



Learning from Teaching Experiences: Novice Teachers' Thoughts *

Öğretim Deneyimlerinden Öğrenmek: Yeni Öğretmenlerin Düşünceleri

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to investigate novice teachers' thoughts about their initial years. Research on this area indicates that novices have various and numerous problems when they begin to teach. To this end, an interview was carried out with fifteen novice teachers who are enrolled in a master program in education and teaching different subject areas. Content analysis was utilized on the data and findings were categorised under the themes. Novice teachers' thoughts about teaching profession, their struggles in teaching context, motivating factors for teaching, effect of teacher training program and the contribution of post-graduate education on their profession are the main themes emerged from the data. The results provided quiet interesting findings which should be considered by teacher educators, researchers, teachers and prospective teachers who are going to be teachers soon.

Keywords: Novice teachers, experience, thoughts.

ÖZ: Bu çalışma yeni öğretmenlerin mesleklerinin ilk yıllarına ilişkin düşüncelerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu konuda yapılan araştırmalar, yeni öğretmenlerin çeşitli ve sayısız problemlerle karşılaştıklarını göstermektedir. Bu amaçla, yüksek lisans programına devam eden ve çeşitli konu alanlarından on beş öğretmenle görüşme yapılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler üzerinde içerik analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. İçerik analizi sonucunda görüşler, katılımcıların öğretmenlik mesleğine ilişkin düşünceleri, öğretimde karşılaştıkları güçlükler, öğretime motive eden faktörler, öğretmen eğitiminin etkisi ve lisansüstü eğitimin katkısı, olmak üzere çeşitli alt başlıklar altında toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçları öğretmen eğitimcileri, araştırmacılar, öğretmenler ve geleceğin öğretmeni olacak öğretmen adayları için oldukça ilgi çekici sonuçlar sağlamıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Yeni öğretmenler, deneyim, düşünceler.

1. INTRODUCTION

The initial years of experience are crucial to novice teachers who face and must overcome a variety of difficulties. The first years of experience of novice teachers may face some unfamiliar conditions which might cause tension, insecurity and lack of confidence (Saenz-Lopez, Almagro & Ibanez, 2011). The first year and the subsequent years of teaching are important for every teacher. The first year of teaching can be considered as an important determinant in a teachers' career (Loughran, Brown and Doecke, 2001). Teachers' first years of experience in the profession seem quite essential for the acquisition of the skills that enable teachers to teach effectively (Ryan, 1970; Kyriacou, 1993). The first year of teaching can also be regarded as a challenging and testing time as teachers may face numerous problems (e.g. Veenman, 1984; Huntly, 2008; Sanford, 1988; cited in Loughran et al., 2001; Akyeampong & Lewin, 2002; Gustafson, Guilbert and MacDonald, 2002; Belay, Ghebreab, Ghebremichael, Ghebreselassie, Holmes & White, 2007; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). However, the problems that each novice teacher faces might be different since individual experiences vary. There are some researches about this issue in the related literature. Reiman and Parramore (1994; cited in Corbell, Reiman and Nietfeld, 2008), for example, conducted a research with 74 first year teachers. Teachers in their study noted adequate planning time, having curriculum resources available, interaction with mentors and beginning teachers, and administrative support as most important to the teachers' perceptions of success.

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Olsan and Osborne (1991, cited in Kyriacou 1993, p.82), analyzed the first year experiences of four primary school teachers and found the following common points: adaptation, sense of responsibility, anxiety about abilities to meet the requirements, anxiety about classroom management, need to contact with other teachers, and evaluation of achievement. Similarly, Talbert (1994) described the first year experiences of three agriculture teachers and found some common points influence the first year experiences: The common points are unique requirements towards the profession, students, activities, time management, lesson organization, and classroom management. In the study, it is concluded that the first year experience is not always negative for beginning teachers and that they sometimes get positive feedback from the students, encouraging them for the future. In addition to these studies, there have been a considerable number of studies on novice teachers which was conducted to investigate the factors that affect their success.

