

Assessment of professional teaching knowledge courses taught at faculties of education according to teachers' opinions

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Article history	<p>The basic aim of this study is to assess the professional teaching knowledge (PTK) courses and teachers' opinions about them. For this reason, a professional skills evaluative questionnaire was developed to determine teachers' suggestions as to the content of PTK courses, their applicability in teaching life, studying the courses at university, the problems encountered in PTK courses and how to make these courses more effective. The sample of the study is comprised of 315 teachers, graduated from faculty of education, at 20 primary schools in Antakya, Hatay. Pearson correlation coefficient, frequencies and means have been used for the analysis of the data. Qualitative data have been assessed using content analysis. At the end of the research, it was largely agreed that the content of PTK courses are related to the teaching profession and informs teacher candidates about the teaching profession. Most of the teachers have stated that the content of PTK courses should not be prepared just only for schools which have sufficient financial and physical facilities.</p>
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1. Introduction

Development of countries is in same line with the number of educated individuals. The most important element in the realization of functions of education whose importance is increasing more and more in our present conditions is doubtlessly teachers as teachers are in a position to put educational policies developed into practice and to affect these policies (Varış, 1973). Also, a teacher is an interceder for learning, a facilitator, an information guide and a captain determining the route of information. A teacher is a trusted person, representative of parents, student advisers and community involvers (Balçı, 1991). Therefore, teachers build the future of a country. Those producing engineers, doctors, teachers, policemen, soldiers, drivers, in short the manpower serving in all parts of the society, are always teachers. As Kaya (1984) states, "teachers represent a significant capital and their contributions are the most important factor in terms of development." In other words, a good level of education and social utility will be attained or not depending on the quality and number of teachers educated. So, teachers should be adequate in terms of professional formation as well as knowledge, capabilities and attitudes

While teachers provide students information and capabilities in the classroom environment, they affect them through their behaviors. Teachers should have plenty of general knowledge besides

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being equipped with knowledge and abilities in teaching to realize this duty successfully. Although the fact that teachers know their subjects well or their general knowledge is adequate as a prerequisite of teaching, it is not enough for successful teaching. Teachers also should know how to teach what they know. No matter how well teachers know their subject matter, they cannot be regarded as successful unless they know how to teach it. So, teachers should have teaching abilities. Teachers attain this ability thanks to professional teaching knowledge courses in the teacher training programs (Erden, 2007:153).

Generally, all the courses are responding to the questions how and where to teach whom and providing the necessary information, abilities and behaviors known as professional formation (Adıgüzel, 1999). As Küçükahmet expresses (1989), the understanding that “the one who knows teaches is not a valid slogan.” has gained importance currently. The one who knows should know how to teach in an organized way as well. This is possible through studying professional teaching knowledge courses effectively. That is, the most important aspect distinguishing a mathematics teacher from a mathematician is that a teacher has a good level of general knowledge and knowledge of the field. There are a number of vocational qualities sought in teachers. Çelikten (2005: 228) states those as follows:

- Using teaching periods effectively
- Organizing participatory learning environment
- Following students’ development (moral, cognitive, social etc. developments of students)
- Planning teaching process
- Providing variety of teaching

Teachers attain these qualities thanks to PTK courses which have been included in all teacher training institutions from the foundation of the republic to the present but in different names and credits. From the past to the present, when some teacher training schools’ PTK courses are compared, the following results shown in table 1 have been obtained.

Table1: Comparison of Some Teacher Training Schools’ Professional Teaching Knowledge Courses

Schools	General graduation credits	Professional teaching knowledge credits	Percentage of professional teaching knowledge courses	Number of Courses	Number of professional teaching knowledge courses
Village Institutes (1943)	*	*	17%	30	5
Teacher Training Schools for Primary Education (1932-1933) 3 years	105	22	21%	26	6
Teacher Training Schools for Primary Education (1970-1971) 4 years	190	27	14%	25	6
2-year Educational Institutes (1974–1975)	104	40	38%	29	11
3-year Educational Institutes (1979-1980)	112	21	19%	26	9
Educational High School (1983-1984) 2 years	131	18	14%	34	7

Educational High School (1989-1990) 4 years	191	52	27%	61	18
Faculty of Education (1998-1999) 4 years	152	36	24%	48	11
Faculty of Education (2005-2006) 4 years	157	41	%26	63	14

Reference: (Ada, 2001: 6)

(*) symbol has been used as the credits of the courses at Village Institutes are unknown. However, there were 44 hours lesson in a week, 22 of which were Culture, 11 of which were Agriculture and 11 of which were Technical Education. Professional Teaching Knowledge (PTK) courses were in the Culture courses (Ada, 2001: 6).

