BEGINNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS' CAREER
PERCEPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS, CONCERNS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES IN
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

BEGINNING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS' CAREER PERCEPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS, CONCERNS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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The aim of this study was to scrutinize perceptions, expectations and concerns of pre-service early childhood education (ECE) teachers before they start their careers and their challenges in their first year as they became beginning teachers. This study also focused on documenting public school contexts where beginning teachers have been either supported and given the opportunity to develop as successful teachers or discouraged and left alone with the challenges in their first year of teaching.

In order to investigate this phenomenon, 16 pre-service early childhood education teachers studying at the same teacher education program were interviewed about their perceptions, expectations and concerns on their future profession immediately before their graduation. Participating teachers started to teach in public schools at different cities after their graduation. They were interviewed at the end of the first and the second semester they taught about their experiences and difficulties, and positive aspects of working in public schools.

Moustakas's phenomenological analysis was utilized to analyze data from interviews in which beginning teachers reflected on their experiences in teacher education program and of being new teachers in public school context in Turkey. Findings have

revealed that pre-service teachers were aware of many difficulties in public schools and ready to contend with those difficulties, yet some of the challenges they faced were beyond their initial anticipation. All those challenges were originated from teacher education program, Ministry of National Education's system itself, and local condition where beginning teachers were appointed. Suggestions for teacher education programs, Ministry of National Education, and administrators were proposed.

ÖZ

GÖREVE YENİ BAŞLAYAN OKULÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN KARİYER ALGILARI, BEKLENTİLERİ, KAYGILARI VE DEVLET OKULLARINDAKİ DENEYİMLERİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine başlamadan önceki algılarını, beklentilerini ve kaygılarını, ardından da devlet okullarında göreve başladıklarında yaşadıkları deneyimlerini incelemektir. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda yeni öğretmenlere karşılaştıkları sorunlarla kendi başlarına kalmamaları için sunulan destekleri ve gelecekte başarılı bir öğretmen olmaları için sunulan fırsatları araştırmaktadır.

Bu olguyu araştırmak için aynı öğretmen eğitim programından mezun olmak üzere bulunan 16 öğretmen adayı ile gelecekteki mesleklerine yönelik algıları, beklentileri ve endişeleri hakkında derinlemesine görüşme yapılmıştır. İlk çalışmaya katılan öğretmenler Türkiye'nin çeşitli illerindeki devlet okullarında öğretmenlik yapmaya başlamıştır. Bu 16 öğretmen ile tekrar iletişime geçilmiş ve devlet okullarında çalışmaya başladıktan sonra yaşadıkları deneyimler üzerine öğretmenlik mesleğinde birinci ve ikinci dönemlerini tamamladıktan sonra görüşme yapılmıştır.

Verileri analiz etmek için Moustakas'ın olgubilimsel yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir.

Veriler öğretmenlerin öğretmen eğitim programı ve devlet okullarındaki yaşantıları hakkında aktardıklarına dayanmaktadır. Araştırmanın bulguları göstermiştir ki öğretmen adayları devlet okullarında karşılaşabilecekleri pek çok zorluğun farkında olup bunları kabullenmiş durumdadırlar. Fakat bazı zorluklar onların beklentilerinin çok ötesinde çıkmıştır. Öğretmenlerin karşılaştıkları zorluklar öğretmen eğitim programından, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın sisteminden ve öğretmenlerin atandıkları yerlerdeki yerel koşullardan kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda öğretmen eğitimi programları, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ve okul yöneticileri için öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler, okulöncesi eğitim, öğretmenliğin ilk yılı, Türkiye'deki devlet okulları

To My Mother Çiçek Akdağ

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Every year many schools welcome beginning teachers who realize that teaching profession is demanding indeed. Some of them would feel overwhelmed and first year would be their last year in the teaching profession (Roehrig, Pressley, & Talotta, 2002). This study addressed the perceptions, expectations and concerns of pre-service early childhood education (ECE) teachers before they started their careers and their challenges in their first year as they became beginning teachers. This study specifically focused on documenting public school contexts where pre-service teachers have been either supported and given the opportunity to develop as successful teachers or discouraged and left alone with the challenges in their first year of teaching. A phenomenological approach was utilized as the analyzed data of the interviews came exclusively from the reflections of beginning teachers, based on their own experiences in teacher education program and being new teachers in public school context in Turkey.

Learning to teach is a slow and difficult process of learning complex tasks such as classroom management, curriculum implementation, instructional strategy development, accurate assessment of student performance, and student monitoring. Therefore, beginning teachers need time and support to develop the necessary knowledge and skills in order to deal with these tasks. Unfortunately, many beginning teachers also have to manage disadvantaged working conditions and lack of quality training in their first years and they leave the teaching profession within five years when the conditions become overwhelming. They report that they have not received much guidance about what and how to teach and struggled on their own each day to balance both content and materials (Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos,

1

Kaufman, Liu, & Peske, 2001).

 Teaching profession is reported to be exceptional in that it requires the same responsibility and expertise with the twenty-five year experienced teachers (Lortie, 1975). Beginning teachers have difficulties in improving students' lives, setting control in class and making students behave in accordance with their expectations, having professional autonomy, motivating students to learn, and finding time to accomplish personal and professional task (Kennedy, Cruickshank, & Myers, 1976). Veenman's (1984) synthesis of 91 studies about first-year challenges of beginning teachers all over the world categorized the 24 distinct challenges highlighted the most. The top five problems faced by the beginning teachers of those studies were: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing student's work, and relations with parents. According to Veenman's (1984) findings, beginning teachers realized that their problems were beyond their anticipation immediately after entering the teaching profession.

In addition to teaching their classes, beginning teachers struggle to learn to teach and learn to deal with challenges that they face in their first year of teaching (Roehrig, Pressley, & Talotta, 2002). As such, first-year of teaching is considered as the greatest challenge in many teachers' careers. Beginning teachers are required to adapt their understanding of curriculum, child development, and learning into their teaching practice. When they first enter the teaching profession, they do not get help or supervision by experienced teachers any longer since they have to learn standing on their own feet. All these responsibilities result in insecurity in the first year of teaching and they experience fear and stress while socializing into school culture and handling problems in the classroom. Thus, they start to feel inadequacy to deal with individual differences, motivating students, classroom management, assessing students' learning, workloads, insufficient preparation time, relationships with colleagues and parents, and awareness of school policies (Fottland, 2004). Moreover, the first-year of teaching has key role for beginning teachers since they are prone to grasp the first strategies that work and carry on them throughout their careers. For this reason, they need more support and guidance early in the teaching in order to

develop professionally (Brock & Grady, 1998).

Studies have shown that teachers' problems in their first-year teaching are numerous. Some of these problems could be traced back to the teacher education programs and their perceptions, expectations, and concerns about their future career at the end of their studies in the teacher education programs. These perceptions, expectations, and concerns are likely to shape their first-year experiences.

1.1 Motivation for and the Purpose of the Study

As a graduate assistant and an undergraduate student advisor at Middle East Technical University (METU), I had many opportunities to observe and interact with pre-service teachers, and had the chance to listen to their expectations and experiences in public school contexts as well as their concerns of teacher education program and the teaching profession. This led me to think about whether there was a discrepancy between pre-service teachers' perceptions, expectations, and concerns and their experiences in public schools. My decision of investigating what challenges pre-service teachers encountered and the frequency and the severity of these difficulties were the starting point for this dissertation. My informal observations of pre-service teachers showed that although pre-service teachers criticized their teacher education program in several perspectives, they were still satisfied with the education they had in their teacher education program. Their satisfaction mostly concentrated on theory and criticism concentrated on insufficient practical knowledge. They had four practicum courses lasting for 15 weeks in a semester and they spent one whole day in early childhood education institutions during the practicum courses. Pre-service ECE teachers were more than non-participant observers in their practicum classes as most pre-service content area teachers would be. They interacted with children, teachers, administrators, and even parents. They witnessed both effective and ineffective practices and shared their experiences with me over the years. These experiences sometimes resulted in decreased motivation and enthusiasm among the pre-service teachers. Therefore, this study implemented long term design to follow pre-service teachers' transition to being college students to beginning teachers. Early

education has gained importance in Turkey due to attempt to involve it into compulsory education. The Ministry of National Education (MONE) prioritized opening or increasing the number of ECE classes in public schools at the time of the study and employed a great number of ECE teachers. As a result, most of the graduates of ECE programs, including the ones I communicated, had the opportunity to work in public schools. This also meant that these beginning teachers were placed in an educational system in which teacher induction policies were not much implemented and beginning teacher support was rare, a case previously investigated for elementary mathematics teachers (Haser, 2010). Therefore, the study focused on a group of beginning ECE teachers working in public schools in different regions and provinces of Turkey.

Studies investigating beginning ECE teachers' challenges in their first-year of teaching are rare and there is not any known study examining beginning ECE teachers' challenges in Turkish public schools. There are two main purposes of this study. First, as the study focused on public schools, it reflected beginning teachers' problems originated from MONE's structure, organization, curriculum, and administration. Thus, this study has provided some practical information for policy makers and teacher education programs to improve beginning teachers' first-year of teaching. Additionally, a major motivation for this study was to provide information for pre-service teachers and let them know about the challenges they might face in their first-year in public schools so that they would be able to prepare better or develop more realistic expectations.

Phenomenological approach might be considered as a better approach to depict both pre-service teachers' and beginning teachers' experiences in teacher education and public school contexts as it illuminates the phenomena through how actors in a situation perceived it. Moustakas (1994) summarized features of phenomenological analysis as "focusing on the wholeness of experience instead of merely on its objects or parts, searching for meanings and essences of experiences rather than measurements and explanations, obtaining descriptions of experience through informal and formal interviews, understanding human behavior, formulating

4

questions and problems that reflect the interest, involvement, and personal commitment of the researcher, viewing experience and behavior as an integrated and indispensable parts of whole" (p.21). Phenomenological research investigates the issues through the experiences and perspectives of the participants through the information and perceptions gathered by interviews, observations, and discussions, in an inductive way. Phenomenological approach addresses a paradigm of personal understanding and subjectivity, and emphasizes the significance of personal viewpoint and interpretation. Therefore, it is a powerful tool for understanding individuals' subjective experiences and gaining insights into their motivations and actions. In this way, individuals are likely to have opportunities to express their experiences more in depth (Van Manen, 1990). As the senior students were the ones who mostly finished their course work and close to become teachers, they were selected as participants for this study at the end of their studies in the teacher education program. Then, follow up studies were conducted to address these beginning teachers' experiences in their first-year of teaching in public schools in depth.

1.2 Significance of the Study

In addition to contributing to the body of research on beginning teachers, the present study was conducted based on several significant arguments due to both its design and research questions. The following discussion presents the significance of the study.

The information gathered from beginning teachers have been considered as critical for several stakeholders as it highlights recruitment, preparation, support, and retainment of highly qualified teachers who are trained to address the educational needs of all students (D'Aniello, 2008). In this sense, this study have explored the experiences of beginning teachers in the field of early childhood education and documented their challenges as well as accomplishments and capabilities. The information presented in this study provided a solid base for teacher education programs in reviewing and renewing the program experiences in order to enhance

their graduates' knowledge and skills which would help them in the early years of their profession.

The present study has also provided real life cases for teacher education programs to be discussed by the preservice teachers. The challenges presented in this study and beginning teachers' ways of dealing with challenges may provide pre-service teachers with a repertoire of possible experiences they may have once they start teaching as beginning teachers and help them develop rational expectations of children, classrooms, schools, and parents. Beginning teachers' experiences also documented the demands of the teaching profession and how beginning teachers may or may not manage these demands within the systemic limitations. Literature have addressed that failing to meet the demands of the teaching profession generally have accompanied with the feelings of depression and helplessness for beginning teachers. Their perceptions of themselves as teachers have likely to be affected negatively due to ineffective effort to create peaceful classroom environment for teaching and learning (Achinstein, 2006; Evans, 1997; Gold, 1996; Huberman, 1992; Ingersoll, 2001; Roehrig, Pressley & Talotta, 2002; Stokking et al, 2003; Veenman, 1984). Therefore, providing preservice ECE teachers with the real cases of challenges and demands of teaching to young children may help them in planning their resources and possible practices for future teaching.

Turkish beginning teachers have been reported to lack systemic support in the form of induction programs or mentoring. Even though the public school system had an induction and mentorship program for the first-year teachers, they may be assigned mentors from other fields or who would not "mentor" beginning teachers' first-year. Moreover, beginning teachers in the induction period have been assumed to have the same responsibility with more experienced teachers and teach in the classrooms although they were supposed to observe an experienced teacher (Haser, 2010). Therefore, the findings of this study may be useful to documenting the ineffective mentoring and induction process for beginning early childhood education teachers in MONE and provide the Ministry with fundamental principles of induction and mentoring programs.

The present study have focused both on negative and positive experiences of beginning teachers, although majority of the studies merely concentrated on beginning teachers' problems. Turkish public schools suffer from several problems such as improper infrastructure, material shortage, lack of teachers, and strict bureaucracy, yet they still offer several opportunities and better work conditions, payment, and job security for many teachers. Beginning teachers were not only asked about their problems rather, they were asked to reflect their experiences which included positive instances as well as problems and challenges. Documenting the positive experiences will provide pre-service teachers, teacher education practices, and the MONE with the indications of effective practices and the success of certain policies.

A small number of studies which Veenman (1984) summarized in his meta analysis implemented face to face interviews. Most of the studies rather used questionnaires in which beginning teachers were asked to rate a series of possible problems that they had encountered in their teaching practice in their first-year of teaching. On the other hand, the current study involved a series of in-depth interviews with each participant and gave them opportunity to reflect what they had experienced in their first year of teaching. In doing so, the current study have provided a broad range of opinions about potential challenges of beginning teachers.

Strengths of this study come from the long-term design it employed since this study was carried out in three phases lasting over a year. Long-term studies of a phenomenon provide researchers the problem factors and the long-term outcomes for the individuals and groups of individuals. The information gathered through long-term studies is important for planning early interventions to prevent the development of problems. These studies help researchers to address the change within individuals, present descriptive knowledge over time, and elucidate the direction of consequences. The most important characteristics of long-term studies is that they focus not only a single moment in time, but also sequences of events (Anstey & Hofer, 2004). The present study gave voice to pre-service teachers to reflect on their experiences upon on being an ECE teacher and evaluate the teacher education

program, the public school context, and the national curriculum. It followed pre-service teachers when they became in-service teachers and sought their experiences and attempted to reflect the connection between teacher education program and their challenges in their first-year of teaching. In this sense, the study also tracked the positive and negative experiences the participating beginning teachers had throughout their first-year in teaching, so that the extent of teacher education program's experiences was revealed.

Long-term studies has also some disadvantages and preceding one is dropout or attrition referring the fact that individuals who are less motivated or having health problems will be more likely to discontinue in the study. In addition, long-term studies are cumbersome, costly, and time consuming; therefore, researchers need to establish whether the effort and cost involved in conducting a long-term study is justified by an improved understanding (Dabholkar, Shepherd, & Thorpe, 2000). This study was supported by university fund project and there was strong rapport between the researcher and participants as she had been their academic advisor for four years. Therefore, carrying out this study was not overwhelming for the researcher. Besides, dropout did not happen in this study except for Study I in which researcher did not include nine beginning teachers who did not work in public schools or who were not teaching.

Finally, there are not sufficient number of studies on the beginning teachers' experiences in Turkey despite the importance of understanding their experiences for teacher education programs and inservice teacher training programs. My review of the theses in Higher Education Council's database revealed that there are limited studies on the beginning ECE teachers' experiences in their first-year of teaching. The thesis study on the beginning biology teachers' problems in their first years of teaching and their strategies to overcome these problems, how these experiences affected their professional careers, attitudes towards the profession, and professional identities by Gergin (2010) is one of the examples studying beginning teachers. Another study on the beginning teachers aimed to investigate adaptation challenges of novice teachers in the induction period and factors influencing their adaptation,

and also assessed pre-service and in-service training in terms of preparing them for induction period (Öztürk, 2008). Sarı (2011) investigated beginning primary education teachers' problems faced in their first years of teaching. Salı (2008) aimed to describe beginning English language teachers' challenges in public primary and secondary schools and identify their professional needs when they first enter teaching profession. Aysal (2007) examined factors effecting professional development of elementary beginning teachers in their first five years of teaching. The situation is not different in national and international databases. Based on the literature review upon beginning teachers in Turkey, there are limited studies on the experiences of beginning teachers and none of the studies accessed was about beginning ECE teachers. Memduhoglu (2008) reviewed beginning teachers' socialization process in the Turkish Education System. He addressed that functionalist approach is embraced in Turkey for the adapting teachers in their new profession. Yet, functionalist approach is criticized for being standardized for all newly employed individuals and restricted to certain periods of time. Another study was carried out to reveal primary schools beginning teachers' own perceptions about their managerial competencies (Demirtaş & Yıldırım, 2010). As it is going to be explained in detail, the first year of teaching is considered as an induction year in public schools and beginning teachers are offered two preparatory courses in this period. Kartal (2005) investigated the effectiveness of basic and preparative education on the organizational socialization of new teachers. He suggested that new teachers needed to learn their personal rights the most, therefore preparatory courses would be more effective if they are redesigned to inform beginning teachers on MONE's complicated legislation and organization. The mentioned studies have revealed the needs of beginning teachers in public schools in Turkey; however, they did not focus on ECE teachers. Thus, it was necessary to conduct a study on pre-service ECE teachers' expectations from their profession and their experience in first-year of teaching.

1.3 Research Questions

This qualitative study employs a phenomenological approach in which the researcher attempted to describe the meaning of the lived experiences of a phenomenon, being a

beginning ECE teacher in Turkish public schools, for several beginning ECE teachers (Creswell, 2007). It started when pre-service teachers complete their course work and earn their degree and continues through the first and second semester in teaching. Precisely, this study was organized around the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions, expectations and concerns of beginning early childhood education teachers before they start their profession?

2. What are the experiences of beginning early childhood education teachers during their first-year teaching in public schools?

   a. What are the problems of beginning teachers during their first year teaching?

   b. What is the origin of their problems?

   c. What are the positive experiences of beginning teachers during their first year teaching?

3. How do beginning teachers cope with the problems during their first-year teaching?

In order to investigate the research questions, sixteen pre-service ECE teachers were interviewed three times: Once before pre-service teachers entered the teaching profession and two times after they started to teach in public schools. The experiences covered but were not limited to the pre-service teachers' perceptions and expectations of teaching profession including public perception; difficulties of being an ECE teacher; classroom management; teacher education program; and physical, educational, and administrative conditions in public schools. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through the qualitative data analysis techniques. The findings of this study may help to improve teacher education programs to educate teachers better to lessen their challenges in their first-year of teaching. Besides, it comprehensively documented how beginning teachers have survived in their first-year in public schools contexts.

10

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

Beginning teachers: In general, beginning teachers are defined as teachers having less than three years of teaching experience (Tankersley, 2009). The term addressed teachers who have just entered in teaching profession in this study. Additionally, new teachers, first-year teachers, and novice teachers were used interchangeably throughout the study.

Early childhood education: The term addresses the education of 36-72 months age children in Turkish public schools (MONE, 2006). This study solely included public school teachers and employed the same definition for early childhood education.

Public Schools: An elementary school or independent pre-school supported by public funds and providing free education for children in Turkey.

Pre-service Early Childhood Education Teachers: Pre-service teachers are the senior students in the Early Childhood Education Program in the Department of Elementary Education in the Faculty of Education at Middle East Technical University (METU). They have completed their courses and close to graduation. These teachers were trained to educate 0-6 year old children in public and private schools.

The following definitions are adapted from Longman Dictionary and they refer beginning teachers' thought about their profession.

Perception: The way one thinks about something and one's idea of what it is like.

Concern: A feeling of worry about something important.

Expectation: What one thinks or hopes will happen.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

In this section, studies from the literature and the theoretical perspective of the study are presented. Specifically, theoretical frameworks explaining being a beginning teacher, what beginning teachers experience in their first years of teaching all over the world, being a beginning teacher in Turkish national curriculum context, and the factors affecting their positive and negative experiences are discussed.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Several theories are core to the development of the present study; thus, they are discussed here to offer deeper insight about beginning teachers' first year experiences, in order to have a better understanding of their problems and needs during this period. Understanding beginning teachers' expectations about teaching life before starting to teach will also be discussed according to these theories.

Cooper (1990) introduces four alternative conceptual frameworks which explain the first-years of teaching. All these frameworks are explicitly different from each other. Even conflicts emerge from time to time among four frameworks to examine how new teachers are supposed to be supported. Additionally, each one of them has its own advantages and disadvantages to support new teachers. Cooper's (1990) investigation not only focuses on meanings, ideas, and beliefs but also suggestions for practice.

In Cooper's (1990) the idiosyncratic survival-response framework in which beginning teachers with limited experience, high anxiety, and confusion are faced with the first teaching assignment, determine their need and solution individually. In

this sense, this model is response-oriented and the design, implementation, and evaluation of the support within this framework are not clearly defined. Besides, this model generally reflects non-integrated components and actions. Building support system on new teachers' need may result in superficial assistance model instead of coherent and long term positive help on beginning teachers' professional development. The reason is the fact that new teachers are not capable of facing the responsibility of determining need and solution since they have the tendency to reflect their needs as directed symptoms rather than issues or problems. This framework is criticized as being inappropriate to support new teachers in forming a clear sense of professional self.

The technical instrumental framework is based on a positivist or empiricist tradition and addresses the pivotal role of technical skills, marked performance, and observable teacher behaviors. This model is rooted in previous studies which scrutinized correlation between teacher behavior and student achievement. Those studies have revealed several prescriptions for supporting new teachers. This framework advocates that teaching performance is combination of clearly specified and sequenced behaviors. Teachers are considered as technician and supporting new teachers requires only technical training. In order to reach broad and generic applicability among different situations and contexts, ambiguity is not acceptable within this framework. Contrary to 'survival-responsive' framework, 'technical-instrumental' framework clearly represents structure of support system. This framework first welcomes new teachers' expressed needs, then blend these needs with previous research. After that, it tries to find a way to translate them into technically precise behavior such as clearly ordered process of instruction. In this way, the framework functions as a checklist to evaluate teacher's performance. Moreover, it is appropriate to standardize curriculum and instruction throughout school districts of countries in this framework.

The complex intellectual framework, which is based on the constructivist epistemology tradition, emphasizes human cognition, deliberation, and principled action. This framework is similar to the previous one but the technical proficiency is

not only dimension in this framework as it is in the 'technical instrumental' framework, since 'complex intellectual' framework includes both technical skills and how to apply those skills in an appropriate way. Reflection is an essence for this conceptual framework which enables new teachers to examine their teaching practice in a systematic and structured way. This examination also includes learner characteristics, curricula, instructional materials, and school and classroom contexts. It also aims to prepare beginning teachers to understand underlying assumptions and coherence which helps them to judge where and when theoretical knowledge is necessary to implement. Technical skills cannot help teachers if they do not know how to observe, rule, and react in unforeseen situation. This framework further tries to examine common problems of novice teachers and possible engagement of those problems into a current support system. In doing so, special skills, interests, and strengths that novice teachers have may help to cover their struggles in first years of teaching. As such, this framework provides more systematic and structured model for new teachers as it does not emphasize supporting teachers in isolation.

 Finally, the conceptually eclectic, concerns oriented framework does not categorize teachers as technician or artisan rather it draws attention to a sequence of concerns experienced by teachers. As such, support programs grounded on this framework are designed considering the sequenced concerns and start with an emphasis on survival tips and followed by recommendation for reflective relation to new teachers' needs. Main criticism for this framework is that, not all teachers pass through same concern stages. Moreover, this framework is highly originated from theory and it fails to offer clear and coherent implication for practice. It may jeopardize beginning teachers' sense of what it means to be a teacher or to teach.

Knowles' (1980) self-directed learning theory is parallel with Cooper's (1990) first theoretical framework, the 'idiosyncratic survival-response' framework. Knowles claims that all people have potential skills for lifelong learning; thus, they are required to gain their knowledge in the context. Knowles (1975) defined self-directed learning through the processes of "diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and

implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (p. 18). Knowles prioritized three core elements in his theory. First, he emphasized that people learn better when they involved in learning process instead of waiting to be taught by teacher. Their motivation increases to learn as long as they are aware of their purpose. Besides, they became more capable of using what they learn in a long run. Second, people have tendency to develop responsibility for their lives to be more self-directed. Lastly, current educational trends enforce learners to be more initiative in their own learning process in order to protect them experiencing anxiety, frustration, and failure (Knowles 1975). According to his theory, new teachers should initiate a plan and organize their own learning to become successful, rather than wait for someone to teach them. Similarly, Dewey (1933) defined reflective thinking as "active, persistent and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9). Dewey's reflecting thinking as being characterized adopting into new circumstances. Changing conditions require people to learn as new events or situations triggers new skills that they need to acquire. In this sense, self-directed learning takes place when certain situation stimulates reflection and exploration (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2006). Learners effectively participate in reflective thinking process by controlling what they know, what they need to know, and how they balance these two movements during learning operation. Reflective thinking focuses on making estimation upon experiences; thus, it plays a role in problem solving activities. In this sense, reflection may help beginning teachers to close the gap between their teacher education program and real classroom environments. Beginning teachers do not start a teaching life as ready to implement their knowledge that they gained from the teacher education programs. Reflective thinking leads teachers to investigate their beliefs, examine their assessment styles, and adjust everyday practices of classroom (Mayes-King, 2004).

Another theory parallel to Cooper's (1990) first framework is Fuller's (1969) three-stage model of teacher concerns theory addressing concern with self, with task, and with impact. Based on this theory, teaching practice improves in a predictable

sequence as teachers acquire experience. Initially, their primary concern is self-oriented and focuses on being successful as a teacher. The sequence is followed by the task stage and the teacher becomes more concerned about instructional techniques and students' achievement. Although teachers are still concerned about themselves, they begin to investigate alternative teaching strategies in tasks related with teaching. After solving their concerns about themselves and tasks, teachers move to the last stage in which they are concerned about their influence upon students. In this stage, teachers become concerned about educating students as functional members of the society (Smith, 2000). They are concerned with their self-efficiency and suspect their proficiency to control classes, their content knowledge, and meeting the needs of students, parents, and administrators. More precisely, teachers improve in sequence and their concerns move to task concerns about handling large class size, planning instructions, and overcoming work load. Finally, in the impact concern stage, teachers become concerned with motivating students and meeting their individual needs (Ghait & Shaaban, 1999). However, Conway and Clark (2003) declare that focusing only on concern while investigating the first year of teaching may lead to a distorted picture since a concern based research biases and restricts our understanding of teacher development. As such, there is a need to focus on both positive and negative aspects of pre-service and beginning teachers' experiences and their anticipations about teaching.

Teachers' concerns lessen as they gain experience (Ghait & Shaaban, 1999). However, concern-focused studies are generally cross sectional and concentrated on comparing the concerns among teachers at different experience levels. Longitudinal studies with long intervals among data collection with the same group of teachers are assumed to capture more subtle changes of teacher concerns within and across years (Conway & Clark, 2003).

The current study was carried out in three phases in over a year to reflect beginning teachers' journey in teaching profession through being a pre-service teacher to in-service teacher. As such, Fuller's (1969) stage model fits the present study the best since both this study and stage based theories focused on certain period of time.

16

Besides, the combination of Cooper's (1990) four frameworks, self-directed learning theory, reflective thinking theory, and teacher concerns theory result in a more powerful and accurate examination of both teacher education programs and first year experiences of teachers. These frameworks are grounded on long-term observation of new teachers' struggle in teaching profession. Each one has their own benefits and deficits thus, contradiction appears among selected frameworks. For instance, one of the frameworks encourage beginning teachers to take initiatives to compete with problems emerging in their first year of teaching, yet another one provides set of procedure to support them. Both giving voice to new teachers to reflect their needs for more practical solutions and deeper insights, thoughts and theoretical assumptions are consideration of this study. As such, all these frameworks were chosen as a focusing lens to comprehend supporting system for new teachers. As Cooper states (1990), theoretical frameworks provide initial direction, modification, and clarification to make us critical to judge previously developed support models. Frameworks are indispensable part of setting appropriate standards to assess effectiveness of induction programs. More precisely, they function as illuminating guides through which understanding ideas on this topic.

2.2 Teaching Profession and Beginning Teachers

While deciding on teaching as a future profession, people consider whether their personality characteristics fit the essential personal features to be successful teachers, whether teaching offers proper rewards in terms of values and challenges, and whether practical issues; such as the financial side, are advantageous (Anthony & Ord, 2008). In the broadest sense, teachers should have an understanding about child development and the learning process, organizing content and connecting related content areas, and using several materials and resources when teaching their content. Additionally, they also should have an understanding about decision making in the classroom, collaborate with their colleagues, the parents, and principals. Moreover, they have to provide realistic opportunities to each student to be successful both at school and in life, and teach students to be productive, and to contribute to the economic growth of the society. In order to responsibly raise the next generation,

they must meet all these criteria (Wiesman, Coover, & Knight, 1999). Beginning teachers are also expected to commit to the profession and have the same knowledge and skills with experienced teachers (Roehrig, Pressley & Talotta, 2002).

How people are attracted to teaching could be explained under five themes (Lortie, 1975): (1) the interpersonal theme-the desire to work with young people; (2) the service theme-the feeling of valuable service of special moral worth; (3) the continuation theme- staying at school because of having attachment to the school and interest for subject matter; (4) the material benefits theme-the wealth, prestige, and job security; and (5) the time compatibility theme-the attraction of working schedules and working hours. People's decision on attempting to teach professionally is multifaceted and complex. Lortie (1975) classified occupation rewards into three types: extrinsic, ancillary, and intrinsic rewards. The first reward basically related to environmental features of profession since they exist independently of the individual who occupies that profession such as income, status in society, and power over others. Ancillary rewards are originated from the nature of the profession such as the work schedule of teaching. Intrinsic rewards refer to teachers' enjoyment of their work and the structure of teaching rewards. Teaching as a profession is mainly motivated by intrinsic rewards rather than extrinsic rewards; thus, teachers are not just motivated with more money. Teacher satisfaction is beyond advancement and extrinsic rewards. Teachers measure their satisfaction in moments or instances of involvement with students (Quagliga, Marion, & McIntre, 2001). Similarly, Siera and Siera (2011) identified three main sources of motivation for pre-service teachers as the desire to develop children, making a difference, personal fulfillment, and convenience of teaching.

Lehman (2000) claims that although the idealism and enthusiasm of the first-year teachers are very high, the reality of teaching life reduces their enthusiasm about working in the field. The nature of the teaching profession is indeed demanding due to the responsibility of raising future generations (Krecic & Grmek, 2005). Then, the attractors initially motivating the beginning teachers became insufficient to retain teachers within the teaching profession when they are left alone in a classroom.

Beginning teachers suddenly realize that the reality of the classroom does not meet their expectations (Gold, 1996; Stokking, Leenders, Jong, & Tartwijk, 2003). As a result of being the only person who has to deal with full teaching workload, many beginning teachers report frustration, anxiety, stress, self-doubt, sense of incompetence, classroom management problems, lack of support, pressure, low confidence, concerns, and challenges since they have to deal with the teaching load and the other responsibilities in school (Achinstein, 2006; Evans, 1997; Gold, 1996; Huberman, 1992; Ingersoll, 2001; Stokking et al, 2003; Veenman, 1984). In this regard, the transition from the teacher training period to the first teaching job could be a dramatic and traumatic process. This transition is often referred as the 'reality shock', which addresses the breakdown of the idealism developed during the teacher education programs by the unkind and offensive reality of classroom daily routine (Veenman, 1984). Veenman further argued that reality shock was not a temporary stage that would disappear easily. In fact, the reality shock would address the process of internalization of the complex reality of classroom life, especially in the first years of actual teaching. Huberman (1992) called the first year of teaching as a 'sink or swim' scenario. Both the notions of "reality shock" and "sink or swim" imply that the first year of teaching is extremely difficult for the beginning teachers. It takes several months for teachers to properly deal with a classroom and to understand that first year of teaching is more demanding than what they anticipated before (Roehrig, Pressley, & Talotta, 2002). For this reason, most of the first-year teachers lose their idealism, ambition, enthusiasm, and they even decide to quit the teaching profession (Delgado, 1999).

Veenman's (1984) study is considered as a good starting point to understand beginning teachers' challenges in their first-years of teaching. He summarized the large body of literature involving studies from all over the world. A common point of studies focusing on the initial survival stage of beginning teachers is to reflect their practical problems and find solutions to those problems. Veenman (1984) reviewed research from the United States, Europe, Australia, and Canada. Then, he identified 24 perceived problems of beginning teachers and the most frequent problems were

classroom management, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relation with parents, insufficient materials, heavy workload, and relation with colleagues. Ganser (1999) examined the relevance of Veenman's (1984) study after 15 years and classified three main problems experienced by beginning teachers as the not having spare time, loaded clerical work, and extensive workload resulting in insufficient preparation time. As stated by Veenman (1984), although the first year experiences would vary for each individual, most of the problems faced by the beginning teachers seemed to be quite universal. However, his review did not include any study about challenges of beginning ECE teachers rather; all of the studies had focused on elementary and secondary teachers' problems.

The first-year of teaching is a crucial career stage in which beginning teachers are trying to build and re-build their professional values, aims, and practices that compose their professional identity. In this sense, beginning teachers are most vulnerable in their first-year of teaching if they are not in a supportive environment (Smethem, 2007). Therefore, it is important to investigate beginning teachers' first year experiences in order to have a better understanding of their problems and needs during this fragile period (Latimer, 2009). Understanding beginning teachers' expectations about the teaching life also provides an insight into their problems (Smith, 2000).

The reason of reality shock, which is a collection of major problems of beginning teachers, can be explained in three ways: extremely idealistic expectations, demanding working conditions, and insufficient preparation to profession (Lindgren, 2005; Stokking et al, 2003). Their unrealistic expectations include setting friendly rapport with their students, getting respect of parents, and gaining appreciation of administrators and colleagues. Moreover, they are expected to design peaceful, comfortable and supportive classrooms, and have endless energy to meet every demand in their classrooms. However, these unrealistic expectations do not match the real conditions such as chaotic classes, indifferent parental behavior, and highly critical assessment from administrators (McCann, 2001). Their positive expectations

are diminished when they begin to struggle meeting the demands of the teaching profession such as discipline problems, relations with parents, motivating students, meeting diverse learning needs of students, insufficient teaching materials, and support. All these components result in frustration to accomplish tasks, failure to maintain the teaching atmosphere in classroom, and inability to communicate with parents for the favor of their children (Britt, 1997; Gordon & Maxey, 2000; Veenman, 1984).

Being an early childhood education (ECE) teacher is quite different from being a primary or secondary school teacher, since it both includes curricular and child care tasks. More clearly, "education" and "care" of young children cannot be distinguished strictly in ECE classrooms. In contrast to their counterparts in upper grades, ECE teachers care for the overall physical, emotional, social, and cognitive needs of young children including warmth, nurture, feeding, and cleaning (Brostrom, 2006). Therefore, becoming an early child educator is not an easy task and requires gaining a variety of skills to work with children, such as knowledge on child development and appropriate expectations for the ages of the children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). These characteristics of ECE bring difficulties for beginning ECE teachers in addition to the ones mentioned above.

Teaching occurs in both complex material and ideological context. Beginning teachers are required to engage in this complex organization and physical environment successfully (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Fottland, 2004). As such, adaptation is another vital issue for the professional life as many teachers quit the teaching profession within their first five years (Anthony & Ord, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001; Lindgren (2005); Nemser, 2003). Being a teacher in not just composed of teaching young children, rather it requires communicating with wide range of people. These communications necessitate several manner and several skills. In general, pre-service teachers are expected to have positive relationships with several groups of people and ready to set a positive relationship with other stakeholders in the educational system.

School is a social system with complex interrelated relationships and teachers are viewed as a member of groups instead of an isolated individual. Each group is interdependent in the larger context of schools including administrators, students, and parents. The balance of this interactive social system is maintained by organizational composition, rules and routines, informal behavioral patterns, standards of performance, and organizational ideologies (Hawley & Rosenholtz, 1984). Beginning teachers also struggle to handle the enculturation process or socialization into the professional culture of teaching as well as teaching tasks. Enculturation process involves interaction among employees and the community in which the employee is a member. This interaction helps community members to learn value system, norms, and expected behavioral pattern (Balcı, 2000).The adjustment process refers to learning the ropes which means helping new teachers fit into the existing system. The early years of teaching are times for coping, adjustment, and survival, which depend largely on the working conditions and culture of schools. If they are not sufficiently supported, they may blame students, parents, or administrators to ease their difficulties and feel some comfort (Nemser, 2003). While beginning teachers enter into schools, another form of shock emerges due to disagreements with colleagues, administrators, and policies since they often come to schools with almost no knowledge of school organizations and politics. New teachers' beliefs and behaviors may contradict with existing rules and regulations. They face power issues, conflicts of interests, and negotiation. They also should know how to interpret, navigate, and change the organizational context in which they work (Achinstein, 2006).

There is a strong relationship between teachers, satisfaction on work environment, and their motivation. Teachers who are not satisfied with their work environment experience burnout because of feeling uncomfortable in the work environment, feeling of being observed and tension, having conflict, being in a stressful environment, and working without peace (Cemaloğlu & Erdemoğlu-Şahin, 2007). Work environments with negativity and hostility are associated with emotional exhaustion and even health problems. Therefore, setting positive interpersonal

22

relationships and empowering employee should be taken into account at workplaces while planning managerial procedures (Helkavaara, Saastamoinen & Lahelma, 2011). Therefore, beginning teachers need to be supported when they are struggling to adjust their new profession (Quagliga, Marion, & McIntre, 2001). Teacher attrition is reported to be high in the U.S. and European countries due to limited empowerment within the profession, lack of support, classroom management problems, job dissatisfaction, and pursuit of better jobs (Everton et al, 2007; Sumsin, 2002; Saban, 2002). Attracting and keeping good teachers require schools to provide better work environments that support professional development and treat teachers with respect (Jalango & Heider, 2006). Luckily, despite the massive difficulty of surviving in the school contexts and the frustration in the first-year of teaching, Britt (1983) asserts that beginning teachers still want to continue the teaching profession due to love of teaching children and observing their development.

2.2.1 Teacher Education Program and Beginning Teachers in Turkey

Teacher education programs help pre-service teachers to understand what it means to be a teacher since students generally enter programs with incomplete and unarticulated initial visions of teaching (LePage, Nielsen, & Fearn, 2008). In order to prevent frustration caused by insufficient preparation, there is a need for building a satisfactory relationship between theory and practice. The gap between theory and practice during teacher education influences beginning teachers the most in their first years. This is due to the widely claimed insufficient preparedness of beginning teachers for the teaching practice or that they are not able to sufficiently implement academic knowledge to the practice. In this context, beginning teachers think that their professional knowledge and skills increase in their early years of teaching rather than in their teacher education programs (Maandag Denium, Hofman, & Buitink, 2007; San, 1999). Even though beginning teachers have sufficient training in the teacher education programs, their training frequently contradicts with the classroom reality. These conflicts increase feelings of being insufficient for helping students with their needs, managing the classroom, and understanding culture of school (Stanulis, Fallona & Pearson, 2002). However, there are certain phases of teaching

that beginning teachers can only learn in schools and classrooms. Beginning teachers must start teaching with the knowledge of engaging a specific group of students and arranging specific curricula to their needs and abilities (Stanulis, Fallona & Pearson, 2002). However, they lack a clear comprehension of the learner characteristics of students, their ways of thinking about specific topics, their problems while learning a specific content since their repertoire of strategies for handling class environment is limited (Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1990).

It is assumed in Turkey that the Faculties of Education and Ministry of National Education work in harmony. However, these two institutions do not collaborate much and there seems to be a discrepancy in their strategies. Hence, beginning teachers experience conflicts between what they have learned in teacher education programs and the school environment (Yalçınkaya, 2002). Both pre-service and beginning teachers view themselves insufficient in content area knowledge. This situation brings the question of quality issues in teacher education programs. Pre-service and beginning teachers address insufficient training in Faculties of Education including lack of practice, focus on theory-based education, incompetent instructors, and insufficient or unnecessary courses (Gömleksiz, Kan, Biçer, & Yetkiner, 2010). On the other hand, there are disadvantages of focusing on practice in teacher education programs such as losing the depth of educational context of teacher education (Maandag et al, 2007).

It is ideal to educate teachers to become competent in class as well as capable of understanding what they are doing, why they are doing it, and how they change their practice to better address the context or circumstances. However, there is a tension between the requirements and focus of universities and schools. While the former focuses on understanding theory, the latter focuses on practice and performance. It seems that university education does not meet the needs of schools since beginning teachers experience a difficult adjustment process when they leave the academic world and enter the real world of the teaching (Moffett, John, & Isken, 2002). Preparedness and commitment to profession cannot ensure that beginning teachers would be successful in the classroom since teaching has an unpredictable nature. A

24

supportive workplace should reduce this uncertainty; so that, it can increase beginning teachers' chances for success and satisfaction. Working conditions are multidimensional for teachers including school facilities, bureaucracy, administrators' competence, and existence of opportunities for beginning teachers' professional development. Factors such as an extreme teaching load, unsupportive administrators, or lack of certain school facilities can limit effective teaching and make it difficult for teachers to reach the intrinsic rewards (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

In Turkey, educational policies heavily rely on each cabinet's priority politics, hence a long standing and salient educational system has not been established (Küçükahmet, 2007). Recently, several Faculties of Education have been established without solving infrastructure problems and instructor shortages. As such, the quality of the university education offered for the ECE teachers is also questionable. Faculties of Education in Turkey have the highest student-instructor ratio among the other faculties (Üstüner, 2004). Moreover, the establishment of new ECE programs in new universities without qualified and sufficient number of faculty members becomes a problem for ECE teacher education. Lack of instructors is an important problem in the ECE teacher education programs since the program consists of a variety of courses but there is not sufficient number of instructors to offer these courses (Küçükahmet, 2007). The teaching profession is characterized with sudden entry as immediately after graduation beginning teachers have the same responsibility with the experienced teachers (Lehman, 2000). The distance between student desks to teacher desk seem to be short in physical world, yet it would be the longest psychological distance that beginning teachers have traveled in such a brief time (Cruickshank & Callahan, 1983). It is crucial to make a smooth transition from being a student to being a capable teacher in order to reduce the problems of the first year of teaching. Considering the lack of sufficient number and quality of faculty members in the ECE field, beginning ECE teachers seem to miss opportunities to get well-prepared for teaching in Turkish schools.

