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Class teachers' expectations from teacher candidates from three points of views

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Abstract

The general aim of this study is to find out the way how the primary school class teachers evaluate the candidates, what they expect from the candidates and the effectiveness of the teaching training program being conducted in Ataturk Teacher Training Academy (AOA) to fulfill these expectations. The study is carried out by phenomenology, a qualitative method. Descriptive and content analysis were used in order to analyze the data. Study group is composed of three different dimensions. In the first dimension, a total of 52 teachers (2 school masters and 50 teachers), who had teaching practice students in their classes in last three years, had served during 2013-2014 and served in 5 different state primary schools that are in collaboration with AOA in the context of Teaching Practice Lessons. In order to analyze the data obtained from the views of these teachers, 15 teachers of AOA and 15 teachers that have graduated from AOA in 2012-2013/ 2013-2014 academic season form the second and third study groups respectively. Research findings were studied and interpreted in the framework of 4 main topics which are field knowledge, basic professional attitudes, effective communication and teaching abilities.

Keywords: teacher training, candidate teacher, class teacher, primary school, North Cyprus.

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1. Introduction

Nowadays education is regarded more than simply delivering the events, situations, ideas to a person. In education it is expected from a teacher, who is to promote learning, to be able to decide which content to use from various subjects and how the content is thought; to be willing to teach his/her field knowledge, teaching know-how and general knowledge to a student in the direction of the student's requirements (Schussler, Stooksberry & Bercaw, 2010). A qualified teacher is well educated in its own field as well as in general knowledge and teaching profession knowledge. A qualified teacher knows the techniques and means for a successful teaching-learning, chooses the most appropriate ones, uses them, guides the students for their maximum mental, physical and psychological development and observes and evaluates students' development on a routine basis. He/She must have acquired effective class management and communication skills and should have acquired the ethical values that the profession requires and carries out the work willingly. Nowadays the teachers are expected to have the qualities such as creating variations in teaching methods and techniques, self-evaluating, cooperating with the parents and colleagues by having teamwork abilities, having high levels of motivation, following scientific and technological advances and making use of those advances, setting up healthy relationship with teachers and coping with the new changes. Most of these qualities are brought to a teacher during the education period for becoming teacher and the continuation of acquiring these qualities is gained in the profession.

In North Cyprus, training of primary school class teachers is carried out by Ataturk Teacher Training Academy (AOA) which is predeceased by Teacher Training College that was established in 1937 and Ataturk Teacher Training Academy maintains its mission with a great success.

Practice lessons allow the teacher candidates to implement the theoretical knowledge in real classes and schools. In AOA, practice lessons take place from the beginning of the third year of the studies and it involves 50 work days. Application lessons are directed by a specific teaching instructor each term, also the teacher candidates carrying out practice are guided by tutors who are recruited by cooperation of the teaching staff (academics/instructors) and the chair of department. Teaching practices are held five days in a week and are discussed altogether each Friday afternoon. At the end of each practice period, teacher candidates prepare a practice portfolio to be submitted to the instructors in charge (AOA, 2011).

For the practices to reach their goals, a close collaboration is needed between AOA, schools that practice take place and class teachers (actual teachers responsible from a class where the practice takes place). An effective collaborative environment promotes process of planning, implementation and evaluation of education-teaching to be maintained in the scope of certain principles and allows the establishment of high levels of standard. At this point, class teachers constitute a vital role for the candidates. A class teacher guides the practices and teaches the subject area of the candidate, evaluates the works of the candidate and collaborates with the faculty/academic instructors. The main role of the class teacher is to help to the candidate for professional development during the teaching practices (Yesilyurt & Semerci, 2011). In this period, class teachers and the academic instructors collaborate and provide the required support and help to the candidate. The tutor observes the candidates lesson delivery in specific intervals and at least two times from the beginning to the end, whereas the class teacher observes the performance on continuously and gives feedback. It is expected from the candidate to work on the course of the feedback.

