

**Taught Curriculum Effect on Teacher Education Programs at Faculties of
Education in Turkey: Action 2006**

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Abstract

Inevitable portion of teacher education programs is the continuous and gradual betterment proposals over the curricula. Any sort of propositions with an aim to improve the maintaining programs either recognizing the top-down, bottom-up or interactive and participative suggestions offered by participants -administrators, practitioners and expert academicians, or a combination of several, if not all- make sense especially if they are realized and find ways to get actualized in real life conditions. Action 2006, as an example of comparatively meaningful proposals of ‘taught curriculum’ which puts the teacher educators as intellectuals and educated brains to the center of curricular studies, has proved to be useful and found a place in teacher education programs for several reasons, which is the focus of this study. General reasoning and relative effects of Action 2006, even though it necessitates some more time to get overall results, shed light to the teacher education programs as an alternative to go beyond keeping abreast of the innovations and paradigm shifts. The study finalizes announcing both prompting concerns of teacher educators and mentioning several handicaps that this approach might bring to the curricular studies, which Action 2006 puts forward.

Key Words: Action 2006, Taught curriculum, Teacher educators, Curriculum development.

**Türkiye’deki Eğitim Fakültelerindeki Öğretmen Eğitimi Programları’nda
Öğretilen Müfredat Etkisi:Eylem 2006**

Özet

Öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının kaçınılmaz bir parçası, müfredatların sürekli ve aşamalı iyileştirmesine ilişkin öneriler”dir. Katılımcılar -yöneticiler, uygulayıcılar ve uzman akademisyenlerin her biri, ya da katılımcıların tümü değilse de bir kaçı- tarafından yukarıdan aşağı, aşağıdan yukarıya sunulan ya da etkileşimli ve katılımcı nitelikli öneriler, dikkate alındıkları ve gerçek yaşam koşullarında hayata geçirilmek için yollar bulunduğu koşullarda anlam kazanırlar. Eylem 2006, öğretmen

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yetiştiren eğitimcileri eğitimi beyinler ve aydınlar olarak müfredat çalışmalarının merkezine koyan 'öğretilen müfredat'ın görece anlamlı önermelerinin bir örneği olarak, geçerlilik kazanmış ve bu çalışmanın da başat amacı olan çeşitli nedenlerle öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında bir yer edinmiştir. Eylem 2006'nın görece etkileri ve genel mantığı, her ne kadar kapsamlı sonuçlar edinmek için biraz daha zamana gereksinim duyulsa da, öğretmen yetiştirme programlarına paradigma değişiklikleri ve yenilikçi hareketlerle ilgili gelişmeleri izlemenin ötesine geçmeye bir alternatif olması yönüyle ışık tutmaktadır. Çalışma, Eylem 2006'nın ortaya koyduğu öğretmen yetiştiren eğitimcilerin güdüleyici ilgilerinin ve bu yaklaşımın müfredat çalışmalarına getirebileceği birkaç engelleyici durumun ifade edilmesiyle son bulmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eylem 2006, Öğretilen müfredat, Öğretmen yetiştiren eğitimciler, Müfredat geliştirme.

Introduction

Curriculum Development (CD) has been recognized as an important issue for the betterment of the education programs due to the fact that it enables plans guiding learning at schools and provides actual learning experiences within the learning environment (Glatthorn, Boschee, and Whitehead, 2006). As education is an investment to the individual and to the future (Wragg, 1997), it is crucial to keep abreast of the recent academic studies to get the most effective and efficient education system; and to congregate the needs and demands of the individuals and the society as well. Within this perspective, there have been changes, adaptations and developmental studies in the education system of Turkey like any other countries all over the world. Moreover, the significance of the CD is doubled if the curriculum is the one which has been used for the training of the teachers of future. As a sample to the CD studies, 2006 Action, reorganizing and bringing up-to-date the teacher education² programs at the Faculties of Education in Turkey, has been put under the scope in this study. Thus, this study aims to analyze the 2006 Action effect from the point of CD studies, putting the focus on taught curriculum. With this aim in mind, the study starts with describing a general picture of the situation and main reasons calling

² Please note that the concept of *teacher education* is intentionally used instead of *teacher training*. The idea here proposes that teacher training is a crucial part of teacher education, yet teacher education is not solely comprised of training-based activities or teachings. In the same vein, much as teacher training refers to the technical, practical part of teacher education, it partly excludes the theoretical perspective of the education.

for developing the current situation in Turkey so as to make the development process more precise and understandable. The second part of the study analyses this development process with reference to the positive effects of the taught curriculum, pointed as the main pillar of the change in Action 2006. Then, reflections of this encouraging change by means of Action 2006 to today's education system will be emphasized drawing especially attention to the maintaining program's progression. The study ends by highlighting the inspiring reflections, inferences and possible problems of this progressive implementation.

