Pre-Service Teachers' Retrospective and Prospective Evaluations: Program, Self, and Teaching Profession

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate teacher candidates' retrospective and prospective evaluations about the classroom teacher education program, self, and the teaching profession. Observations, interviews, focus group interviews, and surveys were used to collect data from the 240 subjects. Teacher candidates believed that the teaching profession is the best fit to their characters and the profession is the best job for females. The data analysis showed that 95% of the teacher candidates indicated at least two or more program related issues, and only 5% of them found the quality of the program satisfactory. The results also revealed that pre-service teachers experience burnout problem, and 90% of the male subjects do not have a plan to stay in the teaching profession. It is recommended that the classroom teacher education department should offer teacher candidates more student-centered and constructivist teaching with adequate field experiences.

Key Words: Retrospective, prospective, evaluation, teaching profession, pre-service teachers

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Introduction

Many teacher education institutions around the world use surveys to learn teacher candidates' ideas about programs, instructors, courses, and after graduation plans. Current student surveys lack of items about student learning (Bedggood & Donovan, 2012). Instead of surveys, more valid and reliable data can be collected by investigating pre-service teachers' responsive evaluations about the quality of the program and their perceptions about the teaching profession so that teacher educators, researchers, and education policy makers can have good ideas about why pre-service teachers choose a path to be a teacher, how they see teaching as a profession, which qualities they possess, and which future expectations they have from the profession.

The Reasons for Choosing Teaching as a Career

The teacher education literature shows that pre-service teachers choose the teaching career for altruistic (desire to help children learn and improve society, etc.), intrinsic (a love for teaching and specific subject areas, etc.) and extrinsic (job security, long holidays, etc.) reasons (Pop & Turner, 2009; Saban, 2003). Most of the Turkish pre-service teachers wanted to become classroom teachers because of altruistic reasons (Saban, 2003). As Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) indicated, when compared with other workers, teachers may be more altruistically motivated, but the pay can also be used to motivate talented college graduates.

The studies focused on the teacher candidates' reasons for choosing teaching as a career revealed different results: Kyriacou, Hultgren, and Stephens' (1999) study showed that 105 Norwegian and 112 British pre-service teachers were strongly influenced by such reasons as enjoying and having a chance to use their subject, and liking to work with children. In Kyriacou and Coulthard's (2000) study, only 15% of the undergraduate students thought that a career in teaching would definitely offer a job that they will find enjoyable. Richardson and Watt's (2005) study also showed that teaching would provide a satisfying, but psychologically and socially demanding career. As the expectations from the teaching profession vary from person to person, the factors that are important for teacher candidates to choose a career should be identified so that they can be persuaded that the teaching profession can offer them what they are looking for (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000).

Quality in Teacher Education Programs

The teacher quality is a very important factor in students' achievements, and everybody wants more of it, but there is not a consensus about how to define it (Cochran-Smith, 2004, 2005; Goodwin & Oyler, 2008; Ingersoll, 2008). "It has been acknowledged for some time now that the strongest teacher education programs are those based on coherent conceptual frameworks, guided by current theory and research, and infused with the wisdom of practice" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p. 188). On the other hand, "there is widespread agreement that teacher education research has had very little influence on policymaking and on practice in teacher education programs" (Zeichner, 2005, p. 756). Nearly all the countries have different or similar standards for quality teaching and quality teacher education programs, but "none of the standards for teaching, collectively or separately, apparently provides the public any assurance that the teacher is competent" (Murray, 2008, p. 1237).

Teacher candidates and current teachers often see pay as a factor that dissuades them from entering or remaining in teaching (Johnson & Kardos, 2008). "Nevertheless, as a common determinant of status, pay does not guarantee high prestige. One critical factor would seem to be the academic quality of those who enter the profession" (Hargreaves, 2009, p. 227). Zumwalt and Craig (2008) indicated that teachers bring the following characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, age, college entrance tests, college GPA, college major, status of college attended, teacher tests, and certification to teacher preparation programs and K-12 classrooms. The authors claimed that these characteristics are frequently used to explain the demographic and quality profile of the teaching force.