Ministry of National Education (MONE) is the chief employer for teachers in Turkey, yet teacher education programs do not include any course explaining the structure of MONE and how it works. MONE governs approximately 60 thousands schools, 659 thousands teachers, and 14 million students (MONE, 2009b). It offers several promotion opportunities and its legislation is quite complex to be managed. Therefore, there must be courses related to MONE rules and regulations in teacher education programs, in order to prepare beginning teachers for official correspondence, legislation, promotion opportunities, and to be aware of their rights (AÇEV, 2002a). Even if pre-service teachers are aware of complexities of paper work and bureaucracy in public schools, the actual situation is even worse than their expectations. Thus, there is an urgent need to provide a course about administrative process including paper works and bureaucracy in public schools (Gömleksiz et al, 2010). Despite the fact that beginning teachers criticized most the lack of necessary connections to real life due to passive teaching and learning methods (Yalçınkaya, 2002). Still, teacher education program lessened four practicum courses to three. It might not be meaningful to require first year pre-service teachers to have practicum, yet it would make more sense to change time of practicum course instead of revoking it completely.

2.2.2 Being a Novice Teacher in Turkish Public Schools

The regulations for employment of teachers by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) in Turkey were reorganized in 1999 due to increasing number of graduates from Faculties of Education. MONE conducts a standardized test called as Public Personnel Selection (PPS) examination to appoint teachers. It is assumed that PPS was developed to improve the quality of teacher education programs, standardize the disorganized job offering requirements for MONE, and ensure a manageable way of comparing pre-service teachers' performance since the test consists of multiple-choice items. Thus, standardized testing significantly affects the employment of teachers in the public schools and pre-service teachers' future social and educational life to a great extent (Baştürk, 2007).

Public Personnel Selection examination is prepared and implemented by the Student Selection and Placement Center and a certain score is required to be a teacher in Turkish public schools. The PPS examination can only be taken once in a year, it consists of three components, and it is considered as a final step in pre-service teachers' career. The first component, the general knowledge and skills part, is designed to measure the general capabilities of pre-service teachers in basic skills of Turkish language and mathematics. In the second component, general cultural knowledge including Principles of Kemal Ataturk, geography of Turkey, civics, popular topics, and Turkish culture is measured. The third component is about the knowledge of educational sciences and it measures pedagogical background of pre-service teachers in principles of teaching and learning, curriculum and instruction, and counseling (Baştürk, 2007).

The hiring policy of MONE brings problems for pre-service teachers before they enter the teaching profession in Turkey. Many pre-service teachers report feelings of pressure of PPS examination in their senior year. They express that examination pressure negatively affected their psychology as well as their academic success, financial situation, and social life (Gündoğdu, Çimen, & Turan, 2008).

Most of the problems beginning teachers encounter such as classroom management is considered as universal (Veenman, 1984). Additional problems due to cultural, regional, historical, and economical conditions emerge in the Turkish context especially for early childhood education teachers. Although there has been a recent emphasis on the early childhood education in Turkey, the tradition of early childhood education is not long (Oktay, 1999). When the Turkish Republic was established in 1923, only compulsory primary education gained priority, thus until the 90s there was no significant move for the establishment of ECE (Üstüner, 2004). After 90s, there has been increasing attention to ECE in Turkey since neurobiological, educational, and socio-economical research have presented evidence that quality ECE can have a major impact on children's long-term cognitive, social, and emotional development (Gammage, 2006; OECD, 2006).

27

Since Turkey does not have a long tradition of ECE, it has the lowest ECE schooling rate among the European countries (Yıldırım, 2008). Low schooling rate might be a result of low financial investment in the education system. The public education expenditure per primary school student in Turkey was $718 in 1994 and $869 in 2003, the average in OECD countries was $5450 in 2003 (OECD, 2006). Public schools are facing financial problems even to meet their basic needs. Especially, in deprived regions in eastern parts of Turkey, teachers cannot focus on increasing the quality of education before meeting their basic physical and material needs (AÇEV, 2002b). Beginning ECE teachers are likely to have difficulties in their first year due to the substantial regional differences between eastern and western parts of Turkey. Most of the children in eastern part are bilingual and their mothers do not speak in Turkish. Therefore, there is an increasing need for programs considering target population's characteristics rather than sole and similar program for all population in Turkey (AÇEV, 2002b). MONE hired more teachers for this region in 2009. Although no teacher was hired in western cities of Turkey such as Aydın, İzmir and Antalya, 100 teachers were hired in Şanlıurfa, 67 teachers in Şırnak, 64 in Diyarbakır and 52 in Mardin, some of the cities in eastern Turkey (MONE, 2009a). However, it is worthy to note that teacher education programs do not include any course about regional differences and ECE curriculum was not prepared considering those regions where most of the parents are indifferent and uneducated. Therefore, teachers are not able to pay attention individually to each parent. Moreover, schools' monetary expectations from parents prevent establishing healthy parent involvement to create supportive environment for children's development (AÇEV, 2002b).

Gömleksiz et al (2010) categorized beginning teachers' problems in remote areas as social, environmental, administrative, structural problems in school, and problems originated from teacher education programs. Social problems include cultural differences, language differences, adaptation to new environment, financial problems, and lack of respect to teachers. Environmental problems include transportation, accommodation, climate, communication, lack of health service, and lack of running water and electricity. Administrative problems cover both insufficient

administrative education in teacher education programs and insufficient in-service training in schools. Besides, lack of effective communication with MONE local office, bureaucratic barriers, and the difficulty of administrative paper works are among the administrative problems. Structural problems in schools result from insufficient materials and environmental conditions. Finally, beginning teachers experience problems due to inadequate teacher education program experiences for which they complain about theory based education, insufficient courses, and instructors, and eventually lack of content area knowledge.

Gol-Guven (2009) has investigated the quality of early childhood classrooms in Turkey. Although sample size was quite small to generalize, her findings provided valuable information on the quality of public school classrooms. Except for independent preschools, most public preschool classes were not built considering the 3 to 6 years old children's needs, interest and development. More clearly, elementary classes were just redesigned for preschool children. For this reason, both structural quality including space, lighting, safety, materials, and process quality including interaction, parent involvement, and educational activities were poor. Communication between teacher and children was authoritarian because of overcrowded classroom. This type of interaction resulted in a passive role for students in activities directed by teachers and limited interaction among students under teacher supervision. Unawareness of pre-service teachers about the school structure and environment mentioned above also caused some problems for beginning teachers (Küçükahmet, 2007).

Considering that classroom management is one of the biggest problems of beginning teachers, large class size may affect their teaching practice severely (Fottland, 2004; Pigge & Marso, 1997; Wyatt & White, 2007). The increase in class size decreases child-teacher interaction as it limits the capacity of teachers to deal with behavioral problems (Essa, 2003). The teacher-child ratio is nearly 1:25 in Turkish preschools (MONE, 2009b). National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends the appropriate ratio as 1:15 with one adult, or up to 25 when a second adult is in the classroom (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Beginning teachers

prefer to being closer to the students and being open to interactions and discussions. Nevertheless, larger class size prevents maintaining daily procedures, distributing materials, supervising students' independent work, and the development of meaningful relationship between the teacher and the children, hence, pushes beginning teachers to become more strict (Unal & Unal, 2009). Considering the fact that teachers are responsible for creating a secure and nurturing classroom environment for young children, the problems of beginning teachers in class affects the future quality of education (Lundeen, 2004).

Beginning teachers tend to develop a hesitation in communicating with their administrators because they do not know their personal rights. This excessive hesitation reduces the quality of the relationship between school administrators and beginning teachers (Cemaloğlu, 2002; Erdemir, 2007). Additionally, beginning teachers should be well-informed about the problems of education system in Turkey (Özel, 2008).

Kartal (2008) addressed that administrators voluntarily inform novice teachers about the physical and social environment of the school, but this is not an official responsibility. Administrators do not always guide novice teachers about more nuanced dynamics such as specific teachers' roles, informal relationships among colleagues and parents, potential conflicts that might emerge in school, and possible solutions for conflicts and novice teachers need to socialize with other teachers on their own effort. Administrators do not generally make job descriptions clear for novice teachers in the enculturation process. Teachers are not provided prior knowledge about their students and only come to know them through teaching. In addition, teachers have to explore physical conditions and materials by trial and error.

The first year of teaching is also the period that beginning teachers start to employ certain professional rules, attitudes and standards that will help them their teaching practice through their teaching career. Beginning teachers have considerable theoretical knowledge about teaching and learning in their first years, but less

experience in practice (Saban, 2002), which could be considered as the most important dimension of the teacher education program (AÇEV, 2002a).

2.2.3 Mentoring Programs

Supporting beginning teachers is critical to retain them in the teaching profession. The first year of teaching is considered an induction period and a mentor teacher is assigned to each novice teacher to provide support and to lessen the newcomer's fear and anxiety. A beneficial mentoring process should be built upon sincerity and confidentiality. Mentoring is more effective when the mentor is an experienced, caring, and committed person who is genuinely interested in supporting beginning teachers by being a role model (McGee, 2001). Beginning teachers need to work with diverse groups of children with several interests, backgrounds, and abilities. In this sense, support for new teachers must encourage relationships with colleagues as well as personal development. Beginning teachers' professional development should include effective mentoring and teaching collaboration, where beginning teachers work together as a team with experienced teachers in their first year (Lundeen, 2004).

Mentorship and mentoring programs have been more emphasized recently. Even the support of a mentor during the first year of employment for beginning teachers is becoming compulsory. Effective mentoring programs should take into account the fact that needs of beginning teachers change over time and their needs are based on changing circumstances. For instance, first-year teaching experience is different in private and public schools and in elementary and secondary schools (Ganser, 1999). Mentoring programs must identify beginning teachers' needs related to practical issues and in instructional and non-instructional contexts. In order to empower beginning teachers, mentoring programs should include development of personal strength, defined rationales and goals, continuous year-long support, collaboration, and efforts to increase the beginning teachers' knowledge and practice. Furthermore, beginning teachers should be allowed to take risks to develop creative teaching ideas and be motivated to control their professional growth through participatory

professionalization programs. Giving voice to beginning teachers enables them to be dignified, and equipped to be a more committed professional who has an effective influence on children (Runyan, 1991). The mentor is not supposed to solve problems, but rather should encourage beginning teachers to come to their own decisions; that is, mentors should serve as catalysts for improvement. Therefore, a constant dialog between mentor and mentee is crucial, as it is beneficial for a mentee to be challenged by a mentor. Through this process, beginning teachers progress in their profession (Lucas, 2001).

The mentoring process would be facilitated if the beginning teachers are aware of the goals and expectations. Mentoring has not only desirable effects on professional development, but it also positively influences personal development of teachers as long as it is well-organized (Lindgren, 2005). New teachers approach their mentor as sympathetic colleagues with whom they can share their doubts and frustrations. Working with mentor decreases new teachers' stress since mentors do not only supervise them but also help teachers to feel more productive and competent (Moffett, John, & Isken, 2002).

First year of teaching is also the induction period for beginning teachers in Turkey. Administrators are responsible for guiding beginning teachers and they appoint mentors with considerable experience in the beginning teacher's field. MONE (1995) documents claim that mentor teachers prepare guiding program to evaluate annual plan, daily plan, and teaching practice of beginning teachers. At the end of the guiding program, the mentor teacher writes a report about the novice teacher. If the administrator approves the report, then the beginning teacher officially completes the induction program. Although the written documents of MONE claims that the induction of beginning teachers proceed as mentioned, induction program and mentoring process do not work properly in practice. It is treated as an obligation and beginning teachers and their mentors rarely meet. Mentor teachers do not observe beginning teachers' practice and do not discuss it. Administrators do not provide effective guidance as well. As a result, ineffective mentoring of first-year teachers leaves them on their own (Akbaba, 2002; Haser, 2009).

2.3 Summary

In this part, the literature review section will be concluded with a summary on the selected theoretical frameworks, nature of teaching profession, what the motivation teachers find to teach, difficulty of teaching in the first year, Veenman's remarkable study about beginning teachers, beginning ECE teachers, adaptation, attrition and support in first years of teaching. In the light of all these topics the essence was to explain what beginning teachers experience in their first years of teaching all over the world and being a beginning teacher in Turkish national curriculum context. Besides, the factors affecting their positive and negative experiences are discussed.

The current study combined Cooper's (1990) four frameworks, Knowles' (1980) self-directed learning theory, and Fuller's (1969) three-stage model of teacher concerns theory. These frameworks have been used to reflect holistic picture of both teacher education programs and first year experiences of teachers. Cooper's (1990) work both emphasizes meanings, ideas, and beliefs as well as practical implication for teaching. In other words, this framework put previous studies together to reach a prescribed teachers' behavior, technical skills, and performance. Still, Cooper argued that beginning teachers should be encouraged to take initiatives to determine their needs and solutions individually. Similarly, Knowles (1980) advocates that all people have potential skills for specifying their learning needs, defining learning goals, identifying necessary resources for learning, choosing appropriate learning strategies, and reviewing results. Parallel with Dewey's (1933) reflecting thinking theory Knowles pointed out that people learn better when they involved in learning process instead of waiting to be taught. Fuller's (1969) three-stage theory focuses on teachers' concerns. Based on this theory, teachers pass through predictable sequence since their concern moves next level as they acquire experience. Precisely, teachers' concern is self-oriented at first and they question their ability to be successful in teaching. In the next step they start to concern about task and instructional techniques. In the following stage teachers concentrate on more societal concern. Then, they become concerned about their influence on students and educating students as functional members of the society.

Teaching profession have been motivating people with several opportunities ranging through financial rewards to satisfaction on raising new generation. When teachers enter teaching profession it does not take long to understand that teaching profession is demanding indeed. Immediately after starting to teach beginning teachers become well aware that they need to equip with new skills to handle all requirement of students, parents, schools and society. Their problems in first year of teaching concentrated around disappointment, stress, anxiety, bewilderment with children, getting confused in class, lack of support, classroom management problems, pressure, low self confidence, and self efficacy. All these problems pointed out importance of teacher education program as insufficient preparation result in failure to design peaceful, comfortable and supportive classrooms. Beginning teachers' positive expectations are broken down when they feel unsuccessful to meet the demands of teaching profession such as classroom management, motivating students, and handling curriculum requirements. Beginning teachers' struggles do not always happen in class they also make an effort to adapt school culture as school is considered a social system with complex interrelated relationships. Each school has their own organizational harmony, code of rules, ethics and behavior.

It is assumed that beginning teachers' problems are universal. Yet, teachers experience additional problems specific to Turkish national curriculum context. In Turkey educational alteration happens in a short time before solving infrastructure problems. For instance, government does not require high standards to establish Faculties of Education. Several Faculties of Education suffer from instructor shortage and structural insufficiencies. This situation decreases the chance of getting well-prepared for teaching in Turkish schools. Moreover, the distance between teacher education program and MONE sharpen with the lack of courses about MONE's complex legislation and operation. Beginning teachers have difficulty to seek promotion opportunities, official correspondence, and personal rights in public schools.

Beginning teachers' problems begins before they enter public schools as MONE hire teachers according to their score on Public Personnel Selection (PPS) examination.

PPS was developed to compare pre-service teachers' performance in a standardized way as it is a multiple-choice examination. In order to find position in public schools all pre-service teachers have to take this examination and get high score which makes pressure on them. Thus, the examination anxiety negatively affected their physical and psychological health as well as their social and financial situation.

Teacher education programs have a considerable responsibility to make a smooth transition from being a pre-service teacher to being an inservice teacher to reduce the problems of the first year of teaching. The gap between theory and practice is also matter in Turkey. Beginning teachers' main criticism about teacher education program is limited connection with real classroom requisites and what they learned in the program. The situation is even getting worse when beginning teachers are appointed to remote areas due to substantial regional differences between eastern and western parts of Turkey. Turkish educational system does not consider regional differences and needs of target population living in that regions. Besides, remote areas suffer from several social, environmental, cultural and structural drawbacks. As such, beginning teachers have additional difficulties both in school environment and social life.

In the first year of teaching beginning teachers need mentorship and guidance to employ what they have learned in teacher education program. The first year of teaching is accepted as an induction period to support new teachers and lessen their anxiety. It is supposed to assign an experienced, concerned, and committed mentor who is being a model to new teachers. However, mentoring process does not help beginning teachers to reduce their fear and anxiety as it is not taken into consideration and treated as formality. In general mentoring process is operated only on paper which leaves beginning teachers on their own and solves their problems with trial and error

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate pre-service early childhood education (ECE) teachers' expectations before entering teaching profession and their experiences in their first-year of teaching in public school context. This chapter presents the method of the research study. Specifically, it addresses research questions, research method, procedures, data analysis, and how the quality of the research is ensured.

3.1 Research Questions

This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach in which the researcher attempted to describe the meaning of the lived experiences of a phenomenon for several individuals (Creswell, 2007). In order to investigate pre-service early childhood education (ECE) teachers' perceptions, expectations and concerns before entering teaching profession and their experiences in their first-year of teaching in public school contexts, first, the meaning of and the expectations for their future profession before they began teaching were sought by interviews conducted at the end of the teacher education program. Then, positive and negative experiences they faced during their first-year teaching were investigated through interviews conducted at the end of the first semester and the second semester they taught. All these experiences covered a wide range of areas including teacher education program, physical, educational, and administrative conditions in public schools, and curricular requirements of public schools.

All of the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for coding. Only three of the Study II interviews were not conducted in face-to-face settings and participants

provided written answers for interview questions. Data were analyzed through the qualitative data analysis techniques in light of the selected theoretical framework. The findings addressed teacher education programs' strengths and weaknesses in educating early childhood education teachers for their profession as well as the problems in teaching contexts that beginning teachers experienced especially in public school settings. More specially, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions, expectations and concerns of beginning early childhood education teachers before they start?

2. What are the experiences of beginning early childhood education teachers during their first-year teaching in public schools?

   a. What are problems of beginning teachers during their first year teaching?

   b. What is the origin of their problems?

   c. What are positive experiences of beginning teachers during their first year teaching?

3. How do beginning teachers cope with the problems during their first-year teaching?

3.2 Research Method

Phenomenology is the study of life world (lebenswelt), defined as "…what we know best, what is always taken for granted in all human life, always familiar to us in its typology through experience" (Husserl 1970, pp. 123–124). It is considered as a theoretical approach based on a phenomenological concept of experience as well as a research methodology. In this sense, phenomenology is an approach to conceptualize and study experience, with consistent philosophical foundations (Giorgi 2009). It is a broad, comprehensive, and diverse field that cannot easily be placed under certain common ground, yet it overtly addresses the lived experiences (Mooij, 2010). It

might scrutinize anything that can be experienced through the consciousness of an object, a person, or a complex state of affairs. Thus, it does not apply objective analysis excluding the people who experienced. Rather, it focuses on how things are experienced by them (Giorgi 2009).

Phenomenological study describes '…the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon' (Creswell, 2007, p.57). In phenomenological studies, the question emerges from an intense interest in particular problem or topic. It seeks to reveal comprehensive description and meaning of human experience with full essence rather than seeking prediction or causal relationship (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological research aims to reduce individual experiences with a phenomenon to a description of the universal base (van Manen, 1990). Various experiences might be considered as phenomenon such as grief, anger, or insomnia (Moustakas, 1994).

There are two main approaches to phenomenology: Hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1990) and transcendental phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994). Hermeneutic phenomenology is heavily based on interpretation of what constitutes the nature of lived experiences by maintaining a strong relation to the subject of research and balancing parts in the whole (van Manen, 1990). On the other hand, transcendental phenomenology is focused on description of the experiences of participants instead of interpretation. Disciplined, organized, and systematic efforts are needed in order to distinguish prejudgments from the phenomenon being investigated. The researcher needs to set aside preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon being studied and be completely open, receptive, and naïve in listening and hearing participants' description of phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The current study employed Moustakas' transcendental approach and aimed to document beginning ECE teachers' description of the phenomenon, the lived experiences of being a beginning ECE teacher in Turkish public schools without interpreting these experiences through the beliefs and preconceptions of the researcher.

The phenomenological study presented a comprehensive in-depth picture of the lived experiences of being a pre-service and first-year ECE teacher. Specifically, it documented pre-service ECE teachers' expectations from their future career which they developed through their teacher education program experiences, immediately before entering the teaching profession. Then, it continued to document the experiences in their first year of teaching, and how they handled the complexities of real classrooms and schools. In this sense, it was pivotal to fully understand participants' perspectives and the changes they went through. The contexts that the phenomena investigated were the ECE program at a public university in Ankara from which the beginning ECE teachers graduated and the public schools that these teachers worked in their first-year of teaching. The researcher took part to collect data, evaluate expectation and experiences of the participants, and depict the whole picture of these expectations and experiences. It was expected that the findings of this study would provide feedback to teacher educators and policy makers in their efforts to improve teacher education programs and beginning teacher support policies, to the limited extend possible.

People's behavior can only be understood in the context of their lives (Patton, 2002; Smith, 1983). Interviewing allows us to see their behavior in context and provides access to understand their actions (Seidman, 1991). In-depth interviews with open-ended questions best fit phenomenological approach since the primary goal is to explore participants' responses and reconstruct their experiences of the phenomena. The purpose of in-depth interview is not to get answers and test or evaluate hypothesis. Rather, the goal is to understand the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of those experiences (Seidman, 1991). Having one-shot interview does not provide a profound exploration on the topic (Mishler, 1986). The current study employed a series of three interviews as data collection method. The first interview was conducted with pre-service teachers at the end of their studies in the teacher education program. In the first interview, participants were asked about their perceptions of and expectations from the profession of teaching young children. As the topic of interest in the present study was pre-service teachers' experiences,

they were asked to reconstruct their experiences in the practice schools, teacher education program, and society. In this sense, the first interview provided a context for the following two interviews.

The second interview aimed to reveal experiences of beginning teachers in the national curriculum context in public schools. They were asked to explain their experiences in the public school contexts they worked and reconstruct as much details as possible. In the second interview they were not supposed to express their expectations rather, they were expected to share what they were actually experiencing in the class, the school, and with the system. In the third interview, participants spent more time in the national curriculum context and made more sense of their experiences. While they were making more sense of with their current experiences, they were also considering and comparing to their past experiences. Beside, the last interview focused on interaction between beginning teachers' educational background and their teaching experiences in public schools. In this regard, the current study established a bridge between being pre-service teachers and being in-service teachers.

3.2.1 Research Site

3.2.1.1 Teacher education program

The study was conducted in the Department of Elementary Education in the Faculty of Education at Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, Turkey. METU is a technology-oriented public university and the language of instruction is English. The Department of Elementary Education offers B.S. degrees in three undergraduate programs: Elementary Mathematics Education, Elementary Science Education, and Early Childhood Education (ECE). The primary goal of the Department of Elementary Education is to train teachers who have positive attitudes towards teaching and have necessary professional skills for their field. All three programs are four-year programs that aim "to develop teachers with a sound understanding of how children learn" who are "confident in using technology;

capable in problem-solving; attentive to human rights, democracy, and ethics" (METU, 2009). The programs in the department emphasize critical thinking, personal reflection, and professional development of pre-service teachers (METU, 2009). The department had only two faculty members working in the field of ECE when the participants of this study were studying in the ECE program.

The ECE program focuses on educating early childhood education teachers with a good self- image, an outgoing personality, a sense of humor, and an interest in helping children achieve a positive image of their own (METU, 2009). There is a practice room designed as an ECE setting for teaching activities of drama, art, and project work. The ECE program had required four semesters of teaching practice courses at the second, fifth, seventh, and eighth semesters when participant of this study were studying.

Teacher education programs in Turkey recruit pre-service teachers through a multiple choice centralized Students Selection Examination (SSE) which is held only once a year. High school graduates are required to take this examination in order to attend a university. Candidates who take the examination receive their examination score and rank the programs they want to study based on their scores. Teacher education programs recruit their students in this system as well.

All over the country, Faculties of Education have the least number of academic staff among all faculties, thus student-instructor ratio is the highest in Education Faculties. Student- instructor ratio is 1 to 129.4 in Faculties of Education, 1 to 39.8 in Faculties of Art and Science, and 1 to 88.7 in Faculties of Economic and Administrative Science (Üstüner, 2004). This also addresses that practice courses are not appropriately conducted because of instructor shortage. Considering the fact that ECE department is relatively new in Turkey, even the biggest universities are likely to suffer from instructor shortage.

ECE teacher education program consists of 25% general knowledge courses (probability and statistic, Turkish, computer application, basic science), 21% general

teaching courses, and 54% field courses (Küçükahmet, 2007). Precisely, there are 28 field courses such as special needs, visual arts, creativity, and parent involvement. These courses are very different from each other and require specialization which might not be taught by instructors who do not have experience in educating young children. Especially, the music, computer use in ECE, and special education courses suffer from instructor shortage.

Even if ECE programs employ sufficient number of instructor, problem still exists since most of the instructors do not have ECE background. Only 14% of instructors were graduates of the ECE programs, 32% graduated from child development and education program, and 39% graduated from varying programs out of 152 ECE teacher educators (AÇEV, 2005). Moreover, instructors generally do not have teaching experience in public schools since graduate students start their studies immediately after their graduation and they cannot get teaching experience in schools.

3.2.1.2 Ministry of National Education and Public Schools

There has been a growing increase in early education in Turkey since the 90's (Üstüner, 2004). Governments have tried to stimulate public attention with television programs and seminars, and projects were carried out in order to extent the ECE to a wider society rather than children living in metropolis and having working mother. Both MONE and non-governmental organizations conducted several campaigns to increase schooling rate for ECE and raise public awareness. Yet schooling rate has been still around 33% as the lowest among all of the European countries (UNICEF, 2009). Inclusion of early childhood education into compulsory education was initiated in 35 pilot districts in 2009 and more ECE teachers were hired by the government. This policy increased the opportunities for the new graduates of ECE programs to be hired by the Ministry of National Education (MONE) compared to the other branch teachers, because the numbers of graduates of Faculties of Education outnumber the MONE quota for teachers in public schools (Üstüner, 2004).

The Ministry of National Education has two types of schools for ECE: independent ECE schools and elementary ECE classes. The former schools are built specifically for ECE and the latter are under the administration of the elementary schools consisting of grades 1-8. MONE have designed a few projects of school buildings and built same buildings in all cities for independent schools. Generally they consist of 4-5 classes, a separate lunch hall, play hall, and garden, and give education to 36-72 mounts age children. They have either all-day or half-day classes. In independent schools, toilets are in the classroom or next to the classroom, which provides safety for children. Moreover, most of the independent schools employ security staff; thus, entrance in school is under control. On the other hand, elementary school classes, which were not originally designed considering the 3 to 6 years old children's needs, interests, and development, have been redesigned for preschool children in elementary schools. For this reason, ECE classes in elementary schools are poor in terms of structural quality including space, lighting, safety, and materials, which in turn are likely to affect the quality of educational activities in ECE classes.

The present study included only beginning ECE teachers working in public schools, therefore, it is helpful to explain the ECE curriculum in schools. The ECE teacher handbook of MONE curriculum was changed in 2006 by the committee consisting of international specialists, instructors from ECE departments, teachers, and ECE policy makers. This restructuring has been made on the light of contemporary ECE program approach and psychological theories by considering 36-72 months children's needs. The new program aims to support 36-72 months age children's psycho-motor, social-emotional, language, and cognitive development. Beside, improving their self-care skills and making them ready for elementary schools are also the goals of the program. All of the goals in the ECE program are parallel with the goals of the elementary education. The program asserts that children learn best when they are actively involved in activities, especially through play. Moreover, the program emphasizes a constructivist approach and it encourages children to construct their own knowledge (MONE, 2006). MONE curriculum was changed once more in 2012. It was not a fundamental change and basic principals remained same. It was

improved version of 2006 curriculum based on the feedback from teachers and experts in the field of early education.

Teachers are required to prepare daily and annual plans based on the objectives and goals stressed in the MONE curriculum. Then, they carry out classroom activities according to those plans. Teachers are advised to alter the objectives and goals of their activities by considering each child's needs considering the children-centered nature of the program. In other words, program provides flexibility for teachers during the implementation. Previous ECE programs included units and teachers used to teach same subject in an order. The present program includes only goals and objectives instead of units. The purpose is to make children gain a predetermined behavior rather than teach a particular subject. In this sense, teachers would choose anything as a topic as long as children gain the specified behaviors (MONE, 2006).

3.2.2 Participants

The study was conducted in three phases. In Study I, the pre-service teachers were interviewed after they graduated from the ECE program. The participants were contacted again at the end of their first semester of teaching and those who were employed in public schools participated in Study II. The beginning teachers who participated both in Study I and Study II were contacted once more after their second semester of teaching and they all agreed to participate in Study III. The detailed recruitment processes of the participants for each study are described below.

3.2.3 Study I

At the beginning of Study I, a total of 25 female pre-service early childhood education female teachers who were studying at the same early childhood education (ECE) program in Turkey participated. All of the pre-service ECE teachers were in their 8th semester of their studies in the ECE program. Participants' field experience in the 2nd semester took place one day each week and based on observations of in-service teachers in school setting. However, it is not possible for pre-service teachers to only observe the teacher in ECE setting since ECE classes are not strictly

structured and pre-service teachers cannot remain non-participant observer because of children's interest. Therefore, it may be assumed that the participants have engaged in teaching life earlier than pre-service teachers in subject area teaching programs. Participants also had field experiences in their 5th, 7th, and 8th semesters; each lasted for one day per week. They carried on field experience in private schools at the first three practicum courses and they gained experience in public schools at the last practicum course. All of the practice schools were located in Ankara and served middle and high income level parents. Considering the nature of the field experiences, pre-service teachers participated in Study I had no experience with children and parents from low income level and rural area. Some of the participants were attending Test Preparation Centers (TPC) in order to prepare for Public Personnel Selection Exam (PPSE) to be hired in public schools at the time of Study I.

3.2.4 Study II and Study III

The researcher was the academic advisor for this group for four years during their undergraduate studies, thus she was able to contact all of the Study I participants in the middle of their first semester of teaching and gathered information of where they were working. Due to the unexpected hiring policy of MONE, many ECE teachers were hired in 2009 and 19 out of 25 Study I participants began to work in public schools. Four of the Study I participants started working in private schools, and two participants chose not to become an ECE teacher working at schools, but started a Master's program. These participants were not included in Study II. Two participants in public schools were removed from the Study II participants since they were appointed as administrators and they did not have a class to teach. Finally, the researcher could not reach one of the participants as she changed her phone number and e-mail address. Thus, Study II was conducted with 16 beginning ECE teachers working in public schools. Study III employed those 16 beginning teachers who participated in Study II after they completed the second semester of teaching. Table I represented more detailed information about participants. In this study only three participants graduated from vocational high schools for girls. Rest of them graduated from Anatolian Teacher High Schools.

45

Table 3.1. Participants' Information

Score on PPSE		Position	Local District	Elementary/Independent School	Class Size	Working Hours	Student Age	School Fee
81	P1	Temporary to Permanent	First center then province	Both schools are Independent First school had 3 classes Second school had 4 classes	10 then 14	Whole Day	4-5	100 Lira
75	P2	Permanent	Remote	Elementary, 1 class	12	8am-3pm	6	10 Lira (not regularly)
79.7	P3	Permanent	Remote	Independent, 3 classes	20	Whole day	6	110
67.5	P4	Temporary	Close to center	Elementary	7	8am-12pm	5-6	5 Lira (not regularly)
66	P5	Temporary	Close to center	Independent, 8 classes (6 whole day, 2 half day)	At first 24 then decrease to 16 Second term 14 students	Afternoon	3-4	Whole day:130 Half Day:75
58	P6	Temporary	Remote	Elementary, 4 classes	At first 5 then increased 20-25	8am-12pm teaching Afternoon administrative tasks	5	1-5 Lira (not regularly)

Table 3.1 continued

74	P7	Temporary	Close to center	Elementary, 1 class	15	11:45pm to 3:45pm	6	40 Lira
70	P8	Temporary	Close to center	Elementary, 1 class	First semester 9 Second semester 7	8:30am-1:30 pm	6	No fee
57.5	P9	Temporary	Remote	Independent, 5 classes	15	8am-12pm	3	5 Lira (not regularly)
	P10	Temporary	Center	Elementary, 4 classes	25	12:30pm-16:45pm	6	85 Lira
57	P11	Temporary	Close to center	Elementary, 2 classes	20	10am-3pm	6	20 Lira
63	P12	Temporary	Center	Elementary, 1 class	18	9am-1:30pm	5-6	No fee
69.9	P13	Temporary	Remote	Elementary, 1 class	25	11:50pm-16:30pm	4-5-6	No fee
77	P14	Permanent	Center	Elementary, 3 classes	16	12.40pm-17.40pm	6	35 Lira
65	P15	Temporary	Center	Elementary	23	Afternoon	6	10 Lira
	P16	Permanent	Remote	Independent, 7 classes	27 (160 in total)	Whole day	6	100 lira

47

3.2.5 Data Collection

Data collection for this study was composed of three phases. In Study I, pre-service teachers' positive and negative expectations before they started their profession were sought. Study II focused on positive and negative experiences of beginning teachers after teaching for one semester and how they coped with problems when they have experienced. The aim of Study III was similar to Study II as it focused on the positive and negative experiences and their coping strategies after completing the first year in teaching. Data collection procedures in these phases are explained in detail below. Considering the fact that this study only recruited beginning teachers working in public schools, it also investigated issues included in ECE program implemented in public schools such as preparing daily plans, assessment, and parent involvement.

3.2.5.1 Study I

The first interview took place immediately before participants' graduation. This interview protocol was designed based on the related literature. Then, two instructors at the ECE program, an ECE teacher working in public schools, and a graduate student without work experience investigated the relevance of the questions. Study I interview questions were redesigned based on their feedback. Pilot interview was conducted with another graduate student who did not have any work experience to test the clarity of questions. After developing the interview protocol, the researcher carried out interviews to document pre-service teachers' expectations of their future profession. Participants were also asked about their career plans and expected work conditions. The interview protocol had 24 main questions. Probing questions were also asked to explore emerging issues during the interviews. Interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes. The Study I interview protocol is presented in the Appendix A and sample questions are represented in Table 2 below:

Table 3.2. Sample Questions for Study I

Career plan	Where do you plan to work when you graduate?
	What kind of teacher do you want to be?
Work condition	How do you plan to deal with disabled children if you have one in your class?
	How do you plan to set your relationships with other colleagues
Expectation	What is your expectation on school's physical environment?
	What is your expectation on educational materials in school?

3.2.5.2 Study II

The second study was conducted after participants' first semester of teaching to explore their concerns about being a novice teacher and what they experienced in their first semester of teaching. Study II interview protocol was developed by reviewing and enhancing the Study I interview protocol based on the related literature. Two instructors in ECE program, a teacher who had seven years of work experience in public schools, and an administrator who had eight years of work experience in public schools investigated interview questions for appropriateness. The researcher conducted pilot interviews with three beginning teachers working in public schools in Aksaray, a province center. All three teachers were graduated from ECE programs of different universities and had no teaching experience when they started to work in public schools. After little change on the questions in the interview protocol based on the pilot interviews, the researcher started to collect data for Study II. Participating teachers were working at different cities, thus, the researcher traveled to 10 different cities in Turkey to collect data. She could not go two of the most distant cities due to scheduling problems. Therefore, three participants in those cities provided written responses for the interview questions. Although the remaining three participants did not answer interview questions during a face-to-face interview, they provided sufficient information about their first semester experiences. The interview contained 46 main questions. Sub-questions and probing questions were

also asked to explore the emerging issues during the interview. Interviews were completed approximately in 90 minutes. The main interview questions in the Study II interview protocol are given in the Appendix B and sample questions are represented in Table 3 and Table 4 for both Study II and Study III below:

Table 3.3 Sample Questions for Study II

Teacher education program	Do you think you had sufficient theoretical and practical knowledge in the teacher education program?
	Do you have any suggestions to make teacher education program more effective?
Work condition	What did you feel when you first appointed to this school?
	How did you handle children coming from differing socio-economical background?
Support	Do you have mentor teacher? How does mentoring process work?
	What could have been done to lessen your problems in your first year of teaching?

3.2.5.3 Study III

Study III was conducted at the end of the first year of teaching of the participating beginning teachers in order to clarify how their perceptions, satisfactions, and views of practice of their profession have changed at the end of their first year of teaching. Interview protocol for Study III was a combination of Study I and Study II protocols. Two instructors from ECE program and one instructor from Elementary Mathematics Education program conducting similar studies investigated Study II's protocol and made minor changes for the Study III's interview protocol. In Study III the researcher was able to reach all of the participants and conduct face to face interview. She traveled to eight different cities and to several surrounding towns to conduct face to face interviews with 12 participants. Four participants were interviewed in Ankara during their visit. Table 4 represented sample questions for Study III.

Table 3. 4 Sample Questions for Study III

Teaching practice	What preparation did you have before entering your class?
	How did you establish classroom management in your class?
	Did you encounter some problems?
Work condition	How was your relation with director in your first year of teaching?
	Did you feel pressure on you in your first year of teaching?
	Where did it come from?
Career pursuit	Do you think you will work as an ECE teacher for long times? Does it make you happy? What motivates you to continue as a teacher?
	Was your definition of good teacher changed after this year?

3.2.6 Data analysis

The phenomenological analysis process developed by Moustakas (1994) was used in this study to analyze the data. Data for phenomenological study consist of long and in-depth interviews involving an informal and interactive process. Accordingly, the audio-recorded interviews in this study were transcribed verbatim and written responses of three participants in Study I were reviewed for completeness before the phenomenological analysis. The analysis started with highlighting significant statements that provided an understanding of how participants experienced the phenomenon, which were expectations of pre-service teachers before entering teaching profession and being a beginning ECE teacher in public schools. Then, relevant statements were determined through the horizonalizing process. After that, the meaning or meaning units were listed from the horizonalized statements. Next, the researcher removed overlapping and repetitive statements so that clusters and themes (such as public perception, relationship with colleagues, work status, and school conditions) appeared. Textural descriptions of the experience was formed using clustered themes, and meanings and essence of the expectations of pre-service

teachers before entering teaching profession and being a beginning ECE teacher in public schools were constructed (Moustakas, 1994). Data analysis process was monitored by a researcher in the field of teacher education program.

The researcher also included Creswell's (2007) suggestions to analyze the data. First of all, organized files were created for easier analysis procedure. The researcher read all the texts, made margin notes, and formed initial codes while highlighting the significant statements of participants' experiences with the phenomena. The literature on Turkish public ECE school contexts revealed limited codes for the analysis. Research on the beginning teachers' problems abroad, such as Veenman's (1984) review, provided more global codes (such as classroom management, relationships with parents and assessment) for the analysis. However, since the present research have addressed a particular educational context with a national curriculum and two types of ECE public schools, data analysis process has revealed codes emerged from the contextual issues (such as independent schools and elementary schools). Therefore, the horizonalizing process employed a combination of pre-determined codes and emerging codes in order to determine relevant statements. Data were analyzed through examining the data, categorizing the sets of data, grouping the sets into similar dimensions, and naming them, while extracting the meaning units. Then, themes were established. More precisely, detailed textural descriptions of the phenomenon (expectations of pre-service teachers before entering teaching profession and being a beginning ECE teacher in public schools) and the setting (teacher education program, independent and elementary public schools, and the centralized system in Turkey) were the core elements in this study.

3.2.6.1 Coding

In order to provide dependability, a coding procedure was carried out in this study. First of all, the researcher coded three participants' interview. Those three participants were chosen to represent several views of participants as one of them expressed her first year of teaching was amazing, one of them expressed that she had terrible experiences in her first-year of teaching, the last one expressed rather neutral

experiences. After coding these three participants' interview data, the researcher discussed the initial codes with a researcher experienced in qualitative methodologies.

The researcher also asked a doctoral candidate in the Department of Elementary Education at METU to code the data as a second coder. Then, the rest of the data were coded based on initial codes with some room for modification. Reporting the inter-rater agreement might not be enough to reflect process of training the coder and the coding process. Precisely and straightly explained coding procedure can ensure the quality of the reliability of research (De Wever, Schellens, Valcke, & Van Keer, 2006). Therefore, the coding process of the both coders is explained here in detail.

The researcher briefly summarized ECE teacher education program and ECE setting in public schools to the second coder. She did not share initial codes with the second coder. Rather, they studied on the pilot study interviews. The second coder openly coded the first pilot interview. Then, they compared their codes to see the commonalities and differences between their codes. The agreement on codes were quite low, which was about 51% as calculated by Holsti's (1969) method which is described in detail in the Trustworthiness section. Low agreement mainly stemmed from using different names for the same codes. After discussing the meaning of the codes, agreement level increased to 80% in the coding of the second interview. Finally, in the coding of the third interview, they reached almost a total agreement. After that, the researcher and the second coder started to code all data separately and the inter-rater reliability ended with a total agreement for all the coded data.

The unit of analysis determines how the overall discussion is to be broken down into manageable items for follow-up coding procedure according to the analysis categories. The choice for the unit of analysis plays an important role on the accuracy of the coding and to what extent data reflect the true content (Hearnshaw, 2000). Different studies choose different units of analysis depending on their contexts. The unit of analysis in a study might be units of meaning, a complete message, combination of meaning and message, sentences, or whole discussion in some

studies (De Wever, Schellens, Valcke, & Van Keer, 2006). Similarly, Merriam (1998) stated that a unit of data is any meaningful piece of data which gives the smallest component of information. In this study, participants' responses to the interview questions were examined, and a sentence, couple of sentences, or whole paragraph was found to be meaningful pieces among the data. Therefore, a chunk consisting of meaningful expressions was selected as the unit of analysis.

3.2.6.2 Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are the core elements to be considered first while conducting a research. Although validity and reliability play pivotal roles in both qualitative and quantitative studies, they are different concepts in two different research traditions. Merrriam (1998) argued that regardless of the research type, validity and reliability would deal with careful attention to the study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, interpreted, and the findings were presented. However, there is no consensus on using quantitative research terminology such as reliability and validity in qualitative research. When quantitative researchers speak of research validity and reliability, they are usually referring to distinguished concepts; however, these terms are not treated separately in qualitative studies. Instead, the terms credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness include both reliability and validity. Quantitative research's quality is mostly determined by reliability and validity, whereas quality in qualitative research depends on the ability and efforts of the researcher (Golafshani, 2003). In qualitative research reality is not single, objective, and fixed waiting to be discovered. Rather it is holistic, multidimensional, and ever-changing in its nature. In this sense, qualitative research focus on people's construction of reality since the primary instrument of data collection and analysis is human beings. When reality is viewed in this manner, internal validity becomes strength of qualitative research and in order to ensure credibility, a researcher should use triangulation, member checks, peer examination, and participatory research, and address researcher's bias (Merriam, 1998).

