrooms. Considering the special education institution, which is quite lacking in terms of classrooms, it is possible to say that it is very important that the number of classrooms is sufficient and appropriate in size, that the materials are prepared for special education and that they are arranged appropriately. Prospective teachers emphasize that special education institutions should be adequate in terms of social facilities and auxiliary units. As the social, artistic and sporting activities for the special education students will enable them to get closer to life, the prospective teachers' views are correct. In addition, according to the opinions of prospective teachers, it was concluded that nutrition, health, support room and auxiliary personnel facilities are important in the educational institution. Special educational institutions should differentiate from other educational institutions in terms of their structure as well as their appearance. In this study, it was determined that the educational institution should be interesting, the colours should be chosen correctly and the structure should be well-maintained and appropriate to create the difference of special education. In this study, it can be said that the two studies support each other in terms of the parallel with the problems identified by Gunduz and Akin (2015) in special education schools.

It was concluded that most of the students acted with a disability/obstacle centered approach while designing the learning-teaching environment of the prospective teachers. Student-centered design and teacher-centered design were found to be other approaches preferred by prospective teachers.

According to the opinions of the prospective teachers, there are 7 different problem areas in the field of special education. It was concluded that these problems were related to the field of "teacher, teaching environments, legislation, program, students, recognition and guidance".

It has been determined that prospective teachers perceive the quality of teacher training and insufficient family guidance as to the most important problems in the field of special education. It was concluded that the lack of infrastructure in teaching environments and the deficiencies in recognizing disabled individuals are considered as the second important problem. It has been concluded that other important problems are seen as out-of-field appointments in the field of special education, lack of sufficient level of knowledge of the family and difficulties in social acceptance of disabled individuals. The insufficient level of family education in special education will prevent the achievement of the desired goals in special education. Dogan (2015) emphasizes the importance of family education in his study on family and family education in special education and supports the result of family education in this study.

The low number of teachers working in the field was seen as a problem by the prospective teachers. It was seen that the prospective teachers' education programs for special education were inadequate and this was perceived as a problem. Furthermore, according to the participant opinions, it was concluded that the legislation regulating the special education area was inadequate.

It has been observed that the prospective teachers not only identify the problems but also provide solutions for them. This situation can be interpreted that they will be well-educated teachers who can intervene in the crisis in the special education field. Participants considered improving teacher quality as an important solution. Increasing the number of teachers and abandoning out-of-field appointments were among the suggestions that could solve the problems of special education. Increasing the number of classrooms, improving their infrastructure, and making them ready by tools and support units stand out among the solution proposals. In addition, it was concluded that special education institutions should complete by elements such as arts, sports, social activities, health and nutrition.

It can be said that the prospective teachers who give suggestions to solve the problems in order to organize the family education of special education students, to eliminate the deficiencies of knowledge, and to realize the social acceptance of the students both by the family and in the society give great importance to the family in special education.

### Implications

In the context of the results of this research, the following implications are presented:

- ✓ Physical appearance and infrastructure of special education institutions should be designed according to the special education aims and needs. This should be done by including the relevant structures in the design process.
- ✓ Infrastructure and opportunities should be developed for social, sporting and artistic activities of special education institutions.
- ✓ Needs analysis should be made for the equipment and educational material requirements of the classrooms. These needs analyses should be repeated from time to time and equipment and equipment should be allocated for changing situations.
- ✓ In order to increase the quality of teachers in special education, a sufficient number of academicians should be trained and employed in special education departments.
- ✓ Special education teacher appointments should be discouraged from out-of-field throwing through branch change through certificate or in-service trainings.
- ✓ In order to meet the educational needs of the families of individuals with special education needs, local and national education projects should be organized and the correct directions should be made.
- ✓ In order to facilitate the social acceptance of individuals with special education needs, awareness-raising activities such as public education and public spot works should be carried out.
- ✓ Student recognition and orientation should be done in a more specialized and sufficient manner. An adequate number of new experts should be provided for the expansion of Counseling and Research Center services.

For researchers;

- ✓ This study can be repeated in a different study universe and the results can be compared.
- ✓ The number of universe and population can be increased to make the results more generalizable for the studies planned.
- ✓ New studies can be conducted using scales and questionnaires to collect large data.

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