Future Expectations and Concerns

Teacher candidates' and beginning teachers' backgrounds, motivations, and previous educational experiences as a student, their reasons for choosing teaching as a career, their expectations from the profession, their preparation levels, and the school contexts in which they work play an important role in their view of the teaching profession and future practices (Saban, 2003; Wanzare, 2007). Teacher educators must carefully think about the knowledge and skills that teacher candidates need to be effective teachers (Long & Stuart, 2004). The future teachers must have a repertoire of intellectual, moral, and critical thinking skills to meet the challenges of schools (Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000).

A review of the literature reveals that there is a gap between beginning teachers' ideals and the reality of school life (Koetsier & Wubbels, 1995; Wanzare, 2007). In teacher education, there is a lack of attention to teacher candidates' imagination and future-oriented thinking (Conway, 2001). Sharing future-oriented imagination in the courses can give teacher candidates a chance to learn their classmates' and instructors' ideas so that pre-service teachers can have more realistic expectations from the profession and know the different alternatives that they may face in their future teaching career.

The literature focusing on teachers' concerns revealed the following results: According to Fuller (1969), teachers experience three phases of concern. In the pre-teaching phase, they rarely had concerns about teaching and they do not know what to be concerned about. In the early teaching phase, they seemed to be concerned with teaching students and coping with them. In the late teaching phase, teachers focus on pupil gain and self-evaluation. Consistent with the Fuller model, Pigge and Marso's (1997) longitudinal study illustrated that as teachers progressed through career stages their concerns about self-survival as teachers decreased because they experienced successes with their teaching efforts, and their concerns about the actual tasks of teaching increased because they experienced the complexity of the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, Evans and Tribble's (1986) study revealed that pre-service teachers stressed problems about subject matter, and both pre-service and beginning teachers had strong concern about motivating students. As Evans and Tribble indicated, this result does not support Fuller's theoretical claims.

The Need for Research

Teacher educators should listen and respond to future teachers' expectations and discuss the nature and structure of their programs so that they can learn about these candidates' concerns (Mueller & Skamp, 2003). The literature reviewed in Turkey did not reveal a type of research that deeply investigates classroom pre-service teachers' retrospective and prospective evaluations of the program, self, and teaching profession. To this end, I aimed to investigate the following three questions:

(1) Why did the pre-service teachers select a path to be a classroom teacher?

(2) What are the pre-service teachers' perceptions about the quality of the classroom teacher education program and the qualification of themselves?

(3) How do pre-service teachers describe and imagine their future professional achievements and concerns?

Method

As Yin (2006) stated, case study design is appropriate in two situations. The research addresses descriptive and explanatory questions, and the researcher wants to in-depth understanding about people and events. As these situations fit well to this study, I used multiple-case (holistic) designs (Yin, 2003) to contrast and compare the five cases, which are described below.

Definition of the Cases

In Turkey, teacher candidates are accepted, after a centralized exam, to the Faculties of Education, which give pre-service teachers four-year-long theoretical and practical instruction. I

selected one of the major universities in Ankara. This university is among the biggest universities in Turkey with approximately 1700 graduating teacher candidates each year.

Classroom teachers are trained to teach all the courses from first to fourth grades. They receive general cultural, pedagogical formation, and content area related courses in the Faculties of Education. Teacher candidates from the department of classroom teacher education receive courses in four years and there are five different classes at each grade level. Each class has at around 45 students. The pre-service teachers who are in the different classes register to the same courses and, generally, the same instructors teach them.

Turkish pre-service teachers take a "National Teacher Placement Exam" after graduating from their teacher education programs. In this exam, they receive pedagogical, general ability, and general cultural related questions. Besides their coursework, they study very hard to have high scores in this standardized and competitive exam. The Ministry of National Education employs the candidates having the highest scores. Generally, teacher candidates graduate in June and become a teacher in September. The fourth year of the Faculty of Education can be accepted as the most stressful period of the teacher candidates' four-year-long journey. In this pre-service to in-service transition period, it is expected that they have very realistic and strong ideas about the classroom teacher education program, they have good feelings about their own capabilities and skills, and they have different kinds of future expectations and concerns. Because of these reasons, I mainly selected the fourth year pre-service teachers who are in the five different classes of classroom teacher education program as multiple cases. In total, 248 pre-service teachers were just about to graduate. I accepted each of these five different classes as an independent case, and examined the pre-service teachers in these classes holistically so that I had a chance to compare and contrast the data collected from the subjects.