Research about professional teaching knowledge in the faculty of education states that in total, one fourth of the program should be allocated to the courses in this category (Çetin, 2009: 59). It is thought that one fourth of the courses taught in the program (25%) should be PTK courses for teacher candidates in a teacher training program in order to be adequate as having teaching abilities. It is quite important that the percentage of these courses should not be less than one fifth of the program (20%), (Küçükahmet, 2000: 4-10). Based on this data, it can be seen from table 1 that the percentage of PTK courses is at 2-year Educational Institutes (38%) at most and, then, at 4-year Educational High Schools (27%) and at 4 years (2005-2006) Faculty of Education (%26). It is seen that these three institutions have an expected rate of PTK courses to train qualified teachers. The fact that Faculties of Education have the expected rate is seen in table 1. Some of the institutions among the teacher training institutions have been closed because they are not getting desired results, while the titles of some others have just been changed. It is seen that these institutions provide source for new programs although their titles have been changed.

Faculties of Education have been exposed to various changes since they were founded and the Board of Higher Education handled “pedagogic formation”, that is “professional teaching knowledge”, before initiating all teaching programs. The Board determined the pedagogic formation program as in table 2, regarding the decisions of XI. National Education Council in 1982 (Kavak, Aydın & Akbaba Altun, 2007).

Table 2: Professional Teaching Knowledge (Pedagogic Formation) Program (19 November 1982)

Name of the Course	Weekly Hour	Term
Introduction to Education	3	I
Educational Sociology	3	II
Educational Psychology	3	III
Principles and Methods of Teaching	3	IV
Measurement and Evaluation	3	V
Educational Technology	3	VI
Guidance	3	VII
Special Teaching Methods	3	VII
Educational Administration	3	VIII
Special Teaching Practices	30 days	VIII
Total	27 hours + Practice	

Reference: (Kavak, Aydın & Akbaba Altun, 2007: 41)

Just 3 years after the regulation in 1982, The Ministry of National Education stated that the pedagogic formation program should be re-organized in a formal letter upon which The Board of Higher Education responded by revising the program in question and made new amendments which was decided on 27.09.1985 and numbered 85.52.845. According to the letter dated 3 October 1985 sent to Ministry of National Education and universities, it was decided that

- Pedagogic formation courses should be 18-21 credits,
- The courses in question should be taken between the third and eighth terms,
- One of the courses in the elective courses list, apart from the required courses enclosed, should be taken as an elective,
- School experience lasting 8 weeks should be compulsory
- These practices should be in operation starting from 1986-1987 educational year (Kavak, Aydın ve Akbaba Altun, 2007: 42).
- Courses set forth in the program are shown in table 3.

Table 3: Professional Teaching Knowledge (pedagogic formation) Program (27 September 1985)

Name of the Course	Weekly Hour
Introduction to Pedagogics	3
Educational Sociology	2
Educational Psychology	3
General Teaching Programs	3
Measurement and Evaluation	3
Special Teaching Methods	3
Elective course	2
Total	19

Reference: (Kavak, Aydın & Akbaba Altun, 2007: 42)

When the regulations are examined in general, it is seen that the first regulation is more comprehensive and it gives more emphasis on practice than the second one. According to this, in the second regulation, hours of credit were changed from 27 to 18-21 and educational technology and guidance courses were excluded. This practice continued without modifications till 1997 and a pedagogic formation program was discussed, re-organized and the "The Guidance" course was included in the program again in that year. In accordance to this regulation, PTK courses and credits are presented in table 4:

Table 4: Courses and Credits of Professional Teaching Knowledge Re-Organized in 1997-1998

Courses	Credits
Introduction to Teaching Profession	3
School Experience I	3
Development and Learning	3
Planning and Assessment in Teaching	4
Teaching Technologies and Material Development	3
Classroom Management	3
School Experience II	3
Special Teaching Methods I	3
Special Teaching Methods II	3
Guidance	3
Teaching Practice	5
Total	36

About 8 years after the re-organization it was realized in 1997 regarding teacher training, a new arrangement was made to update the programs and non-thesis master's degrees. In this changed program, credits and percentages of PTK courses were not changed, but just their titles were changed. Likewise, the ratio of PTK courses to general courses was adjusted to 25-30%. Its difference from the previous arrangements was just the increase in the elective course opportunities (Kavak, Aydın & Akbaba Altun, 2007: 64). PTK courses taught at present are shown in table 5.

