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INTEGRATION ETHICS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

ÖZEL EĞİTİME ETİĞİN ENTEGRASYONU

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Abstract

Information obtained from past and existing information sources enables the emergence of new information through various scientific methods. Presenting the information produced according to a certain order, system and principle is related to ethics. Ethics is important in the field of special education, as in every field. Considering the characteristics of the individuals that instructors or teachers deal with in the field of special education, it is understood that ethics is more important in the special education program. In this study, the integration of ethics into the special education program was tried to be explained by taking into account the existing research results. The study, based on systematic literature review, aims to present a plan for integrating ethics education into the teacher education program. In the study, the reasons for integrating ethics into teacher education, the obstacles to integrating ethics into teacher education, and the aims and results of integrating ethics into teacher education are stated in general terms. Moreover, the study explains and discusses the benefits and pedagogical strategies of integrating ethics into the teacher education curriculum. As a result, it was stated in the study that ethics is important in the special education program. and that this should be integrated into the program.

Keywords: Special Education, Special Education Program, Ethics

Özet

Geçmişte ve var olan bilgi kaynaklarından elde edilen bilgiler, çeşitli bilimsel yöntemlerle yeni bilgilerin ortaya çıkmasını sağlamaktadır. Üretilen bilgiyi belli bir düzene, sisteme ve ilkeye göre sunmak ise etikle ilişkilidir. Her alanda olduğu gibi özel eğitim alanında da etik konusu birçok açıdan önem arz etmektedir. Özel eğitim alanında öğretmenlerin veya öğretilenlerin ilgilendiği bireylerin özellikleri dikkate alındığında özel eğitim programında etiğin daha önemli olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada da etiğin özel eğitim programına entegre edilmesi, mevcut araştırma sonuçları da dikkate alınarak açıklanmaya çalışılmıştır. Sistematik literatür taramaya dayanan çalışmada, etik eğitiminin öğretmen eğitimi programına entegre edilmesine yönelik bir plan sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada etiğin öğretmen eğitimine entegre edilmesinin gerekçeleri, etiğin öğretmen eğitimine entegre edilmesinin önündeki engeller ve etiğin öğretmen eğitimine entegre edilmesinin amaç ve sonuçları genel hatlarıyla belirtilmiştir. Ayrıca çalışmada, etiğin öğretmen eğitimi müfredatına entegre edilmesinin yararları ve pedagojik stratejileri ele alınmıştır. Sonuç olarak çalışmada özel eğitim programında etiğin önemli olduğu ve bunun programa entegre edilmesi gerektiği belirtilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Özel Eğitim, Özel Eğitim Programı, Etik

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INTRODUCTION

Ethics comprises the fundamental principles and values that govern the conduct of a given collective, particularly in regards to engagements with clients, consumers, or colleagues (Wesley and Buysse, 2006). Ethics is an academic field that seeks to develop principles and standards by examining and evaluating moral conduct. Additionally, its objective is to aid organizations and specialists in making informed decisions by distinguishing between ethical and unethical choices (Akçamete, Kayhan, İşcen-Karasu, Sardohan-Yıldırım, and Şen, 2016). Ethics is intricately linked to morals and encompasses the consideration of moral dilemmas within the realm of human interactions. The field of ethics has expanded to encompass concerns that extend beyond the realm of human beings, encompassing a reverence for and preservation of the natural environment. Ethics is also encompassed within the realms of human rights and democratic discussions. Contemporary society has developed a heightened awareness regarding the imperative of safeguarding the rights of individuals, particularly those who are susceptible to harm or exploitation (Ramrathan, Grange and Shawa, 2017). Currently, ethics holds a significant position in all aspects of life. The significance of ethics in education has increased due to the crucial role that education plays in human existence. Hence, ethics holds significant importance as a subject in education (Gülcan, 2015).

Teachers have an agentive role in social change and are exemplars of behavior (Sileo, Sileo & Pierce, 2008). The teacher's disciplinary knowledge is centered around ethics, which means that understanding a subject is not just about acquiring knowledge but also about adopting a set of values that align with preferred methods of investigation. Teaching involves being immersed in a realm of unpredictability and difficult decisions, where the actions and thoughts of a teacher carry moral weight (Bullough Jr, 2011).

