



LIBERAL ARTS COURSES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract:

Liberal arts courses (LACs) have been introduced in education faculties for high quality teacher education. This study aims to examine the views of education faculty lecturers, graduates and senior year students about the place and implementation of LACs in teacher education. The study group of the qualitative study includes lecturers (17), senior year students (21) and graduates (19) who volunteered to participate in the study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. One-to-one interviews were held with lecturers and graduates, and 30-45 minute focus group interviews were held with groups of 3 to 5 senior year students. Data analysis involved the formation of a list of codes. Related codes were gathered together for thematic coding. The following themes emerged from LAC-related lecturer and student comments: General perceptions, contents, implementation, lecturer quality, measurement and evaluation in LACs, recommendations and desired LACs. The study ends with recommendations for teacher education.

Keywords: teacher education, liberal arts courses, lecturer views, student views, education faculty

1. Introduction

Teacher education programs have long included subject area, professional knowledge and liberal arts courses. This taxonomy was based on the results of studies on teacher qualities, which suggest that teachers need to be both cultured and knowledgeable in their profession and their fields (Özyürek, 2008). The following teacher qualities have

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frequently emerged as important from previous studies: Being creative and innovative (Ferrari, Cachia and Punie 2009), coming to class prepared, having a positive approach to life, being fair, having a sense of humor, being compassionate (Walker 2008; Çelikten, Şanal and Yeni, 2005; Okçabol, 2004), and understanding students (Bany and Johnson 1975). These qualities constitute the profile of a socially and emotionally developed, self-actualized, modeling, effective and reliable leader-teacher. What may be the contributions of subject area, professional knowledge and liberal arts courses offered in teacher education programs to the formation of this desired teacher profile? What group of courses may bring such an outcome? Subject area, teaching profession or liberal arts courses? Or is there a need for a totally different model with courses outside this taxonomy? Such questions emphasize the need for discussing the issues of teacher education policies, models, strategies, courses and restructuring. This study examines liberal arts courses (LACs), which have an important place in teacher education programs at education faculties. Based on lecturer and student views, the place and importance of LACs in teacher education is discussed. It is hoped that the study will benefit the field of teacher education.

1.1. Liberal Arts Courses (LACs)

Item 45 of the Turkish National Education Law dated 14/06/1973 and numbered 1739 lists subject area knowledge, knowledge of the teaching profession and general culture as the qualities expected from teacher candidates. Liberal arts courses (LACs) teach general culture, which enables teacher candidates to place small information, concept and event categories in a larger context (Küçükahmet 2007, 207). In the 9th National Education Summit (1975), the following LACs were recommended for teacher education programs: Turkish, History of Revolution, Cultural History, Physical Education, and Foreign Language. These courses have long been included in teacher education programs. Later, the revised teacher education program initiated in the 1998-1999 academic year following the Higher Education Board resolution dated 4 November 1997 recommended the following LACs: Computers, Foreign Language I and II, Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History I and II. In addition to these, four or five elective courses were added to the 3rd and 4th year programs of all education departments as liberal arts courses during these years. General culture has an important place in modern universities, and the 1997 revision was thought to contribute to teacher candidates' general culture with the help of elective courses (YÖK, 1998). These elective courses included courses such as Educational Sociology and Pediatric Mental Health (Ada, 2001). The inclusion of these courses in the program was left to the discretion of individual departments (YÖK, 1998), a decision which was seriously criticized. In addition, the facts that LACs ignored the "general culture" dimension and did not

include psychology, sociology, philosophy, history of education and educational psychology classes were also criticized (Baskan, 2001; Kavcar, 2003; YÖK, 2007b).

The 2006-2007 curriculum revision took the criticisms into account and increased the number of LACs. Course composition was made more flexible and subject area and subject area education courses were given 50-60% weight, while teaching profession courses were given 25-30% and LACs 15-20% weight. Courses were diversified by adding "History of Science", "Scientific Research Methods", "Effective Communication Skills", "History of Turkish Education" and "Introduction to Philosophy" in order to raise teacher candidates' intellectual level. These revisions also allowed the inclusion of various LACs and the flexibility to change them over time (YÖK, 2007b). One new LAC was the "Community Service" course. A compulsory course in all education programs, it expects students to examine the society's problems and innovate projects to solve them. The course also encourages students to participate in scientific activities such as panels, conferences, congresses, symposia as audience, speakers or organizers (YÖK, 2007b).

