

RESTRUCTURING OF TEACHER TRAINING SYSTEM IN TURKEY

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1. Introduction

Scientific and technological developments affect the human lives in all aspects. Education of quality is required for individuals to adopt themselves to these changing conditions. When we consider the education of quality, teachers - indispensable part of the system - cannot be overlooked. Teachers have been at the core of the education process with their changing functions from the past to today.

Regarded as a professional occupation, teaching requires a special training. Teaching training system provided in three dimensions - field knowledge, professional knowledge for teachers, general culture - requires a well-planned and programmed educational process.

Countries follow different models according to their own education systems for the training of teachers. In this article, the training system for teachers in Turkey is taken into consideration with its features in general. Within this framework, historical background is mentioned firstly and particularly the changes after 1998 are underlined.

2. Historical Background

Training of teachers in the Turkish education system goes back to 1848. “Darülmualimin-i Rüşdi”, the first organization to train teachers was established on March 16, 1848 in İstanbul. The term of this school aiming to train teachers for “Rüşdiye”s in the level of secondary schools was three years. In 1868, “Darülmualimin-i Sıbyan” school aiming to train teachers for elementary schools called “Sıbyan Mektebi” of one year was established.

A school called “Darülmualimat” was established in 1870 in order to train teachers for elementary and secondary schools for girls. These schools were also established in different parts of the Anatolia later on. Apart from these organizations that train teachers, graduates of other educational organizations started working as teachers as well. This is due to the lack of enough number of teachers and particularly soldiers were employed (Akyüz, 1989).

After the Ottoman Empire, Republic of Turkey was founded on October 29, 1923, and a new era started for the training of teachers as seen in all other fields. In 1924-1925 educational term, the name of “Darülmualimin” schools was changed as “Muallim Mektebi”, and they were called as “Öğretmen Okulu” (Teacher Training Schools) after

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1935. Schools with the name of “Köy Enstitüleri” (Village Institutes) were established with a law of 1940 in order to train teachers for villages, and these schools were joined with the other elementary schools in 1954. These schools with the level of high schools were changed as two-year higher education schools with a law, National Education Fundamental Law of 1973 No: 1739, and they were named as Institutions of Education (Akyüz, 1989). These schools were transferred to universities in 1982 with the name of Higher Schools of Education (Duman, 1998: 39).

Between 1923 and 1926, secondary schools for girls and boys in İstanbul and “Musiki Muallim Mektebi” (Music Teacher School) and “Beden Eğitimi Öğretmen Okulu” (Physical Education Teacher School) in Ankara were established as an important practice in the Republic era for the training of teachers for general secondary education, but these schools were not efficient (Duman, 1991).

Establishment of two-year higher education school for teachers in Konya in the 1926-1927 educational term is another significant development regarding the issue. As for vocational education of teachers “Kız Meslek Öğretim Okulu” (Vocational Education of Teachers for Girls) in 1934-1935 educational term, “Erkek Meslek Öğretim Okulu” (Vocational Education of Teachers for Boys) in 1937-1938 educational term, and “Ticaret Öğretmen Okulu” (Trade Schools of Teachers) in 1950 were established. At first the term of these schools were three years following high school, one year added to the term after a period, and their names were changed. All these schools were transferred to the universities in 1982 (Duman, 1998: 40).

Almost all teacher training schools before 1982 were boarding schools and they were established under the management of Ministry of National Education. After 1982, they were transferred to the universities. Higher Schools of Education of two years were changed to be four years in 1989-1990 educational year. Their names were changed as “Faculty of Education” in 1992 (Duman, 1998: 40).

As for 2002-2003 educational term, there are 60 Faculties of Education, 13 Faculties of Technical Education, 2 Faculties of Vocational Education, 1 Faculty of Industrial Arts Education, 1 Faculty of Trade and Tourism Education, and 1 Faculty of Vocational Informal Education under the management of universities (YÖK, 2002). Faculties of Education train teachers for different branches in pre-school, elementary and secondary education, and other faculties train teachers for different branches of vocational and technical secondary education schools.

Teacher training system of Turkey has gone through a rapid development regarding the training of teachers since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, and the latest and the most comprehensive change took place in 1998. Here are the general features of the new teacher training system of Turkey, which was put into practice in the 1998-1999 educational term.