The extent to which the resulting descriptions or relationships are valid in qualitative studies depends largely on four criteria namely objectivity, reliability, replicability, and systematic coherence (Rourke, Anderson, Garrison, & Archer, 2000). The assumption underlying the search for objectivity is simple. The way we perceive and understand the world of empirical reality is depended on us (Kirk & Miller, 1986). In other words, objectivity refers that a truth or independent reality exists outside of any investigation or observation and researchers try to uncover this reality without influencing it in any way. However, the process of investigation itself would affect what is being investigated especially in the social sciences. In this sense, a realistic aim for the researchers is to remain impartial to the result of the study, acknowledge their own preconceptions and reflect them as unbiased as possible (Smith, 1983). In short, objectivity refers to the extent to which categorization of sections of transcripts is subject to influence by the coders in the context of qualitative analysis and the primary test of objectivity in qualitative studies is inter-rater reliability, defined as the extent to which different coders come to the same coding decisions on same content (Rourke et al. 2000).

One of the assumptions underlying reliability is that there is a single reality and it will yield the same result with repeated study (Merriam, 1998). Researcher's position within the group being studied, participants selection and information about them, data gathering, and the social context in which data gathered should be explained in detail. Therefore, the researcher enables readers to understand methods and its effectiveness thoroughly (Shenton, 2004). The researchers' position, audit trail, and triangulation are strategies to establish credibility. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) do not suggest use of the term "triangulation" since it results in more confusion than it is assumed to clarify. They suggest explaining the use of different data collection techniques, different data collectors, or different data sources in detail rather than imprecise and abstract term triangulation. Considering that terms such as reliability, validity, and triangulation have several approaches in the qualitative research paradigm, the quality of the research in this study was described by adopting Bogdan and Biklen's suggestion.

The present study employed Holsti's (1969) coefficient of reliability in order to measure percentage agreement among the two coders as it is recommended more. The formula is given below:

PA=2A/(nA+nB)

where "PA stands for percentage agreement. A is the number of agreements between two coders, and nA and nB are the number of units coded by coders A and B, respectively. This measure ranges from .00 (no agreement) to 1.00 (perfect agreement)" (Neuendorf, 2002 p.149)

As it was explained in the coding section in detail, first, codes were discussed with a researcher experienced in qualitative research and conducting similar studies in order to ensure the reliability. All interviews were initially coded individually by the researcher. Then, the second coder and the researcher worked on the pilot interviews. When they reached a reasonable consensus on the codes and coded chunks as calculated by Holsti's (1969) formula, they started to code the actual data. Finally, they came together and compared their codings and they reached a total consensus.

Another strategy to validate result of qualitative study is replicability. It refers to recording the exact methods, rules, and procedures so that another researcher can do the same thing and draw the same conclusion. Providing the materials for such replication will enable readers to understand and evaluate what has been done. Replicability is not only applied to see whether research measures are reliable. Rather, it is an entire reasoning process used in producing conclusions. Further research would be able to duplicate the data and follow the process to reach previous conclusions. Replication is only possible by reporting the study in sufficient detail so that researchers can evaluate the procedures followed and methods used (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1996; Merriam, 1998). Researchers are required to provide sufficient detailed description of the research context to enable readers to compare it with their research and transfer findings and conclusion to other situations (Shenton, 2004). Parallel with Shenton's (2004) suggestions for transferability, research

context, recruitment of participants, the data collection methods, and the time period of the study were discussed in detail. In so doing, researcher aimed to provide detailed information about the process to enable other researchers to repeat the current study.

Researcher brings a unique perspective to the qualitative research. In this sense, researcher should ensure as possible as that the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants instead of preferences of the researcher; that is, confirmability for reducing researcher biases. There are a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. The researcher should document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study (Shenton, 2004). Ensuring replicability and confirmability is similar in this study since researcher explained underlying reason for choosing particular methodology, provided detailed methodological description, and discussed its strengths as well as weaknesses. After providing detailed methodological information, the next step is the audit trail which is a transparent description of the research steps taken from the start of a research project to the development and reporting of findings. These records are used for examining the data collection and analysis procedures and making judgments about the potential for bias or defect in design (Shenton, 2004). The present study employed audit trail for ensuring the confirmability. A researcher from Elementary Education Department monitored the research findings step by step and authenticated the findings of study. Finally, in order to maintain the trustworthiness of this study, data were collected over an extended period of time: Before the beginning of teaching, middle of first year of teaching, and the end of the first year of teaching. Other strategies to ensure trustworthiness were debriefing sessions with the supervisor and thesis committee members; peer scrutiny in international conferences; and member checks during interviews restating or summarizing participants' responds as the researcher sent transcripts to participants in order to allow them critically analyze the transcripts and comment on them. None of the participants disaffirmed that the transcripts did not reflect their views, feelings, and experiences. Researcher had a strong rapport with the participants since she had been their

academic advisor through their undergraduate education in the ECE program. In order to comfort all of the participants during the interviews, researcher ensured the confidentiality with consent forms of ethics committee. She also indicated that she was interested in their ideas and there were no correct answers for the interview questions. The participants were interviewed in their homes or where they felt comfortable in talking about their experiences.

Another strategy to increase trustworthiness of present study was to employ inter-coder agreement to decrease the amount of inferences that the researcher made. Beside, direct quotations were used to decrease the amount of inferences that the researcher made. Rich and thick description of the study including teacher education and public school context was provided and previous research in the literature was used to assess the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This study is a phenomenological research in which the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a phenomenon is described (Creswell, 2007). The purpose of this study was to scrutinize the pre-service early childhood education (ECE) teachers' perceptions and expectations before entering the teaching profession. Moreover, the current study aimed to investigate beginning ECE teachers' challenges in their first-year teaching and how they coped with these challenges in the national curriculum context. In order to investigate the lived experiences of first-year early childhood teachers in public schools, first, their expectations for their profession before they began teaching were sought by interviews conducted at the end of the teacher education program. Then, positive and negative experiences they faced during their first-year teaching were investigated through interviews conducted at the end of the first semester and the second semester they taught. Their experiences covered a wide range of areas including teacher education program, physical, educational, and administrative conditions in public schools, and curricular requirements of public schools. Specifically, the following research questions were sought in this study:

1. What are the perceptions, expectations and concerns of beginning early childhood education teachers before they start their profession?

2. What are the experiences of beginning early childhood education teachers during their first-year teaching in public schools?

    a. What are the problems of beginning teachers during their first year teaching?

b. What is the origin of their problems?

c. What are the positive experiences of beginning teachers during their first year teaching?

3. How do beginning teachers cope with the problems during their first-year teaching?

As it was explained before, data collection proceeded in three phases in this study. Study I's findings were represented separately as it solely focused on pre-service teachers' perceptions and expectations of their future profession. However, Study II and Study III's findings were represented together since they both were about beginning teachers' experiences in public schools. In order to prevent possible confusion quotations were represented as "P1-S2" or "P8-S3" where "P" is referred to participants and "S" is referred the study (Study II or Study III) which mentioned quotation stated. The quoted participant expressions were selected as representative of the perspectives or experiences stated for a specific issue.

4.1 Study I

Study I documents 16 pre-service ECE teachers' expectations of their future profession. Their expectations are clustered around their perceptions of the profession and expectations about the school and classroom contexts.

4.1.1 Perception of Profession

4.1.1.1 Being an ECE teacher

4.1.1.1.1 Importance of ECE

The term perception is difficult to clearly define. For the purposes of this study, it is defined as participants' expressions of a positive or negative perspective concerning being an early childhood education (ECE) teacher. Their reflection upon the teaching profession concentrated mostly on importance of ECE and difficulties of being an ECE teacher.

The findings of this study revealed that 12 participants out of 16 were not aware of the importance of ECE until they started to study in the teacher education program. P11 explained how her perception has changed throughout her college education:

"I was not aware of the importance of ECE when I first started (to study) in the department. We took 'Child development' and 'Introduction' [to ECE] courses, then I realized its importance". (P11)

All of the participants recognized the importance of ECE after taking classes that were setting a basis for the following years. P14 summarized its importance with the tree and root metaphors:

"It is important since it sets the basis of our life. It is just like a root of tree. Early years are rooting time for young children. If we plant roots properly they will be a complete tree". (P14)

Participants explained the importance of ECE with different viewpoints ranging from cognitive development to being less dependent in life. P10 pointed out a pivotal role of early education on cognitive development:

"We have seen in all our courses that education starts as early as birth even in the mother's womb. Moreover, brain development occurs in early years and affects children's whole life to a great extent. This is why 0-6 years are emphasized so much." (P10)

P6 believed that having early education would help children to become more independent:

"If we enable children to manage themselves or give them the opportunity to meet their needs, they would not be dependent on someone. Rather, they would live as individuals in the future." (P6)

4.1.1.1.2 Difficulties of Being an ECE Teacher

The participants identified difficulties of being an ECE teacher including physical and mental exhaustion. The former was related to tiredness. The latter stemmed from feeling considerable responsibility to educate a vulnerable group of humans and feeling extensive pressure to be responsive, fair, and sensitive to all children's needs all the time. ECE classes do not have breaks as upper grades which causes isolation for ECE teachers in schools. Eleven participants expressed that it was especially difficult for teachers working in whole day classes:

> *"You do not have a social environment. [You have to be with the children the whole day.] Teachers cannot even eat [lunch] with their friends in whole day programs. They have to eat with the children. There should be a substitute teacher so that full day class teachers can eat their lunch in dining hall with the other teachers"(P13).*

Working without break is even harder in all day programs with a young age group such as 3-year-olds. P8 addressed non-stop teaching as the hardest part of being an ECE teacher:

> *"We have to spend all day with children without a break. It is worse if you are teaching a younger group. We do not have lunch or a coffee break since we cannot leave children even for a moment."* (P8)

All of the participants felt emotional pressure due to the nature of the teaching profession. Being objective all the time and a good communicator as a teacher were difficult for P16:

> *"You must always be socialized and careful. It gets tiring in time. You must listen to people carefully, understand what they mean, give the right feedback, give the right answers, and communicate properly. We are human beings so we might be angry, unhappy, or disappointed. However, teaching is a profession where you are not allowed to show*

your emotional challenges." (P16)

P14 approached the difficulty of teaching young children from a psychological aspect. Being an appropriate model and responsive to children were demanding responsibilities that she was afraid of making a mistake:

> *"It is a difficult job since all my actions are observed by children. I might think that I have behaved normally to children but they might totally misunderstand and be deeply affected. You need to be very careful about what you are saying all the time. You might think it is an ordinary thing but it may affect children's subconscious minds."* (P14)

On the other hand, P5 mentioned both the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards of being a teacher and addressed that teachers overrated the difficulty of their jobs. She stated that working conditions were not too bad for teachers in Turkey if they worked in a public school:

> *"You observe what you taught to children [in their behavior]. You are free in your class. Which occupation can provide this kind of thing for you? Teachers always complain about working conditions, but they have several holidays. There is always a holiday in public schools. We need to take that into consideration [the positive aspects]."* (P5)

4.1.1.2 Public Perception of Teaching Profession

4.1.1.2.1 Underestimation on ECE

Pre-service teachers used to be exposed to negative reactions from people about their profession when they first entered the ECE program. All of the participants claimed that many people had the tendency to underestimate teaching young children as a profession and they even did not accept it as a profession in general. This situation made pre-service teachers frustrated, and they started to question their choice of profession even though they willingly started. P12 stated:

"When I say I am an ECE teacher, people say 'What are you doing? Just playing! Why are you studying five years? Are two years not enough?' I really get angry. Even though I willingly chose teaching young children, I doubted my choice at first." (P12)

P2 compared the status of teaching with other professions and found no difference between being an ECE teacher and being a teacher for higher grades. Teaching was considered an easy occupation while other professions got high salary, seemed to be more complex, and were considered more prestigious:

"It is not different than any other teaching profession since society considers it as an easy occupation. It has been this way for years in our society that you are valuable if you have the title of engineer in front of your name which means you are successful". (P2)

P16 explained how she doubted her profession due to a negative reaction from people, but then both her perception and public perception have changed in time:

"It affected me very much. First, I chose the department [ECE]. As I said it was not considered as an occupation. In general their reaction was 'Ohh! After studying five years are you going to be a nanny? You are going to be a nanny with a certificate.' I was really disappointed in the beginning. Then, as I studied I recognized that I am occupied with a serious job. I do not know whether it was because of a change in society's perception or not. I do not feel like that anymore, but I doubted at first if I would really be a nanny." (P16)

Participants' negative feelings about being an ECE teacher were decreased with the help of positive experiences in the practicum course. P8 explained this process:

"You are influenced by the environment. I was thinking that I was going to look after children in the beginning. My perception was negative at first and then it got better as I saw my accomplishment

with children." (P8)

Six participants addressed the influence of parents rather negative perceptions about ECE on their profession and how unaware the parents were about the ECE:

> *"People's unawareness generates quality problems in early education. If parents would really be aware of [the importance of] early education, they would have tried to increase the quality"* (P3).

This negative perception on their profession motivated P14 to fight with perception and improve the field of early education:

> *"I do not believe that teachers get respect as much as doctors or engineers, yet sometimes being oppressed motivate people to fight for a better world. For instance, it works for me reversely. I think we can create a beautiful environment for children. We will improve the field of early education and we will train society about its significance".* (P14)

4.1.1.2.2 Increasing Attention on ECE

All of the participants addressed the change in society's attitude towards ECE and they appreciated this change. The tradition of early education in Turkey has not been long. It has just lasted to 90s which urged to Ministry of National Education (MONE) to increase schooling rate of ECE and participants were satisfied with the latest improvement in their forthcoming profession. P13 addressed the growing interest on early education in society parallel to the recent efforts:

> *"It has been changing. When we first entered the program people used to underestimate early childhood education but people are not like that anymore. It has changed even more recently. People, especially parents, started to realize that it is good and important."* (P13)

65

P9 believed that people from high socio-economic status would give more priority to early education. Although the majority of parents seemed to be concerned with their children's education, they needed to be informed about the importance of ECE:

> *"People graduated from university and having high socio-economic status really understand its significance and monitor their children's education closely. On the other hand, another group of parents send their children to school but still do not know how to support their children's early learning. I think they want to get information about early education, yet could not find people to receive help."* (P9)

4.1.1.3 Issues with Motivation of Pre-service Teachers

4.1.1.3.1 Desire to Develop Children and Making Difference

All of the pre-service teachers expressed that their main source of motivation was intrinsic, not extrinsic. Pre-service teachers wanted to make a difference and be satisfied with the accomplishment in their profession. Being accomplished meant helping children to reach their full potential both academically and personally:

> *"If I see my effect on children, I will be motivated. I think it is a highly motivating job. I was really happy when children were happy in my activity, even in the practicum course".* (P15)

P7 claimed that no other occupation could provide satisfaction as much as teaching young children:

> *"You are motivated with this job since you see how children are shaped in your hand. I love this part [of teaching] the most. Any other occupation could not provide this to you. You might only experience [such a satisfaction] while raising your own child. I think there is no sense of satisfaction like this."* (P7)

4.1.1.3.2 Personal Fulfillment and Dispositional Motivation

All of the pre-service teachers defined love of children as an essential characteristic of being a good teacher. This might be related with their source of motivation since 13 participants identified their personality as well-suited to be teachers and love of children was a part of their personality. Being with children and sharing their ideas were sufficient to motivate P8:

> *"Children are so innocent that their purity [cleans] you. In my last practicum a child cried madly. I asked him why he was crying and he said 'I forgot my watch at home; my mom will forget to take me from school.' I really like the way they are thinking. They are so innocent, so you can forget all other things and your tiredness with their innocence."* (P8)

P11 believed that being with children also helped her stay young by its dynamic structure:

> *"It is enjoyable and it will keep me young. I will be a child when I will be 40, which makes me happier. This cannot be found in any other occupation. In contrast, people lose their energy. I love its dynamics."* (P11)

Both physical environment and workload of ECE was more attractive than an ordinary job for P6:

> *"This is the kind of job where every day is different. We do not need to sit all day at a table and look at the same file. We are dealing with children, so we will experience something new every day."* (P6)

Some of the participants had been motivated for years to be a teacher since it was their dream from childhood like P16:

> *"Becoming a teacher has been my unique dream since elementary*

school. I really like teaching something to people or to get a right answer from them. This is why I postponed my graduate study to become a teacher. I wonder what will happen when I work as a teacher." (P16)

P1 complained about material payoff but immaterial satisfaction covers lack of material reward in teaching profession:

"It does not satisfy materially but it is intrinsically satisfying. It is difficult but enjoyable and funny... I laugh a lot with the children. They are cute and funny. It is more enjoyable for me to work with children rather than [working with] adults." (P1)

4.1.1.3.3 Anticipated Loss of Motivation

Fourteen participants expressed their fear of losing motivation as the years would pass since it was not always possible to sustain their enthusiasm without breakdown. Participants have observed burned out teachers in their practicum course. They were afraid of losing their enthusiasm like the teachers since they witnessed that teachers could continue their profession without much effort after getting a teacher position in public schools. P13 was concerned about how to handle a demoralizing situation:

"I am afraid of losing my idealism. I sometimes get suspicious about my idealism and ask myself 'If I could not perform what I am planning now'. Would I be just concerned about April 23 shows if I work in private school or would I just want to drink coffee with other teachers while children are sleeping in public school. These doubts really frighten me." (P13)

Similarly P12 was negatively affected with the example of unmotivated teachers:

"I feel like a child when I am with children; thus, I feel like it is for fun instead of work. At least I felt in practicum course like that but I

do not know what will happen when I become a teacher. Teachers sometimes complain about their job 'I came [to school] again and I have to deal with these children.' I am really angry with them. What are they doing? Ultimately, you have fun while making children have fun. It must be that way if you like your job. I hope I will not be one of those teachers. " (P12)

P13 addressed how educating young children would be difficult in a whole day program. However, getting immediate response for what they had done motivated preservice teachers to endure long working hours:

"OK! It is very enjoyable and very good but it becomes tiring especially in private schools from 8 o'clock to 5 o'clock. However, you can observe what you have done quickly. You do not need to look at the score of children, rather it is observable in children's behavior which is more satisfying." (P13)

Seeing changes in children's behavior is not enough for P16 and she needed to be supported to sustain her motivation:

"Definitely I am going to be motivated, if I get positive feedback from parents. If parents recognize improvement in their children's behavior, I am motivated. Support and appreciation from administrators would motivate me as well." (P16)

4.1.1.4 Lack of Practice in the Teacher Education Program

All of the participants were satisfied with their teacher education program; however, they all stated that they were likely to have problems in their future career since the teacher education program did not provide sufficient practice opportunities. Fifteen participants expected to have difficulty in implementing what they had learnt in the teacher education program in a real classroom context when they entered the profession. P10 mentioned the theory-practice gap issue in teacher education

program:

> *"We learnt the perfect style of education but there is reality that we meet in school. I believe all my friends think the same way that things are very different in schools and you can find yourself in a situation where what is written in books is not helpful to solve problems in the class with children."* (P10)

Theory-practice gap was even deeper for the participants of this study since the language of instruction was English at METU, the entire course books were written in English, and they were not related to the Turkish educational system. P14 pointed out how the teacher education program was far from preparing pre-service teachers for the problems of the Turkish educational system:

> *"There is no need to go to remote areas since I realized that it is not possible to find appropriate conditions even in some parts of Ankara. To tell the truth, we are not familiar with Turkish context since we never discussed it in our courses. We always studied the American context which has already developed, but Turkey is a developing country and we would feel more prepared for the undeveloped conditions if we had seen the Turkish context."* (P14)

After studying all of their classes in English for four years, pre-service teachers seemed to be distant from Turkish cases. Although they all planned to work in public schools, they did not look over Turkish ECE curriculum:

> *"We have such a funny habit that we were always interested in and read our [course] books so we did not investigate MONE's curriculum ever. It is a big drawback. We are living in Turkey why don't we investigate it. Ultimately, it was prepared by expert people in the field."* (P5)

70

Participants claimed differences in their practicum experiences based on the cooperating schools. While some of them closely worked with cooperating teachers, some did not. They did not learn much practice in university, and they tried to compensate for this drawback in the practicum course. However, the lack of support from mentor teachers, who were supposed to guide pre-service teachers about the expected and unexpected situations in the class, did not help participants much. P10 was challenged by her mentor teacher to calm down a child having temper tantrum without any support:

> *"One of the children in practicum course had a temper tantrum. He cried and kicked floor 'I hate school and I will never come back here again'. The teacher made me deal with him and added: 'You can have this kind of child in your class. What should you do?'. However, what could I do? It was my 2nd week and I did not know that child. I tried to calm him down but I could not accomplish it."* (P10)

Timing of the practicum course limited the range of experiences that participants would benefit from. P9 offered an ongoing practicum course instead of having practicum for a long time with intervals:

> *"We have been discussing about going to a practicum course for an entire two weeks rather than a day in a week. We went to practicum every Wednesday and their program is always the same on Wednesdays, so we just observed the same activities over and over again. Besides, it is getting boring in time; we could not observe different activities."* (P9)

The existing structure of the practicum course also brought classroom management problems for the participants as P6 claimed. She offered a three-month practice to make practicum more efficient:

> *"If we conducted practicum course in summer for three months, it would be more efficient since I would try to teach children something*

now but they would forget us by the next week. Additionally, children do not take us into consideration seriously when we go to the practicum school only one day in a week." (P6)

Participants had the last practicum course in independent public schools. Therefore, they did not have any experience with the processes in the preschool classrooms located in elementary schools. P16 pointed out this limitation in teacher education:

"I want to have a practicum course in an elementary school to see how things are going on and how teachers work there. I had an opportunity to see an elementary class when I was in vocational high school. As I remember, it was quite different than an independent school. I want to have practicum in [an elementary school] with my current knowledge." (P16)

Moreover, the practicum course was conducted in schools serving education to middle and high socio-economic status families, which limited participants' experience in educating children coming from low socio-economic status families. Almost all of the participants were planning to work in public schools where teachers might be confronted with children from low socio-economic status families or even from poverty. P5 confessed her incompetence for teaching such a group of children:

"I really do not know children coming from low socio-economic status (SES). I do not know how to teach them. Of course! I will teach them, but it would be hard. It is even worse if I will meet low and high SES children in the same class. It would take some time to get used to this situation for me." (P5)

4.1.1.5 Career planning

Pre-service teachers' future plans and career decisions were uncertain when *Study I* was conducted since most of the participants were waiting for Public Personnel Selection Examination (PPSE) to be appointed in public schools. The PPSE did not

require participants to have a predetermined score. Candidates were appointed based on their scores ranked from highest to lowest and the quota that the MONE determined. Therefore, getting higher scores increased the likelihood of being appointed to a public school. For this reason some of the participants were attending Test Preparation Centers (TPC) in order to prepare for the PPSE. The number of public schools that the teachers would be appointed to and their locations were also unpredictable, and it would be announced several times during a year by MONE. MONE did not announce any vacancy in the beginning of *Study I* and participants felt stressed due to their indefinite future plans. Working in private schools would also be stressful for participants as those schools' contracts would be loaded. All of the participants were nervous about their future plans to some extent and P10 reflected pre-service teachers' tension while deciding on their career path because of the requirements:

> *"There are many unknown things waiting for me in the future. I do not know where I am going to work. It is a huge gap and everything will become definite according to where I would work. If I signed a contract with private school and I realized that I could not be happy in there, then what would happen? Feeling the obscurity is definitely annoying".* (P10)

Participants had three practicum courses in private schools and one in public schools. Their experiences both in public and private schools played a major role in shaping their career plans. Based on their observation in public and private schools, 15 participants out of 16 were planning to work in public schools. P11 mentioned about ECE teachers' chance in the PPSE:

> *"It depends on our score in PPSE. We graduated in a strange time yet we did not study enough [for the examination]. It is a great chance since there is a rumor that the score will decline dramatically and we would be appointed with 60-65[out of 100] points. I hope I can benefit from this opportunity. All my friends said 'I wish we had such an*

73

amount of vacancy for our department." (P11)

Participants' preferences concentrated on job security, income, freedom at work, and less parental pressure. P5 compared public and private schools' conditions from several perspectives and summarized attractiveness of public schools:

> *"Definitely, I will work in public schools since you do not have additional responsibilities in public schools other than teaching children. For instance, you need to satisfy parents in private schools and work to present your class beautifully. I want to feel free and public schools are more flexible. Besides, of course, job security is better, working hours are less tiring, and people respect you. It is not the same in private schools based on my observation. Teachers are beaten down and lost in private schools".* (P5)

Pre-service teachers' negative feelings towards private schools were strengthened after conducting job interviews with the private schools. Low salary, excessive workload, and long working hours were primary reasons for not working in private schools. P12 summarized her job interview in a private school:

> *"I said I wanted 1100 Turkish Liras and I also wanted to study master. They were bargaining for paying less but it is difficult to even support yourself in Ankara with 1100 [Liras]. [...] Therefore, it is not reasonable to work in private schools since you can get 1700 [Liras] in public schools with several means."* (P12)

Small schools were more concerned about financial issues since their existence only depended on the number of students they had and their only financial support came from children. P14 argued that small private schools' educational policy was meaningless:

> *"When I went to a small private school for a job interview, they warned me that I should never forget that this school was a business.*

If I am going to work in this institution, I do not need to be a teacher with five years of experience. It is enough to know how to communicate with parents then I just need to linger away my time with children. [...] After listing their rules in order, they also added their eccentric working hours: from 8 to 7. All the people have claimed that you cannot improve yourself in public schools but it depends on your effort. You can study master and get permission to join seminars. Therefore, public school is the best place to improve yourself." (P14)

Working in public schools also had some disadvantages due to the laws that teachers, especially in remote areas, should complete a certain amount of time period before they could move to another city. The exceptions for this law were health problems and marriage. MONE used to provide privileges to teachers who were studying for a graduate degree. However, as many teachers started to study master's degree, MONE decided to terminate this privilege. P6 was planning to study master's degree and therefore, she had to work in private schools located in Ankara:

"MONE terminated privilege for the master's degree since most of the teachers tried to abuse it in order not to go to remote areas. I am planning to study master's degree while I am working as a teacher. Thus, I have to choose to work in private schools. However, working in private schools is more difficult... The only reason to work in private schools is to continue my education." (P6)

Pre-service teachers also had certain concerns about working in public schools. The most important concern seemed to be being appointed in remote areas where schools suffer from lack of materials and contextual problems. Moreover, remote areas sometimes lacked fundamental survival facilities, such as electricity and running water. On the other hand, private schools were generally located in city centers and they had sufficient materials. Yet, teachers did not have freedom in private schools because of administrators' interference. P15 explained her concern for working both

in public and private schools:

> *"I am afraid of working in deprived areas with bad conditions [in a public school]. People frighten me saying 'if you work in private schools, administrators put pressure on you and you will stand on a knife's edge.' I do not like having such fears in my profession."* (P15)

Not only deciding where to work but also lack of knowledge about procedure in public schools made pre-service teachers worries. They were uncertain about what they were supposed to do in a public school when they would be appointed. P3 expected ambiguous working conditions:

> *"I do not know how things are going on in public schools. Who should I ask if I need something? Is the administrator going to listen to me if I want something? He is the primary respondent in school. I have no idea about how classroom needs are met. I am going to be like a fish out of the water."* (P3)

Some of the pre-service teachers were having trouble choosing between public and private schools. P11 was confused about her choice since both private schools and public schools have their own advantages and disadvantages:

> *"I think condition in public and private schools are in a balance. I want to work in city center since I want to carry on my social life with joy. Moreover, [institutionalized] private schools provide ballet, swimming, and theater courses, but public schools cannot provide these facilities. As such, sometimes I am thinking private school then change my mind to work in public school. I do not know exactly what I want."* (P11)

Being a teacher was not the only career alternative for the ECE graduates. Five of the participants were uncertain about being teacher since they were planning to study for a master's degree to be an academician. P7 was one of them and went back and forth

between two options:

> *"I would be happy and excited to be a teacher if I planned on being a teacher for four years. However, I also want to be an academician. I cannot give up [being an academician] and I also want to be teacher."* (P7)

4.1.2 Pre-service Teacher's Expectations of Teaching Profession

4.1.2.1 Expectations of School Contexts

ECE program at METU generally focused on developmentally appropriate practice. All of the participants wanted to work in schools where physical conditions were appropriate for children. P15 explained her dream school to work:

> *"I want to work at a school with a garden in which there are animals and flowers. I really want to have vegetables and fruits in the garden. The corridors are full of plants and children's works. There must be enough space for both children and teachers."* (P15)

However, fifteen participants were planning to work in public schools and they were well aware of the narrow circumstances in public schools. All of the pre-service teachers mentioned their anticipation of poor standards in public schools. Their expectations were limited to have a classroom for ECE, since it was common to be appointed to a school as an ECE teacher where an ECE classroom did not exist. ECE teachers needed more materials than upper grade teachers since young children would not know reading and writing; and therefore, education should be carried out with visual materials and several toys. Fourteen pre-service teachers were optimistic about the material shortage in public schools before entering the teaching profession and they expressed that material shortage would not keep them from conducting educational activities. Using cheaper materials or making easier activities would solve the problem according to P1:

"I have never been in remote areas but what I have observed at schools in Ankara and the other big cities located in the western part of Turkey was that conditions are not perfect. We learned that easily applicable teaching may not require expensive materials. I do not expect to struggle due to material shortage." (P1)

Similarly, P2 was optimistic on material shortage and she asserted that material shortage in MONE schools would not affect her teaching since she had an alternative solution for it:

"We generally worked with waste materials, so we know how to use materials. Our instructor mentioned a project about an ECE class without toys. If I cannot find any toys, I will implement that project or we can make our toys. Shortage is no matter for education." (P2)

P4 further argued about overcoming all material shortage with her creativity and waste material:

"It depends on your creativity. Teachers should think about what they can do rather than complaining 'I cannot find material.' Teachers can alter activities according to what they have. Only 5% of activities cannot be implemented because of material shortage and 95% can be performed." (P4)

On the other hand, P7 explained how material shortage restricted educational activities in her practicum class:

"There is no glue. No glue! Each class can take two glues in a week. When it was finished, the teacher did not bring glue in class and did not conduct activities. It happened in my practicum course that the teacher planned an activity but she could not conduct it without materials… For this reason I want to find moderate materials at school." (P7)

Problems in remote areas sometimes went beyond lack of material and contextual issues. Remote areas consisted mostly of the ethnic population in Turkey with their own culture, language, and tradition which were unfamiliar to participants of this study. Pre-service teachers, who were planning to work in public schools, were ready to accept the diversity that they might encounter in remote areas, provided that the place was safe to live in terms of terrorist activities threatening people's lives in some remote areas. P12 accepted all the difficulties present in remote areas except for terror:

> *"I have never been in the culture of remote areas. I do not know their life style. I have no experience about their lives; still I believe that I can adjust myself to their lives. However, if I suddenly find myself in a class in which children do not speak in Turkish, honestly I do not know what to do. I have heard of such places and I am worrying about that. Despite this, I am planning to go to remote areas provided that the area is clear from terrorist activities... Children would be so different than what I am familiar with and I need to be tolerant to diversity".* (P12)

Another concern participants mentioned was about the curriculum. The first ECE curriculum was issued in 1994. After that, MONE has changed the curriculum in 2002 and 2006. Yet, the changes had not reached some teachers. P8 was planning to use a plan published by the book providers before beginning to work as a teacher, although MONE required teachers to prepare plans parallel to the characteristics of the children:

> *"We have already prepared an annual plan, thus I do not expect to have trouble with the MONE curriculum. Moreover, plans are ready for teachers since schools arranged published plans for them [from publisher]."* (P8)

4.1.2.2 Relationships in School

4.1.2.2.1 Relationships with Administrators

Ten of the participants approached the relationships in schools in a tangible manner that they would first try to understand administrator's way of thinking before demanding something, because this would be necessary to predict an upcoming reaction. P4 prepared herself for the undesirable condition:

> *"First of all, it is necessary to analyze administrators' reaction. It is really important since they might be intolerant people and refuse even my most crucial request. They may say 'there is no need for it'... It is highly possible."* (P4)

P6 thought that the relationship with the administrators would also affect her relationship with parents:

> *"Administrators' attitude is important because eventually they will introduce me to the parents. Therefore,[relation with parents] depends on how much administrators trust me as a teacher."* (P6)

All of the participants acknowledged the superiority of administrators in a school as long as they would be provided with respect and freedom in the school. Their concerns about the relationship with administrators ranged from fear to bias. P3 reflected her concern about relations with administrators:

> *"Eventually administrators are my superior if they order me to do tasks, I would try to fulfill them properly since things should be run in this way without doubt. I do not expect to have trouble about obeying orders; however, I hope they do not try to oppress me or abuse my inexperience."* (P3)

P13 argued that administrators' superiority had a certain extent. She was expecting administrators' interference and she was ready to stand against administrators for the

favor of children and her ideals:

> *"If I work in a private school, of course they will restrict me. I know they will always warn me: 'You should do it in this way; you must do it in that way'. However, if I disagree with their ideas, I will definitely tell them. I do not want to teach children anything that I do not believe."* (P13)

Pre-service teachers did not take any courses about school administration and MONE's legislation; therefore, they were uncertain about how things would happen in public schools. For this reason, P11 did not know her rights against the administrator since she did not know the boundaries of administrator's authority and she made some interpretations based on her observations in the practicum course:

> *"I am uncertain about to what extent administrators can interfere in my class. I do not know the MONE legislation. For instance, can administrators enter my class without permission and question me?"* (P11)

4.1.2.2.2 Relationships with Colleagues

Another important relationship participants mentioned was with the colleagues at the school. P16 emphasized the pivotal role of the relationships among people in schools to motivate teachers:

> *"Interpersonal relationships influence teacher's motivation more than physical conditions. For instance, you might work in an inconvenient condition, but when your administrators encourage and support your initiations, you will be happy. On the other hand, you might work in an excellent condition, yet you are not free in your class which is terrible, and I do not want to work in such a place."* (P16)

81

P7 observed quarreling among teachers in the practicum office and she believed that having positive relationships with the colleagues would strengthen the quality of education. She was planning to establish a positive relationship in her school, yet she was ready to change her approach depending on the reactions from her colleagues:

> *"It is better to have positive relations since our field requires cooperation so that we become stronger. I am planning to be nice and share my activities but what can I do if they do not? I need to break off my relationship."* (P7)

Public school teachers are paid by the government and their teaching activities are financially supported by the government. However, private schools support themselves and need to satisfy the parents with their children's education, which puts a considerable pressure on teachers and creates a competitive atmosphere. P8 claimed that competition and jealousy was more excessive in private schools:

> *"Especially in private schools, teachers deviated from the main point and compete with each other particularly in art activities. It was the same [competition] in our class but it is more obvious in working life. Everybody tries to undermine their colleague so it is important whom you are working with".* (P8)

Administrator's attitude towards teachers could also change the competitive atmosphere into cooperation. P9 expressed an example from her practicum school:

> *"In my last practicum school, teachers came together and watched a movie about the imagination of children. I really liked that and I want to work in such a school. Of course, there is contention in all work places but I want to work in a school where conflicts are minimized by administrator's effort. I want to work in a cooperative place where I can be happy and make people happy by using all my potential."* (P9)

4.1.2.2.3 Relationship with Parents

Collaboration with the parents was an important issue for the participating pre-service teachers. Therefore, P11 emphasized the importance of getting respect from parents to prevent unpleasant interruptions in her teaching. She believed that teachers had the power to shape the direction of relationships with parents:

> *"Teachers need to behave professionally and should be careful about even their clothes and manner. Teachers can prevent parents' disrespectful behavior by treating them professionally. Otherwise, they have to deal with annoying details coming from parents rather than educating children."* (P11)

P8 explained which certain manners teachers should have in order not to lose parents' respect:

> *"Personality, appearance, and communication skills, all influence relationships with parents. A teacher should have dignity and should make a difference with her manner. Some teachers are too eager to please parents; this is why parents treat teachers as a caretaker as those teachers are relying on parents' words."* (P8)

Participants' views about relationships with parents were also influenced by their experiences in the practicum. P7 was negatively influenced by how her cooperating teacher discriminated against parents:

> *"In a university-based early education school, the teacher was very respectful for faculty member parents. Then, other parents working as a worker at the university came to class, but the teacher did not care about them at all. It was so bad and I cannot forget it. Teachers must treat all parents respectfully".* (P7)

4.1.2.3 Classroom management

4.1.2.3.1 Feeling Incompetent

All of the participants' primary concern before they started to work as a teacher was classroom management. They felt incompetent in gaining children's attention to conduct daily activities in a peaceful atmosphere. They claimed that the classroom management course and the practicum courses in the teacher education program were not helpful in providing them with the knowledge and skills of classroom management. Participants' negative experiences in practicum schools strengthened this concern. Pre-service teachers knew the theoretical aspects of classroom management procedures but they felt incapable of putting theory into practice since they did not have practice on real classrooms as the only teacher. P3 explained why she was afraid of performing poor classroom management:

> "*It is always said: be attractive, find interesting activities, make seating arrangements in this way, stand in this way, speak in that way. Yes yes! I already know what I should do. I do not know how to do that.*" (P3)

All of the participants expressed lack of practice in teacher education programs and P16 specified what exactly she needed in practical knowledge for managing a class:

> "*It was difficult for me to gather children's interest to do activities on a table when they were scattered around. In practicum schools, mentor teachers asked me what kind of song, poem, and finger play we knew but we did not learn much at the university. No one told us "These are finger plays and you will need them in the future." I wish our instructor showed us 10-20 finger plays.*" (P16)

Almost all of the participants had some negative experience in practicum schools which resulted in a sense of incompetence. Children in practicum schools were exposed to different styles of teaching and classroom management methods because

pre-service teachers from several universities in Ankara were placed in these schools. Therefore, children became frustrated in following instructions of different student teachers, as P9 explained:

> *"Five or six student teachers came to school every week. Children were puzzled to see us as an authority. It was normal [for the children] not to listen to us. I had to shout at them. I was really tired in the last practicum course. The teacher often left the class to me and the children did not listen to me. There were 20 children in the class. The teacher told me that I could shout as much as I wanted and I could not really manage the class without shouting. They got used to it but it was contradictory to my belief. I felt terrible [when I shouted]. When I have my own class, it should not happen."* (P9)

Children easily realized that pre-service teachers were only trainees in the class and they might not accept them as teachers. P3 explained the change in children's behavior with their own teacher and with a trainee teacher:

> *"When the teacher comes into the class they become silent but I cannot make them silent, if the teacher is not already in the class. It might happen because of being a student teacher in the class."* (P3)

Mentor teachers in practicum schools did not give much help to student teachers in their last practicum and they generally left the class to the student teachers. As such, most of the participants associated their problems with not having their own class. P1 expressed her expectations for her future class:

> *"I was in trouble with classroom management in my last practicum since the teacher left me alone with twenty five children. I did not blame myself for the mess in the class but truly I was a bit depressed. I was worrying about my skills: 'Is it going to be like this in my class? Am I going to succeed?' However, I am going to be responsible for a class from the beginning so children will accept me as a teacher. I can*

accomplish [to be a good teacher]." (P1)

The negative experiences of classroom management in the practicum classes reduced pre-service teachers' enthusiasm to become a teacher. Feeling powerless in classroom management was the worst among all the problems as expressed by P2:

> *"I do not want to be a teacher [in the last practicum]. I was exhausted and I even almost fainted when I came home since I had to shout very loudly. I was knocking doors to make them silent which made me depressed. I was really sorry for that."* (P2)

Participants sometimes witnessed negative classroom management practices. Even if these practices worked in the class, participants were reluctant to implement them. Rather, they preferred to establish inner discipline of children. P5 gave an example of an inappropriate practice:

> "*I have observed in the practicum class that teachers turned the lights off and children became silent. Ok, they are silent but I do not want to do that. I want them to realize that they need to be silent. It is unpleasant to make children nervous in the middle of the activities".* (P5)

4.1.2.3.2 Setting Rules

All of the participants mentioned setting rules in a classroom as a condition for creating an organized educational environment in the class. They specifically planed to establish rules in the beginning of the semester since they believed that the semester would continue in the way it would start. Beginning teachers intended to establish rules in a democratic way by incorporating children in the process of making the rules. The most widely mentioned method they considered to integrate children in the decision making process for rules was explained by P2:

"If the teaching year starts in a chaos, that will affect the rest of the year so in first days [of the semester], I can say to children: "Let's make rules for our class. We should do that, we should not do that." I can offer [these rules] to children. Then l will listen to their ideas. I mean rules must be established with joint agreement. Rules should be accepted by children so that they obey the rules willingly." (P2)

Another strategy to manage peace in class was setting limits, as long as they were consistently implemented. P10 explained how to set limits:

"Setting limits is also important. If you define boundaries clearly, children do not go beyond the limits. However, if your limits are inconsistent, children will try to break limits. You can blame yourself when it happens but if your limits are clear-cut, no problems would emerge." (P10)

P15 recognized that making children have fun and consider their needs and interests were more effective to keep children's attention on class activities:

"It is not effective in classroom management to say children 'Do not do this! Be silent!' You need to find something interesting for them. I tried something in practicum course that when children lost their interest, I sang an interesting song then children would become silent and listen to me." (P15)

Similarly, P6 offered the choice to children instead of simply sending children to timeout since having the power of making choices brought positive feelings where being punished resulted in negative feelings. In doing so, P6 succeeding in preventing misbehavior in her class:

"I offer two choices: 'Either you work on the activity with your friends or you will sit and think nearby, but when you feel ready you can join us.' Generally they come back saying 'I want to do that '

when they see their friends eagerly working on something." (P6)

4.1.2.4 Parent involvement

All of the participants were planning to encourage parents to make activities in class with their children. P7 explained its effectiveness:

> *"I really like that one of the practicum schools invited parents to the class to conduct a science experiment. The experiment was so simple but children did not know [it] at all. Nothing can make children's eyes as bright as conducting an activity with their mothers. Teachers hesitate to invite parents into class but if you are confident with yourself, your class, and the children, then you can invite anyone to the class."* (P7)

P15 summarized the rest of the parent involvement activities that pre-service teachers were planning to apply:

> *"I want parents to carry out activities with children in the class. Of course, we will have meetings, and besides I can give them lectures about what they need. Then, we can go on field trip together and if possible I would visit their home."* (P15)

Ten pre-service teachers claimed that the most proper time to develop strong, collaborative parents-school partnerships would be the first days of schools since parents would never come to school as often as first days. P16 planned to use this chance to create a base for parent involvement activities:

> *"Parents might worry about who this woman is and what she is going to do with their children. Therefore, I would invite them into the class to do some activities together so that they will be informed about what their children will do in early education. This is the chance to involve parents in class activities since they come to school often in the first*

88

weeks and they are interested in school a great deal. If we work together on some tasks at the beginning, it would be easier to ask them to join class activities afterward." (P16)

P14 wanted to be open in her first meeting with parents:

"I want to clearly explain all my intentions to parents in the first meeting. I will express to them that their ideas and wishes will be welcomed in my class as long as we carry out their ideas together so that we can observe outcomes together." (P14)

Nine participants were concerned about parent involvement in low socio-economic status or rural schools due to the lack of involvement of parents in school activities in these schools. P12 expressed this challenging situation and especially aimed to involve those parents:

"Although it is difficult in remote areas, I will really try hard to involve parents in their children's education to enable them to see how much their children have developed." (P12)

P9 needed a few interested parents to trigger other parents' interest for parent involvement activities:

"I believe that we can conduct parent involvement activities with some parents who really care about their children's education. After that, they will affect other families since everybody know each other and see each other on a regular basis in small towns." (P9)

Twelve participants believed that parental involvement would be helpful in the assessment process as they claimed that knowing parents meant knowing children. P14 expressed being in contact with parents was necessary to diagnose children's needs and problems:

"You spend 6-7 hours with children but everything happens at home. When children experience something unpleasant at home, they may become violent or introverted depending on what is happening at home. In order to understand changes in children's behavior, we should conduct face to face meetings with parents." (P14)

P16 believed that parent involvement activities would also help teachers to get respect from parents and children:

"I believe that the positive relationship with parents glorifies your position in the children's eyes and also it prevents parents from treating a teacher as a caretaker. I definitely do not inform parents at the end of the semester. Rather, I prefer to inform parents in an ongoing process. I am planning to see a few parents each week so that we both share information about children." (P16)

Fourteen participants in this study complained that parents treated ECE institutions as a nursery school and the teachers as caretakers. P3 considered parents' questions about caring task as a disrespectful behavior to her:

"I am not the nanny of their child thus I do not want to be treated like that. Many parents just focus on the caring of their children such as sleeping and eating. I am a teacher and I want to be questioned about teaching activities." (P3)

Not all the participants reacted negatively to parents' questions about caring of children. P4 established empathy with parents and claimed that she understood their concerns. She believed that it would be normal for parents to question teachers' caring practice if they did not know what to expect from early education. In this sense, teachers would be required to make parents interested in curricular tasks:

"Teachers complain all the time: 'Parents just ask: Did she eat? Did she sleep? They do not consider other things at all.' Teachers need to

establish empathy with parents. If I were a parent, I would be curious about that. However, I would use their interest [as a teacher] in caring tasks as a strategy to make them aware [of curricular tasks]. It depends on the teacher." (P4)

4.1.2.5 Assessment

All of the participants were enthusiastic about using assessment techniques that they learned in the teacher education program, as illustrated by P5's expressions:

> *"I imagine myself while taking notes. It is so interesting and modern. It will be a great pleasure to read them later, besides, we can share them with families and it would be valuable for children. I have a portfolio from early education but there is no written document in it... Moreover, if I do not write small notes, I will not remember what happened in the class later."* (P5)

Eleven participants were concerned about how to keep an anecdotal record while conducting activities and dealing with children since it required the complete attention of the teacher. P13 thought about writing important events in the class during the after-class hours:

> *"At the end of the day, I will write an anecdotal record since it is difficult to write it simultaneously while conducting activities. I am planning to write anecdotes on the way home, otherwise I forget."* (P13)

All of the participants expressed that they would use observation, as an apparent assessment tool. P16 claimed that she would also use asking questions to assess children's learning:

> *"Most probably, I would observe children. I will also ask questions to children especially for assessing cognitive development. I will even*

assess social skills by asking questions. I will not ask directly, rather I will ask without being noticed." (P16)

Thirteen participants planned to implement portfolio as an assessment tool due to its chronological usage:

"The portfolio is the most important assessment tool for me to keep children's works and it enables us to see children's development week by week and even day by day. You can simply put children's picture in September and then you put in a picture in June. After that you can see how children develop step by step. Thus, the portfolio is going to be my assessment tool."(P15)

One of the main concerns of participants in assessment was how they would monitor children's learning. P7 wondered if she would be able to see accomplishment of her educational goals:

"Ok, we are having fun but I am basically trying to teach something. I want to learn whether they learn or not. If they have not learned, I want to support them so that they would not get lost as they will start school next year." (P7)

Assessment practices in practicum schools, however, did not turn out to be educative for participants as cooperating teachers considered assessment mostly as completing the paperwork required by the MONE. P4 experienced the following:

"My mentor teacher asked me to fill the MONE assessment forms and told [me] it was not important. Actually she was a good teacher but her assessment style was weird for me. However, it is a general attitude for all MONE teachers. Are we going to be like that? I hope we will not." (P4)

4.1.3 Summary: Beginning Teachers' Perceptions, Expectations and Concerns about their Future Profession

Study I aimed to reveal pre-service ECE teachers' expectations of their prospective profession. It appeared that their expectations were driven by how they perceived the profession, how society perceived the profession, and their experiences in the teacher education program. The pre-service ECE teachers seemed to believe in the importance of their profession in several perspectives. They claimed that ECE helped children in becoming easily socialized, cognitively well-developed, and independent individuals in the society. However, they expressed that teaching young children would be both physically and emotionally difficult due to the nature of their future profession. Their responsibilities would be higher than upper grades' teachers considering the age of the children they taught. All these factors increased the expectations of people from ECE teachers, and participants felt more pressure to meet those expectations.