The teacher education literature includes research studies on the 2006-2007 teacher education curriculum revision. Most of these studies include LACs. However, studies offering a general evaluation of LACs are rather limited. Some of them are as follows: Küçükahmet (2007), in his article evaluating the teacher education undergraduate program which was launched in 2006-2007, stated that the LAC entitled "History of Turkish Education" was not necessary for each program, required specialism on the lecturer's part, and was therefore faced with a shortage of lecturers to teach it. He suggests "Educational Sociology" as a more functional course instead of it. He also mentions that the weight of LACs in the program was 15-20%, but that the weighting should consider specific qualities expected from teachers in a given subject area and stage of education. He uses the early childhood education program as an example. He states that this program needs more subject area courses: "*In Turkey, an early childhood education teaches more subject area courses than a mathematics teacher does*" (Küçükahmet, 2007, 211). Therefore, he supports shaping LACs according to the needs of individual departments. Durukan and Maden (2011) explored Turkish language teacher candidates' views about the Turkish education undergraduate program. These teacher candidates' subject area knowledge, professional knowledge and attitudes towards LACs were at a moderate level and similar to one another. Turkish language teacher candidates believed that the experiences they were gaining in their undergraduate education would benefit both their professional and personal lives. These beliefs affected teacher candidates' attitudes towards LACs more positively than their attitudes towards subject area and professional knowledge. The positive views of teacher candidates about LACs preparing them for life and the profession was

noteworthy in this study. Baskan Atanur, Aydın and Maden (2006) compared various dimensions of the Turkish teacher education system with that in the USA, Germany and Japan. They recommended the following as a result of their comparison: The courses offered in existing teacher education programs in Turkey should be categorized as liberal arts, subject area knowledge and professional knowledge courses, and the weight of these categories should be changed in favor of liberal arts and professional knowledge courses. It may be argued that these recommended changes already took place with the 2006-2007 curriculum revision by increasing the percentage of LACs. However, this study is important for emphasizing that teacher education requires a special formation in addition to subject area courses.

In the literature about LACs, Doğanay (2011) shared the following views about the “Educational Philosophy” course recommended as an elective professional course during the 2006-2007 teacher education curriculum revision: *“An examination of new course content shows that most teacher education programs do not include a philosophy-related course, with only some departments (early childhood education, elementary education, social studies education, etc.) offering a two-credit philosophy course”* (Doğanay 2011, 346). Educational philosophy may add value to both professional courses and LACs. Considering its importance for education faculties, it is impossible not to agree with this statement. Other studies have also touched upon the importance of philosophy, thought training and educational philosophy courses in teacher education (Orhan, 2017; Tok and Sevinç 2012; Çoban 2007). As for other LACs than Philosophy and Educational Philosophy, the following were found important for teacher candidates: History of Science (Bıkmaz, 2017; Şimşek and Şimşek 2010; Şimşek 2011; Güneş and Gökçek 2013), Scientific Research Methods (Orhan, 2017; Yaşar, 2014; Kurt, İzmirli, Fırat and İzmirli 2011; Tay, Demirci-Güler and Taşdemir, 2009) and Effective Communication Skills Training (Çam, 2016; Durukan and Maden 2010; Gülbahçe, 2010; Dilekmen, Başcı and Bektaş, 2008; Pehlivan, 2005). Courses such as Scientific Research Methods or History of Science are important as they enable teacher candidates to approach events and concepts with a scientific attitude. It can be seen in previous research that the Community Service course is given special emphasis (Uğurlu and Kırıl, 2012; Gökçe, 2011; Sönmez, 2010; Elma, Kesten, Kiroğlu, Uzun & Dicle 2010). These studies suggest that community service develops teacher candidates in multiple ways, and they also mention several problems with the implementation of the course. Of the desired teacher qualities mentioned at the start of this paper, social and affective qualities such as adopting a positive approach to life, being fair, being compassionate and understanding students may well be developed with the effective use of courses such as community service, effective communication skills, etc.

This study was born out of the small number of studies with an overall view of LACs. The aim was to discuss the place and importance of LACs, which are believed to constitute a significant variable in high quality teacher education.