General Picture of the Previous Situation and the Need for Curriculum Development

For the last two and a half decades, there have been tremendous changes in the education system of Turkish Republic due to several factor: to name the most significant two of them, the first is the growing number of the population whose demands go further, and the second is longer-term high quality education with reference to the concept of *lifelong learning* and the process of accreditation to the European Education System (Sorbonne Declaration along with the Bologna Process for the Higher Education Institutions and Universities). In that sense, changes not only focused on meeting the vast educational demands of the society keeping the changing needs for education in mind (Richards, 2003) but also providing the possible best quality in education.

The Council of Higher Education, the institution one of the responsibilities of which is to develop, activate and maintain the programs in Higher Education in Turkey, decided to make adjustments both for the structuring of the Faculties of Education and in the curricula of teacher education in Turkey to meet the growing need for teachers. The training of classroom and branch teachers, who will take positions in primary (8 years of compulsory education) and secondary education (3-4 years), were the focal point for the improvement action. It was also accepted as mandatory to certify teachers only at the Faculties of Education, instead of supporting the Departments at other Faculties to train teachers. The solution was found by closing those departments and bringing up new teacher education departments or gathering the teacher education related departments under the umbrella of the Faculty of Education. Therefore, the major improvements, at the initial stages,

focused on undergraduate programs and course syllabi to train and graduate better-equipped teachers in Faculties of Education.

When we narrow down the reshaping perspective, as a matter of curriculum development, to teacher education to see the picture much clearer, four important problems should be unpacked and considered carefully in Turkey. Admission to higher education is based on a nation-wide university examination and fully centralized. The candidates who would prefer to be teachers of any field are to be successful in the national university entrance exam and attend one of the Faculties of Education at a university to get a diploma for teaching. Therefore, *the first hindrance* is the difficulty to attend a teacher education program at a faculty of education to be a teacher, because of the limited number of candidates to be accepted and the limited number of education faculties all over Turkey. Put another way, the number of the applicants to enter the nation-wide exam (more than 1,500,000 candidates per year³) and the limited number of the universities including Education Faculties (only 67 Faculties of Education, 5 of which were Foundation Universities in 2006, and in 2012 there are 71 Faculties of Education, 7 of which are Foundation Universities⁴) are both big handicaps for the teacher candidates. *The second problem* is the lack of professionally systematized some other programs providing teaching certificates for the candidates who did not graduate from any Faculty of Education. The nuance within this problem is that the program of any certificate and/or diploma programs lack of nation-wide accreditation. It is even harder for the older candidate to have education to become a teacher, which is a big handicap when the profile of the age average data is investigated⁵.

³ According to the data announced at the formal web page of ÖSYS -Testing, selection and placement center, the number of applicants for the university entrance exam has been **1.860.515** in 2012. The number of applicants who haven't yet graduated is **783.854**, and the number is **1.076.661** for the applicants who graduated from a high school. The deadline for the application for the examination was January 13, 2012. The data were retrieved from: <http://www.osym.gov.tr/belge/1-13264/2012-osysye-basvuran-aday-sayilari-16012012.html?vurgu=%C3%B6%C4%9Frenci+say%C4%B1s%C4%B1>

⁴ to get the names of the Faculties of Education go to: <http://www.yok.gov.tr/content/view/520/> (28.02.2012) There is also a Faculty of Education Sciences at Ankara University mentioned in the list.

⁵ According to The Council of Higher Education of the Turkish Republic's data illustrating the composition of undergraduate level student population, ages between 16-

The lack of the academic staff to educate the teachers was the third problem which is to be taken seriously. For instance, student/faculty member ratio for language and literature was 43 students per academician and for applied social sciences is 70 students per faculty member, which is very thought provoking. Meanwhile, *the fourth* and the biggest problem, *quality of the teachers*, became a topic under debate. In order to compensate the number of the teachers needed, quality matter was proclaimed to be ignored by many scholars and experts in the field.