Table 5: PTK courses and credits reorganized in 2005–2006

Courses	Credits
Introduction to Pedagogics	3
Teaching Technologies and Material Development	3
Classroom Management	2
Principles and Methods of Teaching	3
Educational Psychology	3
Special Teaching Methods I, II	3
School Experience	3
Special Education	2
Measurement and Evaluation	3
Guidance	3
Teaching Practice I, II	5
Turkish Educational System and School Administration	2
Total	35

Reference: (ÖSYM, 2008–2009)

When the programs are analyzed, the following points stand out related to the professional teaching knowledge courses:

- There were some changes in the professional teaching knowledge courses. Credits of some courses were changed. Generally, the number of courses and their credits were the same, but because of the problems encountered in finding schools to the teaching practice, teaching practice hours were reduced which was in line with the demands of the dean's offices of Faculties of Education.
- Educational Psychology and History of Education courses about the fundamentals of education became compulsory and Philosophy of Education and Sociology of Education became elective courses.
- Introduction to Pedagogics, Development and Learning, Planning and Assessing Teaching courses were removed.
- Introduction to Pedagogics, Educational Psychology, Principles and Methods of Teaching, Measurement and Evaluation, Turkish Education System and School Administration courses were added. Moreover, an elective course was added.
- One or two elective course(s) was/were added to the program for professional teaching knowledge courses (Board of Higher Education, 2006)

Titles, numbers, scope, credits and hours of the courses were re-organized in order to make teacher candidates in higher education institutions raising teachers with the new practice more competent especially in terms of particularly professional teaching knowledge and skills and general knowledge. In this regard, twenty-five percent of the power was given to faculties to determine some courses. Previously, The Ministry of National Education stipulated that every teacher candidate should take professional teaching knowledge courses of 36 credits in order to be assigned as a teacher. With the new practice, it was aimed that teacher candidates could observe and practice more at schools with the newly-added courses in the programs for better equipped teachers. Thus, it was aimed to have integration between the theory and practice (Şişman, 2008: 197).

Problem

It is necessary for teachers to have had good education in terms of professional teaching knowledge to know how they will be more successful, how they will teach, how and where they will use the most suitable tools, how effectively they will use suitable methods, know students with their personal characteristics and how to teach them. For this reason, this research was started to

determine teachers' opinions about professional teaching knowledge and to develop some suggestions about the issue.

1.2. Problem Statement

What are teachers' opinions about professional teaching knowledge courses taught in education department?

1.3. Sub-problems

- What are teachers' opinions according to the content dimension of professional teaching knowledge (PTK) courses assessment questionnaire?
- What are teachers' opinions about the content of professional teaching knowledge (PTK) courses?
- What are teachers' opinions according to applicability dimension of professional teaching knowledge (PTK) courses assessment questionnaire?
- What are teachers' opinions about the applicability of (PTK) courses in teaching life?
- What are teachers' opinions according to the applicability dimension of professional teaching knowledge (PTK) courses assessment questionnaire in university?
- Is there a relationship among teachers' opinions about how professional teaching knowledge courses are taught at university, their applicability and content?

1.4. Significance and Reasons of the Study

Professional teaching training is the combination of all the courses offering information, skills and behaviors necessitated by the teaching profession. What needs to be emphasized here is not only to know the subject matter but also knowing how to teach it in an organized way, which is possible through taking professional teaching knowledge courses.

In this study, it is aimed to determine how effectively professional teaching knowledge courses are taught at faculties of education and how useful and effective they are in the teaching profession. In line with this aim it is envisaged to determine positive, negative, useful and effective points of professional teaching courses, contributions to the teacher and related literature and to present it.

2. Methodology

The methodology, population, sample, data collection tools and data analysis of the research have been explained in this section.