2. Method

This study uses the qualitative research method of phenomenology in order to examine lecturer and student comments about the place and implementation of LACs in teacher education. The semi structured interview technique was utilized to do this. The purpose of interviews is to understand the perspectives of an individual (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). With semi-structured interviews, individuals' perceptions, views and thoughts may be examined in depth.

2.1. Participants

The study group included lecturers teaching LACs at Gazi University Gazi Education Faculty (17), their senior students (21) and graduates (19). A total of 57 people were interviewed. Of the students, 30 were female and 10 were male. Their ages ranged between 21 and 34. Among the lecturers, 10 were female and 7 were male. Six of them were professors, 6 were associate professors, 4 were assistant professors, and one was an instructor with a doctoral degree. Their years in the profession ranged between 12 and 36. Effort was made to include lecturers and students from all departments of Gazi Education Faculty in the study group. The senior year students and graduates came from the following departments: Elementary education 7, French education 6, Art education 6, Mathematics education 3, Early childhood education 3, Music education 3, Geography education 3, Science education 2, German education 2, Turkish language and literature education 1, English education 1, Physics education 1, Social studies education 1, Chemistry education 1 student. The distribution of lecturers, on the other hand, was as follows: Geography 3, Curriculum and Instruction 2, Music 2, Physics 2, Turkish 2, English 1, History 1, Philosophy, Mathematics, Biology, Educational Leadership 1. The study group was selected with the purposeful sampling method of criterion sampling. The criteria used in the selection of interviewed lecturers were: minimum 10 years of experience in the profession, experience of having taught at least one LAC and volunteering to take part in the study. For students and graduates, the criteria were: being aware that the course they were taking was a LAC and volunteering to take part in the study.

2.2. Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were used in the study as they provide in-depth data from participants' own perspectives (Furlong and Edwards, 1993; Yıldırım and Şimşek 2006). The interviews were held between April-August 2016. Lecturers and graduates were interviewed individually, while senior year students were interviewed in 3-5 person focus groups lasting 30-45 minutes on average. Notes were taken during the interviews, and the voices of participants who gave their consent were recorded. Interview forms were developed by writing primary and follow-up questions based on literature review. The questions were presented for expert review and revised upon feedback. Then, 2 lecturers and 2 students were interviewed to check item intelligibility and effectiveness in data collection. The questions on the finalized interview form were: 1. Which LAC's have you taught/taken? 2. Do LACs achieve their objectives in teacher education? 3. What are your views about the contents of LACs? 4. What are your views about the implementation and process of LACs? 5. What are your views about the qualities of lecturers who teach LACs? 6. What are students' attitudes towards LACs and participation in class? 7. What are your views about the measurement and evaluation conducted in LACs? 8. In your opinion, how should LACs be? How should they be planned, implemented and evaluated?

2.3. Data Analysis

During data analysis, notes from lecturer and student interviews were analyzed in detail, and a list of codes was made by coding the data. Related lists were then gathered for thematic coding. Internal and external consistency was considered in thematic coding. Later, participant views were grouped by considering the lists of codes and themes. Themes and codes organized by frequency of agreement were tabulated, and sample quotes were given as comments. Instead of real names, the quotes were coded with abbreviations such as L1 for lecturer 1, and S1 for student 1. In order to secure research reliability, responses by lecturers and students were coded separately by two researchers. The codes were examined by the researchers and gathered under "agreement" and "disagreement". The reliability of codes was calculated by using the reliability formula recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994). $Reliability = \frac{Agreement}{Agreement + Disagreement}$. The resulting reliability level was 83% and the study was accepted as reliable.

3. Findings

In this section, comments about LACs are tabulated and explained with sample quotations. Lecturer and student comments about LACs were gathered under the

following themes: General perceptions, content, implementation, lecturer qualities, measurement and evaluation in LACs, recommendations and desired LACs.

Table 1 shows LAC themes and code lists from lecturer and student comments and the frequency of reporting an opinion.