3. Restructuring

With the cooperation of Higher Education Council (YÖK) and Ministry of National Education (MEB), the function of Faculties of Education to train teachers was restructured, and the application began in the 1998-1999 educational term. Therefore, the new arrangement is presented in Figure-1 in the Appendix-1. Departments and programs of teachers to work in the Pre-School Education, Elementary Schools and Secondary Schools are presented in Figure-1. The features of the system can be explained according to the level of education as follows:

3. 1. Pre-School Education

The aim of the Pre-School Education is to meet the teacher demand in the Pre-School Education organizations. In this program, there are classes such as “Child Development and Child Psychology”, “Music and Art Education”, “Health and Nutrition”, “Games and Drama in the Pre-School Education” (YÖK, 1998b: 12)

3. 2. Elementary Schools

In the department of elementary education (in the eight-years compulsory fundamental education) teachers are trained with the following general programme that includes the basic principles:

The students attend to the teacher programme (elementary school 1st – 5th classes) can select one of the branches from Music, Art, Physical Education and Sport, and Computer fields as a secondary fields.

Students in the Elementary School Branch Teacher programme (elementary school second phase 6th – 8th classes) may have an opportunity to select at least one of the secondary field in different branch. For instance, students in the Turkish Teacher Training Program may be given Social Sciences field or students in the Science Teacher Training Program may be given Mathematics field as a secondary field.

Field courses in the elementary school branch teacher training programs (6th – 8th classes) might be given by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the universities where available

3. 3. Secondary Schools Field Teacher

Here are the basic principles to be observed in the training of field teachers for the secondary schools:

Except from the field teachers for the secondary schools in Foreign Languages, Fine Arts, Physical Education and Sport, Computer and Education Technologies, the field teachers may have at least master of science degree level.

The master of science programs without thesis might be carried out by Social Science Institutes in two ways (YÖK, 1998c):

3,5 + 1,5 years option: The concerned faculty and the faculty of education can establish master of science programs without thesis within the framework of a joint program. In the undergraduate phase of these programs, students take the courses from the field faculty in the first seven sub-terms. Those succeeding in these courses can take the courses and practices from the faculty of education within the framework of “Professional Knowledge for Teacher”.

4 + 1,5 years option: Those undergraduate students from the programs to be determined by the Higher Education Council are selected for the quota given by Institutions via Faculties of Education, and receive the classes within the framework of “Professional Knowledge for Teacher” for three sub-terms.

On the other hand, faculties of education can apply 3,5 + 1,5 or 4 + 1,5 together or separately.

3. 4. National Committee for Training Teachers

National Committee for Training Teachers was founded in 1997 in order to provide the communication and coordination among all the relevant organizations concerning with the training and employment of teachers (Cordan, 1997: 74). Here are the main functions of the Committee (YÖK, 1998a: 26 - 27).

Increasing the quality of education by providing the communication among the faculties of education.

Performing quality evaluation and developing criteria for this purpose.

Improving the quality of pre-service teacher training

Concentrating on practices in the training of teachers.

Working with cooperation with the Ministry of National Education regarding the employment of teachers.

Providing the development of the personnel with various national and foreign scholarships.

7. Recommendations on the subjects related to the training of teachers may be given to the Higher Education Council.

3. 5. Cooperation Between the Faculty and Practice School

Another significant point in the restructuring of the faculties of education is concentrating on practices. Therefore, practical teaching experience can be gained in a real environment, in other words in schools (YÖK, 1998a: 29 - 31). The interaction between the faculties of education and the practice schools is presented in Figure - 2:

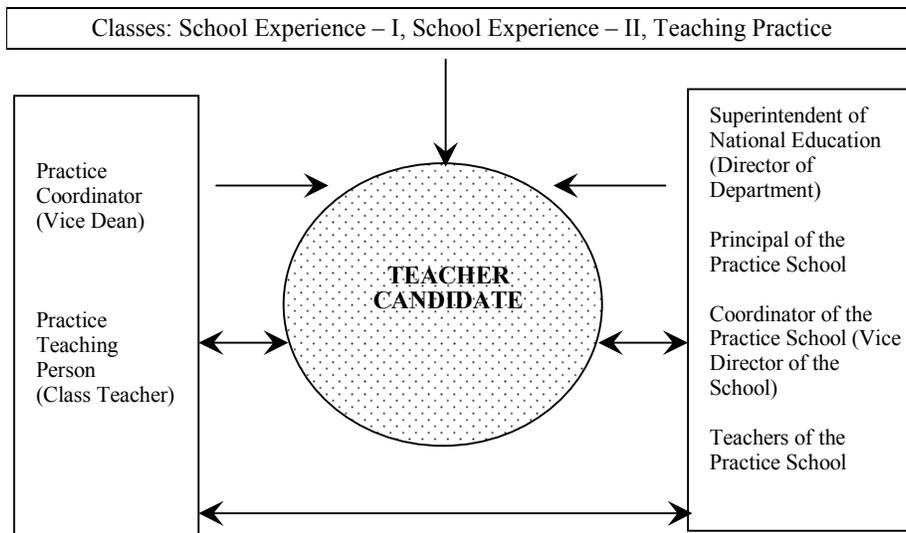


Figure-2: The Interaction Between the Faculty of Education and the Practice Schools

For the practice classes and school experience classes within the framework of the interaction between faculty of education and practice school, Directorate of National Education practice coordinator, director of the school and the practice coordinator in the school is paid for four hours weekly equivalent of four hour classes. Teachers of the practice school are responsible for carrying out the practice studies of the student 6-15 hours weekly and are paid with the amount equivalent of six hours classes weekly from the university budget in the circumstances of the laws issued (YÖK, 1999: 1-2).

3. 5. Standards and Accreditations

One of the significant steps after the start of the restructuring process is endeavors to establish an accreditation system in teacher education. These endeavors are undertaken within the framework of the Council of Higher Education of the Republic of Turkey (YÖK) / World Bank Pre-Service Teacher Education Project (YÖK, 2003a).

Accreditation ensures the quality of programs and services to the public in a systematic manner in many sectors. Thus, the Turkish model of accreditation aims a quality assurance system based on expert judgment. Input, process and output standards are defined in this model. These groups of standards include fields of standards for education, staff, students, cooperation, physical infrastructure, administration and quality assurance (YÖK, 2003b). Within the framework of the cooperation of YÖK and the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey (MEB), studies were carried out in the Faculties of Education of the Middle East Technical University (METU), Anadolu University, Çukurova University, Gazi University, Dokuz Eylül University and Black Sea Technical University (MEB, 2002). These studies are highly significant for improving common standards for teacher training and for providing qualitative progress depending on improving such standards for teacher training. Therefore, rational use of national resources will be possible, and better planning can be made.

RESULTS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Turkey has an experience of more than 150 years in the training of teachers. Founded on October 29, 1923, the Republic of Turkey inherited very limited amount of organizations for the training of teachers from the Ottoman Empire, but succeeded a lot in the last 79 years. Democratic and secular Republic of Turkey began studies for a modern system for the training of teachers with the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the modern Turkey, as in all the other fields, and followed different models in certain periods.

It has known that teacher training system was conducted under the management of the Ministry of National Education since 1923, but it was transferred to universities in 1982. Allover Turkey carrying out the training of teachers had a four-year undergraduate program in 1990. The latest arrangement regarding the training of teachers is the changes that were put into practice in 1998; we may call them as "restructuring". With these changes, the functions of the faculties of education were redefined, and more stress was put on the classes and practices within the framework of "professional knowledge for teachers". The main function of the faculties of education was defined to train teachers for the eight-year obligatory elementary school education in the system; teacher candidates for the secondary school education field teacher have to participate into the master of science programs without thesis composed of courses and practices of

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“professional knowledge for teachers” of 36-credit within the framework of the models 3,5 + 1,5 years or 4 + 1,5 years. The practice studies were more stressed in the system, and importance was attached the cooperation between the faculty of education and practice school.

There were significant problems in the teacher training system from 1982 to 1998, the period when the teacher education training was transferred to YÖK. These problems can be summarized as lack of experience for universities in teacher education, lack of an adequate amount of teachers and infrastructure, lack of establishment of sufficient communication and coordination with MEB, and abandonment of teacher training philosophy in education given.