2.1. Research Model

With this research, assessing the content of the professional teaching knowledge courses taught at faculties of education, their applicability in the teaching life, the way they are studied at faculties, the problems encountered in PTK courses are examined. Also suggestions from teachers were considered for the teacher candidates to prepare them better for the teaching profession and for this reason, the researcher tried to illustrate the current situation and conditions using the selected method. With this aim, the opinions of the teachers who graduated from the faculty of education and who were teaching in primary schools in the 2009-2010 educational year were gathered.

2.2. Population and the Sample

53 primary schools teachers working in Antakya, Hatay in the 2009-2010 educational year, comprised the working population of the study. As the population was large, a sampling method was used. The schools to represent the population were chosen using the Cluster Sampling Method

among Random Sampling Methods by complying with the objectivity principle, which is the basis of choosing the sample. A research was carried out involving 315 teachers in 20 primary schools which comprised the samples.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

A two-part professional skill “**Evaluative Questionnaire of Professional Teaching Knowledge Courses**” was used as the data collection tool. The first part consists of 5-likert type closed-ended questions to determine the teachers’ opinions as to how professional teaching knowledge courses are studied at university, their content and applicability in the teaching profession. Then, in the second part, there are open-ended questions to determine the teachers’ opinions and suggestions about the contents of the courses, their applicability in the teaching profession, problems encountered most during lessons and preparing teacher candidates better for the teaching profession. The closed and open-ended questions in the questionnaire were prepared based on the theoretical information obtained from the related literature and the data collection tools used in the related research.

Necessary adjustments were made in terms of clarity, comprehensibility and scope by taking the opinions of experts in Educational Sciences, Primary Education and Turkish Education into consideration. Later on, the questionnaire was administered to 132 teachers and a factor analysis was done depending on the results obtained from the first application. Two items’ factor loads were below 0.35 were removed from the scale (Büyüköztürk, 2002), and the questionnaire was finalized. Then, the Cronbach-Alpha coefficient of the 31-item questionnaire was calculated as 0.93. In the questionnaire including closed and open-ended questions, the closed-ended items were rated as 1. Totally disagree (1.00-1.80), 2. Disagree (1.81-2.60), 3. Neutral (2.61-3.40), 4. Agree (3.41-4.20) and 5. Totally agree (4.21-5.00) in 5-likert type.

2.4. Analysis of the data

Analysis of the data has been made and commented using the arithmetic means, standard deviations, Pearson correlation coefficient and frequencies in accordance with the sub-problems of the study. Statistical means and standard deviations have been used in the assessment of closed-ended data and frequencies were used for open-ended questions. Statistical means and standard deviation have been provided and commented for the closed-ended questions which comprised of three dimensions separately. Besides, simple correlation was carried out to check whether there is a relationship among the dimensions of the questionnaire.

Content analysis method was used in the analysis of the open-ended questions. Content analysis is expressed as bringing similar data together within the framework of certain concepts and themes (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005). First of all, responses to the open-ended questions were given certain codes. The more the number of codes increased the more different responses were provided for the research question. The same procedure was followed for four open-ended questions and an “X” mark was allocated for each repeated code in the same question. These codes were put into a table by bringing together and they were commented by giving their frequencies.

3. Findings

Findings obtained at the end of the study are provided in this part. Explanations are made based on the findings obtained. Findings are presented according to 8 sub-problems.

3.1. Finding based on the First sub-Problem

The results of the teachers' responses to the items in the content dimension of the questionnaire are shown in Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6: Teachers' Opinions about the Positive Questions in the Content Dimension of the Questionnaire

Item Nr	Questionnaire Items	\bar{x}	ss
20	PTK courses are related to the teaching profession in terms of content.	3,56	0,97
22	PTK courses informed students about the teaching profession.	3,47	0,92
26	I had sufficient information about the features of learning theories in the PTK course.	3,07	1,09
21	PTK courses increased my desire to become a teacher.	2,94	1,11
27	Measurement and evaluation methods that I learned in PTK courses were informative enough.	2,93	1,05
7	The content of PTK courses was adequate to become an influential and effective teacher.	2,73	1,08
8	PTK courses took the teacher candidates' interests, demands and needs into account enough.	2,64	1,07
Total		21,37	4,74

According to table 6, it is seen that teachers mostly agree that the content of PTK courses is related to the teaching profession ($\bar{x}=3,56$) and informs students about it ($\bar{x}=3,47$).

