Caucasian Journal of Science
Journal home page: www.cjoscience.com
Year: 2017

Received: November 2017 Accepted: December 2017

ANALYZING IDEAS OF STUDENTS WHO STUDY AT DEPARTMENT OF PRESCHOOL TEACHING RELATED TO SCIENCE COURSES IN THE CURRICULUM

Adem AKKUŞ[1]

[1]Muş Alparslan University, Education Faculty, Science Education Department-Muş

ademakkus@gmail.com

Abstract

Aim of this study is to determine the opinion of prospective early childhood teachers related to early childhood education program and implementation of science education in the program. Study is carried out with 147 students who are studying at early childhood education program. Study is carried out with respect to document analysis. Codes are represented in question topics and themes are determined through data analysis. Study reveals that prospective teachers are interested more practical education and expecting instructors to have required skills on the program and its requirements. Fulfillment of the program and courses are determined by its practical value. Study reveals that science education is a must for the program and it should be integrated with experiments which explain nature to teacher candidates and kinder garden students. In addition it is also revealed that students want to take advantage of the courses and program for practical purposes such as parenting.

Key Words: Childhood education, program, childhood program, student ideas

Introduction

Requirements of a job as profession requires individuals to gain perspectives of science, and advances in science and technology have lead education process to start early ages of children. Skills required for the job profession are gained through education which is shaped to provide the necessary skills starting from early childhood education. That means science education should start at early childhood education and children must have the ability

of processing scientific thinking skills. All the topics mentioned above are important gear of education process in which teaching skills, individuals' personalities and ideas in terms of educator and educated (Aslan, Köksal Akyol, 2006).

Feelings, attitudes of teachers or teacher candidates affect teaching skills. For that reason it is important to know teachers' ideas and attitudes for effective teacher education. Professional skills for the required job are affected by attitudes and expectations from the job as a profession (Demirtaş, Cömert, Özer, 2011). Considering the topics mentioned above then it is possible to say that ideas and attitudes of students studying at education faculties are important. Students who do not have the desired interest in the job profession (i.e department) may not give enough attention on the departments' requirements which in return affect readiness level of teacher candidates and hence teachers. Özgan and Tekin (2011) states that low readiness level of teachers negatively affect teachers' performance on classroom management. In the same article authors also states that families also have effect on students who naturally affect education directly or indirectly. This also points out that education process has many aspects and each aspect should be studied carefully and relations between the aspects should be carefully pointed out. By this way it is also possible to identify negative causes of aspects and eliminate them or at least reduce their negative effects, or divert and turn them into the positive ways.

Aim of implementing science courses in to the pre-school education program curriculum is to provide scientific thinking skills to the students studying at faculties and helping students to have the habit of looking to the world in the way of scientific views. Purpose of that is to raise teachers who will help their student to gain scientific process skills. Another purpose is to make teacher candidates to have the habit of scientific thinking in their life (Kefi, Çeliköz and Erişen, 2013). From a different perspective, Alat, Akgümüş and Cavalı (2012) claim that while designing curriculums, needs of children related to their childhood are usually neglected. According to them this situation may be observed in some studies. Studies are usually carried out to answer the needs of the program and students' personal needs are omitted in the studies or researches.

Purpose of curriculum designs is to shape the courses with respect to desired outcomes and requirements of the departments. This purpose may be achieved by the curriculums which offer students rich learning environment (Nicol and Crespo, 2006). A study reveals that students who study at pre-school education departments are already thinking that science courses offered in the curriculum are helpful to them, however same study also implies that giving only theoretical lectures without real experience are not enough for meaningful

learning and hence do not provide qualified teachers (Karamustafaoğlu, Üstün and Kandaz, 2004).

Research

Purpose of the Study

Aim of this research is to reveal and investigate the ideas of teacher candidates who study at pre-school education program.

Research Design and Sample

Document analysis is used to reveal the data of the qualitative research methods. To answer the purpose of the study three topics are determined. Three questions were asked to students to collect data for the topics. To get the most in sight views students were asked to answer the questions anonymously. Only information were asked from the students were only age and gender information. Sample of the study consist of the students who study at pre-school education program. Number, gender and grade levels of the students are; 15 girls 3 boys for the 1st grade, 34 girls and 11 boys for the 2nd grade, 43 girls and 3 boys for the 3rd grade, 31 girls and 7 boys for the 4th grade. Sample consists of 147 teacher candidates.

Data Analysis and its Implications

Hermeneutic analysis is done for data revealing and data coding is done with respect to empiric coding. Three themes are determined for the research purpose. Topics and their relations were again analyzed and final relations are determined. Determined topics are; expectations from the department, necessity of science courses and expectations from faculty instructors. Determined themes are; job expectation for the living standards, job as a profession and parenting purposes. Through data revealing student statements are shown below with double quote.

For the all grade levels it is clear that students expect department to be a way of providing how to be good parents and how to do teaching as a profession. “I want to be a responsible parent”, “after graduation from the department I want to be able to understand children”, “to satisfy curiosity of the children” are some of the statements from the students. Thus it may be said that departments are seen by the students as key component of academic knowledge into reality. Another outcome is students’ expectations related to real life and how to use academic knowledge in the daily life in case of parenting. It is also noteworthy that parenting purposes increases as the grade level increases. While the 1st grade students barely indicates a desire on that purpose 3rd grade level students have strong emphasis on parenting

purposes. Here one of the student statement as “I want to raise my kid in a perfect way” when responding to outcomes. Thus it may be said that as the grade level increases students start to have the role of future parents. This also raises the question why 4th year students do not have such strong emphasis as their juniors. Answer also relies in their responds. In Turkey to be a teacher in government institutions teacher candidates must take KPSS exam and enough points to be eligible to serve for the government. For that reason 4th year students also study for the exam along with their program courses. Here are some statements “please do not give us any home works or project at least two months before KPSS”, “I expect instructors no to make a big deal on course attendance as we have other responsibilities as the exam”, “at least instructors may not ask hard questions in the exam since we have exam to be teachers” are clear examples. Akkus (2013) points out that exams which regarded as a great final or have enormous effect on near future, may drive students into stress and thus may cause academic works to fail or may make students not to pay enough attention on the courses.

