

The Responsibility Education of Teacher Candidates

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to take the views and suggestions of academicians working at the faculty of education on what can be done about teacher candidates' responsibility education. This study was designed on the basis of qualitative research approach and purposive sampling method was used. Data were collected by unstructured interview method from 30 academicians working at Firat University, Faculty of Education in the 2009-2010 academic year. As a result, the views of academicians were classified under four general themes: attitudes towards school, voluntary social activities, tolerance education and sharing. For teacher candidates to acquire social sensitivity and responsibility, it was proposed that the related values should be internalized. The participants view that the rationale behind these values and their meaning for themselves and for the community should be instilled for these values to be internalized.

Key Words

Responsibility Education, Social Sensitivity, Empathy, Benevolence.

The Concept of Responsibility

Responsibility is a sense which is peculiar to human beings. As human beings live in societies, they have a responsibility for their behaviors in the society regarding to "the other." Responsibility is undertaking the results of one's own words and actions, or of behaviors in his scope of authority (Pehlivan, 1998). Responsibility is comprised of the principles of one's considering others' psychological and emotional needs (Lee & Kotler, 2006), comparing his expectations with those of the society (Altun, 1999), and regarding social interest in his behaviors (Seyyar, 2003). We can talk about responsibility if one has volition and has the right to choose (Doğan, 2007; Elibol, 1983). Despite the communal sense, some authors question this relationship between freedom and responsibility and claim that one might be responsible for a thing he has not done freely (Perring, 2009).

Whether people fulfill their responsibilities or not makes them face some moral descriptions. Those who do not fulfill their responsibilities as they are supposed to be blamed morally (Pink, 2009) while those who perform their tasks are described as

good-natured and morally-upright citizens (Romi, Lewis & Katz, 2009). These descriptions vary because of the changes that occur in the course of time in the description and the content of the responsibilities. Technological developments in the information age brought out different dimensions in the description and the content of the responsibility concept because of the different social interactions in the virtual world today (Dhillon, 2002).

The Source and Development of the Sense of Responsibility

There are different opinions on the source of the sense of responsibility in the related literature. According to some researchers, the source of the sense of responsibility is mind, intuition, and heart (Tozlu, 2008) while according to others, the source of responsibility is people's right of choice (Elibol, 1983). Responsibility is a mutable characteristic and it is a process of learning the culture triggering it and one's learning the cultural elements (Güngör, 1993). In this sense, it is possible to say that the sense of responsibility exists in the humans potentially and it may change depending on the environment.

There are two factors composing the sense of responsibility: socializing and education. Humans are essentially social beings and they develop

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this characteristic through learning and the society. Depending on one's level of socialization and education, responsibility perception area expands concerning his surroundings, society, nation and the humanity. On the basis of many problems facing the families, organizations, and governments lies the irresponsible faults and behaviors (Bozdağ, 2008). In the root of many social problems lies one's not taking the responsibility. Sometimes an individual's self-interests and logical assessments come up against the requirements of the social responsibility, thus one may not undertake the responsibility (Krueger, 2008). Individuals have different senses of responsibility regarding different factors. A person growing up in a society has responsibilities against his family, friends, environment, government, other nations, animals and other creations.

Responsibility Education

As it is stated in the self-determination theory, in order for lasting behavior change to occur in an individual and the sense of responsibility to develop, the practices in a topic should be based on one's free choices and intrinsic motivation. The total extrinsic motivation is thought to cause temporary behavior change (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). To provide lasting behavior change and raise the conscience of responsibility in individuals, educators who adopt a more humanistic control ideology instead of a custodial one are more effective (Hoy, 2001). So when giving responsibility education, an individual's internalizing the related values (Haji & Cuypers, 2008) and undertaking the responsibility of his own work and reaching to a conscious level of abiding by these rules should be provided.