The brief literature review so far indicates that when novice teachers begin teaching, they encounter the complexity of the teaching task (Murshidi, Konting, Elias & Foori, 2006; Wanzarae, 2007, p.349). Major challenges that novice teachers face can be summarized as follows: time management; student assessment; negative relationships with teachers, principals, lack of time (to plan, prepare, carry out administrative duties); establishing positive relationships with students; the need to establish authority; difficulties in aligning instructional techniques to the subject content and evaluation. There are some studies (e.g. Karacaoğlu and Acar, 2010; Özpınar and Sarpkaya, 2010; Çakmak, 2010, Türkmen, 2009; Büyükyavuz and Aydoslu, 2005) on teachers' problems during their teaching profession in the related literature recently. On the other hand, even though there have been many studies which examine belief or attitudes towards teaching profession, few studies (e.g. Arslan, 2013; Battal, Yurdakul and Sahan, 1998) handled teachers' viewpoints regarding teaching profession and the problems they encountered. Those studies primarily focus on teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession. When these studies are analyzed, it is seen that each of them highlight teachers' problems in the framework of their disciplines. It is also seen that these studies do not put forward an analysis of the first years of teaching. As Romano and Gibson (2006) stated that little research has been done in order to understand novice teachers' experiences regarding how their concern might be met during the first year.

In sum, a comparison and evaluation of previous research and the research area in question can provide a foundation which can be expanded and implemented in different educational context. Based on this framework summarized above, this study aims to investigate the novice teachers' thoughts about teaching profession and their teaching experiences.

2. METHOD

Mainly a qualitative design based on interview was used in the present study. The generalization was not the main aim of the study and it was confined to 15 novice teachers.

2.1. Participants/Subjects

The participants of the study includes a total of 15 novice teachers (2 male, 13 female) who were attending a post graduate program at a university during the 2013-2014 academic years in Ankara, Turkey. They were enrolled in a Masters program on Education. The participants had no more than five years of teaching experience and all voluntarily participated in this research. In detail, teachers between one and five years of teaching experience were participated in the research. Teachers' subject areas were: Mathematics, English, Biology, Science, Primary teaching and they all were from different schools.

2.2. Data Collection

Interview technique was used to collect data in this study. The following questions were addressed to participants in the study: (1) How do you define (describe) teaching profession? If

you give me some key adjectives describing your profession in your initial years, what would those adjectives be? (2) What were remarkable struggles that you have experienced related to teaching in those years? Can you give me some details? (3) Is there any situation that has positive impact on you in those years? What are they? (4) What are the main factors which increase or decrease your motivation for teaching in your initial years? (5) What do you think about the effect of the teacher training program you have graduated on your initial years of teaching? (6) Do you think post graduate education you are attending will provide contributions to your profession? If so, what kind of contributions you expect?

2.3. Data Analysis

Content analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Miles and Huberman, 1994) was used in the analysis of the data based on interviews. All interviews were first audio-recorded by the researcher after taken the participants' permission. Secondly, data was transcribed for analyzing process. Thirdly, content analysis was utilized based on the assigned codes on the text. Finally, the main themes were defined in terms of the codes given. In this stage, two other researchers also identified their own themes on the same data during the analyzing process. In the present study, some of the comments of the participants from interviews were also selected and presented.

3. FINDINGS

In this part of the research, findings are given under several subtitles with the following sequence: novice teachers' thoughts about teaching profession, their struggles in teaching context, motivating factors for teaching, effect of teacher training program and the contribution of post-graduate education on their profession.

3.1. Novice Teachers' Thoughts about Teaching Profession

Perceptions regarding teaching profession have always been important factors determining the attitudes of teachers. Therefore, it is first investigated novice teachers' thoughts about teaching profession in general. To this end, first, the following research question is directed to teachers: "How do you define (describe) teaching profession? If you give me some key adjectives describing your profession in your initial years, what would those adjectives be?". Table 1 shows the main themes emerged from teachers' views based on the analysis of teachers' reports.

Table 1: Novice Teachers' Definitions of Teaching Profession for Their Initial Years

Themes	N=15	Examples of adjectives
Negative views	(n=12)	Tiring, difficult, hard, compelling, demanding, tiredness, disappointment.
Positive views	(n=3)	Holly occupation, joyful, instructive.