Data Collection

The data was collected between February and May 2011. In each of the following different data collection process, I used retrospective and prospective questions. I mainly investigated why the participants choose a path to be a teacher, how they think about the quality of the teacher education program, what they think about their strengths and weaknesses, and what their future teaching profession related expectations and concerns are. In this study, as Conway (2001) stated, I encouraged the teacher candidates to look toward the future with knowledge of the past by using their present viewpoints. I used the following data collection techniques.

Observations: As possessing an insider perspective, I observed each class and took field notes during the observations. In addition, I had many chances to observe and listen to the subjects in classroom breaks, in drinking coffee in the canteen, etc. If the note taking was impossible at the time of observation, I wrote down them as *post-facto* notes in my first chance by relying on my memory.

Interviews: I interviewed 60 voluntary participants to learn their beliefs, opinions, and values about the research questions during the semester. I used semi and unstructured interview protocols, and recorded each interview. The interviews were about 30-60 minutes long. In unstructured interviews, I wanted to learn as much information as possible without limiting subjects to particular topics (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Mainly, speech like conversations took place between the researcher and the interviewees.

In semi-structured interviews, I asked 12 pre-prepared questions. A few examples of the questions can be seen below. In addition, I asked the interviewees detail-oriented questions, elaboration probes (Tell me more about that), and clarification probes (What do you mean by _____?) to increase the richness and depth of their responses (Patton, 2002).

(1) When you imagine the time you registered to the Faculty of Education, please tell me, why did you desire to be a teacher? Was it a right decision to select a path to be a teacher?

(2) How do you think about the courses you take in this program? Did you learn the knowledge and skills that you will need in the future as a classroom teacher?

(3) If you had had a chance to return to your first year, what would you have done to make the four years you spent in the department of classroom teacher education more efficient and effective?

(4) When you are assigned as a teacher, which achievements would you like to reach and which concerns would probably bother you?

(5) What is the biggest aim you would like to reach in the teaching profession?

Focus Group Interviews: I conducted five video-recorded focus group interviews with the voluntary teacher candidates of these five classes to generate discussion among the subjects and to learn their alternative views in detail. Each focus group had five female and five male pre-service teachers. Mainly, the subjects evaluated the classroom teacher education program, assessed their own academic and teaching skills, and discussed the future expectations and concerns as related to the teaching profession.

Survey: The voluntary teacher candidates were requested to answer an open-ended survey. I wanted to learn the participants' insider perspectives about the questions and give them a chance to reflect and express themselves in writing (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). The survey included 17 open-ended retrospective and prospective questions (see Appendix). In total, 240 (168 female and 72 male with the average age of 22.5) participants answered the surveys in four different sessions.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, I examined each case in total and used the following data analysis strategy: I, first, transcribed video-recorded individual and focus group interviews. Then, I read them in detail, summarized the data and determined sub-categories, compared interviewees' responses to the same question, and identified major themes and issues that emerged from the data. I used inferential and explanatory pattern codes to identify emergent themes, issues, and patterns (Miles & Huberman, 1994). After completing the individual interviews, I used member-checking strategy (Creswell, 2003; Hatch, 2002) to enhance the overall accuracy of the study.

To analyze the surveys, I use the same method as I followed in analyzing the interviews. In short, I coded the pre-service teachers' written answers and found repeated themes, issues, and events. Then, I triangulated the field notes, individual interviews, focus group interviews, and surveys to find major issues, themes, and patterns that I used to describe and interpret each case. I repeated this procedure for the five cases. Finally, I found the differences and similarities across the five cases by using a cross-case analysis (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The following major-and sub-themes were found in the data: Teacher candidates' reasons for career choice, a retrospective look at the past four years (evaluating the quality of the classroom teacher education program, and perceptions about teacher candidates' own efforts to be a quality classroom teacher), and a prospective look at the future. Emerged major themes were discussed in the conclusion section of the study.

Results

Results are examined under the three main headings: (1) reasons for career choice (2) a retrospective look at the past and (3) a prospective look at the future.

Teacher Candidates' Reasons for Career Choice

Teacher candidates indicated six reasons to be a teacher. First, the participants wanted to be a teacher because teaching profession is the best fit to their characters ($f =75$). They think they have a capacity and an innate skill to teach. They feel a big responsibility and capacity in raising future generations as knowledgeable and skillful people. During the interviews, the participants showed strong desire of teaching good and useful knowledge, and skills to their future students. Two female teacher candidates' statements can be seen below.