Table 1: Lecturer and Student Comments About LACs

Themes	Codes	L (n=17)	S (n=40)
General perception	necessary and important	15	17
	do not meet their goals	11	18
	boring courses	-	15
	scientifically beneficial courses	-	3
	credit gaining courses	2	7
	courses that vary according to the lecturer	13	17
	courses largely taught by field lecturers	-	5
	courses that disregard student wishes	16	-
	courses that do not value students	11	-
	courses that turn students into individuals	7	-
	courses for thinking	8	-
	social communication courses	9	-
Contents	do not cover different disciplines	17	-
	resemble field courses	4	-
	the course titles are good	3	-
	are up to individual departments	3	4
	there is sufficient time	-	2
	include general information	-	3
	need to be reduced	-	4
	philosophy, educational philosophy and history of science are difficult	-	4
Implementation	is theoretical	17	30
	is based on student presentations	4	12
	is unplanned	5	8
	does not motivate students	4	3
	is inefficient	8	10
	does not make students actively participate	6	40
	does not consider student characteristics	4	23
	is fun	-	12
	does not include contemporary examples	-	13
	should include observation trips	6	3
	should include different activities	7	4

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Lecturers	should be experts in the course	10	8
	should receive training when necessary	6	1
	are not well-equipped	5	-
	do not value the courses	8	11
	should make sure their courses are in demand	5	-
	need voice training	1	6
	cannot communicate effectively with students	-	5
	can make students like a course with their personality	-	15
	go into too much detail	-	5
	need to make sacrifices	-	8
Measurement and evaluation	should be practical	10	1
	should include alternative approaches	17	9
	should include written (classical) exams	5	5
	should include individual measurement/evaluation	6	-
	should include competence-based measurement and evaluation	10	3
	should provide students with feedback	7	4
	include multiple answer tests	-	5
	do not measure performance	-	9
	do not measure performance	-	5
	include memorization questions	-	2
do not include objective evaluation	-	-	
Recommendations	The university needs a common LAC pool.	5	-
	Students need freedom in course selection.	5	2
	Students should be able to take LACs from other universities/faculties.	4	2
	Students from different disciplines should take LACs together.	2	-
	LACs should be free of credit/grade impositions.	4	-
	Student needs should be considered.	3	3
	LACs should be free of credit/grade impositions.	3	2
	Student needs should be considered.	4	-
	Affective behaviors should be acquired.	3	-
	Lecturers should communicate about LACs.	3	-
Lecturers should communicate about LACs.	2	-	
Cooperation with the Ministry of Education is necessary.	-	-	
Students should be convinced.	-	-	

Desired LACs	Community Service	2	11
	Art and Music	8	5
	Philosophy, Educational Philosophy	10	5
	Philosophy and History of Science	1	3
	Turkish Education-Culture History	1	5
	Reading Culture	-	3
	Sociology	3	2
	Cinema and Photography	1	3
	Esthetics	2	-
	Ethics	1	-
	Geographical Skills, Turkish Geography	4	-
	Empathy in Education	3	-
	Diction	-	1
	First Aid	1	1
	Public Relations	-	1
	Nutrition	-	1
	Psychology, Social Psychology	-	6
	Creative and Critical Thinking	1	1
	Drama in Education	2	-
	Effective Communication	2	8
Values Education	-	1	
Anthropology	1	1	
Scientific Research Methods	4	5	

3.1. General Perception of LACs

Even though lecturers, students and graduates found LACs important and necessary, they also believed that these courses do not reach their goals. Their perception about these courses changed based on lecturers' attitudes towards the course, their expertise and the way the course was taught. Some students and lecturers stated the following about why LACs were necessary but failed to achieve their goals:

"Based on my experience, I can say that even the lecturers do not value these courses and instruction is therefore not ideal." (S1)

"General knowledge is crucial ... I don't believe that we can make teacher candidates understand that. Some students see these courses as a "burden". As we plan course content and teach them ... we should definitely explain the personal and professional benefits of LACs and help them gain awareness." (L13)

Some students viewed LACs as boring and defined them as "courses one takes to complete the necessary number of credits". They also stated that some lecturers teach

these courses regardless of their fields. They added that lecturers did not consider student needs or wishes in identifying LACs, which results in students not valuing these courses. However, according to lecturers, LACs are thinking courses that turn students into individuals and put them into contact with the society.

3.2. Contents of LACs

Some students and lecturers believe that the content of LACs is decided by individual departments. Students made very few remarks about the content of LACs. While some of these remarks stated that LACs include shallow information, others claimed that the content was too detailed and should be loosened. Several students stated that the history of science, educational philosophy and philosophy courses were difficult. The remarks of graduates and students about the importance of the contents of LACs were meaningful:

“I wish we had taken more LACs. In hindsight, everything seems to fall into place. Back at the time, we didn’t think too much of it.” (S14).