Thus, they are very effective on students' ethical development, which is significant for students' academic and daily lives. This important role starts with entering teacher education programs. While teacher education programs are the most important factor in providing consideration for ethical issues in schools, many teacher education programs do not ensure quality education for all students. Pre-service teachers graduate without the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to make moral judgments and ethical decisions necessary from these teacher education programs (Sileo et al., 2008).

To solve the problems about ethics education in teacher education programs mentioned above, this paper aims to provide a plan for integrating ethics training into a teacher education program. In this plan, rationales for integrating ethics in teacher education, obstacles to integrating ethics in teacher education, and objectives and outcomes of integrating ethics in teacher education would be clearly stated. Also, helpful programmatic structures and pedagogical strategies would be addressed to integrate ethics in teacher education curriculum. How to monitor and evaluate teacher candidates and connect to the P-12 environment of the plan will be mentioned in this paper.

METHODOLOGY

The current study was a systematic review of prior research published on the subject. It provided an overview of the various types of perspectives currently held on the subject. Contrary to research studies, systematic reviews do not contain any fresh experimental results. The purpose of a systematic literature review is to give a critical assessment of the available data from previous studies. A systematic literature review helps to synthesize and summarize the results of existing research, analyze the gaps in knowledge, identify areas of controversy and disagreement, assess current thinking on a subject, and situate one's own research in relation to existing studies. By understanding the body of literature on a topic, researchers can gain insight into current thoughts and debates as well as determine the next steps that need to be taken in the research process. In short, systematic literature reviews are essential to understand the existing body of research on a topic (Pollock & Berge, 2012; Gough et al., 2012). Conducting a systematic literature review can also help researchers discover what methods, theories, and perspectives have already been explored and the implications of those studies. During a systematic review of the literature, the data and findings of previous authors are analyzed in relation to a predetermined research topic

or questions. (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009; Pollock & Berge, 2012). In this research, studies on integrating ethics into special education were examined using the systematic review method. There are few studies on integrating ethics into special education teaching program. The systematic review method was applied by including these existing studies in the present research. The importance of ethics in special education, the problems that may be encountered regarding the integration of ethics, the determination, and the studies on how to integrate ethics into education programs were evaluated using the systematic review method.

Rationale for Integrating Ethics in Teacher Education Program

Educational approach in this century supports life-long learning. The most important goal of education is to grow ideal humans who are able to indigenize virtues, have ethical values, and use them in their behavior or attitudes (Sakar, 2014). Ethics has been described as actions and practices which people are obliged to do in a situation. Further, professional ethics concentrates on norms, values, and principles. Those norms, values, and principles should control professional conduct (Bergman, 2013). Ethics education has become important since the 1970s, and during this timeline, ethics education is called as 'an ethics boom' from tertiary institutions (Boon, 2011). By this way, interest of ethics in teacher education programs has been increasing in teacher education programs (Howe, 1986). It becomes crucial because an ethics curriculum provides teachers to scan their professional environments for occurring issues and to exercise public leadership.

Further, an ethics curriculum emphasizes the foundational ethical underpinnings to professional codes of conduct in undergraduate teacher education, so an ethics curriculum in teacher education programs helps pre-service teachers use value education in the classrooms which reflects in their own practice. Thus, pre-service teachers are able to meet their student's needs better (Boon, 2011). Moreover, ethical responsibilities of teachers consist of "teacher's maintaining regular work hours, having knowledge of students, planning and teaching with care, reflecting and developing one's teaching, cooperating with parents and colleagues, and positively addressing disagreements" (Bergman, 2013), so ethical teachers may have courage, empathy, enthusiasm, honesty, humility, practical wisdom, imagination, and open-mindedness with these responsibilities (Sileo et al., 2008).

Ethical knowledge is an entrance into morality and values. It provides knowledge to teachers about how to relate to other people by using their abilities to implement the values and rules wisely. In addition, ethical knowledge enables teachers to build their conceptual and practical links between essential ethical and moral values, and ethical knowledge might support the finding of choices, awareness of responsibilities, and improvement of value preferences, attitudes, and behaviors (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011).