Table 7: Teachers' Opinions about the Negative Questions in the Content Dimension

Item Nr	Opinions of the teachers	f
1	Courses were just taught theoretically	85
2	I think the content is insufficient	61
3	There is a great difference between the content of the courses and the curriculum of The Ministry of National Education	36
4	I think the content is sufficient	19
5	Teacher's experience should be made use of in terms of content	15

According to Table 7, while teachers agree with the idea that PTK courses are not associated with the real life enough ($\bar{x}= 3,49$), they disagree with the idea that PTK courses did not arouse their interests ($\bar{x}= 2,46$).

3.2. Finding based on the Second sub-Problem

Frequency values of the responses given by the teachers to the open-ended questions as to the content of PTK courses are given in Table 8

Table 8: Frequency Values About Teachers' Opinions About The Content Of Professional Teaching Knowledge Courses

Item Nr	Questionnaire Items	\bar{x}	ss
11	PTK courses are not associated with the real life enough.	3,49	1,10
9	PTK courses were not enough to practise the teaching profession.	3,33	1,13
12	The aims of PTK courses were not clear.	2,97	0,99
13	There was no integration among PTK courses.	2,91	1,00
2	PTK courses did not arouse my interest.	2,46	1,14
Total		15,17	3,49

According to Table 8 teachers are in the opinion that the courses are theoretical, the content is insufficient and there is no coherence between courses and the curriculum of The Ministry of National Education.

3.3. Finding based on the Third sub-Problem

Results of the responses given by the teachers to the items in the applicability dimension of the questionnaire are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Teachers' Opinions about the Applicability of Professional Teaching Knowledge courses

Item Nr	Questionnaire Items	\bar{x}	SS
16	PTK courses have had a positive impact on my attitude towards the teaching profession.	3,30	1,03
28	PTK courses have enabled me to have a health communication with my students.	3,26	0,98
10	I have been applying the information that I learned in PTK courses in my teaching life.	3,20	1,16
25	PTK course enabled me to teach by taking students' characteristics into consideration.	3,19	1,07
23	PTK courses have had a positive impact on my preparing materials according to the students' developmental levels.	3,16	1,07
29	PTK courses have helped me about how to guide students.	3,14	1,00
24	PTK courses have helped me organize the learning environments according to students' levels.	3,12	1,06
6	PTK courses have prepared me psychologically for the teaching profession.	3,09	1,18
31	I can manage the classroom more effectively thanks to PTK courses.	2,99	1,05
17	PTK courses have ensured my establishing effective education in the classroom.	2,85	1,07
15	Practice teaching serves its goal.	2,69	1,10
Total		37,29	9,22

When Table 9 is analyzed, it shows that teachers are neutral about whether the PTK courses have had a positive impact on their attitudes towards the teaching profession. ($\bar{x}=3,30$), PTK courses have enabled them to have a health communication with their students ($\bar{x}=3,26$), they have been applying the methods and the techniques ($\bar{x}=3,22$), they have been applying the information that they learned in PTK courses in their teaching lives ($\bar{x}=3,20$) and PTK courses enabled them to teach by taking students' mental development characteristics ($\bar{x}=3,19$) in terms of applicability.

3.4. Finding based on the Fourth sub-Problem

Frequency values of teachers' responses towards open-ended questions are given Table 10 in order to determine the applicability of PTK courses in teaching profession.

Table 10: Teachers' opinions about the applicability of Professional teaching knowledge courses

Nr	Teachers' opinions	f
1	There is a problem in practice as the classroom and school environments vary depending on the regions.	102
2	I have used most of the information I have acquired.	28
3	They have not contributed to my teaching career.	27
4	The courses taught are partially applicable.	17
5	Teaching is a profession which is learned with experience.	11

According to Table 10, most of the teachers state that they have a problem in practice as the classroom and school environments vary depending on the regions ($f=102$); they also state that not having necessary traits such as the number of the students in class, physical qualities, materials,

there is a decrease on applicability of the courses and they have not contributed to their teaching career (f=27). It has been seen that some teachers haven't used most of the information they acquired from PTK courses in their teaching career (f=28).

3.5. Finding based on the Fifth sub-Problem

Results of the responses given by the teachers to the items in the dimension of how PTK courses are taught are shown in Table 11 and 12.