Questioning the necessity of science courses and students’ ideas also shows that although there are few students who oppose the science courses offered and see them as unnecessary or “too much information for pupils” yet most of the students believe science courses offered in the curriculum are important. Although emphasis on necessity on the topic divides into two, yet main reason is professionalism. “There are nature and science corners in the schools and for that reason we should be prepared on what is there”, “if we do not have the idea on the corners then how can we help the students in the schools”, “we have to have required skills and qualifications” are clear examples of professionalism. There are also some statements indicating the will of teacher candidates is to be an effective teacher in instruction. “doing experiments will help on creativity and doing different experiments will enhance students’ different skills”, “science instruction is necessary because it develops students’ cognitive development”, “science courses are necessary because children are little scientists” and “science courses are necessary because children are curious especially on the topics related to science itself” are examples of students who both see necessity of science courses in faculty programs and science instruction to the children at kinder garden.

However there are few statements emphasizing personal needs such as “I want to understand science and its relation with daily life”. This is important because it is also a clear indication of that curriculums designed should also satisfy personal needs along with profession qualifications. When analyzing with the purpose of parenting then it is possible to say curriculum designs which both satisfy personal and professional needs would enhance both professional and personal gaining from the curriculum.

Last outcome of the data is related with instruction techniques used in the classroom by the instructors and their way of approach to students. Data analyze indicates that students desire more active and participating role from the instructors in the education process. Some indicated that by “I expect them to use different methods” directly and some indicated as “I would prefer if instructor does not read from the slide, I can take slide and read it at home”. Students expect to take role in the education process and some stated that desire as in “I would like to have courses through a discussion with instructor”, “it is ridiculous that instructors think everything is in the books, we have our own ideas”, “they only give lectures in the classroom and leave, it seems they have forgotten we will be active in the classroom as teachers”. However a student statement indicates that “instructors use slide after certain time”. This is believed an indication of tight schedule of instructors. Students are aware of instructors at faculty use slides after certain time which indicates instructors’ tiredness which in return causes teachers not to take active role in the classroom and tries to find a way to have some rest.

Conclusion

This study partially reveals components of education which is believed as curriculum design and its implementation in the classrooms. It is clear from the study that although curriculums designed to give necessary professional equipments to the students, yet it should offer personal satisfactions such as parenting. Based on the feedbacks received from students, perhaps it will be wise to offer different courses to satisfy personal needs in universities along with designed curriculums. This could be achieved by reducing number of must courses and placing selective courses in the curriculums and making curriculums rich in terms of equipments offered. Another reveal of the study is lecture hours of instructors. It is vital to benefit from instructors at highest level. However long lecture hours make instructors tired and in return they tend to avoid being active in the classrooms which eventually drive back education. Idea of constructivism is to help students to build knowledge through their own way and to do that it is crucial that instructors facilitate guidance role properly. For that reason it is believed that universities should define both maximum and minimum active lecture hours for instructors.

References

Alat, Z., Akgümüş, Ö., Cavalı, D. (2012). Okul Öncesi Eğitiminde Açık Hava Etkinliklerine Yönelik Öğretmen Görüş ve Uygulamaları. Mersin Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 8 (3), 47-62.

Aslan, D., Köksal Akyol, A. (2006). Okul Öncesi Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğretmenlik Adaylarının Öğretmenlik Mesleğine Yönelik Tutumları ve Mesleki Benlik Saygılarının İncelenmesi. Ç.Ü Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 15 (2), 51-60.

Demirtaş, H., Cömert, M., Özer, N. (2011). Öğretmen Adaylarının Özyeterlik İnançları ve Öğretmenlik Mesleğine İlişkin Tutumları. Eğitim ve Bilim, 36 (159), 98-111.

Işık, A., Çiltaş, A., Baş, F. (2010). Öğretmen Yetiştirme ve Öğretmenlik Mesleği. Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 14 (1), 53-62.

Karamustafaoğlu, S., Üstün, A., Kandaz, U. (2004). Okul Öncesi Öğretmen Adaylarının Fen ve Doğa Etkinliklerini Uygulayabilme Düzeylerinin Belirlenmesi. 13. Ulusal Eğitim Bilimleri Kurultayı, 6-9 Temmuz 2004, İnönü Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi, Malatya.

Kefi, S., Çeliköz, N., Erişen, Y. (2013). Okulöncesi Eğitim Öğretmenlerinin Temel Bilimsel Süreç Becerilerini Kullanım Düzeyleri. Eğitim ve Öğretim Araştırmaları Dergisi, 2 (2), 300-319.

Nicol, C. C. and Crespo, S. M. (2006). Learning to Teach with Mathematics Textbooks: How Preservice Teachers İnterpret and Use Curriculum Materials. Educational Studies in Mathematics, 62, 331-355.

Özgan, H., Tekin, A. (2011). Öğrencilerin Hazır Bulunuşluk Düzeylerinin Sınıf Yönetimine Etkisine Yönelik Öğretmen Görüşleri. Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 8 (15), 421-434.