Teachers encounter many ethical issues in their classrooms, such as improper separation of resources, undutiful colleagues, and situations in which students are being forced to act inappropriately. If teachers do not have a sense of proper action in their educational practice, and they cannot make right decisions about the situations, they will deal with ethical conflict and moral distress which may cause critical incidents. Now, teacher educators have significant impact on improving pre-service teachers, and they only focus on curricula in education programs.

In addition to curricula, teacher educators should undertake responsibilities to train pre-service teachers to be able to solve their ethical issues before their actual educational practice (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2011) because teacher educators have liability for their pre-service teachers to make them professionals (Freeman, 2000). The mission of teacher education programs which integrate ethics into their structure is that teachers recognize schools' critical roles (Sileo et al., 2008), so ethics should be a cornerstone of teacher education programs. It should be introduced early and revisited systemically into pre-service curriculum during the program because ethics is known for increasing responsibility for instruction and classroom management for pre-service teachers (Freeman, 2000).

Obstacles to Integrating Ethics in Teacher Education Program

Although it is known how important integrating ethics in teacher education programs is, there are still obstacles to implement ethics into teacher education programs. One of the obstacles to integrating ethics in teacher education programs is that many teacher preparation programs may not train pre-service teachers with skills, dispositions, and knowledge to make moral judgments and ethical decisions in their educational practice. Additionally, lack of personnel in teacher education programs has been a concern because there are not enough teacher educators who are able to prepare pre-service teachers adequately to deal with ethics and morality (Sileo et al., 2008).

Another obstacle to integrating ethics in teacher education programs is that teacher education programs primarily focus on the methods utilized to integrate ethics content into coursework instead of practice. In addition to this obstacle, according to results of a study, in a recent review of the curricula of 156 religiously affiliated colleges and universities, it was found that only 9% of teacher education programs offered ethics courses as program requirements or electives. On the other hand, it was found that 71% of business programs, 60% of nursing programs, and 51% of social work programs offered ethics as program requirements or electives. The result of the study shows that teacher education programs focus on integrating ethics far less than other professional programs even though integrating ethics in teacher education may be more important than other departments (Warnick and Silverman, 2011).

In addition to Warnick and Silverman (2011), Cummings, Harlow and Maddux (2007) also stated that teacher education programs often neglect to focus on awareness of and discussion about ethical issues in teaching. Instead of ethical issues, they focus on more skill-oriented and technical competence in courses. Thus, pre-service teachers may not be able to have ability to make decisions and respond to the many ethical issues when they are in educational practice.

Another challenge of integrating ethics in teacher education programs is to add one more requirement or coursework to the teacher education programs about ethics. Pre-service teachers do already have many requirements or coursework to meet institutional and state licensing requirements, so they are almost overwhelmed (Cummings et al., 2007), so additional coursework may cause to lose pre-service teachers' motivation. According to these obstacles which are mentioned above, Luo and Song (2005) stated several solutions for teachers' professional ethics. These are:

- ❖ Clarify the values of the teaching profession and acquire a correct educational outlook,
- ❖ Work hard to develop education programs on teachers' professional ethics and perfect a mechanism to guide professional ethics in institutions of higher education,
- ❖ Perfect the internal administration of institutions of higher education, applying a rational system to mold teachers' professional ethics, and
- ❖ Increase the potency of commendations for advanced work and make full use of model workers.

Integrating Plan Objectives and Outcomes into Teacher Education Programs

According to Luckowski (1996), pre-service teachers and in-service teachers face many ethical dilemmas during their educational practice. The first job of teachers is to identify their responsibility to meet the needs of their most important client group children, and youth. To do this job, they should know what action they need to do and resolve ethical dilemmas which they come across in the classrooms. Thus, ethical decision making must be an integral part of teachers' professional life because ethics is an essential element in the preparation and continued development of professional educators.