The Council of Higher Education, in addition to these facts mentioned above, pointed out three significant reasons which necessitated to make changes in order to make up for the deficiencies and to improve teacher training programs in the faculties which have been used for eight years. The first reason was the academic studies, which NGOs (non governmental organizations) and Ministry of Education meetings that put the education matter under debate. As a result of these academic meetings there grew a great need to develop the maintaining program.

The changes made in the Primary School Programs by the Ministry of National Education were the second reason. The sustaining teacher education programs were unfortunately lacking to meet the need of the new programs that novice teachers are to recognize to get prepared and activate for/at the Primary schools.

Accountability and Accreditation of the Education Faculty programs to enable mobility at the European Higher Education Area provided via the international standards was the third reason. Although Turkey was a member candidate of the European Union, it has been an active participant and member of the Socrates 2 and Life-long Learning Programs (European Education Programs) since 2003. Therefore the education system in Turkey was proposed to be organized in line with the European education system. As a matter of fact, this process has not been so easy for Turkey. Providing the standards at different levels of education has been one of the concerns. The difficulty was not with having the required standards but with making adaptations for the process to get accredited. The second complicated point also comprised of the

22 comprises the 66.5% of the total percentage and for the 30 and older the rate is only 1.2%.

idea which refers to prioritizing and keeping the cultural varieties and differences of the society whilst trying to adapt the education system for accreditation.

Action 2006 was put into action by taking into consideration the problems mentioned above. There was a need for a comprehensive solution embracing easy-to-adapt and to be used to overcome all these problems. Although the idea does not solely offer taught curriculum as the panacea for all of the problems, it might be accepted as a meaningful start to make improvements in the process.

Taught Curriculum as a Focus throughout the Developmental Process

With reference to the curriculum types of Glatthorn et al. (2006), the starting point to analyze Action 2006 was to focus on *taught curriculum* for the decision making process to determine the courses to be taught at teacher education programs in Action 2006. They (2006: 14) describe taught curriculum as "... the delivered curriculum, a curriculum that an observer would see in action as the teacher taught". Having recognized the taught curriculum along with the written, supported, and tested curriculum under the umbrella concept of intentional curricula, identifying such a way of managing the curriculum was a matter of preference having logical reasoning, which will be discussed below. Describing the management process in the curriculum work, Hewitt (2006) refers to three characteristics of the activities;

- they are to be organized in order to realize specified goals,
- they are to be integrated into a process, and
- they are to include the resources which are compulsory to make the process successful.

There were various reasons to validate this strategy in Action 2006 case with reference to Hewitt's (2006) understanding of management process. First of all, it aimed to determine nation-wide standards both to provide the practitioners with common-shared rules and understanding in Turkey and to enable the ability to adapt the education program during the accreditation process at the European Education level. On one side, approach enabled compromised rules for the reshaping of the curriculum at the national level, and on the other side, within the boundaries of the rules, the suggested approach made it possible to consider the differences and varieties of the faculties' resources.

Moreover, this approach provided flexibility⁶ and triggered intrinsic motivation of the faculty members to quest for the best and to look for alternatives for the betterment of the education process. Teacher/academician-based understanding of improvement also fed teacher leadership and supported Murphy's (2005) understanding of teacher leadership "*outside the realm of classroom*". With this broader developmental approach, all the participants of the development process were open to looking for opportunities and all felt voluntarily ready to change themselves over time. Shortly, it put emphasis on leader teachers in general and encouragement of the individual creativity in particular.

The inclusion of the teachers into the development process in Action 2006, contributing to the development of teacher-proof curriculum, was also a good example to support and verify Gordon's (2004) counterattack against the two ideas; the task of the teachers was only to implement the curriculum, not design a new curriculum and creativity and decision making was merely for what to teach but not how to teach. Action 2006 can also be regarded as a solution to the problem of "*lack of consensus and controversy*", which Walker and Soltis (1986) deal with in their curriculum aims discussion. Solution is trying to not have a general consensus on each and every detail of the curriculum but to compromise on the general rules and let space to the various adaptations within the limits of the shared rules.

