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PREPARATORY COMPETENCES OF TEACHER CANDIDATES ON ADULT EDUCATION

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Abstract

As is known, adult education is the education that is given to individuals who are not in formal learning. And this takes place in the scope of continuing education. Teacher candidates undergoing teacher training have been prepared to teach at primary and secondary education. Being intellectual members of their societies, teachers are expected to be models for parents and other adults in the society. Within this scope, that they train and improve the surrounding adults is of essential. When looked through the programmes of faculties of education, it appears that there are mainly pupil-oriented lectures and activities. Thus we can easily say that preservice teachers cannot ready adequately for the adult education. In the light of such information, the key point is as follows: "How are the preparatory competences of teacher candidates studying in faculties of education on adult education?"

In order to solve the survey problem, the scanning model have been used. Data concerning the problem have been obtained by the methods of literature review and interviewing. For this purpose, about thirty teacher candidates have been interviewed. Having evaluated each branch's educational programme and the data found out by the interviews together, we have presented the findings regarding the survey problem. Afterwards, we have written down the survey's results and our suggestions on the basis of the obtained findings.

Keywords: Adult education, teacher candidates, teacher training programmes, preparatory competences.

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Introduction

The meaning and content of terms about pedagogy such as learning, education, and teaching are discussed in literature. Concepts and applications of adult education in scientific basis have not being discussed for a long time. The methodological determinations that adults had different learning features had been found in 1940s. The theoretical base of the studies about adult learning had been done by Malcolm Knowles with his book 'Adult Student' which was published in 1973. Knowles pointed out the need of specific situations for learning and named the situation as andragogy. This subject is begun to talk by the composition of the following two words; 'andra' means adult and 'agosos' means guiding somebody (Kışmir, 2006).

As a result of both technological and scientific developments, the education that is given to limited ages is not enough and the lifelong learning appears as a basic need of our age. This is valid for all subjects. But as adults are different from children in terms of biological, psychological, social and cultural features, they are also different from children in terms of learning styles. The basic responsibility of educators is developing learning and teaching environments with suitable methods through the needs and expectations of adults (Köylü, 2012)

Malcolm Knowles (1975) accepts 'andragogy' (the science and art of helping adults in learning) instead of 'pedagogy'. Educational institutions and educators' duty is preparing required environments for individuals to make them gain desired behaviors. In order to provide a successful education, individuals' learning features have to be known and the variables of adult learning have to be taken account (Okçabol, 1994).

Adult Learning and Its Features

With the term 'andragogy', the theoretical framework of adult learning is formed. Generally in Turkey and several countries, the term 'education' recurs to people's mind the education of children. The idea of there is no need of adult learning is widespread. The British has an idiom 'You can not teach an old dog new skills'. We have such an idiom 'Tree bends only when it's young'. These idioms point out that education can be possible only with young learners. Can't adults actually learn? Can the adults learn less compared to young or children? Actually adults' cognitive skills are different in certain terms. Although aging brings some physical changes, surveys show that aging doesn't bring any regressions in intellectual or cognitive features (Bülbül, 1991).

Differences in learning originate from personal differences. In terms of education, the differences between children and adults are as follows:

- Children can limitedly learn hard, but adults' learning depends on his/her learning motivation.
- Although children have high self confidence, adults' confidence won't be enough in terms of learning.
- Although children have plenty of learning time, adults' learning time is limited to their free time remaining from working hours.
- Children's life experiences are limited compared to adults.
- While the relation between children and teacher is same as the relation between mother and father, the relation between adult-student and adult-teacher is same as the relation between a friend and a colleague.

The Learning Features of Adults

- The experiences of adults have to be used.
- There have to be enough time to learning
- The knowledge that they learn have to make them conscious.
- Adult student have to be active in learning process.
- The repetitions are important in gaining new behaviors and permanency of the knowledge.
- The desired and true behaviors have to be reinforced.
- There must be suitable learning environments in terms of social and physical features.
- Learning has to depend on adults' interests and skills.
- Learning conditions have to be constructive to their personal skills and students have to be encouraged and directed because of their worries.
- Adults' values have to be considered in learning processes.
- The subject or the problem has to be constructed in detail so the students can see the basic items and the relation between them.
- The skills and behaviors have to be put in order from simple to complicate.
- Conceived learning is only come true with feedbacks.
- Adults have to have goals for motivation and success.