The Indicators of the Sense of Responsibility

The individuals having the sense of responsibility are expected to be more helpful, sharing, and tolerant. The ones who are open to cooperation and have the sense of helpfulness which has come along with the social responsibility leave a better impression and build in trust more easily (Fukuyama, 1998). In this respect, cooperation is an essential tool in helping the social problems reach to a solution, the social peace to be long lasting and the individual to conform to the society.

One of the most important elements of social responsibility is sharing which is realized on both individual and institutional levels. Sharing consists of the help which is non-profitable, respectful to the

human-rights, done voluntarily requiring altruism and the information exchange (Birth, Illia, Lurati, & Zamparina, 2008). Sharing helps institutions overcome the obstacles in performing their roles easily (Bertels & Pelozo, 2008) and helps individuals increase their commitment, work performance, and motivation (Bowd, Bowd, & Haris, 2006).

In order for an individual to show helpfulness and sharing to the ones he perceive different from himself in society, he should look these people tolerantly. So it is necessary that the individuals should not put off by the existence of different languages, genders, religions, beliefs, and understandings (Cevizci, 1999) and they should not be withdrawn and should accept the ideas and thoughts existing out of their environment (Gürsoy, 1991).

Educational Organizations and Social Responsibility

Responsibility is not restricted to individuals only. It is among the duties of organizations providing services for the society. While in individual social responsibility there are the ethical duties of an individual to himself and his surroundings, in organizational social responsibility there are the duties of realizing the aims of the foundations protecting the shareholders, abiding by the rules, serving and doing charity work to his shareholders and the society (Carroll, 1991). These factors are among the reasons of existence of the foundations' cultural extensions. Thus, the organizations composed of the relationships among humans and owning more complex structures have ethical duties to achieve for their members, sectors they serve and generally for the society (Eren, 2002). So, the organizations wishing to fulfill their social responsibility can increase their roles to serve their shareholders and the society voluntarily in addition to their scope of activity.

In this issue, the most important social responsibility belongs to educational organizations, as they are open to different and broad sections of the society. Schools are among the first places that individuals encounter in the process of assuming responsibility besides their family (Köknel, 1997). Educational organizations, in addition to having their students gain knowledge and skills, should educate students in voluntary work -conducted as a requirement of social responsibility-, cooperation, being open to sharing, and helping those in need (Schlechty, 2005).

Responsibility is an individual sense; however, it becomes significant within a social context such as school society (Güngör, 1993). Thus, according

to Kant's philosophical view, responsibility is described as one's behaving according to the reciprocal behavioral expectations in the society (Gardner, 2007). People mainly learn responsibility through familial, cultural, and organizational socialization processes. People's perception of responsibility is expanding towards their environment, community, nation and entire people depending on their socialization and education levels. In this context, teachers have important roles to teach students why and how to behave responsibly to the concerned entities. Teachers must have a high sense of responsibility for teaching responsibility effectively and for being good role models. So, training the prospective teachers with a high sense of responsibility is important for creating a more peaceful society and solving the social problems stemming from the lack of the sense of responsibility.

Purpose

The aim of this study is taking the views and suggestions of academicians working at the faculty of education on how teacher candidates' responsibility education is improved.

Method

In this study, which was designed on the basis of qualitative research approach, purposive sampling was used. In purposive sampling method, the criteria that are considered important in choosing are determined and it is thought that the sampling chosen as to these criteria represents all the nature of the research with all its properties (Tavşancıl & Aslan, 2001). The work group consists of 50 academicians working at Firat University, Faculty of Education in the 2009–2010 academic year. Data of the study were collected by unstructured interview method from 30 academicians at the work group. In an unstructured interview, the interviewees' opinions on a specific issue are tried to be 'discovered' thoroughly and if any specific topic is discovered during the interview, these topics are tried to be scrutinized with more detailed questions. This kind of interview is based on open-ended questions (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005).