Another motivating factor for the success of Action 2006 was the idea of faculty meetings and teachers' professional development, which Reeves (2006) believe as "*the two sources of time most frequently misused in a school*", this idea was not optional or only supported but in fact it was required for the development process. In this way, Council of Higher Education made it possible to include the faculty members to the curriculum development taking into consideration and adding value to their academic and professional backgrounds and profound and practical knowledge in the field. One basic benefit of this approach was that teachers felt their ideas were valued and they were actually included in the developmental process, which increased their motivation and their participation during the first steps of the development

⁶ As opposed to the idea that "In many teacher education programs, inflexible structure of the teaching programs have been always subject to criticism." (Kavak, et. al, 2007:9), flexibility of this approach is prone to provide a fresh looking angle. The degree of flexibility is also open to discussion though.

process. For the following process, the actualization of the new curriculum, teachers intrinsically claimed to be the owners of the curriculum and put their efforts to create alternatives to cover the deficiencies and to make curriculum more meaningful within the learning environment.

Another powerful pillar of the process was the implementation of the curriculum with regards to the “power standards”. Every faculty of education was able to decide on their own preliminary courses and their power standards according to their own academic knowledge and resources to provide the best education to their students. As Hewitt (2006) announces that the power standards are the “*value-added standards*”, instead of a program heavily imposed on teachers regardless of the local and institutional differences and resources, each faculty would be able to reflect their educational way of thought and put their differences and varieties into action.

To see how Action 2006 succeeded this notion, it would be appropriate to explain the very simple innovative approach of this new action. In general, although there are a few differences and exceptions in different programs, the distribution of the courses programs⁷ are comprised of is as follows:

- field-based knowledge and skills (50%),
- pedagogical-professional knowledge and skills (30%), and
- general knowledge (20%).

Even though this distribution is the strict side of the overall program, faculties have a right to open new courses by changing the preceding curriculum structure up to 25%, which was impossible in the past because of the mandatory courses to be taken. Furthermore, the number of the elective courses is increased so that the students are provided a great variety of courses in accordance to their individual skills and interests.

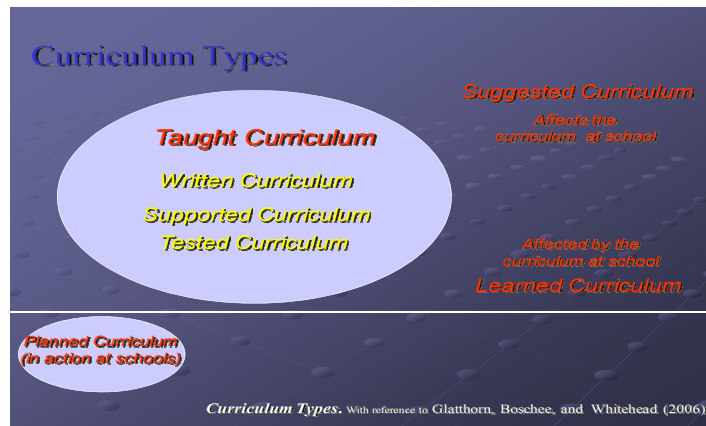
As a result, although these changes might seem so easy for many of the educationalists, taking a nation-wide and one-size-fits-all understanding into account, it made sense for the development of the curriculum at all levels, including participants, resources, materials, progression procedures, pre- and in-service trainings by putting the taught curriculum, in other words teachers, to

⁷ To draw attention to the changes during the time it should be recognized that the XI. National Education Council in 1982 proposed that the teacher education program would be comprised of 12,5% *World Knowledge*, 62,5% *Field/content Knowledge*, and 25% *Professional knowledge* (including practice).

the center and developed the systems and actions accordingly. It produced an opportunity for the departments to put their understandings and alternative thoughts into action for teacher education all over the country. The flexibility prompts creativity and productivity; plain, unambiguous rules scaffold the skeleton of nation-wide education. However, although in this study the positive sides of Action 2006 come to the fore, every system includes strong and weak sides in itself and Action 2006 is to be discussed with the threads and opportunities it requires.

Taught Curriculum Effect on Other Curricula

Focusing upon the idea of prioritizing the taught curriculum when compared to the others, and its relation and/or effects on the other curriculum types needs to be analyzed in detail so as to gain how taught curriculum affects the other curricula, educational environment, and educational planning accordingly. Glatthorn and the colleagues (2006) refer to suggested curriculum as the curriculum which is basically offered by the experts in order to have a better educational environment. When suggested curriculum is backed up (or fed by) the teachers/instructors, as the educated brains of/in the society, then it is an invaluable opportunity to make a difference in real life conditions due to the fact that the professional/practical experiences of teachers find a way to get realized and activated. As a matter of fact, Apple and Beane (2007:20), while discussing over the idea of Democratic Schools defend the idea that “teachers have a right to have their voices heard in creating the curriculum,... this right has been eroded over the past several decades as curriculum decisions and even specific curriculum plans have been centralized in state and district offices of education.”