During teaching practices usually it is the class teacher closest to the candidate. Class teacher is subject to observe and direct the candidate in every aspects of the profession (such as professional competency, approach, teaching abilities, professional knowledge etc.) At the same time, the class teacher should be a role model and give feedbacks on the incompetencies of the candidate, promote the candidate to apply new methods and techniques and help to improve positive professional attitude (Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012).

Once the literature is analyzed in the context of teaching practice lessons, many studies on the experience of teacher candidates, their views on the period and problems encountered (Dursun & Kuzu, 2008), benefits of the practice lessons (Sisman & Acat, 2003; Becit, Kurt &

Kabakci, 2009), class teachers' guidance and tutorship levels (Russell & Russell, 2011), problems they have faced and their duties (Basturk, 2010) are come across. On the other hand, researches on general evaluation and expectations of class teachers about teacher candidates are not encountered.

Besides, according to the student duties and responsibilities Article 7 specified by AOA Internship (Practice) Directives, students of the academy are responsible for delivering new knowledge, abilities and attitudes that were acquired in the academy as much as possible and they are responsible of contributing to the educational activities in the schools they are attending (AOA, 2011). However, what proportion of this is achieved or to what extent the candidates had the chance to achieve can come to light after determining the class teachers' observations, views and expectations from candidates. It should also be mentioned that, feedbacks coming from the schools can help to improve the teacher training programmes (Plecki, Elfers & Nakamura, 2012).

From this point of view, the general observations, evaluations and expectations (about teacher candidates) of the primary school class teachers serving in the schools which collaborate with AOA for teaching practice, constructs the problem of this research. Also, the efficiency of fulfillment of these expectations by the training programme in the academy is added to the problem of this research.

2. Method

This study is carried out by phenomenology, a qualitative method. A qualitative method is carried out to understand the social lives of people by evaluating the relationships and substances that are being used in daily lives, by determining the hidden meanings in verbal and written texts. In addition to that, phenomenology is carried out by concentrating on visible issues that are needed to be researched in deep and in detail and in an effort of describing the research topic, individual or subject in its own state (Snape & Spence, 2003; Yildirim & Simsek, 2005; Buyukozturk, Kilic, Akgun, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2009).

9,8, ck p

Study group is composed of three different dimensions. The first dimension composed of a total of 52 teachers (2 school masters and 50 teachers), who had teaching practice students in their classes in the last three years, had served during 2013-2014 and served in 5 different state primary schools that are in collaboration with AOA in the context of Teaching Practice Lessons. In order to analyze the data obtained from the views of these teachers, 15 academic teachers of AOA and 15 young teachers that have graduated from AOA in 2012-2013/ 2013-2014 academic season constitute the second and third study groups respectively.

9,9, k h

In order to collect the data, a semi-structured focus group discussion is carried out with class teachers and teachers graduated from AOA within two years and a fully structured discussion form is used for the instructors in AOA. Five schools included in the study group were visited at determined dates after getting the permission, following that, the teachers were gathered together and they were asked to answer "How do you evaluate the teacher candidates that come to your classes for practices and what do you expect?" with focus group discussion method. These sessions lasted about one or one and a half hour. During meetings, a voice recording machine was used to record teachers' views and expectations.

The aim of the focus group discussion is to gather detailed, in depth, multidimensional qualitative information on the views of participants, lives, interests, experiences, trends, thoughts, perceptions, emotions, attitudes and habits about a determined topic (Bowling, 2002). It is important to provide an ambiance for the participants to present their ideas freely. In this

In the view of these criticisms, the research was developed into more detail and 15 teachers who graduated in 2013 from AOA were interviewed. All of the teachers (%100) were asked to what extent they feel they are adequate on the field knowledge and teaching abilities in music classes. All of them responded that from time to time they felt inadequate both in teaching music and field knowledge in the schools they completed their practice. In parallel with class teachers and new graduates, music class academic staff in AOA drew attention to the shortness of the music classes and imbalanced distribution of music classes in 4 years. It is possible to say that the same applies for other specialty classes. As a matter of fact, the academic staff of English classes also mentioned the same criticism.

