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PROJE YÜRÜTÜCÜSÜ VE ARAŞTIRMACILAR*:

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Evaluation and Development of School-Faculty Collaboration in Teacher Education Programs

Abstract

Improving science teacher education has been an integral part of reform movements in the National Education in Turkey during the last decade. As a result of these efforts, Higher Education Council and Ministry of National Education restructured science education programs in all Colleges of Education nationwide (YOK, 1999). In addition to new courses with the renewed curriculums, re-conceptualized Faculty-School Partnership has been implemented since 1998. However, regarding our teaching experiences in the university, observations in school placements, and informal conversations with our prospective teachers; we, as faculty members of the Secondary School Science and Mathematics Education Department in the Marmara University, realized that there was a need for improvement in the Faculty-School Partnership model. Thus, the purposes of this project were to evaluate the effectiveness of different dimensions of the partnership and, after diagnosing the weaknesses in the current implementation, to find possible ways to enhance them. We accept reflective-based teacher education approach. Participatory action research design was used and the data that were based on the views of prospective teachers, mentors and supervisors were gathered by utilizing various data collection methods. The following stages were achieved with the help of the project: Conferences were conducted for the mentors and school coordinators. Additionally, teaching portfolio was implemented in the science teacher education program and alternative approaches were tested in order to improve the content and effectiveness of the school practice courses. Furthermore, the contents of some activities under the school practice courses were either changed or extended in order to coordinate and synchronize the school practice courses with each other and with other courses offered in the program, and to implement reflective-based teacher education approach. Findings and suggestions were drawn from each stage of the project and then, general results and suggestions were determined by performing cross-sectional comparison. Issues that need to be considered while choosing schools and mentors, roles that mentors and supervisors must have, and contents of the weekly seminars taken place at the faculty were stated as the general results. Important steps were taken in the portfolio implementation by the end of the project. As a final point, Faculty-School Partnership Textbook was revised according to the results and our own teaching experiences.

Keywords: *Science teacher education, Faculty-School Partnership, reflective teacher education, program development, portfolio, participatory action research.*