As seen from the table, novice teachers have both negative and positive viewpoints about their initial years. Of them, some participants focused on the negative viewpoints about initial years of the profession. Tiring, difficult, hard, compelling and demanding are some of the adjectives used by novice teachers to describe initial years in teaching profession. Several quotes of novice teachers' responses are the following:

Teaching is very a tiring profession in terms of affective points. It is very nice to be together with students. However, other sides are very tiring and frustrating... I began my career with full desire. My idea has not changed, but its social status and people's views about my profession make me sad. I think people have some biases about it, for instance they think that teachers have long periods of vacation. But we as teachers work hard. Teaching is nice and I fondly work. But others'

views negatively affect me...I sometimes think that I wish I had a different job. It is satisfactory but tiring profession...(Mathematics teacher/1, 2 years Teaching Experience, Female).

Although it was very very tiring, someone may think that it is very easy...(Maths teacher/2, First year, F).

I thought that teaching was easy, later I recognized that knowing and teaching are very distinct acts. I experienced some difficulty in topics, class management, behaving in front of students. It is like learning how to ride a bicycle... I saw many teachers but being a teacher is different (Biology T, 4 years TE, Male).

First of all it was not the job I wanted...Practices in the schools affected my point of view. I began to get used to teaching when I was about to graduate... It is very exciting to teach something to someone. My students learnt science through my courses. After starting my profession, my point of view began to change. (Science T, 3 years TE, F).

There is no difference between my theoretical teaching knowledge and my job. For me teaching is difficult. It is a demanding and compelling job.... I felt mostly despair...But over time I began to like my students, ending my despair. Unlike my previous thoughts, now I think that I can do my job...(Maths T4, 2 years TE, F).

Before I began my career I had some different views. I thought that teachers affect the society...Now I try not to teach in a routine way. I am happy if I could teach anything even to only one student. If I feel that students do not learn anything, I am disappointed...(Maths T, 2 years TE, F).

...I am happy now to teach something to my students, but it is hard for me... I tell them the topic, but they could not remember a week later (Primary T, 3 years TE, F)

However, some participants focused on the positive viewpoints. To exemplify:

For me teaching is joyful. It makes me feel good. My thoughts regarding teaching were the same before I started working, so I did not experience any disappointment. In short teaching profession is joyful and instructive (English T, 2 years TE, F).

It is like an art...Teachers shape the students... (Maths T4, 2 years TE, F).

All these explanations show that novice teachers generally describe teaching profession with the adjectives such as challenging, difficult and tiring. Only several of them characterized this profession as joyful and didactic. Their views also indicate that regardless of whether they started teaching profession voluntarily or not, they encountered some unexpected problems or difficulties during their first years. This shows that a difference appears between novice teachers' thoughts before they started their profession and after they started. Berl (2004) states that "...Beginning teachers come fresh to teaching. While they are eager and imaginative, they can also be impatient, opinionated, and very passionate about their beliefs. High on ideals but low in self-confidence, beginning teachers want to do well and to be good teachers". All these suggest

that the conditions they encounter might determine whether they have negative or positive thoughts.

3.2. Novice Teachers' Struggles in Teaching Context

As mentioned in the earlier part of the research, novice teachers might face numerous difficulties associated with their first year of teaching. Considering this, teachers were asked the following question: "What were remarkable struggles that you have experienced related to teaching in those years? Can you give me some details?". When the responses of the participants are analyzed, several themes such as classroom management, teaching and evaluation emerged. These subcategories were also observed by some other researchers (e.g. Veenman, 1984) in different studies conducted on novice teachers. To give some quotations would be useful at this point to see novice teachers' viewpoints regarding with their struggles on teaching. Several quotes of novice teachers' responses based on the main themes are the following:

Classroom management:

...Classroom management. I recognized that no one listened to me. It took time to feel myself confident and to maintain classroom management. On the other hand, I also felt that my subject knowledge was not enough. I had problems in transferring my knowledge to students (how to teach)...(Biology T, 4 years TE, M).

I have not experienced so many problems, but I have had and still have some problems related to classroom management...(English T, 2 years TE, F).