Table11: Positive opinions regarding how courses are studied

Item Nr	Questionnaire Items	\bar{x}	ss
3	The people specializing in their subject matters taught PTK courses	3,33	1,20
4	The instructors teaching PTK courses were qualified enough.	3,24	1,10
14	The time allocated for the practice teaching was sufficient.	2,62	1,17
Total		9,20	2,60

When Table 11 is analyzed, it is seen that teachers are neutral about how PTK courses are taught at universities. It is seen that teachers are neutral in the test items "PTK courses were taught by the people specializing in their subject matters" ($\bar{x} = 3,33$), "the instructors teaching PTK courses were qualified enough" ($\bar{x} = 3,24$) and "the time allocated for the practice teaching was sufficient" ($\bar{x} = 2,62$).

Table 12: Negative opinions regarding how courses are studied

Item Nr	Questionnaire Items	\bar{x}	ss
5	PTK course hours were insufficient for preparing teacher candidates for the teaching practice.	3,37	1,17
19	PTK course instructors' guidance about the teaching profession was not sufficient.	3,34	1,10
1	Teaching methods used in PTK courses were not useful	3,09	1,12
30	The way PTK courses are studied make students turn people against the teaching profession.	2,88	1,10
Total		12,69	3,06

When Table 12 is analyzed, it is seen that teachers are neutral about the items "PTK course hours were insufficient for preparing teacher candidates for the teaching practice." ($\bar{x} = 3,37$), "PTK course instructors' guidance about the teaching profession was not sufficient" ($\bar{x} = 3,34$), "PTK courses were not useful because of the teaching methods that the instructors used" ($\bar{x} = 3,09$) and "The way PTK courses are studied make students turn people against the teaching profession" ($\bar{x} = 2,88$).

3.6. Finding based on the Sixth sub-Problem

The correlation among teachers' opinions as to how professional teaching knowledge courses are studied, their applicability and content are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: The Correlation among How PTK Courses are Studied, Their Applicability and Content in the PTK Courses Assessment Questionnaire.

Dimensions	B1	B2	B3
B1 (How PTK courses are studied)	1		
B2 (applicability)	0,621*	1	
B3 (content)	0,680*	0,806*	1

N=315, *p< 0.01 (2-tailed)

According to Table 15, there is a positive, meaningful correlation at moderate level between how PTK courses are studied and their applicability in the teaching career ($r = 0,621$). Also, how PTK courses are studied and their content have a positive and meaningful correlation at moderate

level ($r= 0,680$). Finally, there is a positive correlation at high level between the content of PTK courses and their applicability in the teaching career ($0,806$).

4. Conclusions, Discussions and Comments

Findings and conclusions obtained at the end of the research are discussed in this part. Teachers are generally neutral according to their responses to the question in the PTK courses assessment questionnaire. There can be 3 reasons for this:

- They may have forgotten the education they undertook at faculties of education in the following years,
- They may not have paid enough attention to PTK courses when they studied and not have learned much about their content,
- Teachers may have given an average response to the questionnaire items rather than extreme answers, either positive or negative.

Additionally, most of the teachers have kept the first open-ended question of the questionnaire “what do you think about the content of PTK courses?” blank. However, it is seen that they agree with the item that the contents of PTK courses are related to the teaching profession. According to this result, the content of PTK courses reflect the teaching profession as aimed. Next, it has been determined that, in order to see whether PTK courses draw teachers’ interest or not, teachers disagree with the idea that “PTK courses did not draw my interest.” According to these conclusions PTK courses do not draw teachers’ interest.

Teachers are neutral about the other test item that “The content of PTK courses was adequate to become an influential and effective teacher.” The study carried out by Akpınar and Özer (2004) in the technical education faculty on the last grade teachers has a similar result with that. Candidate teachers agree with the judgment that “PTK courses are adequate to train an influential and effective teacher.” at the moderate level. Next, teachers agree with the opinion that “PTK courses are not associated with real life enough”. According to the answers given to this questionnaire item, teachers think that PTK courses are not associated with the real life enough. Also, the responses given to open-ended question support this finding.