I have a childish character. Children's behaviors are friendly, sincere, and genuine to me. Teaching is the best fit to my personality, character, and skills. I never imagined a place to work other than classrooms. Because of my profession, my school life will never end. My pencil and notebook will always in my hand. Teaching students useful knowledge is fun for me.

When I was a child, I would like to teach math or science to my friends, and my mother often told me things like: *My good teacher girl.* Teaching is my destiny. As a teacher, I have an innate capacity to educate and cultivate our students as productive and useful members of our society.

Thinking teaching as the best job for a female who wants to raise a family was the second reason of choosing teaching (f =54). Most of the classroom teachers in Turkey work half a day so that they can find a good amount of time to spend with their families. Especially, female teacher candidates indicated that the knowledge and skills they learned in the classroom teacher education program would be useful to their own children as well. In addition, they have a good communication with children and studying with children gives them happiness. A female participant stated,

I wanted to be a classroom teacher because I have sympathy, patience, and compassion towards children. I like to dialog with children. I like to listen to children's talks and I like to teach them.

Seeing teaching as a sacred profession and believing to have the spiritual peace in this profession was the third reason (f =40). The subjects stated that because of their quality and good teaching the next generation will consist of people possessing good moral character. As a result, they will reach the goal of seeing a peaceful environment and social atmosphere in the society. A male teacher candidate stated,

For me, teaching is a sacred profession. I have a big responsibility to my students, their families, and the god. If I cannot teach my students useful knowledge and if I cannot give them a good and quality character education, I will be responsible to the god as well. I believe my students and I will together follow a path that directs us to explore how to be a good person.

People's respects to the teachers were the fourth reason. Traditionally, Turkish people show respect to teachers (f =25). Many families encourage their children to be respectful to their teachers. Two female teacher candidates stated,

I wanted to be a teacher because people respect to teachers. I know I will not earn much money, but no one forget her/his first grade teacher. This is a nice feeling.

I think the elementary school as a fabric. My students are my inputs. My process or teaching will be quality and constructive manner so that the quality of the output will be good. If I do that, I deserve the parents' and my students' respects.

The fifth reason was the desire to be a teacher who like or unlike their previous classroom teachers (f =22). Nearly half of the participants had very positive experiences with their classroom teachers when they were in elementary schools, and they wanted to be like them. The other half wanted to be a teacher because they had negative experiences with their untalented and incompetent classroom teachers. They desired to be a teacher because they do not want to leave the students to untalented teachers. A female teacher candidate stated,

I do not want to leave our students to senseless, untalented, and burnout teachers. When I was in elementary school, my classroom teacher always seemed like very tired and unwilling to teach. I hope my students will never see that type of teacher. Our schools should be full of teachers who like teaching students.

Lastly, teacher candidates wanted to be a teacher because there are some practical considerations such as long holidays (f =11), finding a job easily (f =10), and the light workload of teaching profession (f =3).

A Retrospective Look at the Past Four Years

Evaluating the Quality of the Classroom Teacher Education Program: The data analysis revealed that 95% of the teacher candidates indicated at least two or more program related issues, and only 5% of them found the quality of the program satisfactory. The participants emphasized five issues. First, they thought that the program is not student centered (f =55). There should be courses such as child psychology and health, classroom management, inclusive education, special education, and teaching in multigrade classrooms that help better understand the elementary school students. The participants needed extra knowledge and practices in these areas. They found the program too theoretical. According to them, the weekly hours of school practices and field experiences related courses should be increased in the program. Two female participants stated,

> Our classroom teacher education program is too theoretical. The most important thing is that how to use theories to improve students' learning levels. I am just about to graduate. I feel like... The teaching profession is a ten step long ladder, but I am on the second step. I wish I had a chance to observe the children at different developmental stages. I wish I had understood the students' behaviors and spent more time in the elementary school classrooms.

> How will I cope with elementary school students? How will I teach students by considering their individual differences? For now, I do not know the answers to these questions because the program is not student centered.

Second, the teaching styles of the faculties were found as traditional (f =50). Teacher candidates frequently mentioned the advantages of constructivist theory, but they stated a lack of knowledge and experience in how to use this theory in their future classrooms. A male teacher candidate stated,

> Our instructors did not use constructivist methods in their teaching. Nearly all of them used traditional methods. I do not know how to use constructivist theory to teach my future Turkish, science or math courses. I know theoretical knowledge, but not sure whether this knowledge works well or not for elementary level students.