There was a topic in the lesson that I had never heard about. It was hard for me to teach it...Students may wish very different things. It is not easy to meet their wish. I did not have effective strategies to deal with their undesirable behaviours, but I am slowly learning these...(Maths T, 3 years TE, F).

Classroom management is an issue that novices might face in their teaching. This is emphasized by several researchers in earlier studies (e.g. Veenman, 1984, Talbert 1994, Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). The participants also stated this issue in this present study. Another important issue indicated by novice teachers was about how to teach. Some examples reflecting novice teachers' viewpoints are given below:

Teaching:

Knowing how to teach. To exemplify, I am working at a high school currently... My students have difficulties to understand mathematics. It was hard for me to teach mathematics to them. Some of them did not know the most basic math processes. So, I tried hard. I also had problems in following the curriculum. Because if I deliver fast, they could not understand...I also experienced difficulty in classroom management... (Maths T, First year, F).

After undergraduate education, I thought that I could do everything and I would be a good teacher. When I began my career, I tried to make the subjects more concrete, but I do not think I always access the students. Sometimes I could not deliver the courses regarding students' age. I do not know how to provide knowledge to students! (Maths T, 2 years TE, F).

During the first two years, I was inexperienced. I knew the topics but I do not know how to teach them. In fact, teaching is like a continuing learning process. Someone told me that you would deliver the course well but the exam papers of your students would not reflect it. I did not believe this, but later I realized that it was true. I think students do not repeat what they learnt in class, so their learning is not long-lasting. The level of students is not the same. Some of them are very well, the others are not. Additionally, it takes time to motivate students... (Science T, 3 years TE, F).

Children are like blank sheets. I become happy after teaching them something. However, it is hard for me to teach them in accordance with their levels. In my first year in teaching it was much harder for me, now I am more comfortable. Now I can more easily understand their world. It is true not only in terms of cognitive aspects but also of affective aspects...(Primary T, 3 years TE, F).

As can be seen from novice teachers' views, they have some problems regarding with how to teach. In another research conducted by Battal, Yurdakul and Sahan (1998), 178 primary teachers' perceptions on teaching profession and their problems they experienced are examined. The most common problems reported by teachers were physical conditions and incompetency regarding their profession. Novice teachers in this present study also reported that they have some problems about evaluation. To give an example:

Evaluation:

... I have some problems in evaluation. Although I have learnt student evaluation theoretically, I do not know how to use this knowledge (Mathematics T-2, 2 years TE, F).

Other:

Students' bias...I think it is much more difficult to eliminate these than teaching ... (Maths T, 2 years TE, F).

The responses of the participants indicate that novice teachers start teaching with hopes, but they encounter some difficulties. Carre (1993) states that many problems experienced by new teachers is a result of their deficiency in terms of the application of knowledge and skills which can also be considered as an important issue in this field. Particularly, novice teachers in this study claim that they experienced some challenges about classroom management and how to teach students. Similar results can also be seen in related research. Classroom management is an area that new teachers may experience problems with in the classroom, which also interferes with timing and planning, and may lead to other problems (Ryan, 1970, p.177).

The findings also show that the participant teachers have not enough confidence in their subject knowledge and their ability of transferring this knowledge to their students. This suggests that teachers' efficacy should be considered here. Related research indicates that a teacher's efficacy is related to how teachers' decisions are made, how goals are shaped, how planning and organization are implemented, and how teachers react in the classroom and relate to students (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001; cited in Corbell, Reiman and Nietfeld, 2008).

3.3. Motivating Factors for Teaching

The third research question was: "Is there any situation that has positive impact on you in those years? What are they? The responses of participants indicated that student achievement particularly is an important factor which influences novice teachers positively. Several quotes of novice teachers' responses are the following:

When I see student achievement I become very motivated. Or if someone gives positive feedback regarding my teaching, I become motivated (Mathematics T/2, 2 years TE, F).

It was nice to see that students understand my instruction. ... (Maths T, First year, F).

Desire to teach...Positive student feedbacks...Positive relationship with students... (English T, 2 years TE, F).

Viewpoints of parents and students. Changes in students. (Math T, 2 years TE, F).