The public perception of ECE did not match with the pre-service teachers' perception of their profession. All of the participants experienced negative reactions from the society to some extent. People seemed not to take being ECE teacher seriously since it was treated as an easy occupation that did not require specialization and professionalism. Receiving constant negative reactions from society affected participants' initial perception of their profession negatively during their teacher education studies and they even felt regret to choose it at the beginning. When public perception changed distinctly during their college education with the help of growing interest towards ECE in the governmental level, they felt positive changes in public perception and their negative perception for teaching young children diminished.

The primary source of motivation for their profession for the participants was the love of children. They were also motivated with the nature of being ECE teacher since it was a dynamic and enjoyable job. However, pre-service teachers observed unmotivated teachers in their practicum courses and they started to afraid of losing their current motivation.

Pre-service teachers evaluated teacher education programs and all of them declared that they had qualified education. Still, they criticized it in some respects. Their primary criticism was lack of practice. Although participants had four practicum courses throughout their education, they still argued that they did not feel ready for teaching young children alone in their classrooms because of some of the limitations in the practicum courses. They further argued that the distance between teacher education program and MONE resulted in lack of essential practice.

Participants were aware of many difficulties in public schools and ready to contend with those difficulties. The most expected problems were material and classroom shortages in public schools, but they seemed highly optimistic and enthusiastic to overcome these shortages for the favor of children. Participants were also afraid of being appointed to remote areas since all teachers were required to work in remote areas for a certain time in the MONE system. Unfortunately, remote areas suffered from safety and structural problems and pre-service teachers were not familiar with these issues. The culture of most remote areas was not also experienced by the preservice teachers.

All of the pre-service teachers appreciated the importance of having positive relationships with administrators, colleagues, and parents; however, they witnessed some negative circumstances in their practicum schools and they were aware of negative relationships that might emerge in the workplace. They planned certain strategies in order to manage negative circumstances in case they would emerge. All of the participants' primary concerns in terms of relationships in schools were mainly concentrated on the relationship with the administrators, because they observed in practicum schools that administrators' decisions considerably affected teachers' lives. Moreover, they observed several quarrels among teachers due to competition. Still, they planned to have positive relationships with their colleagues. Finally, pre-service teachers aimed to treat parents with respect to establish an effective relationship with them.

All of the participants expressed their fear of not being able to manage class. They felt unprepared and associated this situation with lack of practical training in the teacher education program. They planned to start their teaching in the beginning of the year with setting rules to establish a peaceful classroom environment, yet they believed that rules would work as long as children are involved in the decision process. As such, pre-service teachers stated that they will set rules with children to provide them empowerment.

The participants emphasized the importance of parent involvement and its benefits, and accepted that teachers needed to organize parent involvement activities. Unfortunately, several participants believed parents treated ECE classes as nursery schools. Teachers' responsibility in this situation would be to increase parents' awareness and make them interested in curricular activities, not only in caring issues, by establishing positive relations with parents. They all planned to make parents come to class and conduct activities with children.

Finally, pre-service teachers emphasized the importance of assessment and they planned to implement some of the assessment techniques in their teaching practice. Participants stated that without assessing children's development, teachers would not be able to determine whether their teaching practice was effective or not. Their most common preferences for assessment techniques were portfolio, anecdotal records, and observation.

4.2 Study II-III: Beginning Teachers' Experiences in Public Schools

Study *II and III* documented the experiences of 16 beginning ECE teachers working in public schools in their first year through the problems they encountered in various contexts as well as positive instances, and how they have handled certain issues in several contexts.

4.2.1 First Years of Teaching in National Curriculum Context

In the present study, all of the participants worked in public schools and their problems mostly originated from MONE's system. As such, findings will be represented starting with topics that are specific to the Ministry of National Education (MONE) in order to represent the research context better. Beginning teachers faced some problems right after their entrance in the profession and they had additional problems during their first-year of teaching. Two participants were appointed in schools in which ECE classes did not exist, two participants were appointed to schools which were still under construction, and several participants suffered from other infrastructure problems. The following section presents the problems participating beginning teachers faced in the public school system in detail.

4.2.1.1 Infrastructure Problems in Public Schools

There was a great attempt to increase the schooling rate of early education at the time of the study. Yet, as it was emphasized before that there has not been long ECE tradition in Turkey. Infrastructure problems seemed to be mostly generated from lack of this long history. In 2009, more than 15 thousand teachers were appointed with the aim of increasing schooling rate for the ECE. For this reason, the majority of beginning teachers were appointed to the schools which were unprepared for the ECE. Infrastructure problems in MONE emerged in two different ways. In first case, schools were ready and children were already registered, but teacher appointment did not take place. In the other case, teachers were appointed but schools were not ready. Infrastructure problems created a drawback for beginning teachers as they had a negative start in profession. For instance, P3-S2 was appointed to a school which actually needed three teachers, thus she had to work with 56 students in her first weeks:

> *"I felt so alien. I felt as if I did not know anything about early childhood education. […] I was the first and only teacher appointed to school but 56 children were registered. Parents wanted to send*

96

their children since they paid for that... There was no cupboard, crayons, paper, pen, and books. I did not know the school and there was no one to guide me... I had to spend the following two weeks alone with 35 children in an unorganized class. It was not a pleasant start for me, I even thought of quitting". (P3-S2)

Eight participants encountered with severe infrastructure problems in their schools or classes and were disappointed due to those problems. The biggest problem was the lack of ECE classrooms in the schools. Being appointed to a school suffering from infrastructure problems increased the inconvenience of being novice in the profession for P6.

"At first, we were 4-5 teachers with 60 children in class because school had not been finished. For this reason, we did not have one to one communication with children. As you can guess, how could teachers conduct an activity in such a context? It was a tiny class. Thus, my first days were in chaos. I was unlucky about that issue. My first days were not good. It was not what I expected or wanted because I supposed that I would have a class. I was expecting to begin teaching with 20-25 students [...] It continued until November. I started to work on September 30th and I did not have class for a month." (P6-S2).

P1 said she was ready for deprivation in school during the interview for *Study I*; however, she could not guess deprivation of school. She just confronted with a construction area. Although infrastructure problems could be characterized to remote areas, they also emerged larger cities. She was surprised with what she had encountered and complaint about slow procedure of MONE:

"My school used to be a high school. They tried to alter it to a preschool. When I arrived in school it was a construction field. We needed to start teaching on Monday but they said 'We are not ready at

*all and it is impossible to finish in 1-2 months.' There was no school.
[…] It has been known that this school is going to be built on June but
contract has been signed on at the end of August. How could it be
possible to build a school in a week? It is impossible. Procedures
should be carried out faster. If our administrator had not been eager,
it would be postponed to the second semester."* (P1-S2).

P15 shared same class with another teacher for two months and this situation largely
blocked educational activities:

*"There was a classroom with almost 30 children. It reached 40 at the
end. We shared that classroom together with other teachers for a
couple of weeks. There was not a second classroom. Administrators
said 'One more classroom is going to be ready. Just hang on for a
while.' After a while we could not handle it. Besides, parents were not
satisfied with this chaos. We separated class into morning and
afternoon classes for a month and covered up in this way... Almost two
months were in a chaos, then, it settled down. We could not even apply
annual and daily plans for a month. We could not adopt in order to
solve disorganization."* (P15-S2).

4.2.1.2 Non-curricular Tasks

Findings of the study showed that infrastructure problems in schools triggered further
problems. Considering the lack of cleaning and substitute staff in school as
infrastructure problems, non-curricular tasks would be the primary problems
originated from infrastructure problems. Being ECE teacher would include both
curricular and caring tasks. Teacher education program prepared candidate teachers
for curricular tasks such as teaching mathematics, science, or conducting art projects.
They were also prepared for caring tasks during four practicum courses such as
changing clothes of children or feeding them. However, teachers were not ready for
non-curricular tasks. Beginning teachers found themselves in a situation that they

were responsible for cleaning the class, heating class with stove, and preparing food for children due to lack of cleaning staff. P13 explained how non-curricular task affected her teaching in a negative way:

> *"It affects my teaching negatively since I spend an hour to prepare stove and I have to leave class so often. I could not control children and something may happen to them while I am dealing with stove. Therefore, they just sit until I finish firing the stove but I talk with them just like a circle time conversation."* (P13-S2).

Non-curricular tasks made beginning teachers discouraged in the long run. Those tasks even caused crisis for novice teachers in the beginning of their profession since curricular tasks were already difficult for them. Teachers were not ready to fulfill the cleaning work and feeding children and they found these works humiliating. Then, they started to question their profession. After five years of college education, sweeping floors and cleaning the classroom disappointed P2 and she began to dislike her profession although she was ambitious at first:

> *"There are two carpets located multiplex and children stumble upon carpet and fall down. I have to clean class and no matter how much effort you spend, class does not seem to be clean. After, 1,5-2 months I started to think that I do not want to do this job. Am I sure that I want to be a teacher? I was really disappointed"* (P2-S2).

When teachers asked for help for the non-curricular task, their request was not welcomed by administrators. They did not want to deal with another expense since schools were not allowed to take fee from parents except for early education. In remote areas, schools could not even take fee from parents for early education and they could not afford to hire cleaning staff. P13 expressed administrator's reaction for her demand:

> *"There was a carpet but it was in a terrible condition. It was covered with dirt and mud. I asked to one of the administrators 'I want to have*

them clean.' He replied me 'You can do whatever you want unless you ask us for money.' School is like this. Administrators are uninterested but they do not interfere either. When I cleaned class they said to me 'You can throw whatever you want. You can organize as you wish'. Actually, it suits me. They do not interfere. I am free but they do not help me materially in any way." (P13-S2).

4.2.1.3 Material Shortage in MONE

MONE provided basic materials to schools such as child size furniture and toys. There was also need for additional materials, especially stationery materials, in order to carry out activities in ECE settings. In general, schools gathered little amount of monthly fee from parents to meet those expenses; however, in some schools parents' socio-economic status was very low that they could not afford to pay for even this little amount. Nine participants suffered from material shortage to carry out educational activities and they spent money to overcome lack of material. Beginning teachers spent their own money in order to provide material for the children:

"I sometimes spend half of my income [for materials].When we first entered this building, there was just the building and furniture. There was nothing else, neither toys nor stationary materials, nothing! For this reason we needed to get our hand on this issue. Not all the people behaved the same way though. MONE gave me approximately 530 lira allocation when I started to work and I spend it for stationary materials. I visited stationer and toy shops. I asked "I am teaching this school and we need some materials. Could you help us?' I sent e-mails to larger corporations in city centers: 'I am working in such a school and we could not meet our needs.' In this way, I established a classroom environment similar to a city center classroom." (P6-S2).

P14 was able to provide some materials yet she could not provide advanced materials which she needed for her teaching practice:

> *"Our books are not qualified. I bought several book series from TÜBİTAK. To tell the truth, there are no qualified books in our bookcase. […] Besides, I want to have better musical instruments. I want to have Orf instruments but there is none. I bought and took to [class] and children really like those kind of things... I want to have a microscope or telescope. I would take the telescope to the upstairs and we could investigate. It is dark in the evening. We could observe the [sky]."* (P14-S3).

Beginning teachers could not meet all of the material needs for 15-20 children in the class without their parents' support and some particular materials could not be substituted with the teacher's effort. P12 expressed that she could not teach some concepts due to lack of material:

> *"I asked to take money [from parents] in the first semester. The administrator said 'We should not attempt to do it because parents cannot afford.' Then we had to [take money from parents] in the second semester. I photocopied worksheet of one of the publishers but if there was something about color, each child would say something different due to black and white [colors]. I could not understand whether they learned or not."* (P12-S3).

Material shortage would also appear in a different way. Although it was uncommon to be appointed to an unfurnished class, P1 could not find basic materials including tables and chairs in the beginning of the school year. They postponed educational activities for a week in the school and tried to keep children busy without conducting activities. Then, parents began to suspect the school's effectiveness and their children became out of control. They had to conduct art and school readiness activities on floor. P1's experiences were a representative example of how material shortage

101

influenced teaching practice in school:

> *"Our tables did not come to school. We did not have table in class. We could not do anything. Parents started to ask 'Are there going to be art or literacy activities?' We could not cope with [parents] also children were about to be out of control. If we could not counteract, children would lose control. We had to make activities on floor then tables came one week later."* (P1-S2).

Sometimes material shortage was the result of preserving and storing problems. MONE provided sufficient material to participants' ECE classes. Yet, schools were unable to protect to those materials. Elementary classes consisted of only blackboard and desk; however, ECE classes included interesting materials and a cozy atmosphere. Therefore, ECE classes attracted students from upper grades. P4 mentioned how she found the class in an elementary school:

> *"Many toys were delivered in previous years... Doors were opened and upper class students entered and disarranged. Materials were not new. Early education class was quite messy. We organized it."* (P4-S2).

Beginning teachers have been learning for four years that ECE classes consisted of corners such as science, drama, math and play. As such, they believed that classes were supposed to have those corners and felt drawback when they worked in class without corner as stated by P10:

> *"Of course I wish I could have drama or science corner but there is not. I wanted to have class with corners. It seems empty now. We try to fill it somehow. The biggest problems appear in free play time."* (P10-S2).

Beginning teachers worked for school improvement and made school environment better with their own effort. P2 founded library in her school with the help of the

province governor and the administrator appreciated her endeavor. Then, he tried to help her whenever she needed:

> *"[Administrators] said that he would support teachers as long as they worked. Besides, library was established in school and they sympathized to me because of that."* (P2-S3).

P7 communicated with an industrial factory in a local district and found sponsor to fund the gym in school; however, her administrator did not appreciate her attempt to improve the school's standards.

> *"One of the sponsors furnished the floor and wall. Another one bought particular 2-3 tools. The other one invested money to school account... My problem was [lack of support]. After spending such an effort you wanted to be appreciated yet there was no [appreciation] even everybody took credit for themselves."* (P7-S3).

Lack of material sometimes originated from the administrator's attitude towards ECE. Elementary school administrators did not have ECE background and their unfamiliarity sometimes caused material shortage. Even though local governor granted materials to ECE classes, the administrator in P4's school sent them to the upper elementary school since he believed that ECE classes were not the places where experiments would be carried out:

> *"For instance we had experiment tubes. Administrators removed and placed them in laboratory, although local governor gave them to us. I said 'We are making experiment with them'. The administrator was surprised: 'Experiment! What are you doing?' They do not think that ECE setting is not an important place for science and mathematics activities. They have no idea."* (P4-S2).

Not all administrators' attitude was negative toward ECE. Sometimes they gave special importance to early education and tried to solve the material shortage

problems. P8 got help from administrator to overcome lack of material:

> *"There was no toy and stationary material at first. In any case parents did not [support financially]. You cannot take [money] in any way. It was even hard to find students. Then a benevolent donated 2000 Liras to our school and the administrator spent 1500 Liras for my class."* (P8-S2).

Although independent ECE schools had rich materials compared to elementary schools, they struggled to provide an appropriate environment and material. Schools had to support themselves financially; therefore schools' financial condition mostly depended on administrators' skills to balance educational activities and running financial requirements. MONE provided buildings, basic materials, and pay for teachers' salaries but it did not take part in renewal of materials and renovation of schools. Independent schools served whole day education and needed to provide breakfast, lunch, and afternoon breakfast for students. In order to provide these facilities to children, schools had to hire additional staff for cooking and cleaning which created other expenditures for schools. P1 explained how schools were helpless to provide an appropriate learning environment for children even though both teachers and administrators strive for it:

> *"I said before I have material problems. It is the same now. So many toys were broken and torn. School does not have much finance. We are serving whole day education and we take 103 Liras [from parents]. It is not enough. It is spent for food and cleaning... This town is rich but we experienced many problems to get donation for school. I mean we could not take anything from anybody. We need 15-20 thousand Liras for landscaping. The project is ready for sand pool and playground but It has not built yet.. Honestly we receive nothing from MONE. I mean this school is run by monthly fee and administrator's effort. No other [finance]. Thus, there is lack of material and toys."* (P1-S3).

4.2.1.4 Inspections in MONE

Administrators were primarily responsible for inspecting beginning teachers, yet they seemed to have restricted knowledge on ECE. They were supposed to investigate teachers' plans but P14 claimed that her administrator was not aware of what she was doing:

> *"He does not investigate it. I think it is a waste of paper. He just signs it. He does not read at all. He never asked 'What did you do?'"* (P14-S3).

Beginning teachers were also inspected by MONE's inspectors two times in their first year of teaching. The first inspection was only for guiding and the second one was the real inspection. Unfortunately, MONE did not have any inspector specialized on ECE. Thus, elementary education inspectors inspected ECE teachers' performance. Although ECE and elementary education would be similar in some respect, ECE had exclusive features and needed to be investigated and evaluated by an inspector who had knowledge on specific characteristics. Lack of knowledge on ECE made inspectors to expect the same responsibilities with elementary teachers, although some of them were unnecessary for ECE teachers. For instance, lesson schedules did not exist in ECE classes since daily schedules in ECE were non-discrete, which meant there were no lessons in ECE classes. An inspector insisted on a lesson schedule and P2 could not persuade him that there was no need for this paper work:

> *"I said I did not need it, so I did not prepare lesson schedule. He said 'Government speaks with documents'. I said 'ECE teachers cannot enter one class and not the other classes. It is different that we [ECE teachers] have to be in the class all the time. It is meaningless to differentiate first lesson and second lesson.' He still wanted me to prepare that document."* (P2-S2).

105

P16 believed that there was a conflict between expectations of inspector and the characteristics of early education:

> *"I was warned that 'Your authority was not good, your children are too free.' I did not know what kind of class they were expecting but they found my class too free. They warned me that "You need to do more things in terms of authority.' I did not know what he was expecting. Children were sitting on their chairs during Turkish-Language activity, I was asking questions and children replied. Some of them got up and wandered around and sit again. Did he expect children to stand still? It is not possible to make children sit in a same position such a long time. He perceived that as a lack of authority. I do not make children involve in my activity with force if they do not want to be involved. My practice is that 'Ok! You can silently sit that corner and deal with these activities without making noise."* (P16-S3).

MONE implements centralized national curriculum. An inspector investigated P12's practice according to this centralized curriculum and criticized her due to the lack of home visits in her teaching practice without considering local circumstances. In general, parents' SES was quite low in this study and they lived in single-room houses. In some situations, beginning teachers even hesitated to interact with fathers due to local cultural norms. P12 felt uncomfortable in a small room with the existence of the student's father and did not go on home visits.

> *"The inspector said 'You did not visit homes.' All of the fathers were staying at home and mothers were working in potato fields. They lived in a single room heated with stove. You could not say I' will visit you.' How could I say 'I will come to you and discuss condition of your child' while their husband was staying at home? Then, I decided to make home visit activities in summer. Then, inspector sent an official notice that I did not make any home visits."* (P12-S2).

4.2.2 Supports for Beginning Teachers in MONE

The following sections report the findings for beginning teachers' perceived needs and received supports in the public schools. The issues with mentor teachers are reported separately as a form of received support.

4.2.2.1 MONE Legislation and Seminars

MONE had a detailed legislation for the induction of first year teachers in public schools. The induction period consisted of three phases. Basic training phase aimed to inform candidate teachers about public employees' minimum common qualifications. Preparatory training phase focused specifically on candidate public school teachers' profession and necessary skills that they must adopt for teaching and make them ready for public schools' demands. Finally, the induction period was completed with a practicum phase however; beginning teachers started teaching immediately after they were appointed with full responsibility as a teacher. Basic and preparatory trainings demanded more time and they were held on weekends. MONE inspectors and district managers were responsible for offering those trainings. Thirteen participants stated that MONE seminars were not effective and helpful:

> *"MONE district manager just read legislation from power-point. Besides, it was held in weekends and we could not go to out of town. It was stressful for us. Thus, I do not find MONE seminars effective."* (P4-S2).

Only three teachers thought that MONE seminars were effective. P16 expressed that she learned a great deal of legislation in seminars:

> *"There were several things that I did not know before seminars but I learned them in seminars. Maybe I do not know all of the things and I may have some missing information but I believe that I learned a great deal in seminars. At least, I know where I should consult if I have trouble."* (P16-S2).

All of the beginning teachers struggled at some degree to understand MONE's legislation and how to carry out paper work in public schools. P11 believed that MONE's legislation was complex and it could not be comprehended in MONE seminars, and she decided to study Open University:

> *"They tried to explain the legislation in preparatory seminars but they could not explain everything. They claim that it is impossible to explain law of public personnel in its full detail. We need to investigate and find several things but there are tons of information. I even started to study public administration at Open University just because of realizing my drawback [upon legislation]. How these processes are running? What are my rights and how could I seek my rights? How could it be administered within this job?"* (P11-S2).

The complex and unstable nature of the MONE legislation was also difficult to follow when participants tried to understand it.

> *"It has been changing all the time. I learn something and it is changed next time I check it. Besides, its language is difficult to understand and I could not comprehend everything about appointment and designation. I try to learn them but as I said it is not possible to comprehend everything. I mean I have difficulty with it."* (P16-S3).

Beginning teachers' expressions about their perceived needs in their first year addressed another person, generally in the position of a mentor or a friend.

> *"I wish someone could tell me 'You need to prepare these. Look at these examples. You can keep these files. Firstly, you need to prepare food list. You should prepare in this way.' I solved all these problems after encountering with them. It was not in an order. I really had trouble. I learned with trial and error. I could have handle in my first month not in my 3rd month, if I had have help from someone."* (P2-S2).

"Paperwork was very difficult at the end of the semester. We have taken seminars but it was not related with plans and paperwork at all. Actually, I learned them at seminars but I learned from my friends that I met at seminars". (P10-S2).

4.2.2.2 Mentor Teachers

Although there was an official policy in MONE that a mentor teacher must be appointed for beginning teachers in their first year, 11 teachers did not have mentor teachers. Five teachers had mentors and they declared that the mentoring process was considered as a formality by the mentors. MONE appointed teachers in two different positions: permanent and temporary. Permanent positions were more desirable since they guaranteed a permanent job status and had more privileges. Temporary positions did not guarantee the position for the next year and provided fewer rights for the teachers. Teachers needed to have higher scores on PPS examination in order to be appointed in permanent positions. In this study 4 teachers had permanent positions and all of the remaining teachers were occupying the temporary positions. Mentoring process was under the responsibility of administrators and administrators did not appoint mentor teachers to beginning teachers who were holding temporary positions. Only one participant having a temporary position had a mentor. This situation decreased the possible supports for beginning teachers in their first-year of teaching. P4 did not have mentor teacher but another teacher who was also newly appointed had one because of her permanent position:

"Another teacher who was appointed recently has a mentor. She is in the permanent position. I have asked to the administrator. He said 'Normally mentor teachers are appointed but you would not have one because you are in the permanent position". (P4-S2).

Mentoring, however, did not always provide the support they needed. P5 pointed out the ineffectiveness of mentoring process even though she had a mentor:

'It does not work. It does not work. I just know my mentor teacher's name. Other beginning teacher also just knows her name. She [my mentor] asks me what a portfolio is. Such a process is running. No one says anything to you. No one supports you or explains anything to you. No one cares about you. You have to cope with everything on your own." (P5-S2).

As it was mentioned before, participants in this study did not have a course on operational process of MONE. Thus, participants had limited knowledge of MONE procedures. Several participants were not aware of the mentoring process:

"Actually we have a mentor since we are in an induction period but I do not know my mentor. I think administrator is our mentor because there is no experienced teacher. We are both temporary position teachers. I am totally unaware of my mentor. No one has ever mentioned. I am curious about it." (P12-S2)

P10 was not sure about her mentor since she was not informed about mentoring process. She assumed that experienced teachers would be her mentor since she received help from experienced teachers, although they could not meet often:

"I think morning teacher is my mentor but it is limited, she is morning teacher and I am afternoon teacher. I barely see her since she leaves school early. Even if I come to school early, I cannot meet with her. However, she helped me a lot at in the beginning when we had a meeting with parents. She arranged everything. I did not know anything at that time. She wrote agenda items and she made a presentation." (P10-S2).

Majority of the elementary schools had only one ECE class. For this reason, beginning ECE teachers had primary teachers as their mentors. P8 was working in an elementary school and she had a primary teacher as her mentor, yet she preferred to have a mentor teacher with ECE background:

"It would be better if she was from ECE department. Primary teachers know (only) their field. I think it would not be helpful for us. However, if mentor is from early education, it would be efficient and I want to have one. I would benefit from her experiences and she also would learn new things. It would be great." (P8-S3).

Sometimes informal mentoring worked better than the formal one when experienced ECE teachers were ready to help the participating teachers in their schools. Even though these experienced teachers were not officially appointed as mentor teachers, they guided beginning teachers in their first year experiences:

"She knows children better. She lives in the same neighborhood and knows children. She gave me information about children. She gave me information about both educational activities and the process in school such as how we can get e-school password. She provided all kinds of information. She shared all of her experiences." (P4-S3)

4.2.3 Problems Related to the School Context and Local Conditions

4.2.3.1 Teaching to Low Socio-Economic Status Children

In this study, most of the children in beginning teachers' classes came from low socio-economic status (SES) families. Six beginning teachers were appointed to remote areas and experienced problems related to being inexperienced for handling the conditions of remote areas. Other teachers also experienced some problems in local districts. The SES of the parents was even lower in remote areas; therefore, the toys in their home may not have been as engaging as the ones in school. Some of the beginning teachers had trouble ending free play since children did not have toys in their home and did not want to stop playing. P8 was working in a little village in which the source of income was only based on primitive agricultural production. She did not want to draw back from other activities but it was difficult for her to stop free play:

111

"I tend to think that we are not spending an effective time in free play, however my students really love to play with toys and they do not have many toys in their homes. Children were excessively fond of toys, even the broken ones... I am getting a particular [income] and I do not want to spoil even a minute... In the schools that I had my practicum in Ankara, children were not like this. They were not interested in toys. But [my students] are excessively fond of toys. They continuously negotiate [to play for] 5 more minutes and I cannot resist. They even forget that they are hungry. If I leave them, they can play all day long. They have nothing at home. I think it's because of [lack of toys.]" (P8-S2).

Children did not have opportunity to experience several events in their limited environment; hence, they shared their limited daily experiences. Beginning teachers stated that children could not get a wider perspective in such a limited environment:

"Even their pictures are about barn and cows. One student drew a picture of me milking a cow. They only draw what they see. […] I ask boys 'What are you going to be? Their response is "I am going to be truck driver or a crane operator." (P8-S3).

"They do not experience interesting events. The biggest action is to come to town from the village since even some of the secondary school children have never visited town. There is a pretty good children's playground in town and children talked about it a lot if they visited there. Sometimes they see a snake while coming to school and share it with us." (P13-S3).

Beginning teachers working in remote areas tried to compensate for the students' deprivation and facilitated their limited life experiences:

"Children do not know what the fruit is. I buy fruits and chocolate for children. I especially buy fruits that they do not know so that they

would learn. I ask them what they want to do the next day.[...]
Sometimes I buy cream-cake and coke. We have a party in the class.
Children have not seen such things here." (P6-S3).

Another problem in remote areas was arrival of students into school in the middle of the semester when families who worked as seasonal agricultural workers in other towns move back in their hometowns. In remote areas teachers started with 4-5 children and their classroom population increased in time:

"Students began to come to school on November and December
because they worked as a seasonal worker out of town. Thus, we tried
to bring them school with field scanning and home visits. [Number of
students] increased gradually after November. I mean I did not have
20-25 students at first." (P6-S2).

Beginning teacher were not emotionally ready to be challenged with poverty in remote areas. They could not handle it at first and felt depressed. Then, they decided to change the negative conditions with their own efforts.

"I cried at home a lot. I cried all the time in the first month. Children
came without socks and shoes. They just came with a t-shirt in the
rain. They brought bread with sauce or just bread for breakfast. I was
continuously crying as I observed this, but I realized that I would not
reach a solution by crying. Then, I began to bring bagels, doughnuts
or biscuits for the children. I contacted with institutions, and found
some nutrition help and got some services delivered to the children.
Crying does not solve anything." (P6-S2).

4.2.3.2 Teaching to Students Who Did Not Know Turkish

Beginning teachers were expecting to have some problems in remote areas yet, their problems were beyond what they expected at first.P6 determined her priorities for the local needs since she encountered with children who could not speak in Turkish.

"90% of five years old classes did not speak Turkish. We could not communicate. They could not do what I instructed because of language barrier. In the first place, I already knew that I would experience problems and difficulties but I did not expect that much. At least, I expected that they would know Turkish. When I saw that they did not know Turkish, I realized that a very difficult semester was awaiting me. Then, I focused on language education because if I could solve this problem, I would solve other problems as well. I just focused on language education." (P6-S2).

They had to find their solutions for children who did not know Turkish:

"*At the beginning we communicated with body language. Three or four children knew Turkish. The others could understand but could not speak. Some of them could neither understand nor speak. I used body language and showed visual materials... To say "sit down" I showed sitting."* (P13-S2).

Similarly, P9 gave priority to teaching Turkish since all of the remaining activities depended on expertise on language. Teaching children who did not know Turkish required particular adjustments in teaching practice:

"At first we were learning the same song everyday for a week long, over and over again. Beside, you cannot teach different subject everyday according to curriculum. When we repeat previous subjects, they really like studying familiar things. Their confidence increases. It seems like taking the easy way out but it is not. It really works. Generally, I conduct Turkish-Language activities first. I always conduct it first when they are most attentive." (P9-S2).

P13 approached children with empathy to lessen their fear of speaking Turkish:

> *"They were very shy at first. When I first arrived, I said 'You are children make a noise, speak, and be energetic. There was a silence. They did not even speak to each other in free play. It might be because of several reasons. For instance, they did not know Turkish and they hesitated to speak Kurdish or Arabic in class. I recently told them run but they continued to walk. Then I asked one of the children who both know Turkish and Arabic. 'Could you tell me what 'run' means in Arabic? Your friends do not understand in Turkish. I will say it in Arabic.' He hesitated to say it and I insisted. He replied 'urk' and I said 'urk, urk.' They all laughed and were surprised."* (P13-S3).

Parents had quite low level SES in remote areas. Most of them were still illiterate and in this context being a teacher was considered as a high status. Thus, parents respected and valued teachers to a great extent. P6 tried to get help from parents to teach Turkish to children:

> *"Teachers are the most important people for parents in this city. They fulfill what teachers ask them to do. It is not only for parents. It is same in this city. I always said to parents 'It is difficult to teach and be effective for your child in school unless they know Turkish. Thus, you need to teach Turkish to your child.' One of the parents did not send her child to school for a week. I thought I received negative reaction because of suggesting teaching Turkish. I called but I could not reach. When the child came to school, he could speak Turkish. They did not send him to school to teach him Turkish."* (P6-S2).

In addition to language problems, there were children migrated with their families from other countries due to poverty, civil war, or unemployment. P8 had students from another country:

"Five of them were Afghan. At first they escaped from school. I could not catch them even when I ran after them. They do not know Turkish properly which is difficult for me. We study our literacy books. I teach numbers. They have more difficulties as compared to other students. They need more attention." (P8-S2).

4.2.4 Parents' Involvement

4.2.4.1 Parents' SES and Parent Involvement Activities

In this study, parents' socio-economic status was low in general and parents might feel insecure in front of teachers due to marked differences between teacher's educational level and their educational background. All of the participants behaved modestly to parents to receive their trust and support. After that, they started parent involvement activities:

> *"After 1,5-2 months passed, mothers realized that I really value them. After that, they started to feel a part of the school. I really liked that. I am planning to involve parents into some part of my photography project."* (P2-S2).

Parent involvement activities were shaped by parents' SES in remote areas since some of the parents did not know Turkish or they used language with a different dialect which caused a barrier for teachers to communicate with them effectively. Beginning teachers could not expect parents to come to school and conduct an experiment or art activities with children if their SES level was very low. P9 stated that school's monetary expectation set distance between low SES parents and school. She tried to lessen monetary expectation to lessen parents' distant attitude towards school:

> *"They had a fixed idea that if they had gone to school, teachers would want money from them. Parents' financial status was low and they could not afford to pay for school. Thus, they avoided to go to the*

school. They did not come to school even when I called. However, with the help of enjoyable meetings, we showed that we did not call them to take money, rather we tried to educate their children. They liked that and began to come to school continuously. Let's say when we wanted 5 Liras, we also accepted 1 Lira. We did not insist on getting 4 more Liras since we knew that they could not give more. We tried to make them warm towards school." (P9-S2).

In P16's school, parents had relatively high SES and she was able to conduct some of the parent involvement activities:

"While we were studying occupation, police parents came [to class]. Teachers, nurses, and doctors came and helped about occupation. Besides that, they helped in social activities to take photo and video. Some of the parents who were housewives baked cookies and cake. One of the parents worked in food workshop. We visited her and we cooked a cookie with children. It was very nice. We visited nurse parents and learned how to book an examination and how to get examined. One of the parents worked in the post office. We visited him and learned how to send a mail. They explained everything." (P16-S3).

4.2.4.2 Implemented Activities

Making activities in class with parents was preceding involvement activities among others for beginning teachers. Eleven beginning teachers invited and encouraged parents to conduct activities in class with children. P14 implement it in several ways:

"All of the parents involved in activities. Some of the parents preferred to read books, some of them conducted experiment. They said about art activities that 'We are not creative. You would give an example and we prepared it at home. Then, carry out with children in the class." (P14-S3).

Ten participants had home visit activities for different purposes and gained different outcomes. P9 expressed that parents were hesitant to come to school or communicate with teachers in remote areas and school's monetary expectation was not the sole fear that parents had. Rather, it might stem from the gap between their educational background and teachers' background. She accomplished to break parents' hesitation by treating them closely:

> *"No one came over to school at first. Then we made a meeting and something happened after that a few parents came to school. Second semester I went to home visits and I also took their phone numbers and called them when something happened. They had never experienced this before and they were really pleased. It would not [have this much effect] if I was in the city center, but they were pleased. Beside, home visits were very effective. I also welcomed them when they came to school. I greeted them 'It is good to see you in school.' It made them feel special. They were not familiar with this kind of attitude."* (P9-S3).

P15 assessed children's performance during home visits and tried to know children closely in their homes:

> *"I take children's work with me when I go to home visit. I share interesting work of children with parents. Children show their rooms. We talk about children's condition at home. We can talk private things as it is home environment. We cannot talk such a private issues at school."* (P15-S3).

P14 explained the effectiveness of home visits not only for relationship with parents, but also for solving the problematic behavior of a child:

> *"One of the children was very hesitant when she first came to class. She came to class 1.5 months later. She was very hesitant because of her late arrival. She was not accepted by her friends at first. I spoke*

with her mother and said 'We will come to your house and she will show her stuff.' We visited their house. She showed her room and stuff. She introduced her family. She showed around her house. Then she became different. It was an immediate change that 'I am an individual in this class. My friends accepted me and visited me." (P14-S2).

All of the beginning teachers were planning to conduct activities with parents in class; however, arranging parents to make activities in class was not as an easy task. Although both parents and teachers were eager to participate in parent involvement activities, P1 could not make it:

"I could not invite them and conduct activities together but I was sending notes when I needed something. I saw them at the door every day, I was still sending notes. They liked coming to school and participate in children's activities, but as I said I could not invite them to conduct activities together." (P1-S2).

P5 claimed that parents were afraid of conducting activities with children and hesitated to come to class for such kind of involvement since they realized that handling young children in class was not an easy task:

"I always [invite them into class] but they hesitate. Actually, they are not afraid of me. They are afraid of teaching. Seriously, even teachers [parents] are afraid. One of them is counselor and he wants to come to class all the time. I say 'Of course you can come; you can simply read a book'. He immediately refuses. They are afraid of [having activities with children]. They say 'I hope God will help you' when they come to class." (P5-S2).

The founder of Turkey, Atatürk, presented a fest to children to be celebrated in April 23 every year. Mother's day in May and end of year in June were also celebrated as in schools. Especially in the second semester, teachers worked with parents to arrange these days and generally prepared shows for the audience of parents and

families. These shows were considered as parent involvement activities since teachers were required communicate with parents for preparation of the event:

> *"We prepared dance-show for mother's day and children sang a song for their mothers. We also prepared a present for mothers and made a surprise to them. I had a meeting before April 23 and we also had meeting at the end of the year to discuss summer activities. You know, I organized a cinema day. We gathered several times."* (P2-S3).

One of the instructors in the teacher education program suggested to give responsibilities to parents not just for the several benefits for both parents and children, but also to lessen burden of teacher in larger organizations such as picnic or parties. P5 followed her advice during occasional day shows:

> *"She said 'Use parents in process. They would support you, not just for conducting activities. Give them responsibility so that you can lessen your burden.' She was right. It was impossible to prepare costumes. Especially costumes were problematic. All of them [preparatory works] were arranged by parents including organizing exhibition hall."* (P5-S2).

P14 also got help from parents while involving them into preparation process:

> *"I did not experience problems while preparing materials because my parents helped me. When I prepared plenty of material, I drew template and gave parents a cartoon and they drew it at home. Then they brought to me."* (P14-S3).

4.2.4.3 Problems in Parent Involvement Activities

All of the participants realized that parent involvement activities they had learnt in the teacher education program were not easy to implement and required more effort than what they had first thought. They further argued that those activities were not

realistic for Turkish culture:

> *"We learnt several methods such as preparing brochure and sending notes. However, you need to think on which word you should use to express your ideas better even to send a two-statement note. It was not that much easy. I even struggled to prepare simple notes. It is not possible to prepare a bulletin since if you accidentally use a word that is not appropriate in their viewpoint about their children, everything collapses… [There is a need for] more realistic parent involvement activities. I think [parent involvement activities] that I learnt were not realistic. Maybe they are not realistic now. After 5-10 years I would reach super results but I had difficulty in using them with my current parents."* (P16-S2).