“As science teacher candidates, our knowledge of history is very limited, and so is geography.....” (S23)

All lecturers stated that LACs are not multidisciplinary, and some added that these courses are similar to subject area courses and that the course titles suggested by the Higher Education Board are appropriate. Lecturers and students believed that multidisciplinary LAC content would not only offer students multiple options to learn but would also enrich their learning experiences. As LACs are under control of individual departments, it seems possible to confuse them with subject area courses. Below is a quotation from a lecturer who was offering the liberal arts course “Biological Struggle” offered by the Biology department:

“My own course is related to our department. I believe that if we have a course pool that we share with other departments, it will only attract a few interested teacher candidates”. (L2)

There seem to be no problems with the course content recommended by the Board of Higher Education. However, as stated by a lecturer, the approach of the lecturer and course implementation is critical:

"In fact, the goals and contents of all courses are fine. The lecturer shapes the course." (L6)

3.3. The Implementation of LACs

Lecturer and student views about the implementation of LACs were as follows: The classes are ineffectual and teacher-centered. Student needs are not valued. Students usually get assigned a topic and present this topic in class through slides. Classes are largely theoretical, with practice being given very little time. Usually classes are centered around a textbook. Student participation is very limited. Below is a striking view from a lecturer:

"Course distribution is bad. The courses that nobody wants to teach are assigned to lecturers without considering their expertise. Therefore, these lecturers simply select a book, give it out to the students, and expect them to present topics out of it." (L3)

The student view below stresses that the implementation of LACs is up to the lecturers. It supports the lecturer view above:

"I don't think these courses are beneficial. We memorized Aristotle. The lecturer did not get up once from her desk, but mumbled in a low and monotonous voice" (S7)

Students stated that they were not active in classes, the lecturer did not include contemporary examples, and different activities such as trips or observation were necessary. Some students stated that LACs were fun. Findings revealed the importance of lecturers' role in LACs.

3.4. Lecturer Qualities

Lecturers engaged in self-criticism and made observations about their own qualities. They stated that lecturers have a high course load; academic studies and promotion concerns overshadowed their teaching; and many have weak instructional performance. Lecturers do not believe in the value of LACs and do not care much about improving instructional problems. Their scientific work is not reflected in their classes and they do not improve themselves. However, lecturers should actually gain the trust of students, act as role models for them and be able to communicate effectively. Below are several lecturer comments about their instructional performance:

"I believe that instructional performance at universities is weak. This has many reasons. Academics are not the only ones to blame. The Higher Education Board values publications. Good and bad teaching is not distinguished." (L10)

"There are those who don't even go to class to teach, and then those who really care about their courses. There is a lecturer who demands a lot of practical work in her classes. Her students are initially intimidated but later they say they learn a lot." (L7)

"In the old days, students would talk highly about a good course and we would queue up to take it" (L10)

Students and graduates stated that LAC lecturers must be experts in their fields and well-equipped role models. They also valued experience of elementary, secondary and high school teaching and effective speech details such as adjusting one's tone of voice. Below are quotations about these concerns:

"A philosophy lecturer taught the History of Science class. We learned a lot of general information" (S6)

"As there are not enough lecturers in some fields, some of these courses are taught by lecturers from other fields" (S1).

"The teacher who taught the scientific research methods course had a voice like a drill and his breathing was heavy. After taking this course, I gave up on the idea of doing a graduate degree" (S18).

"Our lecturers say «You artists and musicians are all the same; you never study or listen to us». Sitting and listening to a lecture for three hours is really difficult for us." (S16)

3.5. Measurement and Evaluation in LACs

About measurement and evaluation in LACs, lecturers stated that the most commonly evaluated domain was cognitive behaviors; students were encouraged to memorize to answer information-based questions; there was no room for alternative measurement and evaluation or competence-based measurement approaches; and the measurement and evaluation of upper level learning was inadequate. Lecturers and students said:

"I don't think the test technique is appropriate at all. I think it's insufficient to have just midterm and final exams" (L1)

“In Sociology class, we spent a lot of time in the library but we never received feedback on our homework and our effort was ignored” (S22)

Students voiced very few views about the measurement and evaluation of LACs. The few ones voiced were similar to those of the lecturers. Students, as shown in the quotations, demanded performance-based measurement and evaluation. Some lecturers and students promote written, or classical, exams in addition to alternative measurement and evaluation.