Students,...,their views. The thought that I could teach and making effects on students... (Maths T, 2 years TE, F).

I have learnt to be patient and calm. I have also learnt understanding my students and their thoughts... (Maths T, 2 years TE, F).

Several participants also indicated colleague influence. To exemplify:

My colleagues...they are very young and it is as if we learn together...Not all colleagues helped me although they had more experience in teaching...Now I am trying to help new colleagues since I can estimate their difficulties...School administrators also motivated me...(Primary T, 3 years TE, F)

This suggests that socialization, including interaction with colleagues, plays an important role in the effectiveness of teachers (Joiner and Edwards, 2008). In general, the novice teachers' opinions on this question indicate that initial years have some positive effects on them in a variety of ways. In general, it is inferred from teachers' utterances that students' success motivates teachers. Moreover, it can be said that positive feedback of families regarding students' development has constructive effect on teachers.

The responses given for the fourth research question was also evaluated under this theme. The fourth research question was: "What are the main factors which increase or decrease your motivation for teaching in your initial years? When the responses of the participants were reviewed, different points were observed they reported. Since the points mentioned are too diverse, they could not be gathered under a theme. Some of those points are given below:

The fact that my parents are teachers motivated me. In addition, being with students and giving courses are very nice... On the other hand, my colleagues negatively influenced my motivation. They seemed to be unhappy. (Maths T, First year, F).

Student learning motivated me. It is very nice to teach somebody something. However, crowded classes negatively affect my motivation... (Biology T, 4years TE, M).

Theoretically I know everything but I had some deficiencies in practice such as classroom management...My knowledge of subject matter was also not enough... (Biology T, 4 years TE, M).

I had problems in motivating the students (Mathematics T/2, 2 years TE, F).

It makes me happy if any student achieves a great success and progress (Primary T, 2 years TE, F).

Doing PhD increases my motivation. It helps me in doing something uncommon in my teaching...However, exam results of my students affects negatively my motivation. Crowded classes also negatively affect my motivation (Science T, 3 years TE, F).

Academic achievement of the students in my classes was very low...Later it improved and made me happy... (Maths T, First year, F).

All the quotations taken from novice teachers' views show that novice teachers feel themselves happy when they think that they are able to teach. This also motivates them positively. On the other hand, there are some factors such as crowded classrooms and deficiencies of students about the subjects force them and decrease their motivation. It can also be said that every teacher have their own stories. The factors that may increase or decrease their motivation depend.

3.4. Effect of Teacher Training Program

The fifth research question was: "What do you think about the effect of the teacher training program you have graduated on our initial years of teaching? Do you think this training process was effective enough to help you acquire the required knowledge and skills that you need when you start teaching?" Teachers remarked quiet interesting and also crucial points for this question. Several quotes of novice teachers' responses are the following:

Very little, for instance, I had serious problems in geometry. It was totally new. We were given theoretical knowledge and my knowledge about curriculum was less. Although I know the topic it took time to know how to teach it (Maths T, First year, F).

I think it is useful only for subject knowledge but not for pedagogical aspects. At university we were given mostly theoretical knowledge but not practice...We learnt some teaching strategies in theory but not in practice. So it is hard to use them in practice... (Maths T/2, 2 years TE, F).

Not very useful... School practicum was very useful. My learning from those practices is long-lasting. In undergraduate education, exams were intensive. Teaching cannot be understood before doing it. (Primary T, 3 years TE, F).

The gap between practice and theory. Knowledge I acquired at the university has not been very helpful for me in practice. However, some of my undergraduate courses are very useful for my teaching, but not all of them. The course of classroom management and current classroom management are very irrelevant ... (Maths T, 2 years TE, F).

The courses of classroom management, guidance, development and learning are useful... (Science T, 3 years TE, F).

Practice was very useful. I use what I have learnt there... It was mostly about student assessment... (Maths T, First year, F).