Several participants were teaching in rather rural areas or close to rural areas where population was scarce and scattered. MONE provided transportation for children living remote areas. Teachers could not even meet some of the parents in a year due to the distance between the school and the homes. Transported education set a barrier for parent-teacher interaction and made parent involvement activities almost impossible as P13 expressed:

> *"I know parents of 4-5 children coming from the same village. I could not communicate with parents through notes for a meeting. I thought to visit home and asked to the vice administrator how to do it. He suggested that I should not go alone as they were living in other villages and they would organize home visits for me. They did not organize and I did not go to home visits."* (P13.S2).

Sending notes to parents was also considered as a part of parent involvement activities yet many parents did not even know reading in remote areas and P9's effort did not work at all:

"They did not even study in elementary school. They did not know reading and writing. Half of them did not know. Children forgot if I said something to them. I had to send notes every day. Parents did not know reading and writing. If [the children] did not have sister or brother, my notes were lost and gone." (P9-S2).

Parent involvement activities would be considered to involve both mother and father in developed countries. Yet, socio-cultural barriers prevented beginning teachers to involve fathers into their children education. P11 could not achieve to involve fathers and she associated this situation with Turkish culture and religious practices:

"It was always mothers. Fathers were always at work. Moreover, some of them limited their interaction with woman because of their religious practices. Whereas, I've always wanted fathers to be involved... Maybe it is considered shameful in their social context. I could not break it on any account. I said several times 'You are expected to join parents meeting together' but they did not come." (P11-S3)

Beginning teachers did not always need to communicate with parents. In some cases grandparents took care of children and teachers needed to communicate with them. However, age differences caused some problems for P5 at first:

"Parents were working generally as teachers. Children were raised by grandmothers and it was difficult for me [to communicate with them]. They were quite older than me. Children called them grandmother. I can also called them grandmother. My grandmother was also in the same age with them. It was a funny situation that I was trying to explain something to grandmothers. I entered such a strange context that I called grandmothers as 'you.' I am a hesitant person I cannot speak with older people. I called them as madam." (P5-S2).

Being relatively younger than the parents also caused some problems. P16 believed that she had problems with parents due to her young age:

> *"Our relationship with parents is quite good right now, but at first one of the parents was offended and left school because I talked with her in the second rank. Besides, I seem young and parents treated me like 'Ok! She is a teacher but she is too young. She is a young girl.' I may even be in the same age with their sisters. At first, some of the parents called me as a 'girl.' Then, they understood that I am not what they called. I am the teacher of this class and they need to call me Miss. K. I established that formal relationship in time maybe because of my age."* (P16-S3).

Home visits did not always yield positive results when the relatively young age of the beginning teacher was considered. P12 complained about a change in the attitudes of parents after a home visit activity. They started intimidating the teacher. One teacher claimed that parents might try to abuse her due to her young age. This kind of behavior discouraged her to make home visit and set close relationship with parents:

> *"I visited three parents. Ok! It is good, but we became like sisters. They treated me like a younger sister. They might think that I am young. I do not know, maybe they did not want to use this situation. Once one of them stopped me while I was driving and put her child in the car without asking permission and said 'Can you drive him to [a place]'. I mean, I cried a lot at that time. Ok! I am your child's teacher but I am not a school driver to take him anywhere [they want]. After home visits there were some informal treatments. [They called me] with my first name. Then one of the parents talked to me and said 'It happened because we felt you close'. No matter how close they felt, I am their child's teacher. I am not their friend. I do not want to be treated like that in any case."* (P12-S3).

Nine beginning teachers send homework to home in order to trigger parents' interaction with their children, make parents spend time with their children, and support their learning. Three participants declared that parents misunderstood the purpose of homework (worksheet) and made the homework instead of helping their children, although teachers reminded that it was a task for improving collaboration between the children and parents. They could not prevent parents making their children's homework:

> *"I realized that parents wrote numbers on the worksheet. I sent explanation clearly that it must be your child own effort, you are just supposed to guide but homework are still the same."* (P3-S3).

P10 pointed out how parent's involvement was ignored in public schools in both administrative and teacher level:

> *"Attitude towards parents is also important but it is one of the biggest dilemmas in public schools. Responsibility is not felt due to lack of authority and pressure. 'Children are enough there is no need for parents. We can leave them outside the door.' More or less both teachers and administrators have this [attitude]. It is very effective when you meet them face to face, even you can make a difference on them. It is out of question to skip [parent involvement]. I do not ignore them. I try to listen to them at least for a few minutes and try to give feedback."* (P10-S3).

4.2.5 Issues Related with Classroom Context

4.2.5.1 Motivation

In current study motivation refers to beginning teachers' dedication and commitment to teach young children and how they sustained their commitment to teach. In this study beginning teachers were generally highly motivated for being ECE teachers and teaching young children. Their motivation mainly originated from love of

124

profession and love of children:

> *"I love the love from children the most. It is so nice that they make something for me of their own accord. For instance, bringing flowers or drawing picture. It is very nice to think and make something for me when I do not expect anything from them. When those things happened, I thought that no one would receive such a chance. I exclusively attained this chance, only ECE teachers could have it. For example, one of the children is just 4 years-old and he wrote 'I love you.' For this reason, I felt so lucky and happy."* (P5-S2).

P9 did not expect to be motivated with love of children but as she spent time with children, she realized that she had a special bond with children:

> *"Being with children motivates me. Actually, I was not expecting that it might happen. I was thinking that I would be compelled. Maybe I think this way because I settle down the class, get used to children, and I miss them. I was really emotional yesterday. We get used to each other with children. We become just like a family… Of course, it happens in time. At first I was bored with children and I was tired when they could not join the activities. All of them join the activities now."* (P9-S3).

Similarly, P16 recognized that she changed her feeling towards both her profession and children:

> *"It changes slowly. Previously, you view this profession as a responsibility. As if 'I am a teacher and I need to go to my duty.' Then, it changes in time. You go to school thinking of children 'What should we do with the children?' It is about embracing children. You are continuously searching for ideas: 'It is good. Let's do with children.' Your attitude changes. Mostly, children motivate me."* (P16-S3).

125

Small but enjoyable events always occurred in class and P10 was motivated with them:

> *"They come to school enthusiastically. Parents bring them early because children do not want to stay at home. Children think that I am sympathetic. Mothers are jealous of me. They said 'He is talking about you all the time.' One of the parents said 'he asked me why you do not wear as beautiful as my teacher.' It has an enjoyable part."* (P10-S3).

Another primary source of motivation for beginning teachers was observing children's development. All of the beginning teachers were suspicious about their teaching skills before starting profession. In this sense, observing children's development in a positive way might have helped them to eliminate the doubt of their skills and made them feel powerful on their profession. Then, both their motivation and love of profession increased:

> *"When children establish a new game I am really delighted. It is wonderful to see their development and it motivates me. Observing the difference between their first arrival and current condition even makes me happy. I really get pleasure from teaching."* (P2-S3).

P16 expressed that having successful teaching years and providing qualified education for children would motivate her:

> *"If I give good early education to children throughout this year, they will be at ease in the first grade. If I am convinced that I am sufficient at the end of the year, it will motivate me the best. I think having a successful year would motivate me."* (P16-S2).

Underestimation coming from society toward being ECE teacher expressed in *Study I* disappeared in *Study II* and *Study III*. Beginning teachers never mentioned about public underestimation toward their profession, rather they gained respect due to

their profession:

> *"It is very enjoyable. Children are so funny. I do not understand how five hours pass with them. Besides, when I say I am a teacher, I am treated differently at all times. It gives me pleasure and honor. It really has a moral aspect. When people learn I am an ECE teacher, they suddenly behave like a child even the most tough people say "Wow! How nice!' I think it still gains respect. I understood that."* (P11-S3)

Beginning teachers sometimes lost their motivation because of contextual reasons. Although participants were motivated with intrinsic rewards, all of the participants mentioned about lack of appreciation from the administrators or the MONE. The need for appreciation might originate from their lack of confidence on their profession since beginning teachers declared feeling incompetent in some areas. P3 felt unmotivated when the administrator did not show appreciation for her efforts:

> *"She does not know appreciation and lack of appreciation made me feel disappointed. Of course, I do not expect any reward but I would feel better if she would say 'that's beautiful' when I asked about her ideas."* (P3-S3)

Another source of motivation was having a positive work environment that half of the teachers had experienced. P1 explained how a positive atmosphere in the work environment and good relation with colleagues positively affected her motivation on her profession:

> *"If I had an unpleasant colleague and someone that I do not want to see, and an administrator that puts pressure on me, I would not want to go to school. I do not feel in this way because of having nice atmosphere and good relation with children. Besides, I love my profession so I go to school enthusiastically."* (P1-S2).

4.2.5.2 Classroom management in the first year

4.2.5.2.1 Setting Rules

All of the participants declared in *Study I* that they were afraid of not being able to manage the classroom when they would start teaching as they had negative experiences during the practicum. In *Study II and III*, they claimed that it was much easier to manage their own classes compared to the practicum experience. They focused on setting rules at first with several strategies and they were successful in having an agreement with the children on these rules. All of the beginning teachers tried to build trustful and close relationship with children to create a peaceful classroom climate in the first year of their teaching since they believed that being patient and consistent while setting rules would ease later practice. P11 stated why she had not experienced much trouble with children at the beginning of her profession:

> *"I learned first [in profession] that you need to explain everything*
> *with patience. It was definitely effective."* (P11-S2)

All of the beginning teachers witnessed some inappropriate practices during their practicum course experiences and tried to avoid them in their classes. Shouting children was most common inappropriate practice in practicum schools. P14 particularly felt uncomfortable when teachers shout children and she preferred to establish rules with love instead of by force:

> *"I did not shout children from the very beginning because I was most*
> *terrified with the use of loud voice and shout to children in my*
> *practicum course. I never used that. I made an effort to be a teacher*
> *who is loved and respected from the first moment. I had a kind but*
> *firm manner. Children knew the rules. They were aware of the rules.*
> *They were free in their actions but within the limit of rules."* (P14-S2)

Both teacher education program and ECE curriculum were child centered and emphasized giving voice to students to make them active learners. P1 explained how she integrated children into decision making process while setting rules:

> *"We established rules together. I did not say 'You cannot do this, you cannot do that'. We talked what we should do. They said 'we should not write on the walls, we should not play with cars on the tables'. I said 'Is it appropriate to leave class without informing me?' We set rules and classroom management in this way."* (P1-S2)

After deciding on rules, 12 participants wrote those rules on a cartoon paper, explained the meaning of sign, and then made agreement with children. Children signed under the rules and teachers reminded children that they had an agreement when they broke rules. P10 explained this process:

> *"I gathered their ideas. I determined the most important rules. Naturally, priority was given to not leaving class without my permission or not giving harm to their friends. In this way 6-7 rules came up. Then, I wrote their names on paper. I asked 'Who promise to obey these rules?' All of them raised hands and signed one by one. I hanged them on the wall. After that, I covered their sign when someone hurt their friends or left the class without permission. I opened his sign when he apologized [and promised] not to repeat it again."* (P10-S2)

Integrating children into rule making process improved children's initiation skills in participants' classes. P2 mentioned about her students' development in classroom management activities:

> *"I put a couch in front of the window near the book corner to make children read the book but they started to lean out of a window. Before I said anything, they set a rule that we should not hang down from the window."* (P2-S3)

129

4.2.5.2.2 Keeping Rules

Setting rules was just an inception for the more complex process to make children follow these rules. One of the strategies used by all of the participants was giving rewards to make children keep the rules, although they were not comfortable with using it often as P10 explained:

> *"I used rewards so much in class. I am not sure if it is right or wrong. I used oral praise, social, and material rewards regularly… We give stars to children who obey rules. On Fridays, children who have the most stars choose a gift from the gift basket. It really worked."* (P10-S3)

P1-S3 expressed effectiveness of using reward when she needed instant solution:

> *"If I realize misbehaviors about eating, if children do not want to eat their food, if I run into difficulty, I say 'you will get a smiling face sticker when you finish your food.' It is very effective with reward. Immediately, they ask 'I finished, will you give me a sticker?"* (P1-S3)

Beginning teachers' classroom management style has changed over time; they either lessened or revoked using rewards after setting peace during the class activities. They did not continue to use rewards since they preferred to make children internalize rules. P2-S2 used rewards often at first to establish classroom routines. After class routines started to go well, she used rewards less.

> *"Believe me they would not sit. Some of them get pleasure from the story but they would not stand still. In order to make them get used to the story time, I said 'if you listen to this story, I will give you these large stickers'. Then, I told my story. I said ' If you talk you cannot get a sticker'. They listen silently to get a sticker, in this way they realized it [listening story] is an enjoyable activity. I can have story time without giving reward now."* (P2-S2)

130

Alike with establishing rules at the beginning, all of the participants also tried to make children keep rules by setting close and trustful relationship. P6 claimed that children living in poverty and receiving little affection from parents were more eager to fulfill teacher's order if teacher was responsive to them:

> *"Children love teacher deeply because they do not receive much love here. When they receive love from teacher, they almost adore her and obey what she orders. I handle [them] with love. If I hug, speak with, and love a child, he obeys what I say. He obeys voluntarily because children are hungry for love here. This is the biggest drawback of children here."* (P6-S2)

Not all the beginning teachers were accomplished to make students internalize the rules. Fourteen teachers used punishment for classroom management although they were not comfortable with that. They just felt they had to do that since it could easily eliminate the misbehavior compared with other techniques. P12 said why she was using punishment for classroom management:

> *"Let's say children like drawing picture, and they do not listen to me. I do not allow them to draw picture for one day or to draw a specific picture. It is a punishment but I have to apply it somehow. I do not want to do that but I have to because it works. You see it works."* (P12-S2)

Beginning teachers' punishments were not severe because they were against to punishment when they were studying at college. Mostly, they used timeout as a punishment. P13 exemplified her punishment techniques:

> *"I often give punishment. Actually, I was totally against the punishment at college but I give punishment to children. I do not give it immediately. Firstly, I try other ways. I warn, explain, and in the end I get angry and give punishment. I determined a point in the corner of class and a child who gets punishment goes to there. He*

131

waits until my anger diminishes. Sometimes I say 'Relax and think of your fault then come to discuss with me'. Then he comes and says 'I understood my fault.' I ask 'What was it?' [He says] 'He hit me, too.' I reply "No you did not understand your fault at all. Go and think of it a little bit more." (P13-S3)

P16 realized that time out would get ineffective in time and she needed to modify her technique:

"I realized that if you use timeout, its effect is decreased. Our experienced teacher suggested a technique that 'You can send children to younger age group. It is more effective because children do not want to go to younger age group. They think they are grown up and have completed those phases.' When they did not obey a rule, I said 'If you do not know this rule, you can learn in young age group.' Then, all of them pick themselves up and said 'Yes, we know, we know." (P16-S3)

P4 experienced that reward was more useful than punishment because of her class dynamics:

"When I gave punishment children did not want to join other activities. I said 'Listen! If you finished this activity, I will give you star at the end of the day'. In this way, I could involve children in other activities easily." (P4-S3)

Fourteen participants emphasized the importance of being consistent to make children obey rules since inconsistency resulted in conflict in the class as observed by P2. At first she was prone to fulfill children's wishes if they seemed to be beneficial for children's development. However, she found herself while breaking the classroom rules. She explained how her inconsistency made children negotiate on breaking rules:

132

"Inconsistency is my weakest part, thus children insist on something for three times. I have to explain that there is no point to insist and we have rules. Children treat me like 'I know you. There is no need to explain rules.' I am really weak in this issue since I cannot stand and I behave emotionally to fulfill children's wishes." (P2-S2)

Inconsistency sometimes happens between teacher's practice and parents' practice at home. P4 expressed how children's daily habits were different in rural areas and how it affected her teaching:

"Children got used to it [violent play] since their early age and their view of play is running without halt. They get pleasure from that. It comes from family. They always wrestle with their fathers and siblings also they play the same way outside. Toys cannot endure long as children break them. For instance, we have new beautiful music instruments, I just opened their boxes. Although we did not use them, although I kept them in the kitchen, children entered the kitchen for a short time and broke the instruments." (P4-S3)

Giving positive messages to children was used by 10 participants. P1 observed that it worked more than giving restricting messages:

"[I say] 'Use your voice with control. Use your body with control.' I say 'You need to learn controlling yourself. You need to learn controlling your anger.' They perceive my advice as an advice for adults. Thus, I give them message to control themselves instead of saying 'Do not do that, do not do this.' It is effective. There used to be a biting previously. It diminished a month later. When I say 'You are a child capable of controlling your mouth.' they began to control." (P15-S3)

4.2.5.3 Assessment

In *Study I* participants all agreed that assessment was an indispensable part of early education. They justified importance of assessment with the belief that teachers cannot be sure about effectiveness of their teaching without assessing children's development. However, this study revealed that beginning teachers did not properly implement assessment techniques that they learned in teacher education program and suggested by MONE's curriculum. In general, participating teachers' classes were not overcrowded and thirteen teachers claimed that they easily detected problems or changes in children's behavior. They believed that being responsible of a class made them aware of all changes that happened in children's behavior and class. As such, they felt confident enough to detect all changes in children's behavior and development without using assessment techniques. P4 recognized her improvement in knowing children and how it helped to assess children as well as interfering emergent situation in the class:

> *"I was so surprised when I was going to the practicum school. We did not know the children. For instance, when children said something, teacher immediately recognized what it meant although she was dealing with something different. I recognize it now. You need to be the teacher of that class and you need to be in charge in order to recognize what is going on there. My perception is necessarily increased... I could not recognize this when I was a trainee teacher [in the practicum school]."* (P4-S3)

Beginning teachers believed that they would not miss children's behavior by careful observation. P3 expressed how she recognized children's development. She even believed that other techniques were not useful as much as observation although those techniques were the structured way of observation:

> *'We always focused on observation at the university. You can understand everything with observation. Checklists and anecdotes are*

134

meaningless. Children are always with me and I observe them. I remember their first arrival and current condition. At first, I gave them a large worksheet to cut and they cut it very small. They wasted everything and they were afraid of cutting themselves. Their panic has diminished. I give them worksheet now and they finish when I turn back." (P3-S3)

Ten participants confessed that they did not properly implement all of the assessment techniques that they learned at the university. Although P13-S3 thought assessment was important she did not implement assessment in her teaching:

"Actually this issue is one of the points that I criticize myself. I thought assessment was very important but I realized I did not implement it now. Assessment is an indispensable part of this profession and it should not be done informally. Rather, it should be recorded. I thought I would record but I realized now I have not done ever. I observed informally and I thought about it at home." (P13-S3)

MONE required teachers to fill assessment forms for each child yet P10-S2 did not assess children by using those forms since she had information that inspector would not come to school again:

"Developmental assessment forms got lost when I heard that inspector would not come again. Yet, I do not think they are unnecessary since you think about each child [while filling checklist] what he was doing. If you could not answer, you began to observe him. I do not think they are unnecessary but I did not fill them because of such easiness [lack of inspector's visit]." (P10-S2)

Repeating activities was used as an assessment technique to check whether children learn or not by twelve beginning teachers. P11-S2 illustrated how she implemented in class:

135

"After teaching something, I asked the same subject again. For instance, we have our body book. I asked some question from it to test whether they remembered. I asked questions about a subject to test if they were interested in it and learned after a certain time." (P11-S2)

Seven participants tired to keep anecdotal records at first. Then, four of them quitted keeping notes and three of them preferred to keep anecdotes in free play time. They all pointed out difficulty of keeping anecdotal record during educational activities. Recording video or taking photos were used as a substitute for keeping anecdotes and they were also effective assessment tools for P15-S2:

"I try to keep anecdotal notes as much as possible. Mostly, I keep notes in free play time. I cannot keep notes in other activities but I take photograph and record video to assess them later. If I cannot keep notes, I use photograph and videos." (P15-S2)

Seven beginning teachers used portfolio as an assessment tool since it provided chronological assessment and allowed children to assess their own effort. P8-S3 explained how she integrated children in assessment procedure with portfolio:

"I collect their paintings in their portfolios. I placed them with children. They make comment on their first work that 'I could paint without overfilling now. I could write this word now. I could draw this number now.' They talk about that." (P8-S3)

Although beginning teachers claimed that they used portfolio for assessment, their use of portfolio seemed to be more of sampling children's work. P1-S3 admitted that she just collected children's work:

"We just collect activities. For example, worksheet and activities or they learn something at home and they bring to class and show. We even save the small empty paper in the portfolio. Stuff like this. I have not ever recorded anecdotes or kept a checklist." (P1-S3)

P5-S3 was the only participant using more structured assessment technique for different events compared to other participants:

> *"I had a child who did not speak. I was using event sampling for him like 'He said this today, he said that yesterday.' I also used it for a child having biting problem. I kept anecdotes but not for negative events. I generally used time and event sampling for negative events. I generally kept anecdotes when they said smart or different things. Then, I took photographs and recorded videos. I investigated the photographs for how much they grew up.[I recognize children's behaviors such as] 'He used to behave in this way and she does not play with this toy anymore."* (P5-S3)

Assessment is carried out to diagnose educational and developmental delay in children's development. Twelve participants preferred to work individually with children to eliminate their drawback if they detected problems in children's learning and they generally chose free play time to work with them as illustrated by P13:

> *"I work with them individually in free play. For instance, if she does not write numbers we play train play. It is played with two people, they write numbers 1 to 10. You need to write the number without showing and counterpart tries to find which number she writes by following hand movements. As you guess, you draw a line to make a train. You win if you finish your train first. I am playing this game with children. They were having problems in writing numbers. They learned better while following the movement of my hands."* (P13-S3)

4.2.5.4 Teaching practice-Improvement

Findings of this study indicated that the more positive experiences beginning teachers had with children, the more they enjoyed their jobs and the more positive attitudes they developed towards the profession. All of the participants in this study indicated that their skills were developed more in the area of classroom management

and relationship with the parents as well as with the administrators. Beginning teachers felt more confident in their profession as they gained experience. P4-S3 thought that her first year was very productive:

> *"My teaching skills mostly developed in classroom management and relation with parents. My self esteem increased about my profession. I really gained several skills in this year. There is a huge difference between the first day of teaching and now. Experience is really gained by living it through. I improved myself in all areas of teaching practice."* (P4-S3)

All of the beginning teachers stated that their preparation time was decreased as they gained experience and knew children closely. They spent their time to get prepared for the next day in the beginning of the school year then, their teaching life got easier with the help of acquired practices. P2-S2 expressed how preparation time was decreased in time:

> *"Of course, first times were very different. I searched through all my books. Imagine that half of my luggage was filled with books and the other half was filled with clothes. I looked over and over and I could not decide... Now I reached the level [that I can easily decide what I can do]. It goes ahead step by step from books but it took a lot of time. [...] I was sleepless and I could not finish [next day's activities] but I realized what could I do and the level of children. Now, I am more improved."* (P2-S2)

P15-S2 exemplified how she gained experience and improved in practice in time:

> *"I became practical compared to the first time... It happens by time and practice. People have always said this and I did not believe, but it came true. You become practical as long as you implement, as you add practice onto theoretical knowledge that you had in the college."* (P15-S2)

138

Twelve beginning teachers asserted that they both developed professionally and personally with the help of teaching profession. P11-S3 particularly explained why she improved personally:

> *"First, my self-confidence increased immensely. The respect that teaching profession brings increased my self-confidence. I feel more self-confident. Moreover, the sense of responsibility increased my self-confidence. Twenty children are depending on me. I feel important because of being with them. I feel lucky since I work in my home town. Additionally, I have learned small but several things. I learn new things every day. I improve everyday and I like that."* (P11-S3)

Although beginning teachers were satisfied with their teaching practice in the first semester, fourteen teachers realized at the end of the year that second semester was more effective. P11-S3 explained the difference between first and second semester:

> *"I was confused at first times. I realize now that I told you a lot of positive issues, but [when I] compare to the second semester, first semester was not that good. Now I recognize that second semester is far better. Everything has settled down. I sometimes said maybe I would quit [teaching in the first semester]. Second semester was enjoyable and I did not even say 'I quit' once."* (P11-S3)

4.2.5.5 Effects of Teacher Education Program

Although all of the participants stated that they were satisfied with their university education, they criticized the teacher education program from several perspectives. Beginning teachers' biggest criticisms on the teacher education program addressed the universal problem of "theory-practice gap" mostly resulting from ineffective practicum course and fourteen participants concentrated on this gap. P1 believed that theories did not work in classroom environment as much as practical information. She signified role of practice in classroom environment:

"I think that theoretical knowledge is not useful in the class. I mean, I wish we had more practice course. I wish there was such a [course] and I did not study that amount of theories since they are not profitable. I cannot benefit from them in any way. I think in that manner. Maybe I am new and they will be useful things in time. I think I just need practice now." (P1-S2)

Beginning teachers characterized lack of practice in teacher education program with their bewilderment in class with children. P4-S2 particularly pointed out insufficiency on finger play and music activities in teacher education program:

"When I began to work, I realized that I had a drawback on finger play and music. I mean I [did not sufficient number of] songs. I realized that we did not learn anything about music and finger play especially in the courses. I would teach a song but which song? I did not know." (P4-S2)

Beginning teachers generally referred 'theory practice gap' as a distance between teacher education program and conditions in MONE. P11-S2 pointed out drawback in teacher education program about MONE's system:

"The missing thing was that giving more information about Turkish educational system. I have not learnt anything about legislation or permissions." (P11-S2)

P6-S2 met with unexpected conditions in remote areas and she suggested having practicum course in low SES region to be well prepared for inconvenient conditions since participants had all four practicum courses in relatively high SES neighbor in Ankara:

"I think, there should be more attention on the practicum courses and the practicum should be conducted in all sorts of regions. I mean pre-service teachers should conduct practicum course in the worst as well

as the best schools so that teachers are not be bewildered when they
are appointed in the low SES region." (P6-S2)

Participants highly criticized instructor shortage. Thirteen participants complained about instructor quality and background. P7-S3 complained about lack of instructors and pointed out disconnection between teacher education program and MONE:

"They should be related with MONE since the conditions has
changed. Numbers of graduates planning to work in private school is
decreased and choice of MONE is increased. What happened in
MONE must be taken into consideration. Certainly, attention should
be given on the documents we need to prepare. There is a need for
someone from the field." (P7-S3)

Not all the comments on teacher education program were negative participants also express their satisfaction especially on technological opportunities as METU is a technology oriented university. Participants reached several technological opportunities at METU. They felt comfortable in using technology and this made them superior to their colleagues in their schools. P2-S2 enjoyed this superiority:

"Technology courses were incredibly enjoyable and beneficial. I still
get pleasure of them. When [other teachers] encounter with video or
power-point presentation, they immediately bring to me. We prepared
cartoon and story on power-point, it is even still useful. For example,
if I could not find 'brushing teeth' on the internet, I can easily say 'I
can make it by using photographs or I can make transition from here.'
I learned several things about technology." (P2-S2)

P6-S2 explained how she became vice principal and got privileged in school with the help of her technology expertise:

"The administrator asked me which program I could use. For
example, to what extent I knew Word and Excel. He asked whether I

141

could prepare a website or not. I mean he tried to understand my computer expertise level. Beside my education at the university, I had a special interest on these subjects. I had an advanced computer expertise. It was the biggest shortage here. They had a great insufficiency in using internet and technology and all of the school work was done through e-school system. There was not any staff member to handle those works due to lack of expertise on computer. For this reason, I was suddenly appointed as vice chairperson 2-3 days after helping the administrative work." (P6-S2)

Participants expressed that they had a sufficient theoretical background in ECE as stated earlier. They generally complaint about lack of practice, yet P5-S3 thought in a different way. She claimed that teachers were reluctant to put theory into practice:

"I think it could not be any better. Because we gained theoretical knowledge and I realized its importance in that time and I also realize [its importance] now. Practice is important but if you know theory well, you can implement it in some way. I observe that children are the same with what we have learnt. If you know observing [children, you realize that they are similar to what theory says]. Instead, if you say 'It does not fit, children do not listen to me, it is not same with what it has written in the book'... Of course, it is not same if you approach in this manner. Moreover, I definitely believe that we learnt several things and got ready in practicum course. Suppose that if we had not have practicum course, how it would be hard to take children to go to the dining hall, making 16 young children to follow you without problem and take to dining hall." (P5-S3)

4.2.5.6 Relationships in schools

4.2.5.6.1 With Administrators

In *Study I*, several participants stated that relationship with administrator would affect their teaching practice and they were concerned about interference coming from administrator. Nine participants had positive relationship with their administrators in their first-year of teaching which made them motivated and feel comfortable in school. On the other hand, six participants had negative experiences with their administrators and they felt pressure and isolation. P1-S2 worked in an independent school and explained how administrator's attitude positively affected her in the beginning of her profession:

> *"She treated me nicely. If she had treated me roughly, my confidence might have been broken. Thankfully, she [helped me] to maintain my confidence."* (P1-S2)

P11-S2 felt comfortable in school with the positive attitude of administrator:

> *"My administrator is wonderful. We are totally like-minded. He is young and dynamic. […] Working with him gives me confidence. It is very enjoyable to work with him. Definitely, he affected my orientation into school positively. He is friendly and has good intentions."* (P11-S2)

P16-S3 worked in independent school and appreciated her administrator's positive manner towards beginning teachers:

> *"Generally, she keeps distance but she mostly behaves kindly to us. She has several novice teachers. She tries to explain and teach to the new teachers. We made unavoidable mistakes because we are learning [our profession] now. She does not correct our mistakes harshly, rather she approaches gently. She explains though formal and ethical*

perspectives: 'My friends, you need to do this in that way.' I appreciate her for that and I also feel comfortable." (P16-S3)

Beginning teachers needed to adopt some strategies to communicate with their administrators. P4-S2 expressed that being open in relationship all the time in school was not the best way and teachers needed to be political in order to get their demands from administrator. P4 explained how she learned to communicate with administrators since she could not directly say to administrator what she wanted. She had to set balance between administrator's power and her demands:

> *"You should express in such a manner: 'You know the best but I think that...' This way is more reasonable for me. Because he does not perceive [your expression] negatively and you can find opportunity to express your demand. Otherwise, when you say 'Let's do this' he may perceive it [negatively]."* (P4-S2)

Beginning teacher's negative relation with administrators emerged in a different way. P10-S2 could not react against the administrator because of being novice in her school:

> *"They asked us to determine our needs but first semester has finished and [materials] have not been bought yet. I do not know what will happen. There is a 15-years experienced teacher and I was thinking that she would set her hand on the tasks and we will follow her. However, it did not happen because the relationship between administrators and teachers is very different. She does not want to involve, eventually she gets permission easily and she gets what she wants. She does not want to be against particular things in order not to ruin her relationship... I did not directly make an objection, but maybe next year I and my friend will object more."* (P10-S2)

Similarly, P7-S3 could not object to her administrator even when she was right. P7-S3 had difficulty in her paperwork related with MONE since her administrator did

not direct her in solving her problem:

> *"I could not get my additional payment for two months. I asked 3-4 times [to the administrator]. Would it be different if I ask again? Administrator did not solve my problem and the person in MONE office was not interested. [...] I do not want to file any complaint about him in the MONE office, because he has good intentions but he cannot comprehend the procedure thoroughly."* (P7-S3)

Finally, P5-S2 believed teachers hesitated to assert their right against administrators since they were afraid of administrators. She expressed that their fear originated from lack of knowledge:

> *"If you are self-confident and knowledgeable about your right against administrator, no one can establish pressure on you. It might not be in this way in private schools but in public schools our rights are very wide that no one can judge me. Teachers are afraid of the inspectors so much but inspectors have no effect upon us. There is no point in being afraid of them and behave stressful."* (P5-S2)

4.2.5.6.2 Relationships with Colleagues

Nine participants declared that they had positive relationships with their colleagues in school. Six participants confessed that they did not expect to have such positive relationships with their colleagues. First impression about relationship in school played important role on beginning teachers' adoption process in school. P1-S2 exemplified this issue:

> *"All of the staff greeted me very warmly. All of the teachers, cleaning staff and administrative staff in school were there to greet me. It was so warm that I felt I was meeting with a new family and I became a member of that family in time. It was so nice and I am very lucky about [relationships]"* (P1-S2)

145

P8-S2 worked in elementary school and she was the only ECE teacher in school. Although ECE teachers rarely have interaction with elementary grades' teachers, P8 was pleased with her school's atmosphere and she drew attention on having positive relation in schools. Her school was located in another city and she had to travel every day. But she wanted to work in the same school because of the positive relationships:

> *"We are nine teachers in school. I am pleased with both my school and atmosphere. If there appears a permanent position here, I will apply for it. I will not think about traveling. I mean I am pleased that much. I suspect that I can find such an environment in the city center. I mean, the staff is very important."(P8-S2)*

Sometimes administrator's attitude played an important role on relationships among teachers. Administrator in P10-S3's school pushed teachers to work together and they realized how they would work together in harmony. She was even astonished with their positive relationships:

> *"Our new administrator was appointed in the beginning of this semester. He encouraged us to make activities. He said 'I want to see this preschool in a continuous movement... Then we began to work together and it was very enjoyable. We were all thankful for that.. We work in a harmony. There is no problem. […] There has not been even an offensive word for two semesters."* (P10-S3)

All of the beginning teachers were planning to have positive relationship with their colleagues in *Study I.* Yet, they set a condition that 'If their colleagues would be open to positive relationship.' Some of them experienced problems with their colleagues even when they tried to have a friendly relationship, as P9-S3 stated.

> *"I tried to set intimate relation at first. Then I realized that there is no point to have intimate relationship because we have different backgrounds and we have different view points... […] Atmosphere has changed and there was a continuous gossip. Thus, I set a personal*

distance. I realized having intimate relationship was not beneficial since they started to judge everything about me. I felt pressure." (P9-S3)

Having negative relation in school resulted in several discomfort for beginning teachers. P14-S3 tried to find a way to change her school:

"I cannot leave this school for three years. I can just apply for working in another school [under certain circumstances] and it seems that I will apply for it because I am clearly unhappy in my school because of one of the teachers' attitude." (P14-S3)

4.2.5.6.3 Relationships with Parents

Beginning teachers accepted their role to set positive relation with parents and they implemented several strategies to gain their trust and respect. P1-S3 tried to established empathy with parents and tried to understand their concern. She claimed that teachers needed to be patient towards parents to gain their trusts. In this sense, teacher's role was greater than parents to establish a healthy relationship:

"Some of the parents want to interfere. We need to be tolerant to them. It is the first time they leave their children in somewhere. You need to get their trust; therefore, you need to be patient. It does not happen quickly. They do not suddenly thrust and leave all decision to you. [Teachers] need to go with the flow. The most important thing is being patient." (P1-S3)

In this study, most of the parents were from low SES background which created distinct difference between teacher and parents, yet all of the beginning teachers behaved modestly to parents. P14-S2 explained how being modest helped to establish good communication with parents:

"I am good with my parents. Besides, there is not a big age difference.

147

I did not behave nose up. I always asked what they were thinking and they embraced me quickly. I made them feel that I was both the teacher and a friend since I believed that if I were arrogant, I would receive different reactions." (P14-S2)

P8-S2 found working in low SES neighborhood to be advantageous since parents having a low SES had lower expectations from teachers and did not interfere in teacher's decision:

"Parents' expectations are getting higher in the city centers. My parents leave it up to me but my friends' parents in the city center interfered in everything. It was good to work in low SES neighborhood to gain experience in my first years." (P8-S2)

P11-S3 expressed that low SES parents' expectation was also low and it might cause regression for her:

"I had such a parent profile that they did not criticize me. If I had another type of parent's profile, like in a university based ECE school, they would criticize me. Maybe they would criticize harshly but there is no criticism here. They appreciated me 'You are making very good activities. It is wonderful.' It might cause regression in that respect."
(P11-S3)

All of the participants emphasized importance of the first impression of teachers on parents for the healthy relationship in the future. P5-S2 specified how she introduced herself to the parents:

"I made a first meeting at the beginning and introduced myself. I made them to know each other. We played drama activities. I was prepared for that meeting a lot. I met them in a rather realistic and strong manner because I know that relationships getting weird if you would not be [strong]. I faced with them in a self-confident manner."

(P5-S2)

P16-S2 was appointed at the end of summer and felt great responsibility when she met with 27 parents in the meeting:

> *"I faced with all of the parents at the meeting. There were 27 parents and [I was] alone in the class. They asked questions and [I] replied or [I] asked and they replied. They took [me] seriously and treated [me]as a teacher. I thought 'Wait a minute I was a student a month ago, now I became a teacher. I am a teacher of these people's children.' It was a different emotion but also I was proud of myself. People took me seriously. I felt that I should be careful about what I would say because they really listened to me."* (P16-S2)

Structure of schools also played a role on relationship between teachers and parents. P1-S2 worked in an independent preschool having three classes. All three teachers greeted children every morning which established strong relationship with parents. This was also helpful to know children closely and assess their development.

> *"Every day we meet parents and children in front of the door and they really liked that. They were really satisfied with the school. We heard something good every day from parents. 'He did not use to wash his hands before dinner; [now] he warns me if I say a rude word.' They were very thankful to us."* (P1-S2)

In addition to the positive experiences with parents, fifteen beginning teachers experienced various problems with parents. Six participants believed that their problems occurred while they were trying to establish an intimate relationship with parents. Thus, they planned to be stricter to parents in coming years. P4-S3 explained what she wanted to change in the future:

> *"I thought at first that if I behaved seriously towards them, they would not share their problems with me. I was open with them. I do not mean*

149

inappropriately, but I spoke intimately. I will not behave like that at first. I will explain rules with a strict manner. I would start with giving order, then we can communicate throughout year. I mean I can arrange it better next year." (P4-S3)

Eight participants stated that they had difficulties arranging a balance with the parents and their demands. Organizing everything according to all parents' convenience tired P11-S3:

"It is very difficult to find a common ground while choosing books. Even the smallest events at a parent meeting [might be problematic]. Teachers are considered as having organizer positions and are faced with 40 parents of 20 children. We even quit several activities for this reason. For example, end-of-year picnic created many problems. 'It should be on Saturday. No it should be on Monday. It should be on Wednesday. OK! On Wednesday at this time.' Then some of them objected. It was very hard to get that group together. If I had set everything [against their will], then I would not provide any choice for them. I had difficulty in satisfying 40 people." (P11-S3)

Five participants complained that parents had a fixed image of and expectations from a teacher. P16-S3 had experienced some problems with unrealistic or exaggerated expectations of parents:

"As I said before, something must be done [in teacher education program] because I experienced a lot of [problems]. I do not know whether I experienced a lot. Even one of the parents asked 'What is this child going to be?' How can I know what will happen 10 years later? I can just say the current condition of child but even some parents said 'Do not tell me that, you should tell me this.' [Some parents] came with these expectations... It is funny. Moreover, they expect you to know everything. When I said 'I know this much', they

150

looked at me strangely. You are not allowed to not know anything."
(P16-S3)

4.2.5.7 Summary

Participants in this study were all teachers working in public schools under the governance of MONE. Although MONE provided better work environment and conditions compared to private schools, beginning teachers experienced several problems in their first year. MONE hired more than 15 thousand teachers before preparing schools for such a sudden increase in schooling rate. Beginning teachers who were appointed in unprepared schools struggled with infrastructure problems. Infrastructure problems emerged in different formats including lack of proper ECE classes or schools and caused discomfort for beginning teachers as they had a negative start in their profession.

Infrastructure problems resulted in additional problems such as non-curricular tasks. Beginning teachers were trained for both curricular and caring tasks. Yet, they were not educated to clean the class, heat the class with a stove, and prepare food for children. Fulfilling all these tasks affected their teaching in a negative way since they were time consuming and tiring. Non-curricular tasks made beginning teachers frustrated in the long run and they started to question their profession. Administrators overlooked beginning teachers' suffering as they did not want to hire additional staff and create other expenditure items.

In order to carry out educational activities in the early education settings, teachers needed more materials compared to upper grades such as child size furniture to provide a better environment for teachers and children. In this study, beginning teachers found basic materials in public schools, yet lack of stationery materials hindered them from carrying out some educational activities. Unfortunately, parents could not afford to pay for monthly fee to support their children's education and nine beginning teachers spent from their own budgets to overcome lack of material. Although teachers tried their best, it was not always possible to meet all of the

material needs for 15-20 children and they could not teach some concepts due to lack of material. In some situations, MONE provided sufficient materials to schools; however, administrators were not able to keep them in safe places and they were broken or got lost. Material shortage was not a condition teacher education programs prepared participants for because ECE classes in their practicum schools consisted of corners such as science, drama, mathematics, and play. As such, they were disappointed when they worked in classes without corners, and it was that difficult for them to put theory into practice. Administrator's attitude also caused material shortage in schools. Some of the administrators gave special importance to early education and tried to solve the material shortage problems; however, some of them believed that ECE classes were not the places where several activities would be carried out.

This study has revealed several unforeseen issues in public schools such as the difference between independent and elementary ECE classes. Beginning teachers working in independent schools had less difficulty in their first year since independent classes were built considering young children's needs. Besides, independent school administrators had ECE background; however, elementary school classes were designed for elementary school children and administrators were totally unfamiliar with early education. Their unfamiliarity sometimes caused isolation for ECE teachers as they felt administrators ignored them.

Administrators were primarily responsible for beginning teachers and they were inspected and guided by administrators. Yet, their limited knowledge of early education was not sufficient to guide or inspect beginning teachers. According to MONE's legislation, beginning teachers were also inspected and guided by MONE's inspectors twice in their first year of teaching. The first inspection was only for guiding and the second one was the real inspection. Beginning teachers experienced problems with inspectors as they were not specialized on ECE. They were trained for inspecting elementary education teachers which made inspectors expect the same responsibilities from ECE teachers, although some of the issues they required were not proper for ECE classes and teachers.

MONE's highly centralized system was managed with its complex legislation and paperwork. All of the beginning teachers complained that MONE's legislation and paperwork were difficult to comprehend as they included tremendous information. They further complained that teacher education program offered limited information upon how official operations were held in MONE, what teachers' rights were and how they could seek their rights when they had faced problems. Beginning teachers needed someone to guide them on MONE's legislation and paper work mostly in the position of a mentor or a friend. Moreover, they needed guidance for practical information to manage classroom activities. Administrators were supposed to appoint mentors for beginning teachers in public schools, yet most of the teachers did not have mentors. For this reason, teachers were not able to get prepared for some issues beforehand; rather they solved their problems after encountering them. This study showed that MONE's detailed legislation for the induction of first year teachers was not implemented as it was required. Most of the teachers expressed ineffective implementation of induction legislation in public schools.

Most of the participating teachers were teaching children coming from low socio-economic status (SES) families which resulted in additional problems in their first year of teaching. Beginning teachers stated that children could not get a wider perspective in their limited environment. Thus, they simplified educational activities according to local conditions but they also tried to compensate for the students' deprivation by facilitating their life experiences. Beginning teachers were not emotionally prepared to educate children living in poverty. This situation was challenging for them at first and they felt depressed. Then, they got used to it and tried to change the negative conditions for these children with their own effort.