3.6. Recommendations

Very few students and graduates have made recommendations about LACs. However, these few recommendations are worthwhile. They may be summed up as follows: LACs should be designed by considering student needs. As can be seen from the quote below, students should be free in LAC selection and be able to take courses from any faculty or university. These courses should also equip students with affective behaviors:

“... I cannot say that the university gives students liberties in this issue, we should be able to take courses from other departments” (S23)

Lecturers made more recommendations in number and similarity than students. Other than what the students recommended, lecturers suggested the formation of a common LAC pool at university. For rich social interaction, students from different departments should take LACs together. LACs should not come with credit or grade requirements. Lecturers should communicate about LACs. There needs to be cooperation with the Ministry of Education. Most importantly, students should be convinced that LACs are necessary. The following quotation summarizes these recommendations:

“There needs to be a pool across the university and students should be able to freely choose whatever course they want or have the talent for, rather than being imposed on “required elective” courses. For instance, students should be able to take Jazz History, Chess or Swimming. Gazi University is old and well-equipped enough to be able to do this” (L2)

3.7. Desired LACs

The most commonly demanded course among students and graduates was “Community Service”, followed by “Effective Communication” and then “Psychology and Social Psychology”. Other courses desired by students and graduates were “Art

and Music”, “Philosophy, Educational Philosophy”, “History of Turkish Education-Culture”, “Scientific Research Methods”, “Philosophy of Science, History of Science”, “Reading Culture”, “Cinema and Photography”, “Sociology”, “Diction”, “First Aid”, “Public Relations”, “Nutrition”, “Creative and Critical Thinking”, “Anthropology” and “Values Education”. The quotations below include the most commonly demanded courses by teacher candidates:

“Effective communication should be studied by all departments. It could replace the classroom management course.” (S6)

“The community service course was given by a department lecturer. She was too busy. I believe she was teaching too many courses. She saw this course as a «burden», everyone received the same grade. I guess we just got unlucky” (S4)

The teacher candidate (S6) suggested that the “Classroom Management” course, which is among professional knowledge courses, should be replaced with “Effective Communication”. The professional knowledge courses are compulsory and Classroom Management features in the curriculum of all education departments. However, the “Effective Communication” course is only offered by departments that deem it necessary.

“Philosophy, Educational Philosophy” and “Art and Music” were the LACs preferred by the lecturers in their programs. Below is a quote revealing this:

“These courses should be beneficial to teacher candidates when they start to teach, make them better equipped, and give them a new hobby. If necessary, these courses may be offered with the support of outside experts. For instance, art history courses may be offered. Marbling, miniature, drama, diction, music education (notation and instrument playing) should also be offered. In my opinion, such practical courses will interest students more and will achieve their goals” (L2)

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The most prominent general perceptions about LACs were as follows: LACs are important for teacher education but they fail to achieve their goals, and the lecturer shapes the perception of the course. While some students think these courses are important and necessary, others view them as courses that «disregard student needs and wishes». Lecturers criticized themselves regarding this issue. Similarly, other researchers mention the importance of deciding undergraduate programs based on

standards and the needs of teacher candidates (Durukan and Madeni 2011; Adıgüzel and Sağlam 2009; Görgeç and Deniz 2003). Participant views about the contents of LACs are in accord with other views. LACs are decided by individual departments without considering student needs. Therefore, LACs resemble field courses and do not reflect different disciplines. Also, lecturers state that even though the course titles determined by the Higher Education Council are appropriate, there are problems in practice. The most prominent problems in the implementation of LACs concern the way courses are taught. They are mostly theoretical and teacher-centered. Students want contemporary examples, observation trips and active involvement in courses. Lecturers, on the other hand, emphasized the need for motivating students for the course. Emanuel and Adams (2006) state that motivating students to learn is an important criterion for evaluating lecturers' class performance.