The responses of the participants of this study indicated that they mostly used what they learned whereas some of them stated that they have some problems in applying their knowledge in practice. In a similar research, Çakmak (2010) investigated the views of novice mathematics teachers about their teaching in their initial years and the study revealed that novice teachers had few problems regarding classroom management and motivating students. In addition, they had trouble in using materials and active learning methods. One of the essential aims of teacher education is to enable student teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of subject matter, children, teaching strategies, and the school curriculum, and to help them draw upon this knowledge in the shaping of their classroom practice (Calderhead and Robson, 1991). However, all those responses indicate that novice teachers have some difficulties. When necessary knowledge and skills such as curriculum and pedagogy are not given effectively, novice teachers might face some difficulties in teaching during their first years. In a sense, teacher education has a crucial role.

Findings imply that self assessment of novice teachers seem to be questionable since they suggest that the undergraduate courses make only contributions to the skills they feel that they are good at vice versa.

3.5. The Contribution of Post-Graduate Education on Their Profession

The last research question was: "Do you think post graduate education you are attending will provide contributions to your profession? If so, what kinds of contributions you expect?" The response level of this question was lower than the other questions. The reason for this might be they have not completed their post-graduate education yet. Several quotes of novice teachers' responses are the following:

Well, it expanded my view. I think it helps me in improving myself... It is helpful for my students and program. It also showed me that different people may have different points of view. I think it is one of the most significant contributions... (Maths T/2, 2 years TE, F).

Since I am doing my MA study in a different field, I do not expect much contribution (Primary T, 3 years TE, F)

It will contribute to my career (Science T, 3 years TE, F).

It improves my awareness about assessment and measurement... (Maths T, first year, F).

4. DISCUSSION and RESULTS

Teachers have problems when they face the real teaching atmosphere (Flores and Day, 2005). Teachers continue to learn more in their profession and they gain any useful insights in this process (Flores, 2005). This suggests that as time goes by, teachers gain a firmer understanding of the students' needs, which provides them with enhanced awareness of how best to implement their teaching strategies in a way that makes for effective learning. The participants' responses indicate that they have different perspectives about the initial years of teaching. Understanding good and hard sides of teaching, students' needs more, learning how to teach better, and improving themselves in the profession are some points regarded as the acquired knowledge of the first year of experience by novice teachers in this study. In light of the findings of this study, assistance to new teachers in their initial years of teaching on teaching methods, using instructional tools, delivery of lessons in accordance with the skills of the students, and time management (Cooke and Pang, 1991) can be emphasized. Finally, every teacher has their own stories in their first years. Those teachers learn from their experiences and explore ways to be more effective as teachers. They spend their initial years with teaching in addition to seeking new ways to be more successful with their students.

Novice teachers are very enthusiastic about their profession in initial years and try to develop their students' knowledge and skills. Given that teachers may come across distinct problems in each educational system, each dimension of problems encountered should be analyzed in detail. New research with larger sample can be conducted to get a larger picture to see the novices' problems in general.

Novice teachers should cooperate with experienced teachers because they will be able to learn from competent or experienced teachers. Gilbert (2005) stated that cooperation with experienced teachers will be useful for novice teachers because they have problems in applying pedagogical teaching strategies in particular. Shkedi (1996) also argues that beginning teachers can learn many things from experienced teachers and that such interaction provides them with professional knowledge.

Teacher training programs should consider the findings of this study. Preservice training institutions are expected to equip prospective teachers with the teaching strategies, the methods, the knowledge, and the skills they need to become effective and productive teachers in their classrooms (Wanzarae, 2007, p.349).

Evidence from this study suggests that more attention needs to be given to the initial years of teaching in order to provide novice teachers with meaningful opportunities for their professional learning and development.

Awareness of the problems that novice teachers experience will allow us to think more deeply about adopting approaches that will help make their transition from novices to experts more smoothly and less problematically. All these reasons require more research in this field. As Yıldırım (2013) stated that the research is mostly focused on the students and instructors at the faculties rather than teachers in schools.

As a last point, it can be said that the less the novice teachers face problems in their initial years the more their self confidence and their success will be enhance in their careers. From this point, it can also be questioned whether novice teachers learn how to put theory into practice during their preservice education or during their professional practice. As teacher educators, researchers, educators, need to think this more and conduct more research on this issue.