Teaching children who did not know Turkish was more challenging than teaching children living in poverty for beginning teachers. Teachers were not able to communicate children and they could not do what the teacher instructed because of the language barrier. In the first place, teachers just focused on language education because if they could solve this problem, they would solve other problems as well. Teaching children who did not know Turkish was required particular adjustments in

153

teaching practice. Beginning teachers basically used body language and visual materials at first to teach simple concepts. This study revealed that the current ECE curriculum is not appropriate to educate children who do not speak in Turkish as beginning teachers could not follow it with those children. Teachers have repeated the same activities several times for weeks as children enjoyed being engaged in familiar subjects. For this reason, teachers skipped some activities in the curriculum. Besides, teachers stated that children who did not speak Turkish were shy and hesitant; therefore, teachers needed to approach them with empathy to lessen their fear of speaking Turkish.

Participating teachers tried to engage parents in their children's education. Parents' SES was generally low and beginning teachers behaved modestly to parents to gain their trust and support before implementing parent involvement activities to avoid possible miscommunication because of marked differences in their educational level. However, especially in remote areas, teachers could not even communicate or they did not even find the chance to meet with parents throughout the year. In this sense, they could not expect parents to come to school and conduct an experiment or art activities with children. Still, some of the teachers had an opportunity to implement parent involvement activities that they learned in teacher education program. Beginning teachers realized that having home visits was really helpful to decrease parents' hesitation to come to school. Making activities in class with parents was preceding involvement activities among others for beginning teachers. Inviting parents in class to introduce their job was another parent involvement activity participants implemented. Giving responsibilities to parents to organize picnic or parties lessened teachers' burden and also had several benefits for both parents and children. Although all of the participants were willing to implement parent involvement activities, they realized that implementing parent involvement activities that they had learnt in teacher education program was more difficult than their initial expectations.

Beginning teachers were generally highly motivated for being ECE teachers, and teaching young children in this study. Their motivation mainly originated from love

of profession and love of children. Beginning teachers felt extremely satisfied when children drew pictures or wrote letters for them. Even though some of the teachers did not expect to be motivated by the love of children, they realized that they had a special bond with children when they spent time with them. Besides, their motivation increased in time as they recognized their success in their profession considering that they doubted their teaching skills before starting the profession. Seeing the development of children, which was a proof of their accomplishment, motivated beginning teachers. Another source of motivation for beginning teachers was totally new for them because they all complained underestimation coming from society in Study I. However, they realized that society really respected teachers when they started to teach. They enjoyed the respect they received from society and it gave them pleasure and honor.

Most of the participants had negative experiences during the practicum. Thus, their biggest fear in Study I was having problems to manage the classroom when they would start teaching. Luckily, they experienced fewer problems than they expected. They all asserted that dealing with their own class as the teacher was far easier than handling someone else's class in the practicum course. In order to create a peaceful classroom climate in the first year of their teaching, beginning teachers first tried to build trustful and close relationships with children. In doing so, they believed that they could reach a consensus with children on classroom rules which were the most important parts of classroom management strategies for beginning teachers. Participants had witnessed some inappropriate classroom management practices such as shouting children during their practicum course and tried to avoid them in their classes. Beginning teachers also tired to empower children by involving them in the decision making process. In this way, children were aware of the rules and they felt free in their actions within the limit of rules.

Setting rules was just an inception for the more complex process to make children follow these rules. Although beginning teachers were not comfortable with using rewards, they gave rewards to make children keep the rules. They all asserted that rewards worked well and provided instant solution for misbehavior. However, they

were not comfortable with using rewards and made regulation to use rewards in time since they preferred to make children internalize rules. As such, they did not continue to use rewards, rather they either lessened or revoked using them after setting peace during the class activities. Similarly, participants were not comfortable with using punishment, yet sometimes they felt that other techniques did not work to eliminate the misbehavior. They were against using punishment; therefore, their punishments were not severe and they did not implement it immediately. Rather, they provided time for children to stop misbehaving.

Before entering the teaching profession, participants all pointed out importance of assessment with the belief that teachers cannot be sure about the effectiveness of their teaching without assessing children's development. Yet, their later practice revealed that beginning teachers did not properly implement assessment techniques that they learned in teacher education program and suggested by MONE's curriculum. Teachers claimed that they were primarily responsible for their class which made them more aware of all changes that happened in children's behavior and class. For this reason, they did not need to use assessment techniques to detect problems or changes in children's behavior. They strongly believed that being in charge of class sharpened their skills and they immediately recognized what was going on in class. In addition to observing children, beginning teachers repeated activities to check whether children learned or not. They simply asked questions about a subject to see if children were interested in it and learned after a certain time. They all pointed out the difficulty of keeping anecdotal records during educational activities. Recording videos or taking photos were used as a substitute for keeping anecdotes. Finally, some of the teachers preferred to keep portfolios because of its chronological usefulness, yet their use of portfolio appeared to be more of sampling children's work.

All of the participants in this study indicated that there was a considerable difference between the first day of teaching and their teaching they expressed in Study II and III. They expressed that experience was gained by living it through in all areas of teaching practice. Their skills were more developed in the area of classroom

management and relationship with the parents as well as with the administrators. When they realized that they were more successful than they imagined on these issues, their self esteem increased to a great extent on their profession. Moreover, they asserted that as they progressed in their profession their self esteem, self confidence and self efficacy improved simultaneously. Beginning teachers realized that they became more practical in putting theory into practice and their preparation time was decreased. They spent effort both in school and at home in the first months. They spent considerable time and energy to search through books and internet to prepare next day's activities. Then, their teaching life became easier with the help of acquired practices. Participants even realized that their teaching skills far were more developed in second semester compared to first semester.

All of the participants in this study believed that METU offered sufficient theoretical background in the field of ECE. Participants reached several technological opportunities during their studies in the teacher education program. Public schools have been trying to carry out all their work on online system and they needed more teachers using technology efficiently. Participants were more comfortable in using technology and this made them superior among their colleagues. Although all of the beginning teachers stated that they were satisfied with their teacher education program, they pointed out some drawback in their education. They criticized teacher education program as giving too much theory-based education. They generally asserted that focusing more on theory caused lack of practice. Their criticism addressed the universal problem of "theory-practice gap" mostly resulting from ineffective practicum course. Beginning teachers justified the lack of practice in teacher education program with their bewilderment in class with children. Moreover, theory-practice gap referred the distance between teacher education and MONE's system in Turkey. Participants associated all these insufficiencies to the instructor shortage in the program.

Participants had observed in practicum that administrators might interfere in teachers' practice and they were primarily concerned with relationships with administrators. When they started to teach, some of them had negative experiences

157

with their administrators felt pressure and isolation. Teachers who had positive relationship with their administrators felt motivated and comfortable in their first year of teaching. It appeared that beginning teachers were hesitant to assert their rights against administrators as they were not aware of their rights. They either kept their silence towards administrators' inappropriate practice or developed some strategies to communicate their administrators.

Similarly, relationships with other colleagues substantially affected beginning teachers' motivation and sense of belongings to school. First impression on relationship with other colleagues played important role on beginning teachers' adaptation process in school. Nine participants confessed that they did not expect to have such positive relationships with their colleagues. They emphasized importance of positive relationships in school since having warm and family atmosphere helped them to come to school enthusiastically every morning. Some of the participants stated that administrator's attitude played an important role on direction of relationships among teachers. If administrators encouraged competition among teachers, it caused jealousy and created negative relationships. On the other hand, when administrators supported cooperation among teachers, they worked in a harmony. Having negative relation in school resulted in several discomfort for beginning teachers. They even tried to find a way to transfer to another school.

The results showed that participants had several positive and negative experiences during their first year in teaching in public schools. They developed certain strategies to overcome negative experiences and turn them into positive ones. Administrators, colleagues, and parents became either the cause of these problems from time to time or the support for teachers in solving problems. Children's lives in specifically rural areas were not close to the experiences beginning teachers had in the teacher education program but causing a difference in their lives was the major source of motivation among many others. Teacher education program experiences helped them occasionally for what to do and what not to do. However, they claimed certain issues in the teacher education program which should be more effectively organized in order to prepare teachers for real classrooms.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of the study. It also offers recommendations for teacher education programs and Ministry of National Education in order to smoothen struggle of beginning teachers in their first year of teaching. More specifically, it addresses the discussion on pre-service teachers' expectations on the teaching profession and their experiences in the teaching profession in their first year. Beside, this study focused on teachers working in public schools and it revealed beginning teachers' challenges related with MONE's policy and conditions in MONE. As such, this chapter aims to discuss the link between teacher education programs and beginning teachers' challenges in the MONE system. Therefore, implications for teacher education and MONE are explained, and limitations of the study and recommendations are made for future research.

This chapter combined all of the three phases of present study. In order to reflect whole picture of being a new teacher in public school, findings of this study was scrutinized under the title of teacher education program, MONE, school and classroom context. These concepts cannot be differentiated as they are all interrelated to each other. Therefore, contexts the discussion was structured might intersect each other from time to time.

5.1 Teacher Education Program

Literature indicates that teaching is an immensely complex endeavor and one cannot be prepared by just knowing theoretical aspects of teaching, which is just a small part of the art of teaching. The first year of teaching is a period to comprehend this complexity since all the methodology classes, pedagogical training, and practicum

159

courses taken in the teacher education programs might help beginning teachers prepare to teach a subject (Wyatt & White, 2007). Findings of this study suggested that pre-service teachers expected to encounter some difficulties while educating young children before starting their profession. They anticipated similar difficulties reported in literature such as relations with parents, shortage on materials, classroom management, lesson planning and student assessment, and time management (Latimer, 2009). Yet, Turkish pre-service ECE teachers expected to have different difficulties because of feeling extensive pressure and responsibility for being responsive, fair, and sensitive to all children's needs. It appeared that pre-service teachers were overwhelmed with the diverse needs of children. It has been addressed that teaching young children required more commitment than teaching upper grades since young children needed affection, warmth, care, and responsiveness (Brostrom, 2006). In addition to psychological difficulties, being an ECE teacher was also physically difficult for participants because young children always needed to be supervised. All these factors made pre-service teachers perceive their profession as a difficult one, and they felt more pressure in their future teaching.

Beginning teachers were overwhelmed with several problems and these problems could be reduced by improving teacher education programs. In general, the primary criticism on teacher education programs was concentrated around giving extensive theoretical knowledge, having little connection to practice, and offering unrelated or ineffective courses for further processes even in developed countries (Maandag, Denium, Hofman, & Buitink, 2007; San, 1999). Latimer (2009) suggested that teacher education programs should place great emphasis on helping pre-service teachers implement the knowledge they are learning in college. Precisely, theory helped to provide a framework for understanding and interpreting practice, still it could not replace learning to implement the basic tools for handling real classroom situations. Although all of the participants stated that they were satisfied with their university education, they also criticized teacher education programs on several points. They mostly complained about too much theory-based education and lack of practice. They all reported that teacher education program disregarded practice while

160

focusing more on theory. Pre-service teachers in this study mostly stated the discrepancy between the teacher training and the actual teaching in public schools as inconsistent and that they did not feel ready for teaching young children. In this sense, there was an urgent shift from theory to explicit practice for pre-service teachers. This shift could be smoothen by providing teachers with specific instructional strategies and guided practice in the form of in depth analysis of case studies and video vignettes during their training in the teacher education programs.

Theory-practice gap also appeared in a different format since beginning teachers generally referred to 'theory-practice gap' as a distance between teacher education programs and the MONE. This distance mainly stemmed from being a graduate of an English-medium university in which textbooks were in English and mainly addressing foreign contexts. Public schools play a crucial role in Turkey, shaping the next generation through education and fostering social unity. One fifth of Turkey's civil service sector consists of public school teachers who educate more than 15 million students. Unfortunately, teacher education programs do not include any administrative courses to enable beginning teachers to overcome all requirements of MONE. There is an urgent need to set a close contact with the MONE and the teacher education programs to resolve leading problems of teachers since MONE is the primary and biggest institution offering job opportunities for pre-service teachers. Emphasis on potential costs, concern, and instructional difficulties that the teachers might face in public schools should be discussed in detail during the teacher education program. It is also necessary to help pre-service teachers to gain a teacher identity by providing the real aspects of the teaching profession in Turkey. Faculties and the MONE must act with combined efforts for the purpose of well-designed trainings both for the pre-service s and in-service teachers. Therefore, there is a need for cooperation between universities and schools to link the professional training and teaching practice (San, 1999).

Turkish educational system is highly centralized and has a complex legislation which generates extremely loaded paper work. Beginning teachers struggled to learn and navigate this bureaucracy. A course explaining MONE's structure and operation

policy was not offered when the participating teachers were studying at the teacher education program. Most of the recently established universities in deprived areas are struggling with the lack of qualified academic staff to teach courses in administration, this need could be provided by public school administrators themselves. Another problem emerged due to regional differences in Turkey. Newly employed public school teachers, including participants of this study, were generally appointed to rural areas because the city centers and western part of Turkey were the most desired place to work and there were few positions in those areas. Rural parts of Turkey were characterized with deprivation of social, structural, and safety issues. Beginning teachers declared that struggling with those problems were harder than handling teaching workload in their first year of teaching. Beginning teachers were emotionally challenged with lack of social life and poverty in rural areas as they have been educated in and for city center conditions. Universities were located in city centers and pre-service teachers performed practicum course in the city center with middle and upper-middle class children which made them unaware of conditions in deprived areas. Additionally, ECE curriculum at schools was not prepared considering the regional differences (AÇEV, 2002b). Participants were required to teach children living in poverty and those children did not even have sufficient nutrition and they were shocked when they faced with this or similar situations. Therefore, participants did not meet what they were trained for and they did not have time for getting ready for these unexpected situations. Regarding the diverse socio-cultural structure of Turkey, it would be better to require pre-service teachers to conduct practicum course in deprived districts where class size is high, structural quality is poor, and parent's socio-economic level is low. Facing with reality before working as a teacher might reduce beginning teachers' frustration in public schools.

Beginning teachers primarily focused on facilitating children's learning since they believed that children did not experience interesting incidents in their limited environment and could not develop a wider perspective for life. Teachers tried to compensate children's drawbacks with their own effort and budget. However, they were not able to deal with all of the difficulties in remote areas, such as children's

health problems, which made them feel depressed and powerless. Another problem stemmed from poverty appeared in children's arrival in school. Economy was based on primitive agricultural activities in remote areas and people could not find opportunity to work in industry or service sectors. For this reason, they moved to other cities to work as seasonal workers in more developed agricultural areas. As such, beginning teachers accepted new children in class until late December and children left school in early May. This situation arouse the needs for region specific curriculum since National ECE curriculum was designed supposing that all children would arrive at school in September and leave in June.

Findings of this study addressed the weakness of early childhood teacher education programs in training teachers for children with diverse backgrounds and for managing the challenges in the first year in teaching. Beginning teachers experienced other unexpected problems in remote areas. They found themselves in situations that they had to teach children who could not speak Turkish. It was impossible to teach without communicating children and their parents. Beginning teachers communicated children using body language at first and then they prioritized teaching Turkish because children could not perform what teachers instructed because of their language barrier. Beginning teachers tried to figure out the best way to teach Turkish, yet they did not have a course about it or they did not find sources suggesting practical solution to teach Turkish as a second language to young learners. In this case, they found their own way through trial and error. Their first year of teaching would be more easy and effective if they had received support on this particular issue. Considering the fact that language was the most important tool for communication, lack of language ability could also cause failure in elementary school. For this reason, MONE and teacher education programs work collaboratively to develop special programs for teaching Turkish to children living in eastern part of Turkey. As participants stated, children were shy and hesitant to involve in activities at first. When they began to learn Turkish, their confidence increased, and they started to involve in classroom activities more.

Early childhood teacher education program was quite a new program in the field of education in Turkey. A few long-established universities used to educate ECE teachers until more than 50 educational faculties started to serve early childhood teacher education program without sufficient staff and infrastructure settlement. The lack of instructors in the teacher education program was compensated in two different ways: Either part-time instructors from other universities taught a course or instructors from other departments taught some of the courses. Either way it caused some problems. Participants had a limited opportunity to communicate with part-time instructors other than the class hours. Besides, instructors from other departments were not familiar with early education and their techniques were unrelated to ECE. Participants associated disconnection between teacher education program and MONE with the instructor shortage in the teacher education program. Lack of appropriately trained instructors in the field of ECE teacher education program left the pre-service teachers with insufficient guidance in their practicum courses.

Participants in this study had many concerns about the classroom management before starting profession which might be a result of insufficient field experiences in the teacher education program. All of the participants declared in *Study I* that they did not feel sufficiently prepared for classroom management and they were afraid of not being able to manage their classes effectively. They had four practicum courses in four different semesters; each lasted for one day per week. Still, they emphasized needs for more practical information such as hands-on activities to manage classroom better. Moreover, they all had negative experiences in the practicum courses. In the first two courses, pre-service teachers took an active part in teaching process with the help of the mentor teachers. However, teachers left their classes to the participants in the last two field experiences. Pre-service teachers went to school only one day in a week and children did not know them well. Therefore, they had problems in controlling the class. Having teacher position in a class for all day might have supported teachers' self-confidence, if sufficient mentoring had been provided by the mentor teachers. Leaving pre-service teachers alone in class without help did

164

not help them to improve their teaching practice. Therefore, both teacher educators and practicum school personnel should work together to support pre-service teachers' learning in a more structured way.

Participants' concerns about classroom management were parallel with Veenman's (1984) review of the problems of beginning teachers from an international perspective. He found that classroom discipline was the most serious problem among all of the difficulties that beginning teachers encountered. Research conducted in the 90s also had similar findings that classroom management was the greatest concern for beginning teachers (Britt, 1997; Walker, 1993). Recent studies have also reveled that creating a positive working atmosphere to provide flow in the classroom has still been a beginning teacher's most serious challenge (Everston & Weinstein, 2006). As classroom management was pre-service teachers' primary concern in their first year of teaching, they decided to implement certain strategies to settle peace in class. All of the participants believed that establishing rules in class was the pivotal step for maintaining classroom management in the class. They further believed that rules did not work as long as children internalized them. Thus, they all agreed to involve children into decision making process and made them empowered. Having their own class changed many things for beginning teachers as they got to know their students better and their ability to manage them effectively increased. Being totally in charge of classroom activities and children made their job easier because children were quite obedient to teacher's orders compared to the practicum course. Considering the fact that pre-service teacher's number one issue was about classroom management, creating a peaceful atmosphere in class increased a beginning teachers' self-confidence upon being a teacher. Fuller (1969) stated that teaching practice improved in a predictable sequence as teachers gained experience. In this sense, Fuller's (1969) stage theory was appropriate in explaining pre-service teachers improvement in the teaching profession since beginning teachers suspected their self to be a teacher first. Initially, a teacher's primary concern was becoming self-oriented and focused on becoming successful as a teacher. In this study, beginning teachers' concerns lessened as they gained experience and their concerns moved in different levels.

Participants wanted to make children internalize classroom rules after they created a peaceful atmosphere. They believed that children should follow rules intuitively when their teacher would not be in class.

Everston and Weinstein (2006) proposed four themes in classroom management. The first theme was the building positive relationship between teacher and children for effective classroom management. In this theme, teachers were warm demanders which meant that teachers were warm, responsive, caring and supportive. All children deserved to be respected -who they were and what they did- in order to strengthen their self respect. A teacher should focus on children's talent rather than focusing on their failure since all children wanted to be viewed as successful. One of the ways to increase a child's self-respect was to empower them since empowerment enabled children to direct their own life. When children felt empowered, they became intrinsically motivated, responsible, and independent (Stone, 1995). Traditionally, children could not join in the decision-making process in school although the right of children to choose was the key to empowerment (Wassermann, 1990). Beginning teachers mentioned strategies aimed having a positive relation with children which was consistent with the first theme of Evertson and Weinstein (2006). Beginning teachers believed that rules could work as long as children agree on and internalize the rules. In order to make children embrace classroom rules, teachers discussed rules with children which involved them in the process while setting rules. Teachers emphasized the importance of building love bonds with children in order to create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere. Participants had many courses addressing attachment theory which argued that children sought proximity from adults who were sensitive and responsive in social interactions with them (Goldberg, 2000). Teachers believed that when children felt love and acceptance from the teacher, a feeling of security could be established and personal responsibility in class would be promoted. Nonetheless, teachers talked about having positive relation with children far less than establishing and maintaining rules. This might be caused by the reflection of the theory-practice gap as teachers talked about this gap many times. They claimed that they found themselves in a situation where theory did not work and needed to

conduct other strategies which were not supported by the theory. Although teachers appreciated what they had learned in the teacher education program, they were incapable of using their knowledge in their teaching practice.

Evertson and Weinstein's (2006) second theme was classroom management as a social and moral curriculum. This theme tried to explain the effects of teachers' managerial decisions on students' social, moral, and emotional development. A third theme focuses on punishment and external rewards and how they negatively influenced the classroom atmosphere. The final theme referred to the recognition by teachers of the background of their students including ethnicity, culture, and socio-economic status.

According to third theme of Evertson and Weinstein (2006) classroom management strategies relying on punishment and external reward might negatively influence the classroom atmosphere. Teachers in this study lessened the negative effect of using rewards and punishment on a regular basis. They used rewards constantly, but they did not favor using punishment due to possible negative effects on children. However, being warm, responsive, and patient was not always possible for teachers and they had to use punishment from time-to-time. Timeout was extensively used by the participating teachers; however, they called it a "break for thinking" instead of punishment.

5.2 Ministry of National Education

The findings of this study revealed that a considerable portion of the problems participants experienced originated from MONE's system itself. Sudden entry into the teaching profession is typical all over the world (Lehman, 2000), yet the MONE recruitment policy did not let beginning teachers have some time to orient themselves in a new profession and local culture where the school was located. Beginning teachers were hired by the MONE after schools were opened and they did not have time to get used to unfamiliar circumstances. Furthermore, they did not expect to encounter a construction area instead of a fully organized class, large class

population for young age groups, start to teach in the middle of the semester, and teach children who did not know Turkish. Beginning teachers have already felt puzzled because of their inexperience and those infrastructure problems made beginning teachers' first year more chaotic.

Infrastructure problems did not always appear in school structure. In some situations schools were completely prepared and children were already registered but teacher appointment did not take place on time. Infrastructure problems negatively affected parents, administrators, and children, yet the worst outcome was for beginning teachers. They had disappointed and lost their enthusiasm with a negative start in profession. For instance; one of the participants had to teach 56 students at first days since other two teachers have not been appointed yet. Although infrastructure problems were characterized in remote areas, it also appeared in more developed cities. Participants stated that most of the infrastructure problems originated from the cumbersome bureaucracy in MONE. For instance, one of the schools used to be a high school and it was transformed into kindergarten. However, construction started only two weeks before the fall semester began.

The most unexpected and unprepared difficulties for beginning teachers in their first year of teaching were non-curricular tasks. Teacher education program helped beginning teachers to be ready for both curricular and caring tasks such as teaching science to children or changing their clothes if they make themselves wet. However, beginning teachers found themselves in a situation that they needed to clean the classroom or heat the classroom with stove. Non-curricular task took too much time and energy; therefore, performing those tasks affected teaching activities in a negative way. Furthermore, those tasks made beginning teachers demoralized in a long run because fulfilling curricular activities were challenging enough for them. When non-curricular task conjoined with other problems they caused crises and made beginning teachers' life difficult. Then, they began to think quitting teaching profession. When teachers asked for cleaning staff, administrators behaved uninterested since they did not have enough budget to hire one. However, ECE classes got dirty easily compared to upper grades as young children lacked well-

developed self care skills. Besides, some activities required teachers and children rolling on the floor. Thus, all the ECE classes needed to be cleaned regularly and teachers should not be responsible for that. Some of the beginning teachers solved this problem with the help of parents. Teachers asserted that when they got help from parents, doing non-curricular task did not bother them that much.

Participants were aware of certain difficulties in public schools. Based on their observation, the most common problems were material and contextual shortages in *Study I*. However, they were highly optimistic to overcome those drawbacks using their creativity. They all claimed that educational activities could be implemented in all circumstances. Replacing materials with cheaper ones or conducting less complicated activities could solve the problems. However, in reality, material shortage caused more problems than their initial estimates. Public schools generally had basic materials such as child sized furniture and toys, yet in ECE setting teachers needed more materials to conduct various activities including experiments, art projects, and drama activities. The school budget was not enough to buy materials for ECE classes. Schools expected money from parents to meet stationary materials expenses. Independent schools' teachers experienced this problem less because these schools charged more money from parents for their children's caring and educational expenses. On the other hand, elementary schools found it difficult to charge a school fee from parents because their socio-economic levels were not high. For this reason, beginning teachers had to spend money to compensate for material shortage. It was impossible to teach some concepts and conduct particular activities without paper, glue or crayon. Similar to non-curricular activities, spending money for class materials caused frustration in the long run. Three participants stated that they spent half of their salary for the first months on their teaching. Still, teachers could not provide all the materials for a class of children without their parents' support. For instance, literacy activities were carried out using a series of books and total cost of those series for a class of children exceeded monthly income of the teacher. Some of the beginning teachers experienced several problems to convince parents to get these literacy series.

Material shortage hindered beginning teachers from implementing what they have learned in teacher education program. For instance, beginning teachers were educated for planning and conducting activities in corners. Then, they started to teach with a lack of science, drama, mathematics, and play corners. MONE should determine minimum standards for ECE classes in order to carry out early education activities better. Besides, MONE should monitor public schools whether they fulfill requirements of ECE classes or not. Sometimes material shortage did not stem from MONE's policy as special attention has been given to early education recently to increase schooling rate for ECE. Even though MONE provided sufficient material, it was the school's responsibility to maintain protection for those materials. Unfortunately, teachers found their classes in a mess and most of the materials were either broken or lost in elementary school because elementary classes shared the same building with first to eight grade classes. Teachers working in independent schools did not encounter messy classrooms since independent schools had their own separate building. Another reason for material shortage was administrator's attitude on early education. Elementary school administrators were unfamiliar to early education and sometimes underestimated early education. With the effort of increasing schooling rate of early education, MONE has granted several materials to ECE classes, yet administrators did not let teachers to use those materials and gave them to the upper classes. It is not possible to establish independent schools and separate early education from elementary schools physically. Thus, it is better to inform elementary education administrators about early education aims, needs, and requirements. Some of the administrators were influenced by societal movement that early education was not optional rather it was essential in children's life and give more importance to early education. Teachers working with those administrators were more comfortably perform their teaching practice.

This study has revealed several unforeseen results. The difference between being a beginning teacher in independent and elementary school was one of the most notable results to discuss. In this study, 5 beginning teachers were working in independent schools and 11 teachers were working in elementary schools. Teachers working in

independent schools found better physical environment and more teaching materials. They also got more administrator support for complicated paper work of MONE since administrators had ECE background. Independent schools only consisted of ECE classes and not elementary grades, whereas elementary schools consisted of K-8 classes. Some elementary schools had more than a thousand students and administrators were from elementary departments, which made them unfamiliar to early education. Another difference emerged between elementary and independent school was the workload and working hours. Generally, teachers worked a full day in independent schools, yet educational activities lasted only half a day in elementary schools. As such, teachers tended to avoid working in independent schools, although its payment and structural quality were better than elementary schools.

According to MONE's legislation, administrators were primarily responsible for inspecting beginning teachers and beginning teachers were also inspected two times in their first year of teaching by MONE's inspectors. Unfortunately, MONE did not have sufficient number of inspectors specialized on early childhood education. For this reason, elementary education inspectors were supposed to inspect and guide beginning ECE teachers. They were not familiar to early education as they got used to inspecting particular standards in elementary classes and they expected the same fulfillment from ECE teachers, such as lesson plans for specific class hours, even though their expectations were not employable in early education settings.

Some of the beginning teachers received negative inspection reports and they asserted that elementary education inspectors misevaluated their performance. Inspectors' unfamiliarity to early education made them judge teachers' practice inappropriately. As such, MONE should recruit inspectors having specialization on early education to increase the quality of early education. Furthermore, since schooling rate has been increasing remarkably in early childhood education, elementary education inspectors would not be sufficient to visit all of the ECE schools and class in the future.

Most professionals go through a certain period of apprenticeship before they start practicing on their own. Not following this tradition, teachers have been considered as full members of the teaching profession when they are hired. Therefore, the responsibilities of a beginning teacher are the same as those of experienced one (Saban, 2002). In this sense, induction programs should focus on well-matched mentors, curriculum guidance, collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, and inspired leadership. The success of school-based induction programs relies on how teachers work together, and the principal can play a central role in facilitating interaction among teachers with various levels of experience. Successful induction may also help to shape professional culture and school capacity (Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kaufman, Liu, & Peske, 2001). King (2004) divided support received by beginning teachers into three broad categories. These are educational, professional, and personal support. In this study, beginning teachers mostly received professional support from teachers who teach the same subject or grade level. They also received support from official mentors, colleagues, and administrators. Yet, it was not a structured, detailed, and sufficient support. Beginning teachers received help when they experienced problems and asked help.

First year of teaching is considered as an induction year in public schools and beginning teachers are candidates in that period. If they do not complete first year successfully, they cannot continue teaching profession. The induction period consist of three parts: The first part only focuses on general information that public officer should know such as Turkish constitutes basic principles, Turkish language grammar, and Atatürk's principles. The second part is specified on teaching profession and it is basically about MONE's structure, organizations, and legislations. The first two preparatory trainings last for the first semester of first year of teaching and held on weekends. MONE inspectors and district managers are responsible for giving those trainings (MONE, 1995). Those preparatory courses keep new teachers busy on weekends, yet they are not designed to meet beginning teachers' basic needs. In this study only three teachers found the preparatory course effective and helpful. It appeared that beginning teachers were overwhelmed with the

172

paper work in MONE. During their first few months of teaching, teachers felt ill-prepared to effectively manage all those requirements of paper work. Preparatory courses would be more effective, if they were redesigned to inform beginning teachers on MONE's complicated paper works, its complex legislation and organization.

New teachers need explicit support in induction period, otherwise they feel alone with their concerns and problems. In the induction period, schools should make assignments that fit beginning teachers' backgrounds and interests, provide easy access to school resources and practical information. Moreover, mentoring programs should involve regular opportunities for substantive talk about teaching and learning since new teachers try to make sense of what is going on in their classrooms. The explanations and advice they receive, especially from more experienced colleagues, affect their attitudes positively. Successful mentoring processes can only be accomplished if mentor teachers have time and expertise to help new teacher. Beginning teachers also need to socialize in the context of teaching practice, become accountable for students' care and educational activities, and interact with other school professionals and parents. These endeavors are believed to develop beginning teachers' own teaching expertise. There is a need to provide assistance to new graduates for their adjustments into their new roles and environments (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). The induction period is completed with the practicum under the supervision of mentor teacher. According to MONE's legislation on the mentoring process, mentor teachers should be appointed to beginning teachers who are teaching in the same branch of the school. The mentoring period must continue at least two months and it should cover all necessary theoretical and practical information that novice teachers might need. Periodically mentor teachers submit report about progress of beginning teachers to administrators. The process continues with regular meetings that focus on school-based issues as well as district-based content. In the mentoring process focus is on instruction and collaborative coaching as well as observing and providing feedback on classroom management and other basic instructional practices to new teachers. New teachers are not allowed to be in charge

of class; rather they need to be supervised by mentors in class in their first year (MONE, 1995). Beginning and experienced teachers both benefit from frequent and meaningful interaction during mentoring process in the induction period. Experienced teachers may learn from and with their mentee about the latest approaches to literacy, or strategies for integrating technology into the classroom (Johnson, et al., 2001). Studies have also emphasized the importance and effectiveness of mentoring process in which professional knowledge passed through experienced teachers to novice. Benefits of effective induction programs were not limited to support new teachers. They also provided renewal for experienced teachers and schools. This circulation helped in overcoming the difficult nature of the first year of teaching (Johnson, et al., 2001). However, beginning teachers reported that their official mentors generally taught different grades and subjects. For this reason, they did not meet each other often and ongoing observations, discussions, and feedback hardly took place in the induction period. As such, participants generally felt alone in the process and tried to figure out their own way except for independent schools' teachers. Elementary schools generally had only one ECE class and this situation increased the loneliness of beginning ECE teachers. Both administrators and mentors did not take this process seriously to help beginning teachers cope with difficulties and becoming more professional. Lack of peer support was accompanied by lack of administrator support in elementary schools as administrators had no ECE background.

Although new teachers were eager to observe the experienced teachers and develop their professional skills under guidance, administrators' and mentors' avoidance left beginning teachers on their own and they missed the opportunities to observe the expert teachers in profession. All of the beginning teachers participated in this study had full responsibility of a class from the very beginning of their teaching life. None of them ever mentioned observations conducted by their mentors, nor did they mention collaborative mentoring, helpful feedback in the areas of classroom management, or even basic instructional practices such as lesson plans and obtaining necessary teaching materials. Furthermore, most of them did not even have mentor

teacher or their mentors were from different branches. Only two beginning teachers in this study had access to the insight of experienced colleagues. It appeared that both induction period and mentoring process were carried out on paper in public schools and not helpful or supportive for novice teachers.

5.3 Personal, School, and Classroom Context

Motivation is defined as the psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction, and persistence of voluntary actions that are goal-directed (Mitchell, 1982). In this study, motivation refers to beginning teachers' dedication and commitment to teaching young children and how they sustain that commitment. Although the definition of motivation changes, there is a consensus that all people are motivated in one way or another as they have different backgrounds, personalities, interests, attitudes, expectations, desires, and needs. As such, sources of motivation differ for each individual depending on all these factors (Kocabaş 2009). Motivation is divided into two types: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation originates from interest or enjoyment in the task itself such as responsibility, freedom, interesting and challenging work, and opportunities for advancement. It is related to psychological rewards, which are those that can be usually determined by the actions and behaviors of the individual instead of any external pressure or reward. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the individual. Extrinsic motivations are in general rewards like money, promotions, grades, and praise. All of these motivators stem from the work environment and are usually applied by someone other than the person being motivated. It is expected that intrinsic motivators have a deeper and more long-term effect as they are inherent in individuals rather than coming from the outside (George & Sabapathy, 2011). In this study participants expressed that teaching profession offered both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

All of the participants stated that they were highly motivated for being ECE teachers and their commitment comes from feeling responsible of children. Besides, their motivation predominantly originated from love of the profession and love of

children. Those feelings motivated them to behave appropriately and do what is right for the children. Some of them did not expect to be motivated by the love of children, yet as they spent time with children, they embraced them and felt motivated by the unconditional love of children. In addition to intrinsic rewards, beginning teachers also expressed extrinsic rewards in teaching profession. In this study three participants worked full day, one of the participants worked until late afternoon, the other worked a half day. Depending on the working hours, their motivation changed. Beginning teachers working half day found their profession comfortable compared with other professions. Thus, they felt motivated with having an opportunity to relax the rest of the day; this convenient schedule also allowed beginning teachers to apply for master programs. Moreover, beginning teachers were motivated with having a position in public schools since it was a highly secure job which offered stable, certain, and unsurprising occupational life.

Occupational prestige is referred to as the public perception of the position in a hierarchy of occupation. In general, consideration of occupations as higher or lower than others generates a hierarchy of prestige. The level of salaries is one of the main factors that affect prestige of an occupation, and the average salary levels for teaching professions are lower than those of other professions (Hoyle, 2001). This situation did not affect pre-service teachers' motivation since they all asserted that despite the low salaries, they were still motivated by the love of children. Besides, teaching young children was a profession that enabled teachers to make a difference in children's life. Pre-service teachers also expected to be motivated by seeing children's development and their effects on it, as well as by the dynamic and enjoyable nature of the profession.

The profession is an important source of identity, self-esteem and self-actualization from a psychological point of view. It provides a sense of fulfillment for people by clarifying their value to the society. It can also be a source of frustration, boredom and feelings of meaninglessness that determine the characteristics of the individual. If they feel their profession does not let them achieve their potential and prevents them from being successful, they have difficulty maintaining their motivation to

carry out that profession (George & Sabapathy, 2011). Although pre-service teachers perceived their profession as important and difficult, their perception of teaching and public perception were not mutually exclusive in *Study I*. Society had a tendency to underestimate teaching young children as a profession since they supposed that it was easy to perform. All of the participants experienced negative reactions from society starting at the very beginning of the teacher education program. According to Johnson and Duffett (2003), underestimation was not specific to ECE; rather, society had a tendency to underestimate the teaching profession in general. Considering the fact that teachers were prone to be pessimistic about the public opinion of teaching (Everton, Turner, Hargreaves, & Pell, 2007), receiving persistent negative reactions from society affected their perception negatively toward their future profession. This was changed by the efforts emphasizing the importance of early education in Turkey through several campaigns and beginning teachers reported that positive reaction from society was a source of motivation for them in *Study II* and *III.*

Beginning teachers not only felt more confident in their profession as they gained experience, they were also personally developed depending on the positive experiences they had with children, parents and other colleagues. Moreover, the respect that teaching profession brought increased beginning teachers' self-confidence. Being responsible for a group of children made beginning teachers feel important as individuals in the society. All these improvements made their teaching life easier with the help of acquired practices. Beginning teachers even detected more improvement their practice in second semester compared to first semester. In short, the more they enjoyed their jobs, the more positive attitudes they developed towards the profession.

Finally, all beginning teachers agreed that teaching young children was very difficult, tiring and demanded them to be energetic all the time. As such, they were all afraid of losing their energy and enthusiasm to teach young children in time. Their concern was not merely concentrated on burn out, boredom, or weariness. Primarily they were afraid of not being efficient for children if they lost their enthusiasm and motivation. Then, they were concerned about not being able to take children's

attention and motivate them to learn new things.

Beginning teachers' relationships with other stakeholders was also important issue to be discussed. Work environment full of negativity and hostility was associated with emotional exhaustion and even health problems. Therefore, setting positive interpersonal relationships, supporting and empowering employee should be taken into account at workplaces while planning managerial procedures (Helkavaara, Saastamoinen & Lahelma, 2011). School was not the place only for training students; rather it was a complex organization with its' own culture, legislation, rules and rituals. In this complex organization, beginning teachers engaged in different relationships with different stakeholders in their schools. In this sense, teachers were viewed as a member of groups instead of isolated individuals. Each group was interdependent in the larger context of schools including administrators, students, teachers, staff, and parents. The balance of this interactive social system was maintained by organizational structures, rules and routines, informal behavioral patterns, standards of performance, and organizational ideologies. All these interdependent parts shaped student learning and there was a need to understand them to improve students' learning (Hawley & Rosenholtz, 1984). Therefore, being ECE teacher was not only composed of teaching young children; rather, it was subjected to establish communication with wide range of people.

In *Study I*, pre-service teachers' concerns concentrated mostly on the relationship with administrators as administrators' attitude would affect their teaching practice more than anyone else in school. Beginning teachers' anticipation came true. In *Study II,* teachers having a positive relationship with their administrators felt motivated and comfortable in their schools. On the other hand, the rest of the teachers who had a negative relation with their administrators felt unmotivated, pressure, and isolation. Beginning teachers needed to find some strategies to communicate with administrators since administrators were not always open to communication. For this reason, teachers first observed administrators' reactions, and then learned how to express their demands in appropriate ways. They needed to set a balance between administrator's status quo and their demands. Unfortunately, beginning teachers

sometimes witnessed inappropriate practices of administrators. However, they could not react towards the administrator because they did not know the procedure and they were afraid of getting into trouble at school.

Regarding the MONE's centralized system, schools were relying on a MONE office in town and town districts relied on a MONE office in city. Teachers were officially dependent on a MONE office to carry out all of the administrative tasks and administrators were responsible for organizing all of the official paper work between teachers and a MONE office. If an administrator was unable to carry out this process, teachers had several problems, such as permission and appointment. Having a positive relationship with administrators did not guarantee ease in beginning teachers' lives because MONE had a complicated legislation and operational system in which beginning teachers easily got lost. For this reason, they needed a guide to find their way around that ambiguity, the role administrators were supposed to have, to support beginning teaches in their first year.

Beginning teachers had a tendency to develop hesitation in communicating with their administrators and this hesitation set a barrier between school administrators and beginning teachers (Erdemir, 2007). Their fear to assert their right against administrators originated from a lack of knowledge on their personal rights and MONE's legislation. Teacher education programs also recognized the necessity of administration course. Then, they added a course upon MONE's legislation and operation systems.

Beginning teachers who had a positive relationship with their colleagues stated that they went to school enthusiastically and this situation positively affected their teaching practice. On the other hand, teachers who had negative relationships with colleagues in school experienced discomfort and they decided to change their schools. In this situation, an administrator's attitude plays a pivotal role in determining relationships among teachers. If administrators create a competitive environment and compare teachers' performances, they encourage teachers to compete with each other instead of cooperating with each other. In this sense,

administrators should urge teachers to work together in harmony for the sake of children.

Another issue about relationships emerged from the school type. Most of the elementary schools had only one ECE class which made teachers feel isolated from the rest of the school and they barely had contact with other teachers or even administrators. Sometimes administrators forgot or disregarded to inform ECE teachers about meetings or MONE's announcements, which highlighted the isolation many ECE teachers experienced in elementary schools.

Both teacher education program and ECE curriculum attributed special importance to parent involvement. All of the pre-service teachers addressed the importance of parent involvement and its benefits as growing awareness of parent involvement resulted from its positive effects on children's educational outcomes. Besides, parents also wanted to be an active part of the education of their children and get more information about school's academic and behavioral expectations. All of the participants believed that parent involvement activities were context free and could not be carried out without taking the parents' culture, SES, and educational background into consideration with all dynamics. Chavkin (1993) stated that one of the barriers for family-school partnership is lack of positive contact with the low-income parents and negative attitudes and low expectations on the part of both parents and educators for low income children. Before entering teaching profession, participants were well aware of low socio-economic status of parents in Turkey and accepted that it was the teacher's responsibility to organize parent involvement activities. They also believed that low socio-economic status might make parents to treat ECE class as nursery schools. Early education was a combination of caring and educating of young children; however, pre-service teachers found caring part somehow insulting. Participants expressed that teachers needed to spend effort to establish positive relationship with parents and increase their awareness, and make them interested in curricular activities. They all planned to make parents come to class and conduct activities with children. In this way, parents would become familiar with early education and understand both caring and curricular activities in

180

its content.

When they began to teach, they realized that low SES was the biggest barrier for parent involvement activities. Participants stated that parents' SES played an important role in shaping their involvement. For instance, low SES parents were afraid of coming to school because they believed that school expected them to pay for their children's educational needs. Before lessening parents' fear of school, teachers could not expect them to come to school and conduct an experiment or art projects with their children. In this situation, beginning teachers accepted all responsibility of having positive relationship with the parents.