However, although there have been some progress in the system with the restructuring process after 1998, certain negative developments have appeared in the agenda. These can be summarized as follows.

One of the most constructive elements of the restructuring process is that it provides coordination with the MEB. Thanks to the coordination with the MEB, certain arrangements have been made in line with the requirements of the employment system. Short-term and long-term studies have been performed in order to meet the teacher need emerged by the eight-year compulsory primary education. Teacher training with certificate programs, which can be regarded as a short-term effort, has been useful for meeting the teacher needs. Moreover, coordination has been provided for the education of pre-school education teachers and English teachers. However, it should be kept in mind that these implementations bring about certain problems regarding the quality and respectability of the teaching as an occupation. Indeed, such applications are the result of lack of a sound employment policy and of planning in this area.

On the other hand, changes in the teacher training programs after 1998 have positive and negative aspects. Considering the subject in a system as a whole, regarding teacher training as the main function of the faculties of education, and defining national standards for teacher education and accreditation studies can be taken into consideration as positive developments. Moreover, increasing credit hours of professional knowledge for teacher courses in a way to emphasize practice and providing more cooperation with the secondary schools can be regarded as positive improvements as well. Being applied in this direction, “Teaching Application Directive” is an affirmative step. However, due to different characteristics of regions where faculties of education are located, different results have been obtained. For instance, large number of teacher candidates going to secondary schools can result in difficulties in the implementation.

According to some reconstruction results students acquired experiences. But, the practices and cooperations between the faculty and secondary schools are not sufficient (Harmandar and others, 2000).

It can also be concluded that there are some negative aspects in this newly introduced “professional knowledge for teacher education” programme. For instance, the course “sociology of education” which was compulsory in the previous programme, became selective. As known, education has a significant function for socializing the individual. This course deals with the relations between the education and the society with all aspects, and it has been a compulsory course for years. Moreover, the courses “teaching methods” and “measurement and evaluation in education” were merged and named as “planning and evaluation in education” Professional knowledge of these subjects have a crucial importance on qualifications of teachers. The mergery of these

subjects may weaken the teaching of the contents of teaching methods and measurement and evaluation in education in an efficient and effective manner.

The main problem lying here is the fact that such implementations are carried out without consulting related persons or institutions in a sufficient way.

Implementations of 3, 5 years + 1,5 year, and 4 years + 1,5 year, which have been introduced in secondary education field teaching can be considered to be a positive step for education of teachers of more quality and with more qualifications. As stated by Semerci and Çerçi (2002) the graduates students (carrying out without the thesis programme) have positive opinions on the without thesis courses.

However, as stated by Doğan (1999: 15-16), additional education term of 1,5 year cause certain problems as it extends the term of education, and leads to late motivation for teaching. For instance, term of education can extend to 6,5 years in universities where preparation courses are given. Therefore, this implementation has to be reevaluated, and its outcomes have to be reviewed.

There have been considerable increases in selecting teaching as an occupation particularly in recent years because the MEB provides scholarships for those selecting teaching programs in their first five choices in Student Selection Examination (ÖSS), which has been implemented once a year by Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM). For instance, 11.122 students out of 40.142 students (28 %) placed in higher education institutions for teacher education in 1998 selected this program among their first five choices. As for 1999, 15,997 students out of 38.456 students (41,60 %) placed in higher education institutions for teacher education selected this program, 21,992 students out of 13, 572 (61,71 %) in 2000, and 12,295 out of 21,309 (57,70 %) in 2001 (Özyar, 2001). It is clear that there has been an increase in selecting teacher education programs among the first five choices in recent years.

The second main reason for the increase in applying to the departments of education faculties is the introducing of adding some extra points, to those of Anadolu High School for Teachers graduates. The new ÖSS examination system and the economic conditions of the country play a significant role choosing teaching as a profession. However, as it enhances the quality of students, it can be said that it will improve the quality of teachers.