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Uzun Özet

Bu araştırma mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin mesleğin ilk yıllarına ve öğretmenlik mesleğine ilişkin bakış açılarını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Mesleğe yeni başladıklarında öğretmenler öğretimin kapsamlı ve çok boyutlu yönleri ile karşı karşıya kalmaktadırlar (Murshidi, Konting, Elias & Fooi, 2006; Wanzarae, 2007, p.349). İlk yıllar öğretmenlerin mesleki kariyerleri açısından son derece önem taşımaktadır (Loughran, Brown and Doecke, 2001). Bu yıllar aynı zamanda yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin öğretmeyi öğrenme becerileri kazanmalarında da önemlidir (Ryan, 1970; Kyriacou, 1993). Diğer taraftan ilk yıllar yeni öğretmenlerin sayısız ve çeşitli problemlerle karşılaştıkları yıllardır (Veenman, 1984; Akyeampong & Lewin, 2002; Belay, Ghebreab, Ghebremichael, Ghebreselassie, Holmes & White, 2007; Gustafson, Guilbert and MacDonald, 2002; Huntly, 2008; Sanford, 1988; cited in Loughran et al., 2001). Bununla birlikte her öğretmenin sorunları diğerinden farklılık gösterebilir. İlgili alanyazında (Reiman and Parramore (1994; cited in Corbell, Reiman and Nietfeld, 2008; Talbert, 1994) yeni öğretmenlerin değişik sorunlarına işaret edilmiştir. Örneğin, Olsan and Osborne (1991, cited in Kyriacou 1993, p.82) dört sınıf öğretmeni ile yaptıkları çalışmada öğretmenlerin en çok adaptasyon, sorumluluk alma, ihtiyaçları karşılama konusunda kaygılı olma, sınıf yönetimi konusunda endişe, diğer öğretmenlerle etkileşim gibi konu başlıklarındaki sorunları tespit etmişlerdir. Genel olarak bu konuda yapılan diğer araştırmalar da zaman yönetimi, öğrenci değerlendirmesi, diğer öğretmenlerle olumsuz ilişkiler, çeşitli görevler için zamanı etkin kullanamama, gibi benzer sorunlara işaret etmektedir. Bu çalışmada, araştırmanın temel amacı çerçevesinde mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin öğretmenlik mesleğine bakış açıları ve öğretim deneyimlerinden kazandıklarını belirlemek için betimsel yonteme dayalı bir çalışma yürütülmüştür. Araştırmaya yüksek lisans programına devam eden ve çeşitli konu alanlarında görev yapan iki erkek, on üç bayan öğretmen olmak üzere on beş öğretmen katılmıştır. Çalışmada veri toplama sürecinde görüşme tekniğinden yararlanılmıştır. Araştırmacı tarafından gerçekleştirilen görüşme sürecinde gönüllük esas alınmıştır. Araştırma konusuna yönelik bilgilendirilen katılımcılarla birebir araştırmacı yarı-yapılandırılmış formatta hazırlanan görüşme sürecini yürütmüştür. Görüşmede öğretmenlere yöneltilen sorular şunlardır: 1. Öğretmenlik mesleğini nasıl tanımlarsınız? Meslekte ilk yıllarınızı hangi sıfatlarla tarif edersiniz? 2.

Mesleğinizin ilk yıllarında öğretimle ilgili olarak yaşadığınız başlıca sorunlar nelerdir? Bununla ilgili detay verebilir misiniz? 3. Mesleğin ilk yıllarında sizi olumlu etkileyen unsurlar oldu mu? Oldu ise nelerdir? 4. Mesleğin ilk yıllarında motivasyonunuzu artıran ya da azaltan faktörler neler olmuştur? 5. Mesleğinizin ilk yıllarında mezun olduğunuz öğretmen eğitimi programının etkilerine ilişkin düşünceleriniz nelerdir? 6. Devam etmekte olduğunuz lisansüstü programın mesleğinize katkıları olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Varsa nelerdir? Görüşme sürecinde katılımcılardan izin alınarak elde edilen veriler, önce yazılı doküman haline getirilmiş, daha sonra üzerinde içerik analizi yapılmıştır. İçerik analizi soru bazında gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bazı sorularda içerik analizi ile belli temalar elde edilmiş, tema elde edilemeyen sorularda ise öne çıkan durumlar öğretmen görüşlerini yansıtan alıntılar aracılığı ile bulgular bölümünde sunulmuştur. İçerik analiz süreci araştırmacının dışında iki farklı araştırmacının da katılımı ile gerçekleştirilmiş, temalarda tutarlık sağlanmıştır.