Additionally, ethical education is not only to ensure a general manual, but it also provides humans to see the world in a complicated way, show their actions, and discover various choices of how to respond to everyday situations (Fridrichova, 2015), so from my review of

literature, I chose these objectives that I believe will help pre-service teachers more than others. These objectives are also supported by the literature.

Program Objectives/Outcomes

- ❖ During the program, college students in teacher education will develop;
- ❖ An awareness and appreciation of their own ethical perspectives, as well as perspectives of others.
- ❖ Possible options for resolving a complex ethical dilemma.
- ❖ Knowledge and skills about ethical approaches and moral standards.

Programmatic Structures

In regard to integrating ethics into teacher education programs, there are several obstacles and rationales. This proposed plan for integrating ethics into teacher education programs aims at addressing the objectives and trying to give solutions to obstacles and challenges which are mentioned above. The proposed plan suggests that teacher education programs should implement professional ethics courses early in their curriculum, so pre-service teachers will be able to be prepared with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the early term, and they will be better able to recognize the ethical implications and resolve ethical dilemmas in early training stage (Cumming et al., 2007). As stated above, one of the obstacles is lack of personnel to teach ethics course in teacher education programs. This proposed plan suggests that teacher education programs which do not have enough professionals in teaching ethics course should use distance learning with other teacher education programs which have personnel who have training in teaching ethics courses.

Additionally, teacher education programs should integrate two ethics courses to all programs. These ethics courses should be compulsory not elective for the programs, and they would be required for graduation. The first ethics course would be "Introduction to Ethics" which gives information about ethical theories. It would be offered the first semester of the program. The second ethics course would be "Integrating Ethics to Practice" which offers college students to apply their knowledge in ethics into educational practice. This coursework would be offered by the last semester of the program.

Moreover, during the second ethics course, case study and drama will be used, so pre-service teachers may be able to understand ethical dilemmas and find solutions in regards to these dilemmas. For example, for the case study, college students are guided by an instructor in carefully examining the specific details of cases, pinpointing the features of the cases that have moral implications, exploring possible avenues of action, and working together to arrive at a justified conclusion. Furthermore, field experience would be one of the best approaches to see concrete examples of ethical dilemmas in educational practice. College students should be required to write a reflection for each experience and share ethical dilemmas which they encounter. Students should find solutions for the ethical dilemmas with group or class discussions, so they will be able to see different ethical dilemmas and different solutions during coursework.

Pedagogical Strategy

There are many approaches or strategies in integrating ethics into teacher education programs in the literature. For example, case studies, role-playing, direct instruction of specific professional criteria, exemplars, problem-solving strategies, and conflict resolution are used for teaching ethics in teacher education programs (Bergman, 2013). Ethics education for pre-service teachers should be enclosed in the ethical code of the National Education Association (NEA) because the code of ethics stresses that educational ethics applies to larger professional communities rather than individual preferences or opinions, so by this way, big population of pre-service teachers will be able to reach ethics education. Code of ethics also helps pre-service teachers to understand moral dimensions in teaching practice (Warnick and Silverman, 2011). Prospective teachers have an important role for decision-making, teaching, and advocating their actions. They often learn content and principles of code of ethics in teacher education programs, but this is not enough to prepare them to become ethical professionals when they are in complex school settings (Sileo et al.,

2008). In this proposed plan, code of ethics would be used with a case analysis approach to make it more effective for prospective teachers.

In the case analysis approach, pre-service teachers will be able to examine the specific details of cases. In addition, they will nail features of the cases which have moral inference. They also will find possible solutions for the actions, and work together to reach a justified conclusion by an instructor. Different case analyses will provide pre-service teachers to serve as inductive evidence for the building of normative principles such as practice in apprehending problems and finding new solutions, chances to improve moral insights, or opportunities to practice the moral imagination. This proposed plan also mentions ethical theory for integrating ethics into teacher education programs. This approach enables novice teachers to learn one or more ethical theories such as, utilitarianism, Kantian deontology, or care theory. Then, pre-service teachers may apply these theories to analyze ethical dilemmas. Teachers utilize case analysis, the NEA code of ethics, and ethical theory to improve an ethical knowledge base, analytics skills, and conscious abilities (Warnick and Silverman, 2011).