Participants have learned several strategies to involve parents in educational activities. Depending on the parents' profile, SES, and educational background beginning teachers tried to implement what they have learned in the teacher education program and what was suggested in the curriculum. They all recognized that implementation was not as easy as it seemed. They experienced that not all techniques worked for all contexts. Some of the strategies worked and some of them did not fit their context. For instance, one of the participants experienced some problems after visiting parents' homes because parents treated teachers too intimately in their homes. On the other hand, in remote areas, parents were not familiar with teacher visits. When they received such attention, they respected the teachers more and they became more interested in their children's education. MONE curriculum and teacher education program might develop more culture specific parent involvement activities that are easily accepted by Turkish low SES parents.

In order to gain parents' trust and respect, they primarily tried to establish empathy with parents in order to understand their way of thinking. First of all, they recognized that they needed to be patient, tolerant, and understanding to establish a healthy relationship with parents. Beginning teachers did not think of finding excuse to disregard parent involvement activities as teacher education program really made them aware of importance of involving parents in their children's education. First, they needed to find the best way to communicate with all these types of parents as it

was not an easy process to set balance between demands of parents and teachers' role. In this study, most of the parents came from low SES which created marked difference between teacher and parents. In order to eliminate this difference, beginning teachers behaved modestly to parents. They asked parents' ideas to show them that they were welcomed in school and teacher cared parents as much as children.

Flett and Conderman (2001) suggested having a casual and unscheduled meeting with parents such as a phone call or talking to parents when they were dropping off or picking up their children. These informal conversations might help teachers and parents to understand each other better and develop rapport. Beginning teachers realized that it took some time to make parents feel secure in the class. Moreover, in remote areas, most parents could not speak Turkish, which made them avoid contact with teachers. In those regions, teachers needed to spend extra effort to involve parents, yet they could not reach all of them due to lack of effective communication. Generally, administrators in remote areas were local people in that region and they had a good grasp of specific condition in that society. Participants could not receive enough support from administrators to involve parents as parent involvement activities were relatively new concepts in our educational system. It appeared that administrators were not completely prepared for parent involvement in ECE classrooms.

All of the participants emphasized the importance of the first impression of teachers on parents for having positive relationship with parents. Most of them tried to introduce themselves in a self-confident manner as they believed that relationships would not be effective if teachers behaved weakly. However, it was not easy to behave self-confident since beginning teachers suddenly found themselves alone in front of 20 parents. Beginning teachers felt stressful in this situation since people had certain images of teachers and expected teachers to answer all of the questions and solve all of the problems about their children. Besides, teaching profession required teachers to be good on organizing several events such as picnic, field trips, and end-of-year shows. Most of the teachers stated their struggle to find the most convenient

time, place, and cost for all parents. The responsibility of getting such a large group together and satisfying their demands made beginning teachers exhausted. Establishing a family unity might lessen teachers' burden on such organization. Although beginning teachers had several problems with parents, in general they stated that parents respected teachers in a great extent. Especially, low SES parents had lower expectations from the teachers and appreciated even the smallest effort of teachers.

All of the beginning teachers were planning to invite parents into class to conduct activities with children. However, arranging this kind of meeting with parents to do activities in class was not as simple as it seemed to be. Even though parents were interested in being involved in their children's education, they hesitated to be alone in front of the children. They realized that handling young children in class was not an easy task. For this reason, beginning teachers encouraged parents to do simple activities such as reading books or conducting a simple experiment. Moreover, organizing parent involvement activities required more commitment, time, and energy than participants initially anticipated.

Beginning teachers received help from parents throughout year to prepare classroom materials for art products and to chaperone field trips. Beginning teachers called parents, had home visits, sent notes and homework as parent involvement activities. Participants all tried to parent involvement strategies that they learned in teacher education program and suggested by MONE curriculum. They choose the strategies that helped them to involve parents and they quit some strategies which did not work at all in their context. If they had been offered more strategies, they would have more chance to involve parents. Participants believed that parent involvement activities were not only beneficial for children but also for parents. Thus, teachers should not leave them outside of school.

Some region-specific problems also prevented teachers from involving parents in class activities. In remote areas, population was scattered among small villages located far away from each other. As such, MONE provided transportation for

children living in different villages to get together in the same school. In this circumstance, teachers did not even meet some of the parents as transportation set a barrier for parent-teacher interaction and made parent involvement activities almost impossible. In addition to regional problems, cultural and religious factors created barriers for parent involvement. Ideally, it was assumed that both mother and father should be involved in educational activities, yet some of the fathers limited their interaction with women because of their religious beliefs. Some of them also believed that mothers were primarily responsible for children's education as it was traditionally a woman's job for them.

Assessment has been defined in Turkish ECE curriculum as the scientific process of knowing children. In order to accomplish knowing and assessing children, teacher needed to collect objective, consistent, integrated, systematic, and multidimensional information about children. All recorded information has been used to evaluate children's behavior and support their development and education (MONE, 2006). Assessment had three dimensions in the Turkish curriculum that assessing children, programs, and teachers. Teachers should consider consistency and harmony among goals, objectives, and the educational process while assessing the program. Then, they determined emergent needs to make necessary changes for future daily and annual plans. After evaluating both children and programs, teachers should also make her own assessment to improve their teaching practices (MONE, 2006). This study revealed that assessment only meant assessing children for beginning teachers and they did not take it seriously as much as they declared while they were pre-service teachers. Both teacher education program and MONE curriculum addressed the importance of assessment. Pre-service teachers also expressed that assessment was an indispensable part of early education. Participants planned to implement some of the assessment techniques that they learnt in teacher education program and suggested by MONE's curriculum. In general, their preferences concentrated on using portfolio, anecdotal records, and observation. Participants all agreed that teachers could not be sure about effectiveness of their teaching without assessing children's development.

184

Although all of the participants stated that they would use portfolios to assess children's performance, only seven beginning teachers used portfolios as an assessment tool. However, their use of portfolios was simply work sampling. Even though portfolios were properly organized, they still allowed teachers to involve parents and children in the assessment process since they provided chronological assessment.

In this study class size generally was not overcrowded and most teachers claimed that they easily recognized problems or changes in children's behavior and they started to believe that there was no need for a structured way of assessment such as keeping anecdotal records. At first they tried to keep anecdotal records then they quitted because they thought they did not miss children's behavior as being in charge of class sharpened their perception of assessment skills. Even though they emphasized the pivotal role of assessment in early education when they were pre-service teachers, it appeared that they did not apply assessment techniques in their teaching practices. A few participants used event sampling, anecdotes, checklist, photographs, and video recording. MONE required teachers to fill assessment forms for each child yet teachers had a tendency not to pay attention to those forms. Teachers might think that they would remember particular incidents, yet several events were happening in class and teachers could not keep in mind all this information. Thus, it was necessary to record particular incidents to make further comparisons in children's behaviors. Moreover, sharing recorded information with parents and children allowed them to foresee the future (MONE, 2006). When beginning teachers recognized a developmental delay, they preferred to work individually to help children to overcome their drawbacks. The most convenient time for individual study was free play time as other children were occupied by themselves and did not need the teacher's supervision as much as other classroom activities. Teachers also kept anecdotal records in free play time because of its convenience to follow children's behavior.

The study showed that participants had concerns about their self-confidence both before starting the profession and at the beginning of the profession. They were

concerned with their self-efficiency and suspected their proficiency to control classes, their content knowledge, and meeting needs of students, parents, and administrators. However, teacher's concerns lessened as they gained experience (Ghait & Shaaban, 1999). All of the participants accepted that there was a huge difference between their first arrival at school and the current condition in terms of practical skills in teaching profession. Their skills were especially developed more in the area of classroom management and relationship with the parents as well as with the administrators. Beginning teachers realized that as they gained experience, their preparation time lessened, they assessed children development better, and organized classroom activities easily.

Educational system was changed dramatically in 2012 in Turkey. Eight years compulsory elementary education was divided in two parts and four year of secondary education was declared as compulsory. The new system, which is widely known as 4+4+4, required several regulations on both elementary and secondary education including the change in schooling age as 66 months old. As such, non-governmental organizations, media, and public discussed this issue for a long time. Early childhood education was affected with this change to a great extent. Early education used to cover 36-72 months age children and MONE was trying to increase early education schooling rate to 100% for 61-72 months age children. MONE announced that new system only made difference on period of early education. Schooling rate now is trying to be increased 100% for the age of 48-66 months children.

Although teacher education program was designed to educate 36-72 month age children, in general 61-72 months age children attended more in early education. For instance, elementary education classes only served education for 61-72 month age children and independent schools had more 61-72 months age classes compared to younger age groups. Apparently, this study might have revealed different results if it would have been conducted after new system put into action.

186

Similarly, early childhood education curriculum was changed based on national and international researches and feedbacks coming from teachers and all the stakeholders in early education in 2012. Pilot schools will implement new curriculum and then it is going to be revised once more according to additional feedback from teachers. In the end, it will be implemented all over the country.

The revision process included assessment and evaluation experts for the first time. As such, new program provided detailed information to assess and evaluate children, teachers, and program. Goals and acquisitions were changed to make them more measurable. Developmental characteristics of children were grouped according to developmental domains in order to ease teachers' work. In the new curriculum, class environment consist of corners and the necessary materials in those corners were explained clearly. Some of the activities were misunderstood, thus, activity example book was prepared for teachers. Previous program was weak to support teachers who have disabled children in their class. The current program defined several disabilities and offered practical information for teachers. New program also provided 'Parents Support Book' for teachers. This book not only included parent involvement activities but also helped teachers to support parents at home.

It is appeared that new curriculum took teachers' need in consideration as most of changes were consistent with what this study suggested. New curriculum provided more practical information to show how teachers should really implement recommended activities in class. Besides, this study revealed that beginning teachers were in a trouble to involve parents into their children's education and assessment was not carried out in a structure way. New curriculum offered more concrete examples for parent involvement, assessment, and inclusion of handicapped children which had several ambiguities in the previous program. Yet, new curriculum also had some drawbacks. For instance, corners in class were defined in this order: Block, dramatic play, manipulative play, art, book, science, sand and water, music, computer, and entrance area. However, in this study most of the participants suffered from lack of materials. In this situation, it can be argued that new curriculum did not

address the regional differences. In some part of Turkey, teachers could not even find table and chairs for children. Therefore, it might not be reasonable to expect them to design their class with ten different corners.

5.4 Recommendations

Although recommendations were embedded in text through discussion chapter, in this part, recommendations for teacher education program, MONE, and teachers are represented more precisely.

Pre-service teachers in this study mostly complained that teacher education program decreased practice to emphasize theory more. This situation created a gap between teacher education program and the actual teaching in public schools and they felt ill-prepared to educate young children. In this sense, there was a need for unifying theory and practice to make teachers more equipped with necessary skills to handle all requirements of first year of teaching. This outfitting could be enabled by providing teachers with cased-based situations which might frequently appear in public schools such as parent meetings in low SES districts.

Beginning teachers struggled immensely to navigate in MONE's complicated organizational structure due to the distance between teacher education program and MONE. When participants of this study were studying, teacher education program did not offer any administrative course explaining legislation and operation policy of MONE. It did not take too long to recognize importance of such course and teacher education programs added administrative course to their course list. Yet, how these courses are provided for pre-service teachers might not be specific for teacher education programs. Experiences of beginning teachers and how they should navigate within the MONE system should be a part of this course.

It appeared in this study that MONE's centralized educational system and curriculum did not work well in remote areas. Thus, there is a need for customized education in some regions where children could not speak Turkish or enter school on December and leave on early May. Moreover, proper structural quality and safety negatively

affected beginning teachers' well-being as well as their willingness to work in remote areas. Material rewards or having early promotion in MONE system might work to gain teachers' attention for working in remote areas.

Lack of instructors was blamed for having insufficient training in teacher education program. Yet, several recently established universities still opened early childhood education programs. Higher Education Council, the governing institution of Turkish universities, should set some standards to open new programs to prevent unqualified education. Besides, public schools might not have sufficient empty position for all graduates of those universities.

All of the participants had negative experiences in practicum course as their mentor teachers left them alone in class with children. They all struggled to handle class then they felt powerless to control class before entering teaching profession. It will be helpful for pre-service teachers that they are required to take all responsibility of class as long as enough support is provided. Therefore, teacher educators and practicum school personnel should discuss to develop more structured practicum course experiences in order to support pre-service teachers better.

The findings of this study revealed that a great deal of problems participants experienced took its source from MONE's unorganized policy. MONE increased mandatory education from 5 years to 8 years without solving infrastructure problems and hired 15 thousand ECE teachers to increase schooling rate for early education. Yet, public schools were not ready for such a sudden move, thus, beginning teachers suffered from several material, structural, and environmental drawbacks. MONE should determine its policy in advance and run pilot practice before implementing new changes in public schools.

Another difficulty that beginning teachers experienced was carrying out non-curricular tasks. Not all the schools had substitute teachers or cleaning staff and teachers had to fulfill non-curricular tasks such as cleaning class or heating class with stove. Non-curricular tasks were originated from infrastructure problems which

might be resolved taking action to set some standards for ECE classes. For instance, schools should charge cleaning staff to work in ECE class at least an hour.

This study revealed that independent schools provided better material, educational environment, and administrative support compared to elementary schools. For this reason, MONE could increase number of independent schools; even in the long run early education might be only served in independent schools for the sake of children.

MONE did not have sufficient number of inspectors specialized on early education which made inspection process ineffective for ECE teachers. This could be solved by hiring more inspectors who have early education background and are in charge of inspecting ECE teachers. Besides, inspectors were responsible of guiding beginning teachers, yet they were not familiar with early education which leads lack of proper guidance for new teachers. This study also revealed that beginning teachers did not receive sufficient support from their administrators and mentor teachers. MONE's detailed mentoring legislation only remained on paper and did not take place in public school context. There is a need for some enforcement to make administrators put mentoring process into effect as they are primary responsible of guiding new teachers.

Both teacher education program and MONE curriculum emphasized importance of parent involvement. Participants learned several strategies to involve parents into their children's education at the teacher education program. However, participants realized that implementing those strategies suggested by teacher education and MONE curriculum was not that easy in real life as they experienced cultural barriers. For this reason, MONE curriculum and teacher education program should work together to develop more culturally appropriate parent involvement activities for Turkish parents.

5.5. Limitations and Further Research

The aim of this study was to examine the pre-service early childhood education (ECE) teachers' expectations before entering teaching profession and their possible

challenges or positive experiences in their first-year of teaching in public school context. The findings of this study brought to light some hidden issues upon pre-service teachers' expectations and beginning teachers' experiences and contributed to related literature. In addition to its contributions, this study had also some certain limitations. First, the present study was conducted with teachers studied at METU. As such, pre-service teachers' expectations and beginning teachers' experiences might be specific to METU as it is technology oriented university serving education in English. Although it was not the aim of this study to reach a generalization as a qualitative study, conducting similar studies with other universities graduates might shed light on beginning teachers' experiences in public schools. Another replication is also necessary to understand beginning teachers' experiences in private schools since this study only focused on teachers' experiences in public schools. Such studies might suggest new strategies of teacher preparation for teacher educators.

Another point to underline is that this study was limited to self-reports of the participants. Observing beginning teachers in their first year of teaching could bring a comprehensive understanding of what they had experienced and how they would overcome problems in their first year of teaching. It should also be underlined that during the analysis period, other issues related to pre-service teachers expectations and beginning teachers' experiences in public schools were ignored as they were not in the scope of this study.

The educational policy in Turkey has changed and will continue to change as our country struggles to improve socially and economically. Supporting new members in the teaching profession plays pivotal role to provide new generation with high quality learning environment in which all of children feel safe and successful. MONE prepared long and detailed induction program, yet induction program and mentoring process only remained on paper. Although beginning teachers were required to attend seminars on weekends throughout the first semester, they did not benefit from the seminars. It appeared that content of seminars were depended on instructors' personal interest. MONE determines topics for training program but there is no fix program for fundamental needs of beginning teachers. Further study could

focus on possible way to improve induction programs for public school teachers.

This study revealed that school climate played important role on beginning teachers' productivity, satisfaction, and social, emotional and physically safety. For this reason, running more research on school climate could bring deeper insight to support new teachers in their early career.

In addition to above all, it should be further studied whether teachers' challenges disappear in following years or continue to bother them. Such a follow-up study might provide more information on problems in MONE's system since those problems cannot be associated with teachers' inexperience any more.

THE END

Climbing a mountain and digging a hole with needle are best metaphors to describe writing a dissertation. It was a very long and challenging process, yet enjoyable at the same time. When I began to study in my graduate program, I was not sure about anything except for lack of motivation to work with pre-service teachers. I was highly determined to work with children or teachers, maybe parents.

 I was always wondering that what our graduates were doing after finishing teacher education program. I was one of the luckiest doctoral students as I was really able to study what I was interested in. Everything has gone well with me throughout my doctoral study since all graduates of 2009 accepted to participate in my study and most of them were hired by MONE. I have been the advisor of this group for four years and it was easy to contact them after their graduation. I believed that present study would not have been happened if I had tried to run with another group with whom I did not have the same background. My participants eased my work in a great extent as they changed their schedule for me and provided logistic support. The rapport between me and my participants helped them to reflect what they actually experienced in public schools. I conducted a similar study in US and participants in

there were highly reluctant to express their relationships and problems with parents and administrators.

While conducting this research, I realized that I was totally unfamiliar to several routines happening in public schools in a regular basis. This would help me to design my courses in the future. I am now well aware of what new teachers need in their early career. I am planning to prepare my courses as a combination of theory and practice. In order to accomplish this, I am going to prepare real cases that might happen in public schools, and then we will rehearse those situations at the last 20 minutes of class.

Another reflection on my future teaching is that I would like to listen to my students and take their ideas about teacher education program and my courses. I have been observing that instructors are sometimes prejudicial upon students' feedbacks. They thought that students will always complain about everything and their primary concern is just getting high grades. It could be true in some point but there is more. If we would expect them to be independent, advocate their rights against administrators, and think critically, we should give them voice.

Becoming familiar with the operational system of MONE made me desperate about future, as MONE works in a chaotic way. I realized that teachers need to perform their profession with self motivation. Luckily, my participants were highly enthusiastic to teach young children and gave hope. I am sure they are teaching somewhere in Turkey and raise creative, independent, and self confident children.

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PART I

1. Okulöncesi eğitim sence neden önemlidir?
2. Türkiye'deki okulöncesi eğitime ve okulöncesi öğretmenlerine karşı genel tutum hakkında ne düşünüyorsun? Bu genel tutum seni nasıl etkiliyor?
   - Okulöncesi eğitim hakkında bilgisi olmayan birine okulöncesi eğitimi nasıl tanıtırsın?
3. Okulöncesi öğretmenliğini nasıl bir meslek olarak tanımlarsın?
   - Okulöncesi öğretmenin sahip olması gereken bilgiler nelerdir?
   - Okulöncesi öğretmeninin sahip olması gereken beceriler ve özellikler nedir?
4. Mezun olduktan sonra nerde çalışmayı düşünüyorsun? Neden?
5. Nasıl bir okulda çalışmak istersin? (Fiziksel , kişiler arası ilişkiler)
   - Diğer öğretmen arkadaşlarınla ilişkinin nasıl olacağını düşünüyorsun?
   - Okul yönetimiyle ilişkini nasıl olacağını düşünüyorsun?
   - Ailelerle nasıl bir ilişki kuracağını düşünüyorsun? Aile katılımı hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
6. Nasıl bir okulöncesi öğretmeni olmak istersin?
7. Öğretmenlik yapmaya başlarsan temel amacın ne olacak?
8. İyi bir okulöncesi öğretmeni olmak için gerekli teorik bilgiyi aldığını düşünüyor musun?
9. İyi bir okulöncesi öğretmeni olmak için gerekli pratik bilgiyi aldığını düşünüyor musun?
10. Almış olduğun okulöncesi eğitim programında değişikliğe ihtiyaç olduğunu düşünüyor musun? Daha etkili olması için önerilerin nelerdir?

Öğretmenlik yapmaya başladığında seni bekleyen durumlar hakkında bazı sorular soracağım

11. Öğretmenlik yapmaya başladığın ilk gün çocuklarla sınıfta başbaşa kaldığında nelerle karşılaşabileceğini gözünde canlandırabilir misin?
12. Okulöncesi öğretmeni sınıfa girmeden önce ne gibi hazırlıklar yapmalı?
13. Bu mesleği yapacağını düşünmek seni mutlu ediyor mu?
14. Öğretmenlikle ilgili güçlü ve zayıf yanların nelerdir?
15. Öğretmen olduğunda burda öğrendiklerini uygulamak için gerekli materyalleri ve fiziksel koşulları bulabileceğini düşünüyor musun?
16. Sınıf yönetimini nasıl sağlarsın?

17. Farklı sosyo-ekonomik koşullardan gelen çocukların aynı sınıfta bulunması sana ne ifade eder?

18. Sınıfında özel eğitime ihtiyacı olan bir öğrenci olursa ne yaparsın?

19. MEB'in okulöncesi eğitim programını iyi anladığını düşünüyor musun? Uygularken zorluk yaşayacağını düşünüyor musun?

20. Öğretmenlik mesleğini sürdürmek için seni motive eden etmenler neler olabilir?

- Ayaklarının geri geri gittiği bir günde motivasyonunu nasıl arttırırsın?

21. Okulöncesi öğretmenliğin sevdiğin ve sevmediğin yanları nelerdir?

22. Vereceğin eğitimin etkinliğini nasıl değerlendirirsin?

23. Bu görüşme sırasında sormuş olmamı istediğin ama sormadığım bir soru var mı? Nedir

24. Bu soru senin için neden önemli

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PART II

Teacher Education

1. İyi bir okulöncesi öğretmeni olmak için gerekli teorik bilgiyi aldığını düşünüyor musun? Hangi dersler sence etkiliydi?
2. İyi bir okulöncesi öğretmeni olmak için gerekli pratik bilgiyi aldığını düşünüyor musun? Hangi dersler sence etkiliydi?
3. Lisans öğreniminde aldığın ama geçen zaman içinde faydasını görmediğin bir ders var mı?
4. Lisanstayken almak isteğin fakat açılmadığı için alamadığın dersler var mıydı?
5. Lisans hayatın boyunca hocalarından beklentilerin nelerdi?
6. Öğretmen yetiştiren kişilerin sahip olması gereken bilgi ve beceriler nelerdir?
7. Almış olduğun okulöncesi eğitim programının daha etkili olması için önerilerin nelerdir?

Nature of teaching

8. Öğretmen olarak temel amacının ne olduğunu düşünüyorsun?
9. Geçen yıl iyi bir okulöncesi öğretmenini nasıl tanımlardın (sahip olması gereken bilgiler beceriler nedir)? Şu anda nasıl tanımlarsın?
10. Şu anda yaptığın iş bu tanımlarına ne kadar uyuyor?
11. Öğretmenlikle ilgili güçlü yanların nelerdir?
12. Öğretmen olmadan önce bu güçlü yanının farkında mıydın?
13. Öğretmenlikle ilgili zayıf yanların nelerdir?
14. Öğretmen olmadan önce bu zayıf yanının farkında mıydın?
15. Okulöncesi öğretmeni kendini geliştirmek için neler yapmalı?
16. Okulöncesi öğretmeni olmanın en heyecan verici / sevdiğin yanı nedir?
17. Okulöncesi öğretmeni olmanın en zor/ sevmediğin yanı nedir?

Teaching practice

18. Üniversite hayatın boyunca öğrendiklerini uygulamak için gerekli materyalleri ve fiziksel koşulları bulabildiğini düşünüyor musun?
19. Sınıf yönetimini nasıl sağlıyorsun? Zorluklarla karşılaştın mı?
20. Aile katılımını nasıl sağlıyorsun?

21. Sınıfında farklı sosyo-ekonomik koşullardan gelen çocuklar var mı? Bu durum senin verdiğin eğitimi nasıl etkiliyor?

22. Sınıfında özel eğitime ihtiyacı olan öğrencin var mı? Bu durum senin verdiğin eğitimi nasıl etkiliyor?

23. Verdiğin eğitimin etkililiğini nasıl değerlendiriyorsun?

24. Bu mesleği uzun süre yapacağını düşünmek seni mutlu ediyor mu?

25. Öğretmenlik mesleğini sürdürmek için seni motive eden etmenler nelerdir?

   - Ayaklarının geri geri gittiği bir günde motivasyonunu nasıl arttırıyorsun?

Workload

26. Sınıfta öğrencilerine eğitim vermek dışında bu okulda başka sorumluluklarında var mı?

27. Sınıfa girmeden önce ne gibi hazırlıklar yapıyorsun?

28. Günlük rutinlerini açıklar mısın? Bir günün nasıl geçiyor?

   - Günün sonunda kendini nasıl hissediyorsun? Genel olarak o gün yapmak istediğin şeyleri tamamen yaptığını düşünüyor musun?

School climate

29. Milli Eğitimde yada özel sektörde çalışmaya nasıl karar verdin?

30. Bu okula atandığını ilk duyduğunda neler hissettin?

   - Burada karşılaştıklarınla beklentilerini kıyaslayınca neler söyleyebilirsin?

31. Okuldaki ilk gününü anlatır mısın?

32. Sınıfta öğrencilerle birlikte ilk gününü anlatır mısın? Kaç tane öğrencin var?

33. Diğer öğretmen arkadaşlarınla ilişkilerinin nasıl olduğunu düşünüyorsun?

34. Yöneticilerle ilişkin nasıl?

35. Öğrencilerinle ilişkilerin nasıl?

36. Ailelerle ilişkin nasıl? Ailelerin çocuklarının eğitimine, okula ve sana karşı tutumları hakkında neler düşünüyorsun?

37. Öğrencilerden, ailelerden, okul yönetiminden yada müfredattan senin verdiğin eğitimi etkileyen bir baskı hissediyor musun? Nasıl bir baskı? Nelerin değişmesini istersin? Bu faktörler değiştirilse daha etkili bir eğitim vereceğini düşünüyor musun? Neden?

38. Bu okulda kendini geliştirebilmen için ne gibi kaynaklar mevcut? (internet yada deneyimli öğretmen)

39. Kendini çalıştığın okulun bir parçası olarak görüyor musun? Ne zaman böyle hissetmeye başladın?

Administration-Support

40. İlk atandığın günden beri yaşadığın zorlukların azaltılması için neler yapılabilirdi? Senin önerilerin nelerdir?
41. Öğretmenliğe başladıktan sonra hiç yardım ve destek gördün mü? Nasıl? Kimden?
42. Senin ilk atandığında ençok hangi konuda desteğe ihtiyacın vardı?
43. Bu dönem yaşadığın zorlukları tekrar yaşamamak için ikinci dönem neler yapmayı planlıyorsun?
44. Sana danışman öğretmen atandı mı? Danışmanlık süreci nasıl işliyor? Sana yardımı dokunuyor mu?
45. MEB'in okulöncesi eğitim programını uygularken zorluklar yaşadın mı?
46. MEB'in mevzuatını ne kadar biliyorsun? Özlük hakların ve MEB'in sağladığı fırsatlar hakkında bilgi sahibi olduğunu düşünüyor musun?

Additional Questions

47. Bu görüşme sırasında sormuş olmamı istediğin ama sormadığım bir soru var mı? Nedir?
48. Bu soru senin için neden önemli? Şimdi sorsam cevaplar misin?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS PART III

Teacher Education

1. İyi bir okulöncesi öğretmeni olmak için gerekli teorik bilgiyi aldığını düşünüyor musun? Hangi dersler sence etkiliydi?
2. İyi bir okulöncesi öğretmeni olmak için gerekli pratik bilgiyi aldığını düşünüyor musun? Hangi dersler sence etkiliydi?
3. Lisans öğreniminde aldığın ama geçen zaman içinde faydasını görmediğin bir ders var mı?
4. Lisanstayken almak isteğin fakat açılmadığı için alamadığın dersler var mıydı?
5. Lisans hayatın boyunca hocalarından beklentilerin nelerdi?
6. Öğretmen yetiştiren kişilerin sahip olması gereken bilgi ve beceriler nelerdir?
7. Almış olduğun okulöncesi eğitim programının daha etkili olması için önerilerin nelerdir?

Nature of teaching

8. Öğretmen olarak temel amacının ne olduğunu düşünüyorsun?
9. Geçen yıl iyi bir okulöncesi öğretmenini nasıl tanımlardın (sahip olması gereken bilgiler beceriler nedir)? Şu anda nasıl tanımlarsın?
10. Şu anda yaptığın iş bu tanımlarına ne kadar uyuyor?
11. Öğretmenlikle ilgili güçlü yanların nelerdir?
    - Öğretmen olmadan önce bu güçlü yanının farkında mıydın?
12. Öğretmenlikle ilgili zayıf yanların nelerdir?
    - Öğretmen olmadan önce bu zayıf yanının farkında mıydın?
13. Okulöncesi öğretmeni kendini geliştirmek için neler yapmalı?
14. Okulöncesi öğretmeni olmanın en heyecan verici / sevdiğin yanı nedir?
15. Okulöncesi öğretmeni olmanın en zor/ sevmediğin yanı nedir?

Teaching practice

16. Üniversite hayatın boyunca öğrendiklerini uygulamak için gerekli materyalleri ve fiziksel koşulları bulabildiğini düşünüyor musun?
17. Sınıf yönetimini nasıl sağlıyorsun? Zorluklarla karşılaştın mı?
18. Aile katılımını nasıl sağlıyorsun?

19. Sınıfında farklı sosyo-ekonomik koşullardan gelen çocuklar var mı? Bu durum senin verdiğin eğitimi nasıl etkiliyor?

20. Sınıfında özel eğitime ihtiyacı olan öğrencin var mı? Bu durum senin verdiğin eğitimi nasıl etkiliyor?

21. Verdiğin eğitimin etkililiğini nasıl değerlendiriyorsun?

22. Bu mesleği uzun süre yapacağını düşünmek seni mutlu ediyor mu?

23. Öğretmenlik mesleğini sürdürmek için seni motive eden etmenler nelerdir?

- Ayaklarının geri geri gittiği bir günde motivasyonunu nasıl arttırıyorsun?

Workload

24. Sınıfta öğrencilerine eğitim vermek dışında bu okulda başka sorumluluklarında var mı?

25. Sınıfa girmeden önce ne gibi hazırlıklar yapıyorsun?

26. Günlük rutinlerini açıklar mısın? Bir günün nasıl geçiyor?

27. Günün sonunda kendini nasıl hissediyorsun? Genel olarak o gün yapmak istediğin şeyleri tamamen yaptığını düşünüyor musun?

School climate

28. Diğer öğretmen arkadaşlarınla ilişkilerinin nasıl olduğunu düşünüyorsun?

29. Yöneticilerle ilişkin nasıl?

30. Öğrencilerinle ilişkilerin nasıl?

31. Ailelerle ilişkin nasıl? Ailelerin çocuklarının eğitimine, okula ve sana karşı tutumları hakkında neler düşünüyorsun?

32. Öğrencilerden, ailelerden, okul yönetiminden yada müfredattan senin verdiğin eğitimi etkileyen bir baskı hissediyor musun? Nasıl bir baskı? Nelerin değişmesini istersin? Bu faktörler değiştirilse daha etkili bir eğitim vereceğini düşünüyor musun? Neden?

33. Bu okulda kendini geliştirebilmen için ne gibi kaynaklar mevcut? (internet yada deneyimli öğretmen)

34. Kendini çalıştığın okulun bir parçası olarak görüyor musun? Ne zaman böyle hissetmeye başladın?

Administration-Support

35. İlk atandığın günden beri yaşadığın zorlukların azaltılması için neler yapılabilirdi? Senin önerilerin nelerdir?

36. Öğretmenliğe başladıktan sonra hiç yardım ve destek gördün mü? Nasıl? Kimden?

- Senin ilk atandığında ençok hangi konuda desteğe ihtiyacın vardı?

37. Bu dönem yaşadığın zorlukları tekrar yaşamamak için ikinci dönem neler yapmayı planlıyorsun?

38. Sana danışman öğretmen atandı mı? Danışmanlık süreci nasıl işliyor? Sana yardımı dokunuyor mu?

39. MEB'in okulöncesi eğitim programını uygularken zorluklar yaşadın mı?

40. MEB'in mevzuatını ne kadar biliyorsun? Özlük hakların ve MEB'in sağladığı fırsatlar hakkında bilgi sahibi olduğunu düşünüyor musun?

Additional Questions

41. Bu görüşme sırasında sormuş olmamı istediğin ama sormadığım bir soru var mı? Nedir?

42. Bu soru senin için neden önemli?

43. Şimdi sorsam cevaplar mısın?

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

__ENSTİTÜ__

CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER 7 Fen Bilimleri Enstitüs [ ]

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü [■]

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü [ ]

Enformatik Enstitüsü [ ]

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü [ ]

__YAZARIN__

Soyadı : Akdağ
Adı   : Zeynep
Bölümü : Okulöncesi Öğretmenliği

__TEZİN ADI__ (İngilizce) : Beginning Early Childhood Education Teachers' Career Perceptions, Expectations, Concerns and their Experiences in Public Schools

__TEZİN TÜRÜ__ : Yüksek Lisans [ ]   Doktora [■]

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. [ ]

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. [ ]

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. [■]

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Beginner German

PUBLICATIONS

1. Akdag, Z., & Haser, C. (2010). Beginning early childhood education teachers' problems in Turkey. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 9*, 884–889.
2. Akdag, Z., & Haser, C. (2013). Experiences of first day of teaching. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education, 3*(1), 25-31.

HOBBIES Underwater Sports, Tango

GÖREVE YENİ BAŞLAYAN OKULÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN KARİYER ALGILARI, BEKLENTİLERİ, KAYGILARI VE DEVLET OKULLARINDAKİ DENEYİMLERİ

Giriş

İnsanlar hayatlarının pek çok yılını okulda geçirmekte ve farklı birçok öğretmenle tecrübeler edinmektedirler. Ne yazık ki insanların eğitim hayatlarındaki bütün öğretmenler çok etkili bir eğitim sunamamaktadır. Kaliteli eğitim sunamayan öğretmenlerle edinilen tecrübelerin üstesinden gelmek zor olmaktadır çünkü olumlu bir eğitim ortamında gerçekleşmeyen hatıralar insanları derinden etkilemekte ve canlılığını uzun sure korumaktadır (Walls, Nardi, von Minden, & Hoffman, 2002). Öğretmenlerin çocukların hayatlarındaki önemli rolü göz önüne alındığında kaliteden fedakârlıkta bulunmak söz konusu olamaz. Bu yüzden hükümetler her çocuğun kaliteli eğitim sunan bir öğretmene sahip olmasını garanti altına almalıdırlar (King, 2004). Her sene pek çok okul göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenlere kapılarını açmaktadır. Yeni öğretmenler için öğretmenliğin ne kadar zor ve emek isteyen bir meslek olduğu daha ilk günden aşikârdır. Bazı yeni öğretmenler bu zorluklarla bas edememekte ve öğretmeliğin ilk yılı aynı zamanda onların öğretmenlik mesleğindeki son yılları olmaktadır (Roehrig, Pressley & Talotta, 2002).

Öğretmen eğitim programı öğretmen adaylarını mesleğe hazırlamaktaki en önemli unsur olarak kabul edilmektedir. Öğretmen adayları okul deneyimleri sırasında eğitim aktivitelerine aktif bir şekilde katılarak gelecekteki sorumluluklarını öğrenirler. Öğretmen eğitim programları öğrencilerine öğretmenliğin ne anlama geldiğini anlamalarına yardım eder çünkü öğrenciler programa ilk girdiklerinde eğitim hakkında noksan ya da yanlış vizyonlara sahiptirler. Bu nedenle, yetersiz eğitim almaktan kaynaklanan hayal kırıklığını önlemek için teori ve pratik arasında

yeterli bağlantının sağlanması gerekmektedir (Moffett, John, & Isken, 2002).

Türkiye'de Eğitim Fakülteleri ve Milli Eğitim Bakanlığının uyum içinde çalıştığı varsayılmaktadır. Fakat uygulamaya baktığımızda bu iki kurumun çok fazla işbirliği yapmadığı gibi aralarında bazen zıtlıklar çıktığı görülmektedir. Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler zaman zaman üniversitede öğrendikleri ile devlet okullarındaki uygulamalar arasındaki uyuşmazlıklara şahit olmaktadırlar (Yalçınkaya, 2002).

Hem öğretmen adayları hem de göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler öğretmenlik uygulamaları konusunda kendilerini yetersiz görmektedirler. Bu durum öğretmen eğitim programlarının kalitesinin sorgulanmasına neden olmaktadır. Öğretmen adayları ve göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler, Eğitim Fakültelerindeki yetersiz eğitimin nedeni olarak şu sorunları sıralamaktadırlar: Pratik eğitim eksikliği, teorik bilgiye odaklanmak, yeterli donanıma sahip olmayan öğretim üyeleri, yetersiz ya da gereksiz dersler (Gömleksiz, Kan, Biçer, & Yetkiner, 2010). Diğer taraftan çok fazla pratik eğitime odaklanmak öğretmen eğitim programlarında teorik eğitiminin derinliğinin kaybedilmesi tehlikesini doğurmaktadır (Maandag et al, 2007).

Öğretmenlere yeterli eğitim vermenin en ideal şekli onların ne öğrettikleri neden öğrettikleri ve öğretmenlik pratiklerini nasıl daha iyi hale getirebileceklerini anlamalarını sağlamaktır. Fakat üniversiteler ve devlet okullarının gereksinimleri arasında zıtlıklar ortaya çıkmaktadır. İlki teorileri anlamak üzerine yoğunlaşırken ikincisi pratik ve performansa önem vermektedir. Görünen o ki üniversiteler devlet okullarının ihtiyacını karşılayacak öğretmenleri yetiştirememektedir çünkü öğretmenler okullara adapte olma konusunda büyük sıkıntılar yaşamaktadırlar (Moffett, John, & Isken, 2002).

İyi bir eğitim almak ve çok idealist olmak ta her zaman göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin sınıfta başarılı olacakları anlamına gelmemektedir, çünkü öğretmenlik mesleğinin öngörülemez bir doğası vardır. Şüphesiz ki, destekleyici bir çalışma ortamı öğretmenlerin karsılaşacağı belirsizlikleri azaltmaya yardımcı olduğu gibi onların başarıya ve doyuma ulaşmalarına da yardımcı olur. Ancak, öğretmenler çok ağır is yükü, destek vermeyen müdürler, ve materyal yoksunluğu gibi sorunlarla

217

karsılaşınca içsel motivasyonlarını kaybedebilirler (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003).

Sınıfta bütün eğitim öğretim aktivitelerinden sorumlu olan tek kişi olmaktan dolayı pek çok göreve yeni başlayan öğretmen hayal kirikliği, kaygı, stres, güvensizlik, yetersizlik, disiplin problemleri, baskı, düşük özgüven ve endişe yaşamaktadır (Achinstein, 2006; Evans, 1997; Gold, 1996; Huberman, 1992; Ingersoll, 2001; Stokking, Leenders, Jong, & Tartwijk, 2003; Veenman, 1984). Bütün bu nedenlerden dolayı göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler idealizmlerini, heves ve isteklerini kaybetmekte hatta öğretmenliği bırakmaya karar vermektedirler (Delgado, 1999).

Metot

Bu çalışmanın amacı öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine başlamadan önceki algılarını, beklentilerini ve kaygılarını ardından da devlet okullarında göreve başladıklarında ki deneyimlerini incelemektir. Bu çalışma özellikli olarak öğretmen adaylarının eğitimlerinin daha verimli hale getirilmesi ve devlet okullarında öğretmenlik yaparken başarılı olmalarını kolaylaştırıcı yollar bulmayı amaçlamaktadır. Aynı zamanda yeni öğretmenlere karşılaştıkları sorunlarla kendi başlarına kalmamaları için sunulan destekleri ve gelecekte başarılı bir öğretmen olmaları için sunulan fırsatları araştırmaktadır.

Bu çalışma üç aşamadan oluşmaktadır. İlk aşama kapsamında 2008-2009 öğretim yılında Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi Okulöncesi Öğretmenliği Programından mezun olmak üzere bulunan 25 öğretmen adayı ile gelecekteki mesleklerine yönelik algıları ve beklentileri hakkında derinlemesine görüşme yapılmıştır. İkinci aşama ilk çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerden devlet okullarında öğretmenlik yapmaya başlayanlar ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. İlk çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerden 16 tanesi Türkiye'nin çeşitli illerinde devlet okullarında öğretmenlik yapmaya başlamıştı. Bu 16 öğretmen adayı ile iletişime geçilmiş ve devlet okullarında ilk dönemlerini tamamladıktan sonra öğretmenlik yaparken yaşadıkları olumlu ve olumsuz tecrübeleri üzerine derinlemesine görüşme yapılmıştır. İkinci çalışmaya katılan 16 öğretmenin tamamı üçüncü çalışmaya katılmaya da gönüllü oldular. En son aşama

218

benzer görüşme soruları kullanılarak katılımcılar devlet okulunda ilk yıllarını tamamladıktan sonra yürütülmüştür.

Bu çalışma doğası gereği nitel bir çalışmadır. Bu nedenle, veri toplama yöntemi temel olarak katılımcılarla gerçekleştirilen derinlemesine görüşmelerdir. Bu nitel çalışmada bir grup insanın yaşadığı olayları açıklamaya ve anlamlandırmaya odaklanan olgu bilimsel araştırma deseni çalışmanın metodu için benimsenmiştir (Creswell, 2007). Katılımcıların öğretmenliğe başlamadan önceki beklentileri ve başladıktan sonraki yaşantıları çok geniş bir alanı kapsamaktadır. Örnek vermek gerekirse öğretmen adaylarının devlet okullarında çalışmaya başlayınca karşılaşabilecekleri zorluklar, öğretmen eğitim programı, devlet okullarındaki fiziksel, eğitimsel ve yönetimsel durumlar ve müfredatın bütün gereklilikleri bu çalışma kapsamına alınmıştır.

Olgu bilimsel analiz tecrübe edilen her türlü konuyu inceleyebilir. Bu yüzden o olayı tecrübe eden kişileri olayın dışında tutarak nesnel bir analiz yapmaz. Tam tersine olayların kişiler tarafından nasıl tecrübe edildiği ile ilgilenir (Giorgi 2009). Olgu bilimsel araştırmalarda araştırma sorusu belirgin bir konu ya da problem üzerindeki çok yoğun ve güçlü araştırma ilgisinden ortaya çıkar. Olgu bilimsel desen çıkarım ya da neden sonuç iliksisi aramak yerine insan yaşantılarının anlamını ve tanımını tüm hakikatiyle derinlemesine ortaya koymaya çalışır (Moustakas, 1994). Aynı zamanda kişisel yaşantıları umumi bir tanıma indirgemeyi amaçlar (van Manen, 1990). Çok çeşitli yaşantılar olgu olarak kabul edilebilir. Örneğin, yas, öfke, veya uykusuzluk olgu olarak incelenebilecek konulardır (Moustakas, 1994).