Araştırmada bulgular; katılımcıların öğretmenlik mesleğine ilişkin düşünceleri, öğretimde karşılaştıkları güçlükler, öğretime motive eden faktörler, öğretmen eğitimi etkisi ve lisansüstü eğitimin katkısı, olmak üzere çeşitli alt başlıklar altında toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçları öğretmen eğitimcileri, araştırmacılar, öğretmenler ve geleceğin öğretmeni olacak öğretmen adayları için oldukça ilgi çekici sonuçlar sağlamıştır. Araştırmada ilgi çekici bazı sonuçlar şu şekilde özetlenebilir. Katılımcıların yarısından fazlası öğretmenlik mesleğini daha çok zor, zorlayıcı, sıkı çalışma gerektiren, yorucu, gibi sıfatlarla tanımlamışlar, çok azı ise yaptığı mesleği eğlenceli, öğretici gibi olumlu bakış açılarına yansıtan sıfatlar kullanarak tanımlamıştır. Bu sonuç, yeni öğretmenlerin ilgili alan yazında olduğu gibi mesleğin ilk yıllarında zorlandıklarını, bununda bakış açılarına yansıdığını göstermektedir. Araştırmada çıkan bir diğer sonuç, mesleğinin ilk yıllarındaki öğretmenlerin en çok güçlük çektiği konuların sınıf yönetimi, öğretme ya da bilgilerini öğrencilere aktarma ve değerlendirme boyutlarında olduğunu göstermiştir. Araştırmada da söz edildiği gibi, ilgili alanyazında da sonuçları destekler nitelikte çalışmalar bulunmaktadır. Özellikle katılımcı öğretmenler nasıl öğretecekleri konusunda yaşadıkları zorluklara değinmişlerdir. Öğretmenler konuları bildiklerini, ancak öğrenci seviyesine göre anlatmanın kolay olmadığına işaret etmişlerdir. Yine bazı öğretmenler çok ve değişik değerlendirme tekniklerini bildiklerini, ancak bunları uygulamada güçlük çektiklerinin altını çizmişlerdir. Bir diğer ilgi çekici bulgu ise, kendilerini ilk yıllarında olumlu etkileyen faktörler olarak daha çok öğrenci başarısı üzerinde durmaları olmuştur. Motivasyonlarını olumsuz etkileyen unsurlar arasında ise sınıf mevcutlarının kalabalık olması, öğrencilerin akademik başarılarının düşük olması gibi değişik unsurlar belirtilmiştir. Araştırmanın bir diğer sonucuna göre, öğretmenler mezun oldukları öğretmen eğitiminde kazandıkları bilgi ve beceriden özellikle konu alanı açısından yararlandıklarını, ancak programı uygulama konusunda sıkıntı çektiklerini vurgulamışlardır. Ayrıca öğretmenlik uygulamasının daha çok gerekli olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Son olarak öğretmenler devam ettikleri yüksek lisans programının mesleğe katkısı konusunda diğer sorulara göre daha az görüş belirtmişlerdir, bu noktada lisansüstü eğitim programına hala devam etmelerinin, henüz tamamlamamış olmalarının bunda etkisi olduğu sonucuna varılabilir. Araştırmanın sonuçları öğretmen eğitimcileri, araştırmacılar, öğretmenler ve geleceğin öğretmeni olacak öğretmen adayları için oldukça ilgi çekici sonuçlar sağlamıştır. Yeni öğretmenlerin sorunlarının bilinmesi özellikle öğretmen eğitimi programları ve yeni tasarlanacak hizmet içi eğitim programları için de son derece önem taşıyacaktır. Bu çalışma sınırlı sayıda öğretmenle yapılmıştır, yapılacak yeni araştırmalarda daha büyük örneklemeler düşünülebilir.

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