When teachers were asked their opinions about the content, most of them emphasized that the content should not be prepared only according to central schools. However, multi-grade classes are present in our country and this can be seen in various schools. Most newly-graduated teachers encounter this practice in their first years of their career. It takes 1-2 year(s) to get accustomed to this system so as to create a real education activity. Both teachers and students are negatively affected by this situation. There is a “Multi-grade Classroom Teaching” course in the primary school programs training primary school teachers at faculties of education. Teachers’ being insufficient in this department stems not from the program, but it can be from the application method of the program. Some of the responses teachers provided to the open-ended questions pertaining to the content dimension of the program are as follows:

Teacher A: “I think that the content is improper and it lacks something in practice in multi-grade class in Suluçem Village of Doğubeyazıt in Ağrı, .I haven’t been able to implement anything that I learned in PTK courses taught at university. What I have learned was through my experience. That is, anything that we learn at university is useless...”

Teacher B: “The content of the courses does not cover or reflect the issues needed in practice. Situations that can be encountered in practice and precaution that can be taken should be focused on rather than storing information.”

As the teachers mentioned, there are problems related to the content. These problems may stem not from the topic in the content but not taking needs of the regions, students and schools during the practice of these topics into consideration. Furthermore, the information given theoretically cannot be applied enough.

The teachers stated that there is a great difference between the content of PTK courses and the curriculum of the Ministry of National Education. What teachers in the study generally think is that there is no connection between the Board of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education. Teachers stated this issue about the problems in both the applicability of the courses and in PTK courses. The indication of this issue in more than one situation by the teachers shows that there is really such a problem or they are unaware of the cooperation between the Board of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education. Most of the teachers' indication about the disconnection between The Board of Higher Education and The Ministry of National Education shows the existence of such a problem. The responses given by two teachers partly explain this issue.

Teacher C: *“Had the courses offered during the undergraduate program been integrated with the curriculum of the Ministry of National Education, it would have been better. E.g. while teaching 4-digit numbers in mathematics lesson, those methods could be used.”*

Teacher D: *PTK courses offered at faculties of education are only theoretical. They do not have much to do with the real life. The courses taught at universities are certainly not sufficient for the teaching experience as the connection between the Ministry of National Education and universities is broken.”*

Teachers really pointed out a serious issue.

One of teachers' duties is to put the curricula into practice at schools. Teachers implementing the program should be prepared for the program before putting it into effect. In other words, the programs of teacher-producing institutions should be changed first. Candidate teachers should be prepared in line with that program so that they can keep up with the changing program and the program can be conducted without any problem after they are graduated. What is important here is to ensure preparing teachers to implement the program rather than directly practicing them at schools.

Some of the teachers stated that the topics in the content of PTK courses are not practicable and comprehensible. In the study conducted by Kızılcılık ve Eser (2000), it was found out that % 49,5 of instructors use lecture method. Aydın (2005), refers to the findings that “students want the courses to be more enjoyable. Accordingly, instructors should not only teach by presenting it, but also research various methods of teaching and improve themselves all the time.” It is known that presentation has a poorer impact on the academic achievements of students than other modern teaching methods.

Teachers stated that they have problems in practice as PTK courses are mostly theoretical or remain abstract. Likewise, not being able to turn theoretical information into practice is seen as the problem encountered mostly in PTK courses. In a study by Okçabol et al (2003), just 30 % of teachers regard PTK courses sufficient in terms of practice. Aydın (2005) mentions that the greatest problem of teacher trainer is the inconsistency between theory and practice and teaching methods are excessively theoretical as for in the way teaching methods are explained. Methodology which is tried to be taught based on theory does not change teacher candidates' behaviors. Since they cannot lead to behavioral changes, problems are experienced in practice teaching. This could be because of instructors' use of presentation while teaching PTK courses. A teacher made such a comment about

this topic:

Teacher E: “PTK courses are just theoretical. As they are not put into practice, they are not sufficient.”

The significance can be attributed to practice teaching in the program prepared by the Board of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education, put into effect in 1997 and re-organized in 2006 was enhanced. Final year students used to have one-month practice teaching up to that grade. The new program projects 3-term observation, examination and practice at schools with the courses entitled teaching practice I-II and school experience. Thus, it was aimed to bridge the gap between the theoretical courses and practice and train students better. Nonetheless, the findings explained that this duration according to teachers’ opinions is not used effectively. Because some teachers stated as a suggestion that applied teaching and practice teaching periods should be increased. The views of teachers participating into research about this issue are as follows:

Teacher F: “A youngster studying at university is not so much aware of becoming a teacher. So, s/he does not take courses seriously and does not pay enough attention. What should be done is to start practice teaching in the earlier grades and to make them conscious of their becoming a teacher.”