LACs do not adequately involve practice. They are mostly theoretical, far from constructivism, traditional, based on one single source, and revolving around Powerpoint presentations by students. Alpan (2013), Yanpar-Yelken, Çelikkaleli and Çapri's (2007) results corroborate this finding. In LACs, measurement and evaluation is mostly traditional. Mostly lower-level, memorization-based cognitive behaviors are measured. Affective behaviors are not evaluated, and there is no room for competence-based or alternative measurement and evaluation methods. These findings suggest that lecturers do not adequately value measurement and evaluation. In studies with similar findings, students stated that their lecturers were mostly insufficient in measurement and evaluation (Arslantaş, 2011; Şen and Erişen, 2002).

The most important determinant of course content, implementation, measurement and evaluation is the lecturer. In the present study, lecturers made adequate self-criticism about caring for classes and students. Students, on the other hand, stated that qualified lecturers contribute enormously to their learning. It is worth noting that the students mentioned the importance of voice training for lecturers so they do not teach in a monotonous tone. Studies emphasizing the necessity of voice training for the teaching profession (Angelillo, Di Maio, Costa, and Barillari, 2009; Bovo, Galceran, Petruccelli and Hatzopoulos, 2007; Töreyn, 1992) reveal the importance of the topic. Aksu, Çivitçi and Duy (2008) found that students thought lecturers taught their courses with a monotonous voice.

According to teacher candidates, some lecturers are weak in effective communication. Şen and Erişen (2002) studied education faculty lecturers' effective teaching qualities. They found that lecturers generally found themselves competent with respect to effective teaching skills, whereas teacher candidates found them less competent. In addition, teacher candidates also did not find lecturers' communication with students effective. Murat, Aslantaş and Özgan (2006) found lecturers to be

ineffective in activities such as establishing communication, creating a positive classroom atmosphere, getting involved with student problems, motivating students as compared to instructional activities. Kumral (2009), on the other hand, gathered negative lecturer behaviors under the following themes: lack of communication, strict attitudes, treating students disrespectfully and condescendingly. These findings corroborate the results of the present study.

Students and lecturers recommended the following about LACs: The formation of a common LAC pool at university, allowing students to freely choose courses, designing courses and content sensitive to student needs. The recommendations focused on presenting students with a wide array of courses in LAC selection and allowing them to choose freely. The final theme “desired LACs” overlaps with “recommendations”. Community service, effective communication, art, music, philosophy, educational philosophy, psychology, social psychology, sociology, scientific research methods were popular among students. The most demanded course by students and graduates was “Community Service”, followed by “Effective Communication” and “Psychology and Social Psychology”. These selections revealed that teacher candidates value understanding humans, making meaning of human behaviors and the importance of socialization, solidarity and acquiring social responsibility. The student demand for these courses revealed that they genuinely felt the need for the acquisitions of these courses.

The results may suggest that education faculties do not have the proper academic environment to teach LACs. There are several reasons for this. Okçabol (2004) studied teacher education from the perspective of students, teachers, lecturers and teacher candidates, and concluded that education faculties were to blame for failing to make teacher candidates embrace the teaching profession, become free and self-confident individuals, have better interpersonal relations, enrich them socially and culturally, develop them mentally and intellectually, and instilling in them a scientific attitude. Okçabol (2004) stated these views prior to the 2006-2007 revision of teacher education courses. Despite the curriculum revision, the same criticisms are still valid for education faculties in our day. At the heart of the problem is the exam- and product-based education system which is open to political influences. Overcrowding of education faculties not only increases lecturer load but also affects other aspects of the environment negatively. On the other hand, the system evaluates lecturers not through their instructional performance, but their academic publications, counseling work and project performance. This has been frequently mentioned in other studies (Özyürek, 2008; Saylan, 2014; Yüksel, 2011; Kumral 2009; Şişman, 2009). In studies questioning LAC quality, the importance of lecturer qualities stand out. Kavcar (2002) emphasizes the importance of teacher education in his article. He states that the “teacher training

teacher type” is partially neglected in Turkey. After all, evaluating lecturers only through their academic performance, problems with the educational environment in education faculties and courses affect the quality of LACs directly.

The following recommendations may be made based on the results of the study: The quality of teacher education and its relation to LACs should be reconsidered. Field specialists and other stakeholders should plan and implement program development and evaluation for high quality teacher education. For LACs, a scientific, competence-based program development model involving students should be adopted. Establishing educational environments in which these programs may be implemented should also be prioritized.

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