The quest for system change that is frequently observed in the developing countries was observed in Turkey as well, and sometimes this situation have led to certain problems. The things to be done can be summarized as follows in order to overcome these problems and to perform the “restructuring” process in a sound way:

Arrangements and changes in the system should be taken into consideration and observed within the concept of “curriculum development”.

Studies of the National Committee for Training Teachers should be carried out without any delay, and all precautions should be taken in order to pave the way for the studies to be carried out in accordance with the foundational purpose of the committee.

Closer cooperation should be provided among the Ministry of National Education, YÖK and faculties of education for taking the problems of the system into consideration and solving them.

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YÖK and MEB have to cooperate in inauguration of faculties of education and new teaching programs, and define the quota for the current programs for sure.

Evaluations should be performed constantly for the cooperation between the Faculty of Education and practice school, and certain precautions should be taken for the solution of the problems particularly in the universities in different part of the country (payments, control, overcrowded practice students etc.).

Studies have to be carried out for the quality of courses included in the education of professional knowledge for teachers, these points have to be taken into consideration in open-ended evaluation meetings, and required changes have to be made.

Turkey, within the integration process with the European Union (EU), has to define its national standards particularly by taking the EU norms into consideration in the system of training of teachers, and accreditation studies for faculties of education have to be carried out without any delay and interruption.

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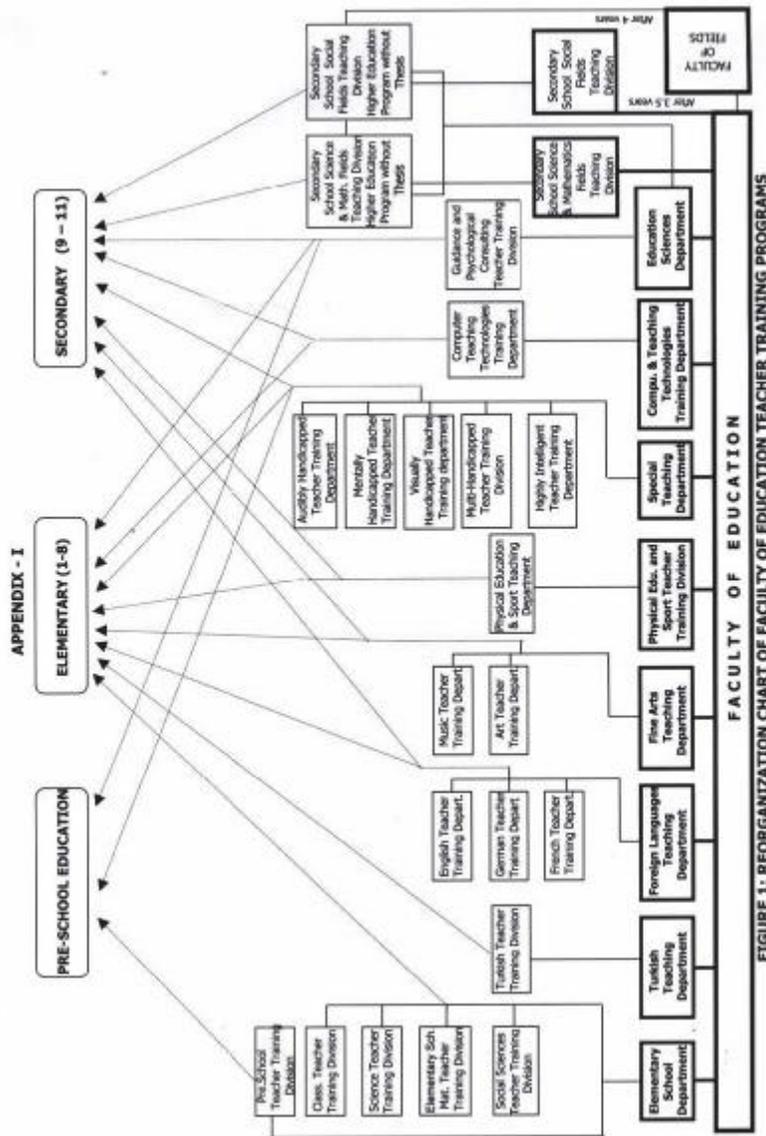


FIGURE 1: REORGANIZATION CHART OF FACULTY OF EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS