


## Evaluation of Faculty-School Partnership Model: Pre-service Science Teachers' Views

Feral OGAN BEKİROĞLU<sup>1</sup> , Ajda KAHVECİ<sup>2</sup>, Serhat İREZ<sup>3</sup>,  
Hayati ŞEKER<sup>2</sup>, Mustafa ÇAKIR<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assoc.Prof.Dr., Marmara University, Atatürk Education Faculty, İstanbul-TURKEY

<sup>2</sup> Asst.Prof.Dr., Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Education Faculty, Çanakkale-TURKEY

<sup>3</sup> Asst. Prof. Dr., Marmara University, Atatürk Education Faculty, İstanbul-TURKEY

**Received:** 04.11.2009

**Revised:** 25.02.2010

**Accepted:** 15.03.2010

*The original language of the article is Turkish (v.7, n.4, December 2010, pp.148-168)*

---

**Key Words:** Faculty-School Partnership Model; Pre-service Teachers; Critical Theory; Reflective Teaching.

### SYNOPSIS

### INTRODUCTION

Field experience has been regarded as the most favorably viewed component of initial teacher education in contributing to pre-service teachers' professional learning. The concept of university-school partnerships is promoted as a holistic approach where mutual professional learning benefits are anticipated and realized—where the knowledge and expertise of educators in schools and universities are valued, respected and utilized. While the partnerships may serve many aims, the underlying belief in their value often stems from the generally held assumption that such partnerships provide opportunities for the relationships between theory and practice to be more effectively enhanced. Varying periods of placement in school and classroom settings encourage pre-service teachers to engage in a developmental process of observing and experimenting with teaching practice, and learning about the skills, knowledge, philosophies and attitudes of the professional teacher. Therefore, the quality of pre-service teachers' learning experiences in the field is a major concern in initial teacher education.

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 Faculties of Education nationwide. In addition to new courses with the renewed curriculums, re-conceptualized Faculty-School Partnership has been implemented since 1997 to enhance the pre-service teachers' field experiences. However, regarding various research done in this area and, as teacher educators, our teaching experiences in the university, observations in school placements, and informal conversations with our pre-service teachers; it was realized that there was a need for improvement in the Faculty-School Partnership model.

Pre-service teachers are practitioners and field teachers of the future and their perceptions of the nature and quality of learning during the partnership process must be regarded as important indicators for making changes in the field education.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purposes of this study were to evaluate the effectiveness of different dimensions of the partnership from pre-service science teachers' perspectives and to make suggestions to improve the partnership. By examining the complexities and dynamics of pre-service teachers' learning experiences in the various facets of the field education context, the paper attempts to contribute to the ongoing discussion of finding ways to bridge the gap in the Faculty-School Partnership by developing clearer communication, understanding and shared purpose.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Reflection-based teacher education approach was accepted as a theoretical framework because the reflective approach should be fostered during the practicum associated with teacher-training courses. Reflective approach enables pre-service teachers to think about what happened, why it happened, and what else they could have done to reach their goal. Case study design under critical theory paradigm was used for the research. Data were based on the views of pre-service teachers about the school practice courses, their schools, mentors, supervisors, weekly seminars taken place at the faculty, and Faculty-School Partnership book. A questionnaire composed of 11 open-ended questions was completed by 224 pre-service science teachers. Qualitative data analysis was utilized and themes were developed from the data. Results are presented as number of the views as well as participants' vignettes.

## **FINDINGS and RESULTS**

Overall findings showed that the pre-service science teachers appreciated the valuable contribution of the Faculty-School Partnership model to their professional development. The pre-service science teachers stated that they felt like teachers, found opportunities to turn their theoretical knowledge into practice, and increased their self-esteem. However, they mentioned some issues that needed to be considered such as criteria in choosing schools, criteria in choosing mentors, mentors' role, supervisors' role, and contents of the weekly seminars conducted at the faculty. The pre-service science teachers complained about how they felt inactive while performing some of the activities, mentors' neglect, and mentors' inadequate knowledge of partnership. Moreover, they requested from their supervisors to be a guide in their journey and create an environment where they could share their field experiences. The results of the current study were discussed with the findings of previous studies on the similar topics.

This present case study points out that the pre-service science teachers' perception of the field experience and about the Faculty-School Partnership model is not disappointing but

some improvements need to be made regarding unsatisfactory placements. Pre-service teachers can face some challenge during field experience. Without much challenge, pre-service teachers are confirmed and may feel good about themselves but may also lack the capacity to engage productively with the field education. Too much challenge in the absence of appropriate support, on the other hand, can drive pre-service teachers to retreat. Professional development occurs with an appropriate mix of challenge and support. Besides, a field placement that offers moderate amounts of ambiguity and dissonance may provide opportunities for problem solving through reflection and thereby enhance professional growth. Therefore, faculty members and school personnel should work on development of good field experience placements as well as improvement of the partnership by engaging with pre-service teachers as persons and their emerging teaching selves as well as structuring an appropriate mix of challenge and support in the action context, socio-professional context and supervisory context.

## **SUGGESTIONS**

The suggestions drawn from this research are as follows: mentors should get training about their responsibilities, mentoring should be promoted by providing various opportunities to teachers, partners from universities and schools should come together each semester and share their ideas as well as their expectations, and school practice activities should be designed in a way that they would give pre-service teachers opportunities to reflect on their experiences and thoughts.