In a study by Akpınar and Özer (2004), it is seen that teacher candidates adopt the attitude that PTK courses about practice teaching achieves their goal” a little. So, there is a parallelism between the findings. These views show that the benefit expected from practice teaching is not obtained.

Next, another problem expressed by teachers is that PTK courses are not taught by instructors who specialize in their fields. The researchers conducted by Dikici, Yavuzer ve Gündoğdu (2006), Akpınar and Özer (2004) and Yanpar-Yelken et al (2007) support this finding. Dikici, Yavuzer ve Gündoğdu, researched the views of graduates of the faculty of education about educational courses and, when their results about the courses from which students cannot benefit are analysed, it was found that the courses should be given by the experts and instructors who are specialists in their fields. Akpınar and Özer studied the assessment of PTK courses according to students’ views and students who took part in the study agree a little with the idea that “instructors teaching PTK courses master the subject enough”. Yanpar Yelken took the views of teacher candidates that “the professional qualities that instructors should have and stated that 66 % of teacher candidates should be experts / master the field.”

Usage of materials during lessons expands an instructor’s role and shows his/her quality. Usage of teaching materials realizes active and effective learning by providing motivation and creativity for students. Yet, according to Rıza (200), education in Turkish schools is generally carried out without using materials and using oral; what is a presentation method. One of the reasons is the way teachers are trained at universities. So, teacher-training higher education institutions are also responsible for this problem of teachers. In addition, Özden (1999) states that the way of teacher candidates’ use teaching materials in classroom and having enough information is certainly under the responsibility of teacher-training institutions. It can therefore be concluded in the studies conducted Duhaney, 2001; Betrus, 2000; Brennan, 2000; Cuckle and Jenkins. 2000; Duran, 2000,734) that teacher candidates should be trained well in terms of the use of technology and materials. Sime and Priestley (2005) also took teacher candidates’ views about the use of information and communication technologies where they stated that ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) change the nature of the relations in classrooms as a new form of learning and teaching. They mentioned that they adopt the use of ICT in classrooms as a modern means of teaching, however this process has several challenges as well.

Regarding this issue in this study, it was observed that one of the problems encountered in PTK courses is the inefficiency in using teaching and learning materials. The reasons for this problem could be that instructors do not take responsibility in this respect, that is, teaching the subject just using the presentation method or they do not have enough information about the use of materials. The study by Akpınar and Özer (2004), also supports this comment. Akpınar and Özer requested the opinion of teacher candidates regarding the comment that “PTK courses are taught and supported by educational materials” and found out that they support his view to a certain extent. In the study carried out by Temizkan (2008), it is seen that 39,75 % of teacher candidates will have difficulty in preparing tools and materials about the topics to be studied.

To conclude, practice teaching should be organised in a way that is suitable in any place and condition of the country. If a teacher is trained, she/he should be well-equipped. So, either the conditions at schools should be improved or teacher training policies should be revised.

5. Suggestions

Results reached based on the findings obtained in the study and suggestions put forward in line with the follows:

- Professional teaching courses studied at education faculties should be offered with an emphasis on teaching practice.
- During the teaching practice of PTK courses teacher candidates should be well behaved and should be observed and guided at schools.
- Teaching practice should be prepared by taking rural-city conditions into account.
- The content of PTK courses should be integrated with the present life.
- Use of educational materials should be increased in PTK courses and teachers’ lack of information and skills should be improved.
- The disconnection between PTK courses and the curriculum of the Ministry of National Education should be improved.
- PTK courses should be taught using modern methods such as discussion, demonstration rather than using traditional methods such as merely oral presentation.
- The content of PTK courses should be arranged in such a way that it is applicable and it responds to the current needs.
- Classrooms at faculties of education should be equipped with technological materials and these materials should be made use of a lot during having lessons.
- It should be ensured that PTK courses taught by experts in their fields.
- Instructors should prepare teacher candidates psychologically for the teaching profession.

Suggestions to researchers:

- The study conducted on teachers as the working group can be implemented and different data can be obtained about the content of the courses.
- The difference between the teachers graduated from the education faculty and other faculties can be studied in depth so as to determine the efficacy and effectiveness of PTK courses in the teaching profession.
- The correlation between points of views of the first-year teacher candidates and final year teacher candidates have taken all PTK courses about teaching profession at faculties of education can be researched.

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