

Prospective Geography Teachers' Views About Teaching Practice Course

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Summary

INTRODUCTION

Teachers have critical roles in raising new generations. Societies that support the raising of highly skilled teachers take an important step in raising skilled students. This notion requires that teachers should not only acquire theoretical knowledge but also practice well in order to learn the teaching occupation. One of the most important notions of raising highly skilled teachers is to train them well in pre-service education. The quality of the process of teacher training is expected to improve continuously. In this regard, prospective teachers are given courses in which they have the opportunity to practice teaching as well as theoretical and vocational courses (Saritaş, 2007; Aydın & Güngördü, 2015). One of such courses is Teaching Practice Course. During this course, prospective teachers gain a line of experiences related to the occupation for the first time.

The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the teaching practice course according to the views of prospective geography teachers. In line with the main purpose, the current study seeks answers for the questions below:

- 1) What are the views of prospective geography teachers about the targets of teaching practice course?
- 2) What are the views of prospective geography teachers about the process of teaching practice course?
- 3) What are the views of prospective geography teachers about instructors' behaviors in teaching practice course?
- 4) What are the views of prospective geography teachers about practice teachers' behaviors in teaching practice course?
- 5) What are the views of prospective geography teachers about the efficiency of teaching practice course?

METHOD

This study conducted a survey model to examine the teaching practice course according to the views of prospective geography teachers. A total of 140 students among final grade students from Karabük University Faculty of Letters Department of Geography who completed the pedagogical formation program in 2014-2015 education year and spring term participated in the study. A questionnaire developed by Aytaçlı (2012) was used to gather data. Data of the study were entered into computer environment through SPSS 15 Program. Data of the study was analyzed by calculating frequency and percentage values.

RESULTS

Results of the study were given below as:

Results of the study revealed that the large majority of prospective teachers (%85) were informed about the targets of the teaching practice course and that almost all of the

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participants who were informed about the targets of the course found the fact that they were informed about the targets beneficial. In his study Aytaçlı (2012) revealed that almost all of the prospective teachers found the fact that they were informed about the targets of the course beneficial. In line with results of the current study, Ünver and others (2010) stated that the targets of the courses were explained to students and that this was good news.

A large majority of prospective teachers define teaching practice course as a course in which they observe how to make use of knowledge that they have learnt until the final grade and have the opportunity to observe the use of strategies, methods, and techniques related to his/her field in the classroom. Prospective teachers find opportunity to perform the theoretical knowledge that they have learnt both during their graduate education and pedagogical formation program. Furthermore, prospective teachers experience how to communicate with a secondary school student. Teacher practice course is regarded an opportunity for a teacher to develop his/her teacher skills and to prepare for the teaching occupation. In this sense, prospective teachers develop themselves with teaching practices conducted and with the feedbacks of instructors throughout the semester (Dursun ve Kuzu, 2008).

Results of the present study demonstrated that most of the practice instructors and practice teachers observed the lesson that prospective teacher taught in the practice school only once. Aytaçlı (2012) suggested that the reasons for practice instructor to observe the prospective teachers less often than expected are the large numbers of lessons in the faculties, the high number of prospective teachers, practice instructors' not having enough information about teaching practice and thus their being indifferent to the subject.

Some of the participant prospective teachers stated that lesson plans and materials were not examined before the teaching practice. Findings of the study conducted by Gökçe and Demirhan (2005) showing that prospective teachers stated they were not guided well in terms of lessons plans and materials were similar to those of the current study.

In this study, most of the prospective teachers expressed that their practice teacher gave information about the student group that they would teach and that he/she introduced them to students in the classroom, introduced the physical properties of the practice school to them, and that he/she allowed them to observe the classroom before their own practice and to teach independently.

This study demonstrated that practice instructors guided practice students well enough. On the other hand, research results of Atmiş (2013) revealed that practice instructors did not guide practice students well enough.

IMPLICATIONS

Some suggestions depending on the results of the current study were as follows:

- Practice instructors and practice teachers should examine the plans and course materials before the practice and give feedback. Instructors should visit and observe the practice courses of prospective teachers and organize feedback and information meetings in which practice teachers participate.
- Practice instructor should more often observe the practice student in the classroom. Therefore, it is needed that the number of practice students under the responsibility of both practice instructor and practice teacher should be decreased.