Adults learning features are different because of age and progressive processes (Köylü, 2009) arranged the nine principals of adult education.

The Basic Principals Of Adult Education

- 1) Experiences are very important in adult learning.
- 2) Adults generally prefer to learn by their own.
- 3) Adults have different motivations towards learning.
- 4) Physical and psychological environment is very important in adult education.
- 5) Time is very important for an adult student.
- 6) Being an adult does not mean regression in learning. An adult can also learn.

- 7) The main obstacle in adult education is looses in seeing and hearing skills.
- 8) The role of teacher in adult education is only guiding.
- 9) Adults have to decide their needs, plan and evaluate the education by themselves.

The Hypothesis Of Adult Education

The features of adult learning depend on various hypotheses. These hypotheses form the fountain of adult education / andragogy model.

One of the hypotheses that forms source to adult learning is; **the readiness of learning**. This readiness means their readiness of learning through their life experiences or the problem that they have to solve. **Experience or living hypothesis** is related to the truth that adults have various increasing experience. This situation produces the variety of learning styles, interests and needs. Also this means that the institutions that are for adult education have individual differences.

Learning necessity hypothesis is parallel to the realization of the adult about what they learn and why they learn. If the students know what they are going to learn at the end of the learning activities, the effectiveness of the learning will increase. The other hypothesis is **tendency of learning hypothesis**. This hypothesis depends on the basis that the adults see learning as the means of solving the problems faced in daily routines. If there is a real problem, adult can solve it at higher levels. The learning that is not applied immediately can not be adopted by the adult students. Consequently, while the learning of children is focused on the subjects, the learning of adults has to focus on problems and experiences. So, in adult learning, the learning environments based on applications are more effective instead of theoretical approaches (Özdemir, 2003).

The Obstacles of Adult Education

The obstacles of learning are valid for all ages. At the beginning of an adult education curriculum, we need to know the obstacles and the solutions of these obstacles. Sophistication, discomfort, getting bored, fear, external, personal and domestic life obstacles can be said in this term.

Sophistication: Individual has to be helped in terms of separating detail or basic and associating the subjects. If an individual do not put in order what he/she has already learned, or do not associate the subjects, he can not learn.

Discomfort: Inconvenient behaviors, despising and ironic attitudes of educators can cause discomfort in adult students. It does not arise from only the disorders of student teacher relations, but also the disorders of student- student, student-principal relations. Discomfort is not only originated from human relations.

Getting bored: The approaches that do not disturb individuals have to be used when values and beliefs of students are tried to be changed. An educator who wants to make a change in student's behavior has to be patient. If an individual get bored because of various reasons (not interested in, not understanding or hearing, thinking of wasting time), it means an obstacle for learning. Adults expect to be used the time of education well. Therefore, educators have to prepare fine syllabus.

Fear: Fears are the basic obstacles of learning. Being in comic situation, be mocked, being unsuccessful or examination fears are common fears of adults. An educator have to eliminate these or related fears and prepare environments that students can demonstrate themselves and they can be successful.

Domestic life obstacles: Not finding chance because of house works, objection of family members, limited times, the responsibilities of husbands, wives or children, compulsory house works and etc. are the obstacles.

External obstacles: Fatigue, transportation difficulties, education time, multi shift working hours.

Personal obstacles: Fear of unknown, lack of self confidence, the negative manner through learning, doubt of usefulness of subjects, physical and mental deficiencies (Uysal, 2005). Negative prejudices towards learning, lack of planning, believing that the education won't be appreciated and boredom can also be given as examples of personal obstacles.