Results

The views of academicians were classified under four general themes: attitudes towards school, voluntary social activities, tolerance education, and

sharing. At the theme of developing "positive attitudes towards school," participants suggest that teacher candidates more easily develop positive attitudes towards school, and so, responsibility related values can more easily be instilled if they are; participated in decision making process, provided with more scholarship opportunities, supported to join in voluntary associations, provided with more career education opportunities, facilitated to take part in various social, cultural and sportive activities, appreciated for their performed responsibilities through performance evaluation and accommodated with basic facilities that could meet all their needs.

At the theme of "voluntary social activities," participants view that teacher candidates would develop social responsibility if they; take part voluntarily in the supervision of non-governmental organizations that make social studies, get involved in social aid activities through voluntary social service bodies founded at universities, mentor voluntarily one or more students and so care for their social and academic problems, help the students in need to provide them with necessary educational materials, and observe the conditions of the individuals who are socially and physically at risk and help them.

According to the participants, for teaching "sharing" which is an essential part of social responsibility, it would be helpful to; arrange kermises for the people in need and encourage teacher candidates to make contributions, perform activities -through social clubs- that will develop social sensitivity and encourage them to share, provide teacher candidates with the opportunity of guiding for some students and make them share their knowledge and experiences with these students, found a sharing center within faculty and stimulate them for helping and sharing.

At the theme of "tolerance education," participants suggest that it facilitate teacher candidates to learn to be tolerant for the different kinds of people if; "values education" lessons -in which tolerance and responsibility would be taught as the core values- are given, various artistic activities are employed as a tool for teacher candidates internalize tolerance and responsibility as significant values, and different sorts of activities are arranged to make them feel more tolerant and responsible towards other people.

Discussion

Individuals' positive experiences related to a focus (school, administrator or teacher) may lead them to develop commitment to this focus through classical conditioning process (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Individual's commitment to a focus creates an inner pressure to perform obligations which are tacitly and explicitly explained in the relationship between the individual and this focus, so the individual develops responsibility (Starratt, 2003). Corroboratively, the participants of this research explained that teacher candidates' positive attitudes towards school, school administrators or teachers would contribute them to develop commitment to school, and so the endeavors to make them acquire responsibility would be more effective.

Socially responsible people are expected to be more altruistic and help others. For being socially sensitive and feeling socially responsible, one should be empathic and aware of their feelings and circumstances. People having such an empathy and sensitivity feel an inner pressure to be more altruistic and help for the other people in need (Batson, 1991). Corroboratively, according to the participants of this study; for teacher candidates to develop a social sensitivity and responsibility which may lead them to display altruistic behaviors in result, they should be aware of the others' emotional, social and physical circumstances and have empathic considerations towards them. Similarly, empathy was found to be an important antecedent of altruistic or helping behavior in the related researches (Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004; Powell, 2005; Stocks, Lishner, & Decker, 2009)

In a democratic society, individuals should learn fulfilling their social responsibilities necessitated by the society, tolerating the differences, respecting each other's choices and living together (Batelaan, 2001). In this sense, the participants in this research state that the teacher-candidates should learn respecting the ones different from them in some ways and tolerating these differences to have the sense of social responsibility. It is thought that it will be beneficial to give teacher-candidates value training courses where tolerance and responsibility are to be taught as part of their tolerance education. For responsibility to be internalized, various artistic activities should be used as a tool and they should be organized to help the teacher candidates view others more empathically and handle the differences more tolerantly.

At responsibility education, it is not sufficient for students to display or imitate responsibility at-

titude only in appearance. For the effectiveness of responsibility education, they should adopt ethical rules and internalize their own responsibilities (Giacalone & Thompson, 2006). Because, students may not feel themselves as responsible for the obligations that do not stem from their own internalized values (Haji & Cuypers, 2008). Accordingly, it is among the most prominent results of this study that almost all participants stressed on the matter of importance of teachers' internalization of the related values for feeling responsible. According to them, for teacher candidates to internalize related values; the meaning and importance of these values for the individual and for the society, the rationale behind these values and the implications of these values should be comprehended by them. For this purpose, verbally expression of them and to get them comprehended through drama method or employing educative films and documentaries are suggested.

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