

## **Evaluating Class Teachers' Opinions About Training Class Teachers As A First Level (1st, 2nd 3rd Grades) and As A Second Level (4th, 5th Grades) Teachers Differently**

### **Introduction**

The history of teaching profession is as old as the history of human being. Teaching profession does not involve only teaching, it also requires a teacher to go along with his personality traits, knowledge, social relationships and his life philosophy (Celep, 2004:iii).

We call "class teacher" who teaches in the first level of elementary school. Class teachers have great influence on students' academic achievement, personality and attitudes against the classes and school. So it is possible to say that the people who interact with students during the period of nursery and elementary school, especially class teachers have great rolls in shaping students' personality and their futures (Senemoğlu 2008:3).

Starting from the beginning of the last century, there have been many efforts to improve teacher education. First Teacher Schools, Village Institutes, Education Institutes, Schools of High Teachers and Technical High Teachers Schools were some of the important teachers institutions. All these models helped teachers to be trained with general culture, the knowledge of subject, and teaching skills and strategies.

Teacher training colleges for primary schools trained teachers until 1974. The length of education in these colleges was five years after primary schools in 1924 and six years in 1932 and seven years in 1970. They were closed down in 1974. After 1974, two-year institutes of education were established to train high school graduates as primary school teachers. These institutes were affiliated to universities under the name of "High Institute of Education" in 1982. They kept training teachers until 1990 by giving two-year undergraduate education. But, in 1990 all teacher training programs nationwide were increased to four years with a new decision of YOK. This decision is important in the history of teacher education in Turkey since teachers start their teaching profession with bachelor's degree in primary education. Later, these institutes were turned into departments of primary school teacher education within the faculties of Education in 1992. In the restructuring process of Faculties of Education in 1997- 1998 this department appeared as a sub-division of Elementary Teacher Training Department. A significant progress was obtained in primary school teacher education from 1924 to 1998.

### **The aim of the Study**

This study aims to train the first stage primary school teachers with an alternative

program and opens to discussion the present program of training the primary teachers. How is it possible to educate both a kindergarden teacher and a classroom teacher in the four-year faculties and to expect the classroom teacher should teach five different classes whereas the kindergarden should teach just one class? The first stage in the primary school which consists of five years is so much loaded that it is not possible to be undertaken by only one teacher. However, the student who sees the same teacher for 5 years gets bored or gets accustomed to the teacher and has difficulty to adapt the second stage. Both cases are harmful in terms of education. It is hard to understand the situation for the teacher. Because the teacher teaches the same class till the fifth grade and than turns back to the first grade and starts teaching again. It is objectionable in terms of students' education in this level that besides courses the teacher also gives some basic courses.

Therefore, this study focuses on the necessity to take steps for the training of more effective classroom teachers and proposes to train the classroom teachers in a new program In this proposed new program, it is suggested that the first, second and third grades will be thought by one teacher (First Stage Teacher) and the fourth and fifth grades will be thought by another teacher (Second Stage Teacher). Separating the primary school teacher training faculties into two parts will be enough to implement this project.

## **Method**

The qualitative research method was used in this study. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire . In this study, the data obtained were analyzed via descriptive analysis technique. A total of 63 class teachers from different schools in the villages and city centre of Province Adıyaman in Turkey participated in the study. This study was carried out in 2008-2009 education term.

## **Conclusion**

After the obtained data was evaluated, It was concluded that the proposed alternative program of class teacher training was adopted by the most of the teachers who participated in the research. The respondents were in favor of Training Class Teachers as a First Level (1st, 2nd 3rd Grades) and as a Second Level (4th, 5th Grades) teachers differently. Most of the teachers stated that they had serious problems when transferring from 4<sup>th</sup>,5<sup>th</sup> grades to 1<sup>st</sup>,2<sup>nd</sup>,3<sup>rd</sup> grades. The problems they had. a) difficulty in adaptation of teaching 1<sup>st</sup> class again, b) difficulty in teaching at students' level and following the changes and developments in curriculum, c) forgetting the class activities. Teachers also stated that” if only one teacher teaches all subjects in elementary school, there will be a monotone education process” and “teachers can not be successful in teaching every subjects”. As a conclusion, It will be very useful in terms of a successful education, if teaching of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>,3<sup>rd</sup>, grades is separated from teaching of 4<sup>th</sup>,5<sup>th</sup> grades and if teaching is given by different teachers.