Twelve (%23) of the class teachers drew attention to the lack of knowledge of candidate teachers on education programmes of classroom they did their practice; 6 (%12) of the class teachers mentioned that candidate teachers have inadequate knowledge on published written and visual materials in the field. Some quotations of the teachers are as follows:

ckck p kck h j k ck lk ck h p p
k ,
ckck ck j h ph k p p k j , p k
ckck j h p ck h ck lk p h k H ck p p
h ck , ck k p h ck h ck p ckck j ck p hck
p ,

Three of the class teachers (%6) mentioned that they expect from the candidates to be aware of the latest information about their fields. It is worthy to mention some of the teachers' remarks:

H h kck h hp h ckck p p ck p p ck j k ck lk ck h
ph h lh ck j k ck h Hk ckck j p k H k p
h p h ,

From the viewpoint of inadequacy of knowledge of candidates on education programmes and sources, in the interview with 15 AOA academic instructors, one indicated that in fact, some lessons conducted in AOA are out of scope of primary school level and this is a significant negative issue (computer lesson). However, apart from this issue all of the instructors stated that they carry out activities certainly in their classes in order to make the candidates informed and aware of primary school programmes as far as the lessons allow the teachers. 13 instructors indicated that this contribution is made to the students. Instructors also mentioned that they contribute to training of candidate teachers by usually bringing primary school programmes of the related field lessons, analyzing these programs or by assigning homework and projects where students can analyze primary school programmes. Likewise, 15 of the instructors indicated that visual and written materials related to the field are delivered to the students.

Fifteen teachers who have graduated from AOA were asked to determine their competence for the field knowledge they learned in the academy. All of the teachers stated that, during their training in AOA, the academic instructors had provided them with the sources having latest advances about the field.

Here, the views of class teachers and AOA instructors show divergence. This brings to the mind that there might be a generation difference in knowledge, attitudes and ability levels of experienced class teachers (and their expectations) and candidate teachers who were raised in a different generation.

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Table 2. Attitude expectations of Class Teachers

"Appropriate clothing is a relative concept. However delicate clothing is sign of respect from teachers to environment and students,

Criticism on the subject was evaluated with teachers in AOA and recently graduated teachers. The group was asked whether clothing guidelines were made available to students in the classes or through tutoring. Introduction to Teaching Profession class was the only class where advice on clothing was given. In addition to this, all of the teachers pointed out the relativity of clothing, stated that teacher candidates should dress parallel to the perception of the community giving advice personally to teacher candidates and that the teacher candidates are trustworthy on the subject.

Recently graduated teachers stated that even the ones who wear unconventional clothing while they were students started to dress parallel to the perception of the community. Therefore, it can be deduced that more experienced teachers find it hard to accept the difference between them and recently graduated teachers.

In this article, teaching skills is divided into three subgroups as planning, practice and evaluation.

Table 3. The expectations of the class teachers from practice class students on lecture planning

Results on Lecture Planning	Frequency	%
Painstakingly Planning Day to Day Lectures	16	31
Discussions of Day to Day Lecture Plans with Class Teacher	2	4

Sixteen of the class teachers (31%) expect students to plan the lectures neatly and day to day so that during the lecture the students would have extensive preparation to the course. One of the teachers on lecture planning said

'A teacher candidate should plan the lectures neatly since it is a sign of value given to the course". Two other teachers on the subject said

"I expect them to plan their work. I ask 'are you going to teach today' only to be answered as 'I do not have a lecture plan but I can'. I do not understand this answer without a plan".

"I want to see teacher candidates that not only prepare themselves when academic evaluation is due but also at all other times".

One of the teachers who touched on discussions of day to day lecture plans with class teachers (4%) said

"I want to work with teacher candidates who discuss their plans lecture outlines with me, who are open to suggestions and who greatly values their work".

Another teacher pointed the importance of discussions of day to day lecture plans with class teachers on the evaluation of the teacher candidates and said

*k p kck p k p k ck p k p h
pckp k p ckck ck k p p i h k,*

Criticism on the subject was evaluated with instructors in AOA and recently graduated teachers. Teachers stated that lecture planning and its importance in neatly working naturally is a course material in AOA. In addition to this, there are direct activities to promote planning. However one of teachers said there is a dispute on the matter between Academy – Primary schools and Ministry of Education. This is actually very clear since Ministry of Education states it is compulsory to have yearly and weekly plans whereas Academy teaches to plan yearly and daily.

The researchers who are course coordinators and tutors carried out a pilot study to promote lecture planning in teacher candidates. The teacher candidates were asked to make their training folders during their trainee positions in 2014-2015 academic years. The trainees in 2014-2015 academic years discussed their lecture plans with class teachers a day before the

lecture and taught at the class with approved lecture plans. Coordinator academics visited trainees in schools, had meetings with them and controlled the plans if they are in appropriate folders or not. Generally the students are content with this practice because the students do not have to work on folders at the end of the training period and this prevents additional inefficient work on retrospective lecture planning.

The interviews with 15 recently graduated teachers revealed that they are not satisfied with the content of the plans they made during the training periods. The greatest issues on the subject were plans being too detailed and writing of their educational status in a conventional sentence by sentence way was regarded as unnecessary.

Table 4. The Expectations of the Class Teachers on Practice (Learning-Teaching) levels.

Results on Learning-Teaching Levels	Frequency	%
Efficient use of time	17	33
Practical answers for teaching stoppage	12	23
Appropriate use of methodology and techniques	13	25
Influential management of the class	6	12
Use of technology, visionary-auditory materials	6	12

As stated in table 4, the greatest variety on expectations and opinions of class teachers is at the level of practice in teaching skills. 17 teachers on efficient use of time, 12 teachers on practical answers for teaching stoppage, 10 teachers on ability to transfer information, 6 teachers on influential management of the class and 6 teachers on use of technology, visionary-auditory materials provided their expectations and opinions. The teachers exemplified their expectations with the following sentences.

H p h , h p h h k , p ph k ck h p ck h
k p h ,
H ckck p h h ck h k ,
H h p ck ck h k ,
ck h h k k p , H h p ck k ckck p ph k ,
H h p ckck ck ph ck p pj h h
p ,
H p ck ph ck h h h h ck h k p ph ck h h h ,
H h p 82 ck p h ph ck ck h p k ph ck
h h ph , p p ck ph k p h pck ck pck ,

On the other hand, the recently graduated teachers supported the opposite. They stated that they planned the lectures with innovative techniques with high motivations only to be refused by the class teachers in the discussions of the plan a day before the lectures. The class teachers refused methods other than conventional teacher oriented methods. The recently graduated teachers thought that the reason behind these refusals was class teachers fear that they have to change their current methods and disturb their current regularity.

Instructors in AOA provided similar opinions to class teachers on the expectation of use of student oriented teaching methods in practice classes and when lectures in AOA were considered. One of the instructors has noteworthy opinions

G p k h ck h p ck h p ck , k h p
h h h h h h h k h ck h j k ck h
h h h p h ck h h h h p ck k p
h ck h p , h h h h p ck k h h
p ck ck h k p p p hck p ck

Another academic instructor states that;

*H p p ck . k p p H h j h h
pj p ck lk ck h k ck ck ph ck h p
ck , hck ph p h ck h lph ck H h p
ck ck h p ck h h k p k p h p ph ck
h h k p h , H ck p p ck ph ck h
ck k ,*

Table 5. The expectations of class teachers on the level of educational evaluation

Results on evaluation levels of courses	Frequency	%
Evaluation at the end of the lecture	1	

As stated in Table 5, only one teacher provided opinions on evaluation which is an important teaching skill. This teacher's opinion and expectations were stated in the following sentence.

*p ckck pp p h ck ck p p h p h k
ck ck ck k p k k p h p ph k ck
h ,*

Table 6. The expectations of class teachers on communication skills of practice students

Expectations	Frequency	%
Communications with teachers and school administration	27	52
Communication with students	9	17

As a result of the research, the communication skills are sub grouped into two.