Hence, taught curriculum gives support to the suggested curriculum and let teachers/instructors make their voice up. It is probable that this sort of suggested curriculum is prone to being accepted by the teachers school-wide, mainly because this time the suggested curriculum does not belong to the experts, educationalist/theoreticians as outsiders, but to the colleagues as the active practitioners. Next stage is that, when this kind of a suggested curriculum gets accepted and formalized, then it gets validated by being formally added up to the Written Curriculum. Furthermore, as the curriculum has been officially placed in the educational environment, it naturally happens to be a part of Tested curriculum. Eventually, a curriculum mainly suggested and thereby supported by the teachers/instructors is actualized as the written curriculum and tested curriculum. More than this, supported curriculum is naturally affected by this flow of educational organization. Because the teachers/instructors are aware of the limits and opportunities that their educational environments provide, there occurs a constructive synchronization at schools. When carefully considered, it becomes also possible to take taught curriculum as a means of both keeping the curriculum in the classrooms under control and open to development, and teachers' activating their teaching approaches in the school/teaching atmosphere. Ultimately, the planned curriculum, which refers to the curriculum in action at schools, is reshaped, implemented, maintained or developed, and directed mainly by the taught curriculum. Teachers, as the leading actors bridging the suggested curriculum (theory-based and expert-oriented) and learned curriculum (the individuals influenced by the other educational factors) also connects the abstract side of education with the real and concrete stance of teaching.

The Advantages and Disadvantages of Taught Curriculum

Launching the suggestions of teachers/instructors at Education Faculties enables a high quality of individual academic performances performed in the classroom provided that they are supported and professionally accredited with reference to a national/international system. However, excluding a professional and systematized approach to improve the maintaining situation and present a sustainable progression would damage and produce some hindrances to the development of teacher education programs. Here are, in view of that, presented the highlighting pros and cons of the taught curriculum both in action and in prospect.

Taught curriculum provides a consensus among the academicians in the educational institution; it triggers and motivates them as it was formed taking the instructors' current academic backgrounds and tendencies of personal studies. It also opens ways for the academician to go in depth in the preferred study area and get expertise. This also leads to educating experts, highly knowledgeable in a specified area. From the point of elective courses, an option for the students to choose a course of their interest to explore how to interconnect the topic with teaching, there is a huge advantage of sharing professional information/knowledge. The more advanced practitioners and expert instructors are prepared to share from their professional areas of study in the education faculties, the more high quality teachers will be educated. Considering the limited number of elective courses within the teacher education programs, a general tendency in increasing the number of such courses as taught curriculum might require concurrently enables a varied selections of expertise in the education field, which is a sign for enrichment in the area.

For any institution to advertise their unique quality (or in other words their institutional core competence) Action 2006 also proves to be a good example. The total of personal intellectual capacity in an institution's overall potential to keep up and to indicate their social capital and the sum of all capacity is the heart of that institution's power, which will be frequently announced through the taught curriculum. When taught curriculum is wisely organized and managed, then each and every individual's characteristics will be under control and ready to get updated.

The focal point of the curriculum in action is "what to teach", therefore adaptations and renewals, additions and omits are all the time on the agenda. One side of this fact announces that there is a need to keep abreast of the developments not only in the field but also all over the globe, which naturally necessitates adaptations and developments in the teacher education program and the courses. Another point related to the 'what to teach' issue is that even though the courses by themselves are open to improvisation, any teacher education program requires a harmonization and consistency among courses. In other words, each and every course should be regarded as one part of the whole program and get attuned to the other courses. Any innovative actions which are limited only with one or several courses without any coherence among other courses would partly serve for the betterment of the programs.

Considering the vision and long-term investments of education faculties, taught curriculum enables educating their academic staff within the field. In the long run, positive feedback can be required by means of taught curriculum. Action 2006 in/directly announces the missing or lacking areas to be fulfilled by academics. However, although faculties of education mostly had teachers of literature, multi-disciplinary studies demanded professionals of other fields. Thus, it proves highly crucial to keep a balance between an academician's or the department's preference for progression and the needs and demands of the society.