In addition, instructors' explanations about the difficulties of the teaching profession give them negative motivation and make them feel unhappy to select this profession (f =20). A female participant stated,

> Our instructors frequently told us about the difficulties of the teaching profession, but after a while, these difficulties precluded us from desiring to be a teacher, and showing positive attitude towards the courses. Because of the difficulties I will face, I am planning and searching to have a different career.

Third, the participants believed that the teacher candidates who do not internalize the teaching profession decrease the quality of the courses (f =45). Their low interest towards the courses, and their negative attitudes towards the profession both decrease the quality of the courses and give them negative motivation. According to the participants, teacher candidates should be selected among the candidates who really want to be a classroom teacher. A female pre-service teacher stated,

> Instead of large number of teacher candidates, we need small numbers of high quality candidates. I was very idealist in my first year in the college, but I am not anymore. I feel very tired. It is very bad to see in this program teacher candidates who are dissatisfied to choose teaching profession or do not believe in the importance of teaching. Voluntary and skilled

people should be accepted to the program. Not only standardized scores, but also interviews should be used to select candidates.

Fourth, according to the teacher candidates, there is a lack of courses about teaching in multigrade schools ($f =39$). In addition, there is a need for adaptation courses that can prepare teacher candidates to teach in rural locations. A female participant stated,

We took courses that aimed to prepare us to teach in an ideal classroom. We are not taught to teach students living in rural areas. There are thousands of village schools possessing multigrade classrooms. I do not know what to do if I am appointed to one of these schools. We should have visited these schools and taught students.

Lastly, teacher candidates thought that the program does not contain comparative education courses ($f =31$). They especially would like to take courses about the elementary and teacher education in European Countries. The participants believed that examining these countries' educational problems and teaching practices might give them new ideas to improve their teaching skills.

Perceptions about Teacher Candidates' Own Efforts to be a Quality Classroom Teacher: The data analysis revealed four themes about the efforts that teacher candidates should have made during the past four years. First, the participants stated that there are some competencies that cannot be taught in the Faculties of Education such as compassion towards the teaching profession; patience towards students; respect to the teaching profession, students, families, and colleagues; and not to make discrimination among students ($f =89$). Teacher candidates should gain these competencies with their own efforts, and they should develop a sense to be quality and caring teachers.

Second, the participants believed that the field experiences are very limited in the program ($f =73$). If they had had a chance to return to the first year of the college, they would have found the elementary schools with their own efforts to observe and teach. Especially, they need practice in the areas of classroom management and emergent literacy.

Third, the teacher candidates indicated that they did not show active efforts to follow academic journals and to participate in conferences ($f =42$). If they had had a chance to return to the first year of the college, they would have attended all the scientific and pedagogical events, and read journal articles about teaching strategies and the characteristics of quality teachers.

Fourth, the teacher candidates who did not apply to ERASMUS program were very sorry ($f =36$). They believed that taking courses in other universities could give teacher candidates new viewpoints, knowledge, and experience. The participants thought that missing this opportunity was a big disadvantage for them. A female teacher candidate said,

One of my friends went to Spain with ERASMUS program. We talked a lot about her experience. I wish I had the same experience, but it is too late.

The results showed that teacher candidates fall into three different groups. The first group stated that they did not like the profession in the first year of the Faculty of Education, but they are happy at the moment to be a teacher candidate because they learned how to teach ($f =84$). The second group stated that they were happy to be a teacher candidate in the first year of the faculty, but they have big concerns at present because teaching something to somebody is very difficult ($f =79$). The third group of subjects indicated that they will have to teach because there is no other options ($f =77$).

A Prospective Look at the Future: Professional Expectations and Concerns

The participants were asked to report teaching related concerns and professional achievements they would like to reach in the year 2023. The results showed that teacher candidates' professional concerns could be grouped under the three headings. First, they have concerns about classroom

management and meeting the educational needs of at around 30 students ($f = 225$). Second, they have a lack of teaching experience and this need can only be met by working as an in-service teacher in a real classroom setting ($f = 218$). Finally, the majority of the teacher candidates ($f = 144$) indicated that they experienced a burnout problem. Traditional teaching styles of the faculties, content-heavy courses, and the low status of the teaching profession were among the causes of this burnout problem. A female teacher candidate elucidated this issue and stated,

> I came to the Faculty of Education very enthusiastically. Now, I am just about to graduate, but I feel very tired. The courses and exams were very difficult. I feel like I am burned-out. I am afraid I cannot do anything when I will work as an in-service teacher.