Twenty seven class teachers (52%) provided opinions on communications with teachers and school administration whereas 9 class teachers (17%) provided opinions on communication with students. The examples are the following sentences.

*H ck p h p lk h p p h k
p k h h p h ck pjh h ,
H h h ck hck ck h p h h ck
k ph p ck k ck ck ph p j ,
H h p h ck p ck h ck j p ck ck ph
p j ,*

All of the 15 instructors at AOA reported in the interviews that they tried to improve communication skills of the teacher candidates through personal advices. They also think that training has a positive effect on communication skills. One academic who stated that understanding students would eventually cause better communication, said that it is beneficial to get involved with student in different activities (picnics, social projects, bazaars, children festivals etc.). On the other hand, the recently graduates pointed out the defects in communication skills thought in AOA. They claimed that they had been thought to act against the perfect situations and have no experience and are uneducated on how to react to problems and crisis and how to communicate with colleagues and parents of the students. According to recently graduated teachers, this is a significant gap in their education. Furthermore they claimed that they did not have any lectures on legal rights at academy and do not know extend and legal limits of their interference in certain situations. The absence of this is believed to result in miscommunication between them and colleagues, parents, school administration and other staff.

4. Discussion

Eighteen of the 52 (35%) class teachers in the study expect practice students to have sufficient information on different courses. The students who would become class teachers and

preschool teachers after courses in AOA can be appointed to field courses (arts, music and physical exercise) like a teacher educated in the related field in the system and this notion is subject to a discussion. For example, when an ordinary physical exercise undergraduate course in a university is considered, there are a total of 145 lecture hours in the field courses in 8 semesters (www.besyo.kocaeli.edu.tr). However in AOA, the lecture hours in the same field are 5-7 hours in 8 semesters for the class and preschool teachers (AOA, 2011). A teacher graduated from AOA can be appointed to physical exercise teaching because of different reasons with this capacity. Therefore the motivation of the teachers and the beneficiary levels of students from these teachers are lower than the physical activity teachers who are specialized in the field. In order to prevent this happening, AOA must immediately start to teach for field courses to educate more qualified teachers.

Another point is to avoid assigning a teacher to a field course because of the proximity of the school to where teacher lives, because the spouse of the teacher is in that school or because of the level of the school. The best solution for this problem is to encourage Ministry of Education to evoke legal regulations in this matter.

Twenty one of the class teachers (40%) claimed that teacher candidates do not have updates on written and visionary materials in both the field and in course they are taking. However, teacher candidates are aimed to have sufficient information on teaching, field courses and general culture (Yazici, 2009). It is an immediate requirement that a student in the education system has research, inquiry and daily problem solving skills as well as a teacher who should be open to new developments in education and have sufficient information in related field course (Matyar, Denizoglu & Ozcan, 2008). Therefore, the teaching staff and the institution should question themselves on if they really are developing the teacher candidates, students in the system until they are graduated. One of the reasons to field course information problem of the teacher candidates is clearly lays beneath the institution and approaches towards them during their time in the institution.

The expectation of class teachers from teacher candidates to bring recent methods to school and class in order to have on the job training should be taken seriously. As a matter of fact, Ataturk Teacher Training Guidelines section 7 under Duties and Responsibilities of Students clearly states that students should implement the new knowledge, behaviour and skills as much as possible and join educational activities in the schools and classes during their training period.

The number of teachers that claimed teacher candidates have low motivation is significantly high. Similarly most of the teachers provided their expectations on devotion to duty and duty responsibility which is linked to motivation. One of the reasons of low motivation as an external motivation, especially in recent years, can be reduced starting salaries in 2/3 when compared with previous graduates. Although in order for a person to have job satisfaction throughout his/her life depends on variables such as personality, interest and talent, it is possible to have working for government and finding a job as soon as possible as primary motivation during job selection because of increased unemployment.