The educators who are writing curriculum for adult learners have to know not only the learning features of adults but also the difficulties and limitations of learning. The knowledge of these features makes writing functional curriculum easy.

Problem and Method

The Problem of the survey: "How are the preparatory competences of teacher candidates studying in faculties of education on adult education?"

Sub-problems

1. Are there enough courses of adult education in literature (curriculums in faculties of education) ?
2. Do teacher candidates think whether they have enough knowledge about adult education or not?
3. What are the suggestions of teacher candidates?

Findings and Comments

1. The courses which contribute directly and indirectly are determined through the examining of curriculums in faculties of education.
 - a) social service applications
 - b) Traffic and first aid
 - c) Effective communication
 - d) Family education
 - e) Sociology
 - f) Environmental science and education
 - g) Private training
 - h) Physical education and sports
 - i) Citizenship knowledge
 - j) Developing social projects
 - k) Sexual health training
 - l) Protecting nature
 - m) Continual social development
 - n) Education and society
 - o) Folk music
 - p) Classical music
 - q) Communication psychology and religious communication
 - r) Rhetoric and calligraphy

In teacher training curriculums some of these courses are compulsory and some of them are elective. In these courses, Social Service Applications, Traffic and First Aid, Family Education Sociology, and Effective Communication courses are directly in relation. Teacher candidates with Social Service Application courses practically learn how to develop various social services and projects that are for both school and school environments. In Traffic and First Aid courses they gain vital knowledge and skills. In Sociology courses they learn social institutions and social relations. So, the foundation of social service and adult education are completed. While serving adults and educating adult, we need communication. Teacher candidates with effective communication try to gain required knowledge and skills. When the other lessons has been done with paying attention to adulthood features, we can consider as additive lessons.

Almost all teacher candidates point out that they have enough knowledge on adult education. But most students say that they don't have enough courses at the faculty. In these terms, it's pointed out that teaching courses, social service applications, traffic and first aid, sociology, effective communication courses are useful for candidates.

Without direct education, it is interesting that candidates' knowledge of adult education. Teacher candidates think that they can give lectures not only children but also adults. But adult education is a separate discipline as other disciplines. Adult education has some methods and principles. Lack of these knowledge and required experience, we cannot have an effective adult educator. But also, teacher candidates' feelings about adult education are an evidence of self confidence. Also, their pointings about not having these lectures and their need of this theoretical knowledge is very important.

When we ask teacher candidates about their suggestions, they answer in such way:

- a) Direct and indirect courses about adult education should be in curriculums.
- b) In indirect courses there should be adult education lessons, for instance in Traffic and First Aid lesson students can learn how to teach these lessons to adults.
- c) Students should take lectures practically. Sometimes students meet with adults and try to understand their feelings and expectations.
- d) At the universities students should be encouraged to establish clubs about adult education.
- e) Teacher candidates should have seminars and conferences about adult education.

Conclusion and Suggestions

As a result of both technological and scientific developments, the education that is given to limited levels is not enough and the lifelong learning emerges as a fundamental need of our age. This is valid for all courses. But as adults are not same as children in terms of biological, psychological, social and cultural characteristics, they are also different from children in terms of learning styles. The basic responsibility of trainers is developing learning and teaching environments with suitable methods through the needs and expectations of adults. In these courses, social service applications, traffic and first aid, family education sociology, and effective communication courses are directly in relation. Teacher candidates especially with social service application courses practically learn how to develop various social services and projects that are for both school and school environments.

Nearly all teacher candidates point out that they have sufficient knowledge on adult education. But most students say that they don't have enough courses at the faculty.

Teacher candidates' suggestions about adult education are considered as valid data for this survey.

- a) Direct and indirect courses about adult education should be in curriculums.
- b) General pedagogy lessons should be empowered with adult education subjects.

- c) In indirect courses there should be adult education lessons, for instance in Traffic and First Aid lesson students can learn how to teach these lessons to adults.
- d) Students should take the required courses practically. Sometimes students meet with adults and try to understand their feelings and expectations.

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