The results showed that 80% of the male teacher candidates would like to see themselves as inspectors, school headmasters, or politicians in the year 2023. Ten percent of the subjects would like to be instructors in the Faculties of Education because they think they do not have enough patience to study with elementary school students. Only the last 10% of the male participants would like to see themselves as classroom teachers in the 2023.

Fifty percent of the female teacher candidates would like to see themselves as quality classroom teachers, and would like to have students doing useful things to all humanity. Teacher candidates in this group stated altruistic aims to reach in the year 2023. Two female teacher candidates' statements can be seen below.

> The students I will teach will be good citizens who are psychologically and physically healthy, have high self-esteem, and always do useful things to all humanity. I would like to reach students who need education most. If I can reach them, I will be very happy.

> I do not want to be a full professor. I just want to be a classroom teacher. I am sure teachers' salaries will be low in the year 2023, and I will probably complain about that, but I will continue to love my profession and my students.

Thirty percent of the female subjects would like to see themselves as instructors in the Faculties of Education. The subjects in this group like teaching, but they think they will be more successful in conducting research. Last 20% of the female subjects would like to see themselves as school headmasters or inspectors. Teacher candidates in this group would like to protect students from low quality and cruel teachers. They believed that if they have responsibilities in the managerial positions, they could better protect students. A female teacher candidate stated,

> I am very sad when I read news about teachers abusing their students. How can a teacher do these kinds of behaviors? I would like to have responsibilities in the Ministry of Education, and spend efforts to employ quality, caring, and psychologically healthy teachers who respect to the students.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, teacher candidates thought that teaching is the best fit to their characters. A similar result was found in Cermik, Dogan, and Sahin's (2010) study which revealed that pre-service teachers who were just about to graduate from the classroom teacher education department mostly indicated intrinsic survey items (love of teaching, suitable profession to my character, etc.) for the reasons of selecting teaching as a profession. As Bektaş and Nalçacı (2012) indicated, personal values are important in predicting teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession. The participants of this study saw teaching as the best job for females who desire to raise a family. It is worth noting that the suitability of the working conditions of the teaching profession for females leads to over representation of women in the Faculties of Education. The results also illustrated that only 10% of the male participants have a plan to continue teaching. On the other hand, 50% of the female teacher candidates would like to see themselves as quality classroom teachers, and stated altruistic aims to reach in the

year 2023. With a similar result, Pop and Turner's (2009) and Saban's (2003) studies also revealed that participants reported predominantly altruistic reasons for pursuing teaching career.

The participants thought that the classroom teacher education program is not student centered. Student-centeredness was seen by pre-service teachers as the most common characteristic of effective teachers (Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher, & James, 2002; Witcher & Onwuegbuzie, 1999). The teacher candidates also found the teaching styles of the faculties as traditional. The subjects believed that their instructors should use constructivist-learning activities in their courses so that the teacher candidates can have more solid ideas about how to apply these activities in their future classrooms.

The participants indicated that instructors' explanations about the difficulties of the teaching profession make themselves feel unhappy to select this profession. In Cermik et al.'s (2010) study, 40% of the Turkish teacher candidates from the classroom teacher education department stated that if they had had a chance, they would not have chosen the teaching profession. Too demanding sides of teaching (stress related illness, classroom discipline, etc) can be accepted as one of the causes of the dropout from the profession (Stokking, Leenders, Jong, & Tartwijk, 2003). According to Fuller (1969), in the pre-teaching phase, teacher candidates rarely had concerns about teaching and they do not know what to be concerned about. In this study, a different result was found. Seventy-nine teacher candidates who intentionally selected the teaching profession developed a concern as teaching something to somebody is very difficult.

The results showed that the teacher candidates who do not internalize the teaching profession had a role in the decrease of the quality of the courses. Generally, Colleges of Education are a second choice for the students who are not accepted to the more prestigious departments (Fejgin, Kfir, & Ariav, 1998). This is especially true for Turkey, because students are solely accepted to the university departments based on their standard test scores. Their first choices generally consist of medicine, law, and engineering related departments. They add a few teaching profession related departments at the end of their list not to stay out of the university. As a result of this kind of selection process, the departments of Faculties of Education have a big numbers of teacher candidates who do not internalize the teaching profession.