One of the critiques is that it is a teacher-dominant curriculum. And the success or failure of the program/curriculum is deeply connected with the teachers. Besides, at the present, there is no institution that controls and evaluates that success or failure level of teacher education programs in Turkey. Additionally, there is a lack of systematized evaluation of the academician's teaching performance and/or their relation with the students. Therefore, much as the quality of a teacher directly affects the quality of the program, there is no guarantee or a systematized controlling organization. Although the Council of Higher Education is claimed to be responsible for that to happen, it puts a deep debate on the issue as the academicians at Faculties of Education would not be contented with this sort of interference, support, or control. A national or international accreditation mechanism to be included in the maintaining system would be one of the options, yet it is open to debate and the approach to educating teachers would determine whether such an initiative would run in or put into action only to a certain extent.

Another adverse opinion is that not everything can be taught within the classroom. Taught curriculum mainly functions as the manifest, yet school culture signals problems because taught curriculum only deals with what is to be taught. So, anything and everything out of the boundaries taught curriculum will have a direct effect on students and school culture. For that reason, the interrelation between the taught curriculum and learned curriculum is suggested to be studied further. The place of taught curriculum in learned curriculum, in that sense, should be analyzed and its level should also be questioned.

Conclusion

Faculties of Education, since they were founded in 1982, have shown great improvement in terms of quantity and quality. This developmental process includes many cutting edges in the recent past. Recognizing the pro-

actions that have made shape the teacher education system in Turkey helps making comparisons and therefore comprehending the significance of new steps.

In 1982, it was agreed to embody the teacher education institutions under universities. It is this year that the XI. National Education Council (NEC), with exact dates of June 8-11, 1982 and the issues of which included pre-service and in-service education of teachers and experts, was accomplished. The significance of the XI. NEC is that among the NEC so far, it is the most comprehensive study (2007:19). The agenda and the decisions are remarkable: the XI. NEC proposed that the teacher education program would be comprised of 12,5% World knowledge, 62,5% Field/content Knowledge, and 25% teachership professional knowledge (including practice). Also, in XV. NEC on May 13-17, 1996, it was declared that “Teachers are to be trained/educated at teacher (educating) universities”. In the same vein, declaring that “the education programs of the Faculties of Education should be united.”, gives clues for the near future initiatives and developments of the time. One of the most remarkable developments in the intervening 30 years since 1982 was the project in the year 1997: “Restructuring Education Faculties”. The project initiated by the Board of Higher Education completely granted Faculties of Education for teacher education, apart from some exceptions, and a new construction approach was adopted which highlighted the primary school teacher training departments and programs. At the same scope as a requirement of the study, multiple sources were allocated to Faculties of Education to educate academicians, as well as all teacher education programs were renovated in accordance with the requirements of that day.

According to the statistics belonging to recent history, “among 733.140 students attending universities in undergraduate programs of formal education, 23% of them (171.794 students) are studying in a faculty of education, which is one type among 52 faculties. The faculties of education, with a number of 4513 as the faculty teaching staff and the quota of 41.273 students, has the first place when compared to the other faculties having a great number of students” (Kavak, et. al; 2007:9).

Again, according to Kavak et. al. (2007:69-70) Considering the changes in the number of academics is also as follows:

In the academic year 1983-1984, 10,7% of them were Research Assistants and only 9,8% were academic members (assistant professors, associate professors

and professors). The percentage of the other academic staff was 77,5%, and there were no lecturers. However, in the academic year 2005-2006, there were 4612 academicians at Faculties of Education, 43,8% of whom were the academic members (approximately 15 times more) and 23,9% were research assistants (nearly 7 times more when compared to a former decade). The percentage of the lecturers was 4,5% and the other academic staff decreases to 27,8%. These data imply that there was a considerable investment and increase at the numbers of field experts. It should, additionally, mentioned that, by the same token, the number of students at faculties of education have increased about 5 times during that time period. The number of the students was 39.684 in the academic year 1883-1984, yet the number goes up to 169.169 in 2006-2007.

Correspondingly, regarding all data given above and the undergoing system in Turkey proposes that faculties of education have a significant place in higher education, the main sources of the teaching profession and also plays a pivotal role in educating the society. The quality of the graduates of these faculties would not only shape the Turkish society but also will have a stance to determine and even lead to the innovations all over the world. Therefore, the intellectual output of a country's education in the long should be re-used so as to undertake to role of putting the invaluable investment on people. In that sense, taught curriculum at faculties of education should be regarded as an important approach to activate the intellectuality of the experts as practitioners in the field of education.

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