Evaluation and Monitoring of Teacher Candidate Progress

Teachers are known as a model and moral agent for their students. In addition, they are considered as a good decision maker when they encounter ethical dilemmas in classrooms and beyond (Bergman, 2013). To be a good model, moral agent, and decision maker for the students, teachers should have the quality knowledge, skills, and dispositions before entering natural educational environment. Evaluating and monitoring of teacher candidate progress during the program will provide pre-service teachers to see whether they have skills, knowledge, and dispositions which are requisite to be a qualified teachers for their future students.

In this proposed plan, surveys will be used to measure knowledge of pre-service teachers in ethics at the beginning and ending of the program. In addition, the case study will be utilized during the class to evaluate pre-service teachers` ethical decision-making skills. For example, an ethical dilemma will be given to pre-service teachers and they will be asked to solve the problem by discussion, so they will be able to see others` perspectives and solutions. By this way, they will improve their skills by using different lenses. Additionally, during the field experience, pre-service teachers will write reflections for each week and keep a journal to see their growth in ethics. At the end of the field experience, in the journal, they will write 7-10 pages about what they learned from this ethics course.

Connection to the P-12 Environment

The proposed plan requires field experience for pre-service teachers during their ethics course. Pre-service teachers in all programs have to take two ethics courses. One of them will be taken the first year of the program. Another course will be taken at the end of the program. In the first year, pre-service teachers will go to P-12 environments and observe the students and teachers in ethical issues. They will write reflections and a journal about their experiences. At the end of the program, pre-service teachers will teach in P-12 environments. They will share problems which they encounter with their classmates and find solutions for the problems by group discussion. At the end, they will find which school or class has more problems in ethical issues and they will help the school or class to solve their problems as volunteer teachers.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Since the emergence of the specialized profession of special education in the mid-20th century, there has been a strong emphasis on identifying and delivering an adequate education for children with disabilities, which has been the primary focus of special educators. Regrettably, within this particular framework, the special education training programs have not adequately addressed the ethical dilemmas we face. The focus on collegial relationships, research projects, and policy-making processes has been superficial (Paul, French and Cranston-Gingras, 2001). Education professionals, particularly those in special education, will inevitably encounter ethical quandaries throughout their professional lives. Although special education teachers have access to several resources to

assist them in making challenging decisions, these resources typically lack a comprehensive framework for effectively approaching, reasoning, and eventually reaching the optimal option (Stockall and Dennis, 2015).

The lack of instruction and investigation in ethics has been an embarrassing oversight. Regardless of the effectiveness of the interventions, the credibility of the research, and the level of knowledge behind the policies, educating children with disabilities is a morally intricate endeavor that presents numerous ethical dilemmas. Both the political framework that rationalizes special education policies and the ethical justifications for practice necessitate careful consideration in establishing the psychological underpinnings that will support the profession against various difficulties (Paul et al., 2001). Furthermore, ethical concerns in the field of special education are especially urgent because special educators are consistently assigned the responsibility of advocating for children with disabilities and safeguarding their rights. The significance of ethical concerns in special education is paramount due to the minority status of children with disabilities (Fiedler and Van Haren, 2009). Nevertheless, the significance of ethics in special education becomes even more apparent when we take into account the potential deficiencies in self-defense, expression, and moral discernment that students with special needs may exhibit in comparison to their typically developing peers.

The purpose of the integration plan is to mention how important integrating ethics education into teacher education programs is. Ethics education is necessary because ethics helps to grow ideal human. In the light of the information which is addressed above, teacher education programs should prepare pre-service teachers as meaning-makers who construe policy and practice based on context. Pre-service teachers should connect their understanding of professional ethics which is gained during their coursework to educational practice involving ethical action in the classrooms. With this integration plan, pre-service teachers will enter teacher education programs with well-formed values and beliefs regarding children and teaching. They plan their real-life experience via their educational practice. By these experiences, pre-service teachers extend their ethical decision making in early care and education programs (Giovacco-Johnson, 2010). This proposed plan expected to help pre-service teachers to be able to reach high quality level.

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