The participants found the field experiences very limited and had concerns about classroom management. As Wanzare (2007) indicated, pre-service teachers often receive limited practicum teaching and classroom management is among the challenges that frustrate beginning teachers in their transition into the teaching profession. Teacher candidates also indicated that they have a burnout problem. The participants had this problem because of instructors' traditional teaching styles and the low status of the teaching profession. In addition, receiving education in a department that was not teacher candidates' first choice might also cause the burnout problem. A similar result was found by Tumkaya and Cavusoglu (2010) who reported that 42.5% of the senior Turkish teacher candidates from the classroom teacher education department were in the risk of burnout, 20.6% of them were experiencing burnout, and 8.6% of them were experiencing very serious burnout.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that the classroom teacher education department should offer teacher candidates more student-centered and constructivist teaching with adequate field experiences. Teacher educators should spend efforts to learn and solve the causes of the teacher candidates' classroom management and burnout problems. In addition, high school graduates entering the university entrance exam should be informed about the realities of the teaching profession so that students who do not internalize the teaching profession may follow another track. The disharmony between students' needs and departments' expectations is a well-known reality in Turkey. The solution is beyond the capabilities of the universities as they cannot select their own students. There is a centralized conducted exam that places Turkish high school graduates to the university departments. There is a need for system-wide efforts and changes. Finally, further studies should be conducted to know why male teacher candidates do not have teaching profession related plans. Further retrospective and prospective evaluations with the participation of faculties, teacher candidates, and

policy makers can give a chance to see pros and cons of the teacher education programs, and to see the teaching profession through stakeholders' eyes.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY QUESTIONS

FIRST SESSION

1) Please imagine the time when you made choices in the University Entrance Exam and answer the following questions: Why did you want to be a teacher? Why did you select the classroom teacher education department?

2) Are there any person/s have an effect on your career decision?

3) Please consider the nearly four years you spent in the Classroom Teacher Education Program (CTEP) and explain: What do you think about the decision you made in the University Entrance Exam? Was it a good idea to be a teacher candidate?

4) Please think about your future roles as a classroom teacher and answer the following questions: What do you think about the quality of the courses you took in the CTEP? Did you learn the necessary knowledge and skills in these courses to be a well-qualified and competent classroom teacher?

SECOND SESSION

5) Are there any teaching profession related knowledge and skills that you could not gain in the past four years? What was/were the cause/s of this/these lack of knowledge and skills? What are the roles of instructors, self, course content, etc. in this lack of knowledge and skills?

6) Are there any additional courses that you think the CTEP should possess? Why do you think this/these course/s are important?

7) If you had had a chance to return to the first year of the college, what would you personally have done to make the college years more productive, efficient, and effective? Which knowledge and skills deficiencies would you like to improve?

8) What should be done to make the CTEP more efficient, effective, and up-to-date?

THIRD SESSION

9) What are the instructors' and teacher candidates' responsibilities and duties in an ideal college-level course? How an ideal college course should be covered?

10) Are there any knowledge and skills that you could not learn in the CTEP and hope to learn them when you become an in-service teacher?

11) Which positive and negative experiences did you have in the field experiences? How successful were you in your teaching during the field experiences?

12) Are there any teaching profession related knowledge and skills that cannot be taught in the CTEP? If your answer is yes, how should these competencies be gained?

13) If a new teacher candidate asks your opinion about the CTEP, what would you say to her/him?

FOURTH SESSION

14) When you imagine yourself as an in-service teacher, which achievements do you want to reach in the first and fifth year of your service? Which aims do you want to reach?

15) Please consider your own personal characteristics and the existing conditions of the teaching profession, and answer the following questions: How will be your life in the year 2023? How will be your professional teaching life in this year? In which position do you want to see yourself in the 2023? Why do you want to work in this position?

16) What is your the biggest professional aim? Do you think you can achieve this/these goal/s? Which problems can prevent you reaching your goals?

17) What concerns and hopes did you have in the first year of the faculty? What concerns and hopes do you have at present? What concerns might bother you in the future, if you continue to work as a teacher? What expectations do you have from the teaching profession?

!!! Please add any comments that you feel I need to know.