The number of teachers that wants to work with teacher candidates that love and interested in children more and emphasize the importance of love in the profession is high. It is stated that sensitivity is extremely important in teaching profession and teachers must be sensitive towards students which is related to personal characteristics. Moreover, the soul of the people who select teaching as profession is affected with their level of sensitivity. This is because; the profession carried out not only for economic reasons but also for psycho-social development and job satisfaction (Yazici, 2009). Both the academic personnel in AOA and schools and administrative staff where the training takes place holds responsibility and duty in making teacher candidates aware of human side of the profession and generate sensitivity towards all correspondents.

Class teachers claimed that teacher candidates only felt responsible for the lectures they should give and did not participate in other educational activities. However, all the activities, operations, duties and responsibilities should be shared in the educational system by all actors. Maybe it is best to increase the responsibilities of the practice schools in developing teacher

candidates as considered by other researchers (Russel and Russel, 2011; Karamustafaoglu, 2009). This is because in AOA teacher developing program, there is not any courses on primary school organization and administration. The students try learning about organisation of the school in school experience course. The administrative staff and class teachers can take more active roles and the cooperation between AOA and practice schools can be improved in providing experience for teacher candidates.

The number of teachers who expected teacher candidates to dress appropriately for the profession is 9 (17%). People should be respectful and tolerant against each other's choices, which is not even a discussion topic, bound to standards internalised by their needs and community's expectations (Balci & Yanpar, 2010) at micro level. However it should be noted that a teacher's way of dressing can be discussed at macro levels because a teacher has social roles in community which can be defined as 'shared means in social lives'. In fact, a study on impactful teacher qualities, focused on the opinions of secondary school teachers, showed that 162(30%) of the 546 teachers think that quality/impactful/good teachers must pay attention to their dressing and be in good shape (Karakelle, 2005).

Sixteen of the teachers (31%) said that the lectures should be planned daily. It is striking that a study on qualities of an impactful teacher showed lecture planning is the 7th quality in 65 qualities (Cakmak, 2009). AOA has a stand to ensure lecture planning in teachers and a high ratio in evaluation of folders prepared by the students.

However, it should be noted that the number of opinions and expectations are high in this matter. This problem can be solved by instructors in AOA who lecture on practice classes closely monitor the plans and ensure they are at the right quality. Together with this, the lecture plan schedules should be identical between AOA and Ministry of Education (weekly or daily). The discrepancy between AOA and Ministry of Education is confusing for and reducing work efficiency of the recently graduated teachers as explained in the results.

At teaching-learning level 17 (33%) teachers on efficient use of time, 12 (23%) teachers on practical answers for teaching stoppage, 6 (12%) teachers on influential management of the class have opinions and expectations and this should be regarded as normal since the sufficiency in these fields depends on experience. In fact, the qualities that teacher candidates have hard time demonstrating during lectures are class management, organization of class activities and promoting class to stay active (Karamustafaoglu, 2009). But when the expectations of the class teachers are entirely considered, there is a need to improve reflective thinking of teacher candidates which includes analyzing experience of the candidates effectively, using criticism constructively, the use of information in practice rather than in theory and presenting new knowledge in higher levels. The results, derived during data collection period, showed that although teachers criticize classic teaching methods as teacher oriented, they do not want to draw away from this and prevent teacher candidates who try to implement their own way. The discrepancy between the current system and the system that is supposed to be implemented shows and negatively affects the country's educational system.

In order to solve this problem, all the actors in education (AOA, practice school administration, practice teacher and all other related actors) should share the responsibility. In addition to this, teachers should receive on the job training in order to maximize the self confidence.

Another important issue in this study is that there is one teacher who provided opinions and expectations on evaluation at the teaching-learning level. This aspect either represents the perfect evaluation by candidates or unimportance given by the teachers.

The expectation of teacher candidates to have a better and cooperation dependent relationship with colleagues can be regarded as unawareness of importance of cooperation and personal characteristics in the profession in AOA students. A study on the criteria on teacher appointments showed that communication skills and cooperation skills are just as important as profession and field knowledge and general culture (Ziebarth-Bovill, Kritzer & Bovill, 2012). The

awareness on this topic can be improved with in class and out class activities. Furthermore, candidates should be educated on how to tackle the daily problems in the Academy.

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