Olgu bilimsel desende iki temel yaklaşım vardır: Hermeneutic olgu bilim (van Manen, 1990) ve transcendental olgu bilim (Moustakas, 1994). Hermeneutic olgu bilim ağırlıkla yaşantıları neyin oluşturduğunu yorumlamaya dayanır (van Manen, 1990). Fakat transcendental olgu bilim yaşantıları yorumlamak yerine açıklamaya odaklanmıştır. İncelenen olgunun önyargılardan arınması için disiplinli, organize ve sistematik bir çalışma gerekmektedir. Araştırmacı incelediği olguya ait önyargılarını, inançlarını ve bilgilerini bir kenara koymalı ve tamamen açık, kabullenici ve

219

önyargısız olarak katılımcıların olguyu açıklamalarını dinlemelidir. Bu çalışma göreve yeni başlayan okulöncesi öğretmenlerinin devlet okullarındaki yaşantılarını araştırmacının inançlarından ve önyargılarından bağımsız olarak anlatmak için Moustakas'ın transcendental yaklaşımını benimsemiştir.

Nitel analizde analiz sırasında çıkan kodların mı yoksa önceden belirlenen kodların mı kullanılacağı halen tartışılan bir konudur. Olgu bilimsel çalışmalarda katılımcıların algılarını çözümlemeye, olguyu nasıl yaşadıkları ve anlamlandırdıklarını ortaya koymaya çalışıldığı için analizin kendinden çıkan kodların daha uygun olacağı belirtilmektedir (Creswell, 2007). Bu çalışma Türkiye kontekstine çok bağlı olduğu için alan yazınından çok fazla kod alınmamıştır.

Veri analizinde Moustakas'ın (1994) olgu bilimsel analizi kullanılmıştır çünkü veriler yalnızca öğretmenlerin öğretmen eğitim programı ve devlet okullarındaki yaşantılarına dayanmaktadır. Olgu bilimsel araştırmalarda veriler gayri resmi etkileşimli ifadeleri içeren çok uzun ve derinlemesine görüşmelerden oluşur. Bütün görüşmeler deşifre edip kodlamak üzere ses kayıt cihazına kayıt edilmiştir. Sadece 2. çalışmada 3 katılımcı ile yüz yüze görüşme gerçekleştirilememiş ve bu katılımcılar görüşme sorularına yazılı cevap vermişlerdir. Kelimesi kelimesine deşifre edilen görüşmelerde öncelikle katılımcıların olguyu nasıl yaşantıladıklarını açıklayan önemli ifadeler bulunur. Ardından birbiri ile ilişkili olan ifadeler horizonalizing denen süreç içinde belirlenir. Daha sonra araştırmacı tarafından tekrarlanan ya da benzer ifadeler çıkarılır ki, toplum algısı, çalışma arkadaşlarıyla ilişkiler ve okul koşulları gibi temalar oluşturulabilsin (Moustakas, 1994). Oluşturulan temalara dayanarak okulöncesi öğretmen adaylarını öğretmenliğe başlamadan önceki algıları, beklentileri, kaygıları ve devlet okullarında çalışmaya başladıktan sonraki yaşantıları anlamlandırılıp öz ortaya konabilir.

Nitel çalışmalarda geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik için nicel çalışmalarda olduğu gibi kesin bir görüş birliği yoktur. Geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik genellikle nitel çalışmalarda aynı anlamda kullanılmaktadır ve kredibilite iki kavramı da içeren manadadır. Nicel çalışmalarda çalışmaların kalitesi geçerlilik ve güvenilirlikle ölçülürken nitel

çalışmalarda kalite daha çok araştırmacının çabasına ve emeğine bağlıdır (Golafshani, 2003). Bogdan ve Biklen (2007) nitel çalışmalarda kredibiliteyi arttırmak için farklı veri toplama yöntemlerinin kullanılarak farklı verilerin toplanmasını ve araştırmanın her adımının çok ayrıntılı bir şekilde anlatılmasını tavsiye etmektedir. Bu çalışma Bogdan ve Biklen'nin tavsiyelerini benimsemiştir. Kodlayıcı güvenirliği ve direk alıntılama araştırmacının yapacağı çıkarımları azaltmak için kullanılmıştır. Bulgular öğretmen eğitim programının okulöncesi öğretmenlerini öğretmenlik mesleğine hazırlamadaki güçlü ve zayıf yanlarını işaret etmektedir. Ayrıca göreve yeni başlayan öğretmelerin devlet okullarında yaşadıkları problemleri ortaya koymaktadır. Daha özellikli olarak bu çalışma aşağıdaki sorulara cevap vermeyi amaçlamaktadır:

1. Okul öncesi öğretmen adayları öğretmenlik mesleğine başlamadan önce bu mesleği nasıl algılamaktadırlar?

2. Okul öncesi öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine başlamadan önce beklentileri ve kaygıları nelerdir?

3. Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler öğretmenliğin ilk yılında nelerle karsılaşmaktadırlar?

    a. Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin ilk yıllarındaki problemleri nelerdir?

    b. Bu problemlerin kaynağı nedir?

    c. Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin ilk yıllarındaki olumlu yaşantıları nelerdir?

4. Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler karsılaştıkları sorunları nasıl çözmektedirler?

Okul öncesi öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine başlamadan önce, mesleklerine yönelik algıları, beklentileri ve kaygıları:

Bu çalışma göstermiştir ki okulöncesi öğretmen adayları çeşitli açılardan ilerdeki

mesleklerinin önemine inanmaktadırlar. Okulöncesi eğitim çocukların sosyal, duygusal ve bilişsel gelişmelerine katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bütün katılımcılar okulöncesi öğretmenliğin hem fiziksel hem zihinsel olarak çok yorucu bir meslek olduğuna işaret etmişlerdir. Okulöncesi çağındaki çocuklara eğitim vermek diğer yaş gruplarına eğitim vermekten daha zor olduğu için toplumun okulöncesi öğretmenlerinden beklentisi daha yükselmekte ve bu durum katılımcılar üzerinde baskı oluşturmaktadır.

Katılımcıların okulöncesi eğitime verdikleri önem toplum genelinde kabul görmemektedir. Bütün katılımcılar eğitim hayatları boyunca toplumdan olumsuz tepkiler aldıklarını belirtmişlerdir. İnsanlar okulöncesi öğretmenliğini uzmanlık ve profesyonellik gerektirmeyen kolay bir meslek olarak görmekte ve ciddiye almamaktadırlar. Sürekli olumsuz tepkiler almak öğretmen adaylarının mesleklerine karşı tutumlarını olumsuz yönde etkilemiştir. Hatta başlangıçta sahip oldukları olumlu düşünceler zaman içersinde pişmanlığa dönüşmüştür. Son yıllarda okulöncesine karşı toplumda aniden artan ilgi sayesinde öğretmen adaylarının düşünceleri de değişmiş tekrar olumlu tutuma dönüşmüştür.

Bütün katılımcılar ODTÜ'de kaliteli bir eğitim aldıklarını belirtmişler fakat öğretmen eğitim programını çeşitli yönlerden eleştirmişlerdir. Dört yıllık eğitim boyunca dört ayrı okul deneyimi dersi almalarına rağmen, eleştirilerin merkezini pratik bilginin azlığı oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcılar kendilerini çocuklarla sınıfta yalnız kaldıklarında eğitim vermeye hazır hissetmediklerini söylemişleridir. Bunlara ek olarak öğretmen eğitim programının Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına (MEB) bağlı okulların işleyişinden çok uzakta bir eğitim verdiğini iddia etmişlerdir. Katılımcılar, devlet okullarında kendilerini bekleyen bir takım zorlukların farkındalar fakat bu karşılaşacakları sorunları çözmek konusunda çok iyimser düşünmektedirler. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığını politikalarına göre bütün öğretmeler belli bir süre merkezden uzak bölgelerde çalışmak zorundadırlar. Bu bölgeler pek çok kültürel, sosyal ve güvenlik sorunu ile karşı karşıyadır. Bu yüzden öğretmenler bu bölgelere atanmaktan büyük korku ve endişe duymaktadırlar. Öğretmen eğitim programının kendilerini bu koşullara hazırlamadığını savunmuşlardır.

222

Bütün öğretmen adayları okul idarecisi, diğer öğretmenler ve ailelerle iyi ilişkiler geliştirmenin önemine değinmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte okul deneyimini sürdürdükleri okullarda bir takım olumsuz olaylara tanık olmuşlardır ve kendileri de bu tür olumsuz durumlarla karşılaşabileceklerinin farkındadırlar. Bu durumlarla karşılaşma ihtimaline karşı bazı stratejiler geliştirmişlerdir. Okuldaki ilişkiler göz önüne alındığında katılımcılar en çok idareciler ile ilişkiler konusunda endişe duymaktadırlar çünkü okul deneyimi dersini aldıkları okullarda idarecilerin öğretmenler üzerinde çok büyük etkisi olduğunu gözlemlemişlerdir. Bütün bunlara rağmen öğretmen adayları idareciler, öğretmenler ve ailelerle iyi ilişkiler geliştirmek için kendi üstelerine düşen sorumlulukları yerine getireceklerini belirtmişlerdir.

Öğretmen adaylarının göreve başlamadan önceki en büyük korkusu sınıf disiplinini sağlayamamaktı ve bu durum pratik derslerin azlığı ve yetersizliği ile ilişkilendiriyorlardı. Bu açıdan sonuçlar Veenman'in (1984) göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin karsılaştıkları sorunlarla ilgili çalışması ile benzerlik göstermektedir. Veenman yeni öğretmenlerin karşılaştıkları 24 tane problemi sıralamıştır. Listenin en başında ise sınıf yönetimi problemleri gelmektedir. Katılımcıların tamamı sınıf disiplinini sağlamak için öncelikle sınıf kurallarının belirlenmesi gerektiğini savunmuş. Ayrıca, çocukların kurallara uyması ve benimsemesi için onları kuralları belirleme sürecine katmanın gerekliliğine değinmişlerdir.

Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler öğretmenliğin ilk yılında nelerle karşılaşmaktadırlar:

Bu çalışmanın sonuçları göstermiştir ki öğretmenlerin karsılaştıkları sorunların çoğunluğu öğretmen eğitimi programları, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ve okul yöneticilerinin tutumlarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma sırasında sorunlar sıralanırken aynı zamanda çözüm önerileri de geliştirilmiştir.

Okulöncesi eğitim programları Eğitim Fakültelerindeki diğer bölümlerle kıyaslanınca oldukça yeni programlardır. Bir kaç tane köklü üniversite okulöncesi eğitim vermekte iken, çok kisa bir sürede 50'den fazla üniversite gerekli altyapı

223

sağlanmadan okulöncesi eğitim sunmaya başladı. Türkiye'de okulöncesi eğitim sunabilecek akademik kadro, bu ani artışı karşılayacak düzeyde değildi. Bu durumda öğretim üyesi eksikliği iki şekilde giderilmeye çalışıldı: Diğer üniversitelerden gelen yarı zamanlı öğretim üyeleri ders veriyordu ya da diğer programlardaki öğretim üyeleri ile ders açığı kapatılmaya çalışıyordu. Her iki durumda da çeşitli sorunlar ortaya çıkıyordu. Katılımcılar yarı zamanlı öğretim üyeleri ile çok kısıtlı iletişim kurma fırsatı bulabiliyorlardı. Bununla birlikte diğer programlardan gelen öğretim üyeleri ise okulöncesi eğitime aşina değildiler ve öğretim teknikleri de çoğu zaman okulöncesi eğitime uygun düşmüyordu. Bu çalışmadaki katılımcılar öğretmen eğitim programı ile MEB arasındaki mesafenin öğretim üyesi yetersizliğinden kaynaklandığını ileri sürmüşlerdir.

Türkiye'de öğretmenlerin kariyer seçimleri büyük oranda Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavına (KPSS) bağlıdır. Bu çalışma içinde durum farklılık göstermemiştir. Katılımcıların çoğu KPSS'den düşük puan almıştı ve devlet okullarına atanmayı beklemiyordu. Fakat okulöncesine son yıllarda artan ilgi 2009 yılında en üst seviyeye ulaşmıştı. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB) okulöncesindeki okullaşma oranını artırmak için 15 binden fazla öğretmen ataması yapacağını açıkladı. MEB'in atama politikaları çok değişken olduğu için öğretmen adayları devlet okullarındaki bütün boş pozisyonlar dolabileceğini ve ileriki yıllarda tekrar atama yapılmayacağını düşünmeye başladılar. Bu durum MEB'de çalışmayı düşünmeyen öğretmenleri dahi devlet okullarına başvurmaya sevk etti. Bu yüzden bazıları mastır yapma planlarını ertelemiş bazıları da özel okullarla imzaladıkları kontratları fes etmişlerdir.

MEB özel okullarla kıyaslanınca daha iyi çalışma koşulları sunmasına rağmen, aynı zamanda kendi sisteminden kaynaklanan pek çok sorunu da barındırmaktadır. Göreve ilk başladıkları andan itibaren öğretmenler çeşitli sorunlarla karşılaşmışlar ve ilk yılları boyunca sorunların türü ve şiddeti değişiklik arz etmiştir. MEB 15 bin öğretmeni gerekli alt yapı çalışmalarını düzenlemeden atadığı için öğretmenler çeşitli altyapı sorunu ile mücadele etmek zorunda kalmışlardır. Araştırmanın bulguları göstermiştir ki öğretmen adayları devlet okullarında karşılaşabilecekleri pek çok zorluğun farkında ve bunları kabullenmiş durumdadırlar. Fakat bazı zorluklar onların

beklentilerinin çok ötesinde çıkmıştır. Öğretmenlerin karşılaştıkları zorluklar öğretmen eğitim programından, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın sisteminden ve öğretmenlerin atandıkları yerlerdeki yerel koşullardan kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu sorunlar öğretmenlerin hayatında sıkıntılara yol açmış ve mesleğe olumsuz adım atmalarına neden olmuştur. Alt yapı problemleri değişik formatlarda ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bazı durumlarda öğretmenler atandıkları okullarda okulöncesi sınıfı olmadığına tanık olmuşlardır ya da atandıkları okulu tamamen inşaat halinde bulmuşlardır.

Alt yapı sorunlarına ek olarak göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler atandıkları okullarda temizlik ve yardımcı personel eksikliği yüzünden eğitim öğretim faaliyetleri dışında hizmetler vermek zorunda da kalmışlardır. Okulöncesi öğretmenleri eğitim öğretim aktivitelerine ek olarak küçük çocukların bakımlarına yönelik de eğitim almaktadır fakat soba yakmak, sınıfı temizlemek ya da çocukların yemeklerini dağıtmak gibi işleri yapmak yeni öğretmenlerin hiç beklemedikleri bir durumdur. Eğitim öğretim faaliyeti dışındaki bu hizmetler hem yorucu hem zaman alıcı oldukları için öğretmenleri olumsuz etkilemektedir. Okulların bütçeleri kısıtlı olduğu için okul idarecileri temizlik personeli ya da yardımcı personel alımına sıcak bakmamakta öğretmenler de uzun sure bu hizmetleri yerine getirmek zorunda kaldıkları için motivasyon kaybına uğramaktadırlar.

Okulöncesi eğitim diğer kademelerle kıyaslanınca daha fazla malzeme ve materyal gerektirmektedir. Öncelikle sınıflar çocuk boyutunda mobilya ile döşenmelidir. Bunun yanında okulöncesi eğitimde öğretmenler çok fazla kırtasiye malzemesine ihtiyaç duyarlar. Bu çalışmanın genelinde öğretmenler sınıfta temel malzemeleri bulmuşlardır çünkü MEB okullara bu malzemeleri sağlamaktadır. Fakat, kırtasiye malzemelerini okullara aileler sağlamaktadır. Ailelerin sosyo-ekonomik seviyeleri genelde düşük olduğu için okullarda kırtasiye malzemesi sorunu yaşanmaktadır. Öğretmenler kendi bütçelerinden malzeme almakta fakat 15-20 çocuk için malzeme almak öğretmenler için pahalıya mal olmaktadır. Öğretmenler eğitim aldıkları süre boyunca sınıfta birbirinden farklı amaçlarla kullanılan köşeler olacağı şeklinde eğitim alıp kendilerini bu duruma hazırlamışlar fakat kendi sınıflarına girdikleri

225

zaman sınıflarını boş gördüklerinde hayal kırıklığına uğramışlardır. Müdürlerin okulöncesi eğitime karşı tutumları malzeme eksikliği üzerinde rol oynamaktadır. Okulöncesi eğitime artan ilgi sayesinde MEB okullara çok fazla miktara okulöncesi malzemesi sağlamıştır. Fakat bazı okullarda müdürler okulöncesine gönderilen malzemeleri üst sınıflara vermişlerdir. Örneğin, müdürlerden bir tanesi okulöncesi eğitimde deney tüplerinin kullanılmayacağını düşündüğü için deney malzemelerini üst sınıflara vermiştir. Okulöncesi eğitimin tamamen bağımsız anaokullarında verilmesini sağlamak yakın gelecekte mümkün görünmemektedir çünkü okulöncesi eğitimi ilköğretim okullarındaki anasınıflarında vermek ekonomik açıdan MEB'ğına daha elverişli gelmektedir. Fakat MEB'in ilköğretim okullarındaki müdürleri okulöncesi eğitim konusunda bilgilendirmesi gerekmektedir. Bu sadece okulöncesi öğretmenlerin hayatini kolaylaştırmayacak aynı zamanda çocukların daha kaliteli bir eğitim almasını sağlayacaktır. Örneğin, bazı ilköğretim okullarında MEB'nın sağladığı malzemeler iyi korunamamış, çalınmış, kırılmış ya da kaybolmuştur.

Bu çalışma başlangıçta öngörülemeyen pek çok bulguyu ortaya çıkarmıştır bunlardan en belirgin olanı ilköğretim ve bağımsız anaokullarının arasında ortaya çıkan farklardır. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı bünyesinde bağımsız anaokulu ve ilköğretim anasınıfları olmak üzere iki tip okulöncesi sınıfı bulunmaktadır. Bağımsız anaokulları özel olarak okulöncesi kurumu olarak inşa edilmişlerdir, fakat ilköğretim anasınıfları ilköğretim 1-8 sınıflarına eğitim veren okulların bünyesinde bulunmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin 5 tanesi bağımsız anaokulunda 11 tanesi ilköğretim anaokulunda çalışmakta idi. Bağımsız anaokullarında çalışmaya başlayan öğretmenler daha az sorunla karşılaşmışlardır çünkü bağımsız anaokulları okulöncesi çocuklarının özellikleri göz önünde bulundurularak inşa edilmiştir. Bununla birlikte bağımsız anaokullarının idarecileri okulöncesi eğitim kökenine sahiptirler ve öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlarını daha iyi anlamaktadırlar. Diğer taraftan ilköğretimdeki anaokulları ilköğretim sınıflarının sonradan anasınıfına dönüştürülmesiyle oluşturulmuştur ve idareciler okulöncesine tamamen uzaktırlar. İdarecilerin okulöncesine olan mesafeleri göreve yeni başlayan okulöncesi öğretmenleri için bazen izolasyona neden olmaktadır çünkü idareciler göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenlerden sorumlu

226

olan kişilerdir ve onlara kılavuzluk yapmaları beklenmektedir. İdareciler okulöncesi hakkında çok az bilgiye sahip olduklarında öğretmenleri yeterince yönlendirememektedirler.

MEB 600 binden fazla öğretmen, 70 bine yakın okul ve 15 milyondan fazla öğrenci ile Türkiye'deki en büyük bakanlıktır. Bu kadar büyük bir bakanlık ancak çok karmaşık ve karışık yönetmeliklerle yönetilebilmektedir. Bu yüzden MEB'de çok fazla yazışma olmaktadır. Katılımcıların öğretmen eğitim programından başlıca şikâyetlerinden birisi de MEB'in yönetmelikleri ve yazışmaları hakkında çok az bilgi vermesiydi. Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler kendilerini bu konularda yönlendirecek bir danışmana ihtiyaç duyduklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Yeni öğretmenler müdürlerle iletişim kurma konusunda çok çekingen davranmaktadırlar ve bu çekingenlik öğretmenler ve müdürler arasında bir bariyer kurmaktadır (Erdemir, 2007). Öğretmenlerin müdüre karşı hissettikleri korku daha çok onların kendi özlük hakları ve MEB'in yönetmelikleri konusundaki bilgisizliklerinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin bu konudaki ihtiyacını fark eden öğretmen eğitim programları ders listelerine yönetim dersini eklemişlerdir. Ne yazık ki böyle bir ders bu çalışmanın katılımcıları eğitim alırken mevcut değildi.

Okul müdürleri ve diğer öğretmen arkadaşları ile iyi ilişkileri olan öğretmenler okula büyük bir hevesle gittiklerini ve bu durumun eğitim performanslarını olumlu etkilediğini belirtmişlerdir. Diğer taraftan, müdürleri ve meslektaşları ile olumsuz ilişkileri olan öğretmenler kendilerini okulda çok rahatsız hissetmekte ve okullarını değiştirmeyi düşünmektedirler. Okulda pozitif bir atmosfer yaratmak için müdürlere büyük rol düşmektedir. Eğer müdürler rekabete dayalı bir ortam yaratır ve öğretmenlerin performanslarını birbirleri ile kıyaslarlarsa, onları işbirliği içinde çalışmak yerine yarışa teşvik etmiş olurlar. Bu yüzden, müdürler çocukların daha iyi eğitim alabilmesi için öğretmenleri işbirliği içinde çalışmaya sevk etmelidirler.

Okul içi ilişkileri etkileyen bir diğer faktör çalışılan okulun türü olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. İlköğretim okullarında genelde bir tane okulöncesi sınıfı

227

bulunduğundan, burada çalışan öğretmenler kendilerini okulun geri kalanından izole edilmiş hissetmektedirler. Okulöncesi eğitim alan çocukların her zaman gözetim altında bulundurulmaları gerektiği için okulöncesi öğretmenler nadiren üst sınıftaki öğretmenlerle ve hatta müdürlerle iletişim haline geçmektedirler. Bu izolasyon bazen müdürlerin okulöncesi öğretmenlerini göz ardı etmelerine neden olmaktadır ki, öğretmenler bazı MEB duyurularından ya da okulda meydana gelen değişimlerden haberdar edilmediklerinden şikayetçi olmuşlardır.

Pek çok mesleğe başlamadan önce belli bir çıraklık döneminden geçmek gerekir. Bu geleneğe sahip olmayan öğretmenlik mesleğinde ise yeni öğretmenler mesleğin yetkin bir üyesi sayılırlar ve ilk işe başladıklarında 30 yıllık bir öğretmen ile aynı sorumluluğa sahiptirler (Saban, 2002).

Bu nedenle öğretmenleri ilk yıllarında destekleyen programlar rehber öğretmenler ile yeni öğretmenleri iyi eşleştirmeli, müfredat konusunda kılavuzluk yapmalı, ortak çalışmaya dayalı ders planları hazırlanmalı, gözlem yapılmalı ve liderlik eğitimleri sunulmalı. Bu programların başarısı rehber öğretmen ve yeni öğretmenin birlikte çalışmasına bağlıdır. Bu noktada yeni öğretmenleri desteklemek için bu programların işlerliğini artırma konusunda müdürlere de büyük görev düşmektedir (Johnson, Birkeland, Kardos, Kaufman, Liu, & Peske, 2001).

Bu çalışmada yeni öğretmenler daha çok öğretmen arkadaşlarından destek gördüklerini belirtmişlerdir. Fakat bu destek yapılandırılmış, detaylı ya da yeterli olmaktan çok uzaktı. Ciddi bir zorlukla karsılaştıklarında meslektaşlarına sormuşlar, aldıkları cevapları destek olarak kabul etmişlerdir. Türkiye'de öğretmenliğin ilk yılı stajyerlik olarak adlandırılmaktadır ve öğretmenler bu dönemde aday memur durumundadırlar. Bu aşamayı başarı ile tamamlayamazlarsa mesleklerine devam etmeleri mümkün değildir. Bu stajyerlik dönemi üç aşamadan oluşmaktadır.

İlk aşama sadece anayasa, Atatürk ilkeleri ve Türkçe gramer gibi bütün memurların bilmesi gereken bilgiler üzerine yoğunlaşmıştır. İkinci aşama daha çok öğretmenlik mesleğine yöneliktir ve MEB'in yapısı, organizasyonu ve yönetmeliği

228

açıklanmaktadır. Bu iki hazırlayıcı eğitim ilk dönem boyunca sürmektedir ve eğitimler hafta sonu yapılmaktadır ve bu eğitimleri vermekten ilköğretim müfettişleri ve MEB müdürlükleri sorumludur (MONE, 1995). Bu eğitimler yeni öğretmenlerin hafta sonlarını meşgul ettiği halde onların ihtiyaçlarına cevap verecek şekilde dizayn edilmemişlerdir. Bu çalışmada sadece üç öğretmen bu eğitimleri faydalı bulmuştur. Bu çalışma ortaya koymuştur ki yeni öğretmenler MEB'deki yazışmalardan dolayı büyük sıkıntılar yaşamaktadırlar. Öğretmenliğin ilk aylarında bu yazışmalarla başa çıkmak için öğretmenler ciddi cabalar sarf etmektedirler. Bu hazırlayıcı eğitimler yeni öğretmenleri MEB'deki karmaşık yazışmalar, MEB'in karışık yönetmelikleri ve organizasyonu hakkında bilgilendirmek için yeniden düzenlense daha etkili hale getirilmiş olurlar.

Yeni öğretmenler ilk yıllarında açık bir desteğe ihtiyaç duyarlar aksi takdirde kendilerini kaygıları ve problemleri ile yalnız bırakılmış hissederler. Kendilerinden daha tecrübeli meslektaşlarından gelen açıklama ve tavsiyeler yeni öğretmenleri olumlu şekilde etkilemektedir. Rehberlik surecinde başarıya ancak rehber öğretmen yeterli zamana ve yeni öğretmeni destekleyecek yetkinliğe sahip ise ulaşılabilir. Yeni öğretmenler sadece mesleki açıdan desteğe ihtiyaç duymazlar, aynı zamanda okul içinde sosyalleşmeleri gerekir. Hem mesleki destek hem sosyal destek yeni atanan öğretmemelerin yeni rollerine ve çevrelerine uyumlarını kolaylaştırmaktadır (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). MEB'in yönetmeliğine göre rehberlik en az iki ay sürmeli ve yeni öğretmenin ihtiyaç duyacağı bütün teorik ve pratik bilgileri kapsamalıdır. Rehber öğretmen yeni öğretmenle düzenli olarak bir araya gelmeli, öğretmeni sınıfta gözlemlemeli ve uygulamaları hakkında geri bildirimde bulunmalı. Ayrıca, rehber öğretmen periyodik olarak yeni öğretmenin gelişimi hakkında müdüre rapor sunmalıdır. Bütün bunların ötesinde, MEB'in yönetmeliğine göre yeni öğretmenler sınıfta tek başlarına ders veremezler ve rehber öğretmen gözetiminde ders vermeleri gerekir (MONE, 1995).

Yasal olarak göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenlere tecrübeli öğretmenler arasından bir danışman atanması gerektiği halde bu çalışmadaki öğretmenlerden sadece 5 tanesi kendisine danışman öğretmen atandığını ifade etmiştir. Bunlar içinden sadece 2

tanesi danışmanlık sürecinin etkili ve verimli geçtiğini belirtmiş diğerleri bu sürecin tamamen formalite şeklinde gerçekleştiğini savunmuşlardır. Bu durumda yeni öğretmenler karşılaştıkları sorunlara önceden kendilerini hazırlayamamışlar her seferinde çözüm yolunu problemle karşılaştıktan sonra kendi kendilerine bulmaya çalışmışlardır.

MEB'in yönetmeliğine göre müdürler yeni öğretmenleri teftiş etmekten sorumlu olan birincil kişilerdir. Buna ek olarak ilköğretim müfettişleri yeni öğretmenleri mesleklerinin ilk yılında iki kez teftiş ederler. Ne yazık ki, MEB yeterli sayıda okulöncesi eğitim konusunda uzmanlaşmış müfettişe sahip değildir. Bu yüzden, okulöncesine dair yeterli bilgi ve tecrübeye sahip olmayan ilköğretim müfettişleri okulöncesi öğretmenlerini de teftiş etmektedirler. İlköğretim müfettişleri doğal olarak ilköğretim sınıflarındaki belirli standartlara alışkın oldukları için aynı standartlara okulöncesi sınıflarda da ulaşmayı beklemektedirler. Örneğin, ders program okulöncesi sınıflarında bulunmadığı halde müfettişler öğretmenlerden bunu bulundurmalarını beklemektedirler.

Bu yüzden bazı öğretmenler olumsuz teftiş raporları almışlardır. Öğretmenlerden biri çocukları çok fazla serbest bıraktığı için eleştirilmiştir, oysa öğretmen eğitim program ve müfredat çocukların bağımsız kişilik geliştirebilmeleri için onlara özgürlük verilmesi gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Çocuklara özgürlük vermek onlara her istediklerini yapma hakkı tanımak olarak anlaşılmamalı. Katılımcılar özgür bırakmayı çocuklara saygı duymak, yetki vermek, karar alma süreçlerine katmak olarak tanımlamaktadırlar. Bu anlayış çocukları kendi haklarına sahip bireyler olarak gören anlayışın bir yansımasıdır (Essa, 2003). Bu yeni yaklaşım ilköğretim müfettişlerine aşina gelmediğinden okulöncesi öğretmenlerinin pratiklerini uygunsuz olarak değerlendirmiş olabilirler. Bu yüzden, daha sağlıklı bir değerlendirmeye ulaşmak için MEB okulöncesi öğretmenlerini teftiş etmek üzere okulöncesinde uzmanlaşmış müfettişleri görevlendirmeli. Ayrıca, okulöncesi eğitimdeki ani okullaşma oranına bakarak, ileride ilköğretim müfettişlerinin sayısının okulöncesi öğretmenlerini teftiş etmeye yeterli olmayacağı ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Merkezden uzak yerlere atanan öğretmenler daha farklı sorunlarla karşılaşmaktadırlar. Bunların başında çok düşük sosyo-ekonomik seviyeden gelen çocukları eğitmek gelmektedir. Öğretmenler çocukların yaşadıkları yoksullukları ve yoksunlukları gördükçe duygusal olarak başa çıkmakta zorlanmışlardır. Çocuklar çeşitli mahrumiyetler içinde yaşadıkları için geniş bir perspektif kazanamamakta öğretmenlerde ders planlarını basitleştirmek zorunda kalmaktadırlar. Çocukların düşük sosyo-ekonomik düzeye sahip olmaları onların okula geliş tarihlerini dahi etkilemektedir. Özellikle Güneydoğuda ailelerin başka ekonomik faaliyetleri olmadığı için daha uzak bölgelerdeki tarım alanlarına mevsimlik işçi olarak Mayıs ayında gitmekte ve ancak Aralık ayında dönmektedirler. MEB bütün bölgeler için aynı eğitim programını uyguladığı için bu bölgelerde yaşayan çocuklar eğitim programında yer alan pek çok aktiviteyi kaçırmaktadırlar.

Göreve yeni başlayan öğretmenler için yoksulluk içinde yaşan çocuklara eğitim vermekten daha zor olan şey Türkçe bilmeyen çocuklara eğitim vermekti. Çocuklar Türkçe bilmediği için öğretmenler onlarla iletişim kuramamışlar, çocuklarda öğretmenlerinin yönergelerini anlayıp uygulayamamışlardır. Türkçe konuşamamak çocukların daha utangaç ve çekingen davranmalarına neden olduğundan, öğretmenler çocukların Türkçe konuşma konusundaki korkularını azaltmak için onları cesaretlendirici şekilde yaklaşmışlardır. Öğretmenler dil sorunlarını çözerlerse diğer sorunlarını da çözeceklerine inandıkları için ilk olarak odaklandıkları şey çocuklara Türkçe öğretmek olmuştur. Bu yüzden verdikleri eğitimde belirgin değişiklikler yapmışlardır. Çocuklar basit yönergeleri öğrenene kadar öğretmenler çocuklara otur demek için oturmuşlar kalk demek için kalkmışlardır. Çocuklar bildikleri şarkıları ya da hikâyeleri tekrar etmekten keyif aldıkları için öğrendiklerini sürekli tekrar etmişlerdir.

Bu çalışmadaki katılımcıların tamamı öğretmen olma ve küçük çocuklara eğitim verme konusunda oldukça yüksek motivasyona sahiptirler. Sahip oldukları motivasyon çocuklara ve mesleklerine duydukları sevgiden kaynaklanmaktadır. Çocuklar kendileri için bir resim çizdiğinde ya da bir mektup yazdığında öğretmenler kendilerini aşırı derecede tatmin olmuş hissetmektedirler. Bazı öğretmenler

öğrencilerine duydukları sevgi ile motive olacaklarını düşünmemelerine rağmen zaman içinde çocuklarla aralarında bir bağ oluştuğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin motivasyonu zaman içinde daha da artmıştır çünkü mesleğe başlarken başarılı olup olamayacakları hakkında çeşitli endişeler taşıyorlardı. Zaman geçtikçe çocuklardaki olumlu gelişmeleri görüp öğretmenlikte başarılı olduklarını hissettikçe ona karşı motivasyonları da artmıştır. Öğretmenler için bir diğer motivasyon kaynağı daha önce beklemedikleri bir yerden, toplumdan gelmiştir. Öğretmen olmadan önce bahsettikleri toplumdaki okulöncesi öğretmenliği mesleğini küçük görme yerini tamamen öğretmenlik mesleğine duyulan saygıya bırakmış bu da yeni öğretmenlerin motivasyonunu arttırmıştır.

Katılımcıların çoğu okul deneyimi sırasında sınıf yönetimi konusunda olumsuz yaşantılar geçirdikleri için öğretmen olmadan önceki en büyük korkuları sınıf yönetimi üzerine idi. Öğretmenler beklentilerinin çok altında sorunla karşılaşmışlar ve bunu kendi sınıflarına sahip olmakla açıklamışlardır. Sınıflarındaki düzeni sağlamak için öncelikle çocuklarla güven ve sıcaklığa dayana bir ilişki kurmayı amaçlamışlardır. Bunu yaparken niyetleri çocuklarla sınıf kuralları üzerine bir mutabakata varmaktı çünkü öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetiminde en çok önemsedikleri şey sınıf kuralları idi. Ayrıca yeni öğretmenler okul deneyimi sırasında bazı uygunsuz uygulamalara şahit olmuşlardı ve bunların başında çocuklara şiddetle bağırmak gelmekteydi. Öğretmenler çocuklara bağırarak yönerge vermek ya da sınıf düzenini sağlamak istemedikleri için çocuklarla karşılıklı güvene ve samimiyete dayanan bir ilişki kurmayı tercih etmişlerdir. Çocukların kuralları daha iyi benimsemesi için onların kuralları kendi kendilerine belirlemelerine izin vermişler ve kuralların çizdiği çerçeve içerisinde kendi davranışlarında özgür oldukları mesajını çocuklara fark ettirmişlerdir.

Yeni öğretmenler ödül kullanımı konusunda hiç istekli olmamalarına rağmen çocukların kurallara uymasını sağlamak için sık sık ödül vermişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin hepsi ödül vermenin istenmeyen davranışları anında durdurma konusunda çok işe yaradığını savunmuşlardır. Öğretmenler çocukların kuralları içselleştirmesini istedikleri için onları kurallara alıştırıncaya kadar bir süre ödül kullanıp sonra zaman

içinde sıklığını azaltıp ya da tamamen bırakmışlardır. Ödül kullanmaya paralel olarak katılımcılar ceza kullanmaya da hiç sıcak bakmıyor fakat bazen istenmeyen davranışı ortadan kaldırmak için ceza dışında başka seçenekleri olmadığını düşünüyorlardı. Yeni öğretmenler cezaya karşı olduklarından verdikleri cezalar ağır değildi ve cezayı uygulamadan önce çocuklara istenmeyen davranışlarını durdurmaları için zaman tanıyorlardı. Öncelikle uyarıyor, ardından açıklama yapıyor sonunda da ceza veriyorlardı. Verdikleri cezaları genelde ceza olarak isimlendirmiyor, çocukları yaptıkları olumsuz davranışı düşünmek üzere bir köşede beklemeye gönderiyorlardı.

Hem öğretmen eğitim program hem de okulöncesi eğitim müfredatı aile katılımına özel bir önem vermektedir. Buna paralel olarak bu çalışmadaki katılımcılar da aile katılımının önemini vurgulamışlar ve çocukların eğitimi üzerindeki olumlu etkilerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Ayrıca uluslararası araştırmalar göstermektedir ki aileler de geçmişe nazaran çocuklarının okuldaki eğitimlerinin bir parçası olmaya daha isteklidirler. Fakat pek çok anne baba çocuklarının okuldaki eğitimine nasıl katılacağını bilmemektedir. Bu durumda, okulun akademik, sosyal ve davranışsal beklentileri veli toplantılarında açıklanmalı ve ailelerin hangi noktada destek sağlayabileceği anlaşılmalıdır (McIntyre , Eckert, Fiese, DiGennaro & Wildenger, 2007). Bütün katılımcıların vurguladığı gibi aile katılım aktiviteleri konteksten bağımsız değildir ve ailelerin kültürel, sosyal, ve eğitimsel durumları göz ardı edilerek yürütülemezler. Chavkin (1993) aile katılımı aktiviteleri için en büyük bariyerin düşük sosyo-ekonomik düzeyden gelen ailelerle kurulamayan olumlu iletişim olduğunu savunmaktadır. Öğretmenler çalışmaya başlamadan önce devlet okullarındaki ailelerin çoğunlukla düşük sosyal statüye sahip olacakları için aile katılımını sağlama noktasında sorumluluklarının daha fazla olacağının farkında olduklarını belirtmişlerdir.

Öğretmenliğe başlamadan önce düşük sosyal statüye sahip ailelerin akademik beklentilerinin de düşük olacağını, kendilerinin görevinin ise ailelerin eğitimsel aktiviteler konusunda farkındalığını arttırmak olduğunu belirtmişleridir. Aileleri eğitimsel aktiviteler hakkında fikir sahibi yapmak için de bütün katılımcılar onları sınıfa davet edeceklerini ve çocuklarla birlikte aktivite yapmalarını sağlayacaklarını

ifade etmişlerdir.

Öğretmenliğe başladıkların da ise düşük sosyal statünün aile katılım aktivitelerinin önündeki en büyük engel olduğunu fark etmişlerdir. Örneğin, bazı bölgelerde aileler çocuklarının eğitimi için en ufak maddi destek sağlamadıkları için okula gelmek istemiyorlar çünkü okula gelirlerse okulun kendilerinden para isteyeceğini düşünüyorlar. Ailelerin bu korkusunu ortadan kaldırmadan onları sınıfa gelip aktivite yapmaya ikna etmek mümkün görünmemektedir. Yine bölgesel koşullara bağlı olarak bazı okullar taşımalı eğitim uygulamakta, öğretmenler birçok çocuğun anne babası ile tanışma fırsatı dahi bulamamaktadırlar.

Katılımcılar öğretmen eğitim programında çok çeşitli aile katılımı stratejileri öğrenmişler, ailelerin profillerine bağlı olarak bunları uygulamaya çalışmışlardır. Hepsinin fark ettiği gerçek şu ki aktiviteler kolay görünse de iş uygulamaya geldiğinde zorluğu anlaşılmaktadır. Bazen, bir iki cümlelik bir not göndermek dahi öğretmenlerin çok vaktini almakta çünkü en uygun, yalın, açık ifade kullanılmadığı takdirde aileler öğretmenleri yanlış anlamaya çok eğilimlidirler. Ayrıca yeni öğretmenlerin fark ettiği bir diğer gerçek öğretmen eğitim programında ya da müfredatta tavsiye edilen bütün aktivitelerin her kültüre, topluma ve aile yapısına uygun düşmediğidir.

Katılımcıların hepsi öğretmenliğe başlamadan önce değerlendirme yapılmazsa öğretmenler verdikleri eğitimin etkililiğini ölçemeyecekleri için değerlendirmenin önemine vurgu yapmışlardır. Fakat öğretmenlerin daha sonraki uygulamaları göstermiştir ki öğretmen eğitim programında öğrendikleri ya da MEB'in önerdiği değerlendirme tekniklerini pek kullanmamaktadırlar. Öğrencilerle her gün birlikte oldukları için onlarda meydana gelen her türlü değişimi ve gelişimi kolayca fark ettiklerini iddia ettikleri için değerlendirmeye çok gerek duymamışlardır. Hepsi bir sınıfın bütün sorumluluğunu almanın çocukları tanımak ve takip etmek konusundaki becerilerini keskinleştirdiğini bu yüzden sınıfta olup biten her şeyin farkında olduklarını savunmuşlardır. Verdikleri eğitimin etkililiğini ölçmek için en çok kullandıkları yöntem gözlemdir. Ardından yaptıkları aktiviteleri tekrar edip

çocukların hatırlayıp hatırlamadıklarına bakmak gelmektedir. Yeni öğretmenlerin hepsi sınıfta bir yandan aktiviteleri yürütürken bir yandan anekdot tutmanın zorluğundan şikayet etmişlerdir. Son olarak bazı öğretmenler kronolojik kullanışlılığı nedeni ile portfolyo tutmayı tercih ettiklerini söylemişler fakat tuttukları portfolyolar daha ziyade çalışma örnekleri şeklinde görünmektedir.

Yeni öğretmenlerin hepsi öğretmenlik mesleğinde geçirdikleri bir yılın ardından mesleklerindeki ilk gün ile içinde bulundukları durum arasında çok büyük farklar olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Hepsi öğretmenlik mesleğinde tecrübenin yaparak ve yaşayarak kazanılabileceğine inanmaktadırlar. Yeni öğretmenler en çok ailelerle ilişki kurmakta ve sınıf disiplininde geliştiklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Katılımcılar okul deneyimleri sırasında idarecilerle ve ailelerle hiçbir iletişimde bulunmamışlar. Aynı zamanda okul deneyimi sırasında sınıf yönetimi konusunda çok olumsuz yaşantılar edinmişlerdir. Bu yüzden göreve başlamadan önce en büyük kaygıları ailelerle ilişkiler ve sınıf yönetimi idi. Öğretmenliğe başladıktan sonra bu alanlardaki gelişimlerini gördükçe mesleklerine yönelik kendilerine güvenleri önemli ölçüde artmıştır. Buna dayanarak yeni öğretmenler ilk yıllarında ne kadar olumlu yaşantılar geçirirlerse mesleklerine karşı o kadar olumlu tutum geliştiriyorlar denilebilir. Bunlara ek olarak öğretmenlikte kat ettikleri gelişme katılımcıların kişisel gelişimlerinde de kendilerini daha iyi hissetmelerini sağlamıştır.

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