

## **Guided Observations Helping First-Year Student Teachers to Link Theory to Practice**

### **Birinci Sınıf Öğretmenlik Bölümü Öğrencilerinin Teoriyi Uygulamayla Birleştirmelerine Yardımcı Olan Danışman-Destekli Gözlemler**

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#### **Abstract**

In the department of Teacher Education in Rauma, University of Turku, Finland, guided observations in the teacher training school are an important part of the first-year teacher students' teaching practice period. This study focuses on how the student teachers reflect on their learning, and how they evaluate practical work during a lesson. The student teachers had attended the lectures addressed by the second author where they studied the basic theories and concepts of developmental and educational psychology. Using the grounded theory approach, 73 self-reports were read and analysed. All teacher students reported that they found the guided observations much more fruitful than the observations they did alone. They stated that it was much easier to focus on one aspect at a time than to observe a lesson as a whole. In addition, they wrote that the discussions after the lessons gave them new ideas about teaching.

**Key words:** Teacher education, guided observation, Finland

#### **Öz**

Finlandiya, Turku Üniversitesi, Rauma kentindeki Öğretmenlik Eğitimi bölümünde, öğretmenlik uygulaması okulunda yapılan destekli gözlemler birinci sınıf öğretmenlik bölümü öğrencilerinin öğretmenlik uygulaması derslerinin önemli bir parçasıdır. Bu çalışma öğretmenlik bölümü öğrencilerinin bir ders süresince kendi öğrenmelerini nasıl düşünüp yansıttıklarına ve uygulamalı çalışmalarını nasıl değerlendirdiklerine odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışma için toplam 73 adet kişisel rapor okunmuş ve gömülü teori yaklaşımını kullanarak bu raporlar analiz edilmiştir. Öğrenciler ikinci yazının verdiği gelişim ve eğitim psikolojisinin temel teorileri ve kavramlarını öğrendikleri derslere katılmışlar. Bütün öğretmen adayları destekli gözlemleri yalnız başlarına yaptıkları gözlemlere göre çok daha fazla faydalı bulmuşlardır. Adaylara göre, bir dersin bütünü gözlemek yerine bir seferde tek bir konuya odaklanmak çok daha kolay bulunmuştur. Buna ek olarak öğretmen adayları dersten sonra yapılan tartışmaların öğretmenlikle ilgili yeni fikirler verdiğini raporlarında belirtmişlerdir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Öğretmen eğitimi, destekli gözlem, Finlandiya

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### Introduction

The year 1974 was a turning point in teacher education in Finland, when it became part of the universities and consequently more academic. Moreover, the length of the education period increased from two years to five, and a master's degree is necessary in order to receive a teaching certificate. In 2005, the teacher education moved to the two-tier degree system of the Bologna process. The class teacher education has been built to consist of two academic degrees: the lower academic degree of 180 credits completed in three years' awards students the Bachelor's degree (BA); and the higher academic degree of 120 credits completed in two years awards the Master's degree (MA). The main components of the teacher education programs for primary school teachers are presented in Tab. 1. (Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006; Niemi, 2012).

**Table 1.** The main components of the teacher education programs for primary school teachers

| <b>PRIMARY SCHOOL<br/>TEACHER EDUCATION<br/>PROGRAM</b>               | Bachelor's degree<br>180 ECTS                  | Master's degree<br>120 ECTS   | TOTAL |
|---|--|---|-------|
| Class teacher's pedagogical studies (as a part of major in education) | 25<br>(including supervised teaching practice) | 35<br>(including a minimum of 15 ECTS supervised teaching practice) | 60    |
| Other studies in a major in education                                 | 35<br>(including a BA Thesis, 6-10)            | 45<br>(including a MA Thesis, 20-40)                                | 80    |
| Subject matter studies for comprehensive school teachers              | 60   |   | 60    |
| Academic studies in a different discipline, minor                     | 25   | 0-35  | 25-60 |
| Language and communication studies including ICT, optional studies    | 35   | 5-40  | 40-75 |

1 ETCS = 28 hours of student's work in studies including lessons, contact hours, examinations, and all independent and collaborative activities.

Resource: Niemi & Jakku-Sihvonen 2006; Niemi 2012

In the autumn of 2014, the first-year-students of the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Turku, Rauma, Finland, started their studies according to a new curriculum. To achieve the qualification to teach, prospective teachers have to attend four training periods: two during the first three years of study, and two during the last two years. Compared with the old curriculum, a significant difference can be seen in their first teaching practice period called *Orientation to Teaching* in the teacher training school, which is a part of the Department of teacher education and located on the same campus. In the new curriculum, the joint guided observations in the classes and the discussions related to the observations are an important component of the course. In addition, the student teachers observe a great number of lessons alone, and practise teaching in pairs or small groups.

The *learning goals* of the first training are that a trainee:

- can describe the tasks of a class teacher and a subject teacher as a part of the functions of the school;
- knows how to make pedagogically important observations of the behaviour of the pupils in different situations, and recognizes the importance of the teacher's knowledge of his or her pupils;
- knows how to reflect his or her own concepts of human, knowledge, and learning, and based on these, is able to make relevant observations about education and teaching;
- knows how to set learning goals based on the curriculum, plan a lesson, and follow his or her plan when teaching.

The *contents* of the first training period are:

- the orientation lectures of a university teacher (2 hours);
- the orientation lectures of training school teachers (10 hours);
- the portfolio lectures of a university teacher (2 hours);
- the group guidance of training school teacher (4 hours);
- guided observations with university teachers (10 hours);
- individual observations (26 hours);
- teaching practise in pairs or small groups (10 hours);
- other kind of school work (6 hours);
- the planning of lessons (20 hours);
- pedagogical diary and portfolio (15 hours);
- the evaluation seminar and training feedback (2 hours).

In this article, we focus on how the teacher students reflected on their learning during the guided observation period, and how they evaluated the teacher's practical work during the lessons they observed.

### **Theoretical framework**

Teacher education has often been criticized for being too theoretical in its approach. One of the long lasting problems has been how to integrate the theoretically based knowledge with experience-based knowledge. Even in Dewey's time, the ques-

tion of 'how theory and practice relate in the context of professional education' was raised, theory being taught in the university lecture halls and practice learnt in the teachers' every day work in schools. Still today, the student teachers' opinion is that there is a difference between what is taught at the university courses and what is experienced in the fieldwork (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Grossman et al., 2009).

Teacher education should support the student teachers in acquiring practical skills and knowledge of theory. Their teaching skills cannot develop without the interaction between experience and theory. It is crucial that teaching is embedded in a deep and rich theoretical base. The presentation of theory should focus equally on stimulating the student teachers' awareness of relevant aspects in concrete situations as on presenting the knowledge base for better understanding the realities in the classroom environment. For instance, when the goal is to help the teacher students to become sensitive to their pupils' feelings they need as well theoretical knowledge as ability to recognize this aspect in real classroom situations (Luneberg & Korthagen, 2009).

Teacher educators have long been aware of the difficulties in making their students properly understand the relationship of theoretical knowledge and experience-based knowledge of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2014). It seems that teacher education does not always give the student teachers sufficient skills and motivation to use research in their future work. However, when it succeeds in creating a positive attitude towards research amongst the student teachers, it is easier for them to be motivated to use the results of research and conduct research in their practice. (van der Linden et al., 2015.) The ground breaking changes in today's world bring about the demands of radical changes in the teacher's role. Knowledge is constantly being updated and the environments in which the teachers teach are different from those of their own childhood. The pupils are increasingly heterogeneous and they require more and more support. To be able to succeed as a teacher, one needs research-based knowledge and tools for observing and getting evidence in one's work and to know how to draw conclusions. (Niemi & Nevgi, 2014.)

When student teachers start their education, they already have strong opinions on what it means to be a teacher based on their experiences during their own school years. They enter the teacher education program with the lay theories of teaching and learning that have been shaped by their life histories. Consequently, they view new theories and perspectives through their prior knowledge and beliefs on teaching and being a teacher (Furlong, 2013; Lanas & Kelchtermans, 2015). Therefore, it is important that the student teachers are guided to understand teaching in ways that are dissimilar from their own experiences as students. They should learn to think and act like a teacher. In addition, they should become conscious of the complexity of the classroom and respond to it accordingly (Darling-Hammond, 2006). A challenge for teacher education is to initiate actions that enrich and diversify the educational concepts that the student teachers do not usually even understand they have. Teacher educators need to enhance student teachers' metacognition in the discipline of teaching. However, it is not an easy task to supervise them when they start to construct their own teacher selves. They should not only be taught what teachers do, but also why they do it (Martin & Russel, 2009).

Several studies show that the teacher students usually use their prior knowledge, preconceptions, and beliefs when observing learning situations. Consequently, when describing these situations, they rely mainly on the affective components of teaching, do not pay attention to the cognitive aspects of the situations, and are inclined to explain them on the basis of their individual memories. They do not believe that some of these episodes may be beyond the teacher's control and thus unavoidable. This tendency may prevent them from learning how to teach (Eilam & Poyas, 2009.)

It has been found that student teachers, when observing other teachers teaching, may first consider how they would teach differently without carefully analysing what is happening in the classroom. Research indicates that shared observation provides a stronger foundation for future pedagogical decisions (Chung & van Es, 2014). They may have developed beliefs that focus their attention on some aspects of teaching at the expense of others. Although they have, during their school years, observed countless hours of teaching, they have done that as learners, not as teachers. The kind of observing that one does as a learner is typically related to the understanding of the presented material, and the observer does not think about the teaching and learning process more generally. Consequently, the student teachers do not have well-developed skills for observing other teachers' work when they initially begin teacher training (Star & Strickland, 2008). While many student teachers are initially quite weak in the critical skill of noticing classroom events, they benefit from using structured observations. Providing them with tools for analysing teaching makes it easier for them to learn to observe teaching and learning systematically. The tools help them to understand the complicated interactions in a classroom and to connect practical experience with theoretical knowledge (Chung & van Es, 2014).

### **The study**

As was mentioned above, in the autumn of 2014, the first-year student teachers of the Department of Teacher Education in Rauma at the University of Turku, Finland, started their studies according to a new curriculum. Compared with the old curriculum, a significant difference can be seen in their first teaching practice course at the teacher training school. During the course, the groups of 10–11 students observed five class teachers' and subject teachers' lessons in grades 1–9 with the teachers from the department of teacher education. After each lesson, the teacher students and their tutors had discussions focusing on one of the five different aspects: *the pupils with special needs, the pupils of different ages, bilingual learning, individualized instruction, and the goals of teaching*. The training school provides good opportunities to observe lessons from all these perspectives. The school has classes from the first to ninth grade; in all classes part of the teaching is given in English, the main language of instruction being Finnish; and there are pupils with special needs in all classes.

The aim of the current study was to investigate the student teachers' (n = 73; 22 males and 51 female) opinions on the guided observations and discussions. The research questions are: 1) *How did the teacher students find the guided observations?* 2) *How did the co-operation between university teachers (tutors), training school teach-*

*ers (mentors), and teacher students succeed? and 3) What did the teacher students learn from the lessons they observed?*

The student teachers were divided in seven groups with 10–11 students in each group. All groups took part in five guided observations. Immediately after an observation, the group had discussions about the lesson they had observed. During the observation and the discussions, the students wrote their comments on an observation form that helped them to focus on essential aspects related to the theme of the observation. For each five different observations there was a different observation form, an example of which can be seen in Figure 1.

| <b>Observation 2: Different learners</b>   |  |
|--|--|
| Student: _____<br>Grade: _____ Date: _____ Subject: _____<br>The goal of the lesson: _____   |  |
| <b>DIDACTICAL ISSUES</b><br>- different working habits<br>- learning material<br>- grouping - illustration                                   | <b>DEVELOPMENTAL AGE</b><br>- cognitive development<br>- motor development<br>- social development |
| <b>INTERACTION</b><br>- pupils' activity<br>- ethos  | <b>EQUALITY AND EQUITY</b><br>- e.g. gender  |
|  <b>What I learned from the guided observation:</b> _____ |  |

**Figure 1.** An example of observation forms

The student teachers returned these observation sheets to us, and we read them several times marking the different aspects that were found with different colours. The reading was based on the grounded theory approach. The observation sheets were numbered from 1 to 73 and the gender of each teacher student was marked (F= female, M= male) in the sheets. In this article, we concentrate mainly on these qualitative answers providing some authentic examples of the teacher students' answers in the text. The qualitative part aims to answer the third research question (see above).

In addition, we constructed an electronic questionnaire together with the training school teacher who was in charge of organizing the schedule for the guided observation. The items of the questionnaire are based on the goals and contents of the first training period (see above). In this article, we only use percentages related to the guided observation to answer the first and second research question.

### Results

According to the electronic questionnaire, 62.86 % of the student teachers found the guided observations very positive, but 15.71 % reported that the guided observations did not meet the objectives. One fifth (21.43 %) of the teacher students were not able to give their opinion. When looking at these results, we have to keep in mind that the mean value 3.67 (max. 5.00) represents all five themes of the guided observation.

All students found the guided observations much more fruitful than the observations they did alone. Many students commented that they would have liked to have more guided observations, stating that it was much easier to focus on one aspect at a time than to observe a lesson as a whole. When observing the lessons alone, it is often difficult to concentrate on the lesson. In addition, they wrote that the discussions after the lessons gave them new ideas about teaching.

*I would have liked to have more guided observations and less the ones done alone. Especially during the last week of the course, my thoughts often started to wander and I just sat there not knowing what was happening in the class. The guided observations were more useful because we had a clear theme on what to focus. When we discussed the lessons, I often got new ideas from my peers.*

*I wish there would have been more guided observations where we analysed the lessons in a group. When observing a lesson alone, I did not have enough time to analyse the situation and therefore I did not much benefit of the observation.*

Next, we present a description of each lesson the student teacher groups observed with the second author of this article using the Observation Form 2 shown in Figure 1. During these observations, the theme was “the pupils of different ages”. The teacher students were asked to pay attention to four different aspects during the lesson: 1) didactical issues (working habits, learning material, grouping, and illustration), 2) pupils’ developmental age (cognitive, motor, social development), 3) interaction (pupils’ activity, ethos), and 4) equality and equity (e.g. gender).

### First Group: 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematic Lesson

The boys were more active than the girls, but all pupils were treated equally. The atmosphere in the classroom was pleasant and open. The pupils worked actively. All student teachers observed the interaction between pupils in a similar way. While most of the student teachers were able to make comments about the pupils’ cognitive development, there were only a few comments about the pupils’ motor and social development. This was due to the lack of knowledge, since the lectures they were attending were on break and continued after the training, and these topics were taught during the last lectures. One of the male trainees commented: *I could not make any comments since I did not have enough knowledge of the motor or social development.* The teach-

er students found differences in the pupils' development: *There are differences in the pupils' cognitive skills – some worked individually and some needed help all the time* (F2). One of the student teachers commented that *the lesson was very teacher-oriented/behaviouristic, only at the end of the lesson the pupils were allowed to work individually*. (F2) Another student saw the male teacher as a good authority who gave clear instructions to the pupils.

#### **Second Group: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Music Lesson**

The teacher students had great difficulties in finding the differences in the developmental stage of the pupils. However, they reported the methods the teacher used during the lesson full of activities well. Some teacher students pointed out that *one activity such as singing the same song should not last too long*. All the pupils were acting together and the atmosphere in the classroom was pleasant. At the end of the lesson, the atmosphere got a little restless. The reason for this might have been that after the lesson the pupils left home. Though the pupils had been attending the school only for three months, they were already able to understand and also use English words surprisingly well.

#### **Third Group: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Finnish Lesson**

In this class, the atmosphere was peaceful and positive and the pupils were active and enthusiastic. The female teachers (two teacher trainees) were *good authorities – at the same time relaxed but strict*. (F25) They used multiple teaching methods. Using songs as a good teaching method was mentioned in all observation forms. This seemed to impress the observers. It was interesting and positive to notice that the teacher students who were teaching this class had adopted the method while observing the music lesson of another class. The teacher students reported that in spite of the equality in the class when forming the pairs – the pupils could choose the pairs themselves – they chose the same gender, and no mixed pairs were formed.

#### **Fourth Group: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Music Lesson**

In this class there was only one boy, but he seemed to be in an equal position with the girls in spite of being a little bossy; for instance, he reminded the girls that they should pay attention to what the teacher said. One male teacher student (M40) made a comment: *There is only one boy in the class. He is not 'walked over' but he should have a boy companion*. Another male student (M37) wrote that *the boy sits at the back of the classroom a little by himself*. The pupils in this class were very active, sometimes they forgot to wait until they were given their turn to answer, which made occasionally a little restless feeling into the classroom. In spite of this, the pupils concentrated in learning because the teacher *had a clear structure for the lesson*. (M37) The teacher students could see differences in the development of the children, as one female teacher student (F30) wrote: *Social skills are just developing, they don't understand, yet, that they may make the other one sad with inappropriate comments*. The students also noticed that in the class there was a girl who was very self-centred.

#### **Fifth Group: 4<sup>th</sup> Grade English Lesson**

This class was very active, from time to time even restless because it was the last lesson of the day. This was the case especially at the end of the lesson. The pupils sat with their backpacks already on and it was hard for them to pay attention to teaching. At the beginning of the lesson after the teacher had given the instructions, the girls started to work immediately but the boys needed extra help. The teacher used different methods (e.g. drama and memory game) in her teaching. The pupils told openly about their problems concerning their homework, for instance one of the pupils commented: *I read it, but I can't remember what I have read.*

#### **Sixth Group: 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Finnish Lesson**

The lesson was very well structured. The teacher had written on the black board the structure of the lesson that the pupils could follow. After the instructions, the pupils were free to move in the classroom. The pupils used iPads as a tool for learning to read and write. The teacher students noticed differences in the pupils' learning, writing, and social skills. The atmosphere in the classroom was good. The pupils asked help from the teacher, not from their peers. At the end of the lesson, the pupils made an evaluation of how well they had succeeded during the lesson.

#### **Seventh Group: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Visual Arts Lesson**

In spite of the fact that there were six trainees teaching as a group in this class, the atmosphere was very pleasant. The boys and girls worked side by side. The task the pupils were working with was to make a finger puppet, which needed different motor skills. The teacher students noticed that, for instance, in the ability to make stitches there were differences, *some work really carefully and the others don't care what kind of stitches they make* (F63). Because the lesson was close to Christmas time, Christmas carols were played in the classroom: *The pupils were very motivated and the Christmas carols made good atmosphere in the classroom.* (M64)

#### **What the Teacher Students Had Learned from the Observations**

The first author of the article observed the lessons with student teachers related to three different themes (bilingual learning, individualized instruction, and the goals of teaching). When comparing the students' comments during the five observations, it is obvious that they improved during the period significantly. It was interesting to read what they thought that they had learned from the observations. After the first observations, some students did not write anything on the lines after the sentence "What I learned from the guided observation". It seems that they had not noticed anything worth mentioning. However, after the last observation all students had filled the lines. In addition, the comments related to the last observation were much more mature than those given earlier. The teacher students were more skilful at analysing the teachers' and the pupils' behaviour and actions during the lessons. Their comments from the last observation show that they had been able to notice several important aspects of the lessons. As the quotations below show, several teacher students compared the last observation with previous observations. This was mainly due to the fact that the pupils

in the last observations were older than in the earlier occasions. The first four observations took place in grades 1–6 and the fifth in grades 7–9.

*It was interesting to notice how different it is to teach the eighth graders than the young pupils. While the young children often need teacher's help the older ones are able to work independently. (M32)*

*In this lesson, the pupils worked in pairs. They sought information from different sources and after that taught each other what they had found out. The ninth graders proved to be capable of taking responsibility of their learning and of teaching other pupils. (F34)*

Most of the teacher students understood the importance of making a good lesson plan. They wrote that planning took time and was a demanding task, especially for a novice teacher. When the teacher took into account the pupils age, interests, and skills in the lesson plan, it was easier to motivate them to learn. A good lesson structure was also important. However, the teacher needed to be flexible and change the plan when needed.

*With careful planning, the lesson becomes well-structured and then the goal of the lesson is easier to achieve. It is important for the teacher to think how he or she can create a good atmosphere in the class because it enables every pupil to be active. (F68)*

*A good plan for the lesson, the teachers' clear instructions for the exercises and support when a pupil needs it, and interesting tasks contribute to pupils' active learning. (F58)*

Most of the student teachers understood that it was important to think carefully about the goal of the lesson before planning what to do. After deciding what kind of knowledge and skills the pupils should learn, the teacher could plan the lesson accordingly. Furthermore, a good plan helped to achieve the goals. When children worked in groups, it was especially important to think how they could all achieve the learning goals. All pupils in the group needed to be active during the lesson, be aware of the goals and get clear instructions for their work. The teacher had to consider what kind of instructions were needed for the pupils of different ages and skills. This was important especially when the children were taught in a foreign language.

*Teaching in English succeeded very well because the teacher spoke clearly and clarified her speech with gestures and pictures. It seemed that all pupils understood the contents of the teaching and the questions she asked. (F63)*

*The teacher should think carefully how it is possible that every pupil can achieve the learning goals when the pupils work in groups. (F31)*

The teacher students also saw that all students were not able to achieve the same goals. In addition, they learned in different ways. When planning the lesson, the teacher had to consider what materials and tasks were the best for each pupil. It was important that all pupils – those with very good skills as well as those whose skills were below average – learn something and get the experiences of success. Individualised exercises help the pupils to be motivated to work and complete their tasks. As some teacher students commented the teacher should also give the pupils individualised homework. Today the learning groups are getting more and more heterogeneous

and therefore it is often a very demanding task for the teacher to provide each student with the best possible ways to learn.

*Individualised learning materials and tasks give all pupils a possibility to develop.* (F16)

*The teacher should use during a lesson various teaching methods and pay attention to learners of different levels. Each lesson should include a visual, oral, and written element.* (M50)

Several teacher students admired the experienced teachers' skills in motivating children to learn and becoming interested in the theme of the lesson. They found several good methods that the teachers used for this purpose. The beginning of the lesson was the most important. If the teacher approached the topic in a way that was related to the pupils' own life, they became motivated. For instance, in the literature lesson, the new genre of fiction was presented to eight graders with clips from films. In ninth grade the topic was consumer protection, and the teacher started the lesson asking the pupils about their own experiences with phones and electronic devices. The teacher students wrote that the use of timely materials and topics that appealed to the pupils' age group motivated them to learn and seek new information. They stressed the importance of approaching the contents that the pupils had to learn by linking it to today's world.

*The use of the ninth graders' own experiences and previous knowledge as a basis of conversation stimulated their interest in the topic and got them to work actively.* (M7)

*Timely learning materials interested the pupils and inspired them to work.* (M13)

The teacher students reflected on how the teacher affected the atmosphere in the class. His/her encouraging and inspiring behaviour and positive attitudes towards the pupils stimulated the children to be active. When the teacher was relaxed and gave positive feedback to all pupils, they worked quietly. Even when the pupils were restless at the beginning of the lesson, they calmed down quickly and started to work. There was no need for the teacher to raise her voice.

*The teacher can, with her calm behaviour, regulate the pupils' behaviour. It was great to notice that she kept the situation in hand without raising her voice.* (F56)

In most classes, the pupils worked in pairs or groups. The student teachers found that the pupils' working together was advantageous in number of ways. The pupils were usually motivated to do it. The discussions had helped them to learn things better and getting a deeper understanding about the topic in hand. When the pupils worked in pairs and taught each other what they had found out, they both learned. The one who was teaching learned the new content especially well while teaching. To be able to teach another, one has to understand what one is teaching. However, the student teachers noticed that when the pupils were working in groups, it was possible that all pupils were not really working. Some pupils tended to let the others work and took on a free rider's role. Therefore, it was important that the teacher planned the lesson well and tried to find means to involve all pupils. Good, clear in-

structions and motivating tasks could inspire all pupils to work. In addition, the teacher had to plan how the results of the group works were presented. Also the reluctant pupils had to consider it worthwhile to apply them in the task.

*The work in pairs is a good method of learning new things. The pupils discuss things together and that helps them to understand the topic better. When a pupil teaches another she or he learns at the same time. This is a good method but it requires a lot of practice. (F1)*

*Group work is inspiring and makes the pupils reflect on the theme more profoundly. (F60)*

*The pupils like working in groups but some pupils seem to take a free rider's role. (F21)*

When we observed a seventh grade's art lesson, the pupils were planning ginger bread houses. The plans were made during art lessons and the houses would be built during home economics lessons. Consequently, it was a rather long project and both the art teacher and the home economics teacher were involved in it. It was evident that the pupils were eager to take part in this kind of common project. Similarly, the student teachers thought that the cooperation between two teachers was a positive thing.

The town where the pupils lived is full of beautiful old wooden houses. The pupils had walked around the old town and photographed those houses they liked most. During the previous art lesson, they had looked at the pictures and talked about architecture and how the houses had been built. In this lesson, they started to plan their own houses in small groups. The teacher students listened to their conversations about various solutions. They noticed that the discussions in the groups were lively and that little by little all pupils participated. The art teacher walked around the class and encouraged the pupils to be creative and answered their questions about practical solutions. They wanted to know if it was possible to have some details in a gingerbread house. Gradually, the pupils started to draw the houses. The teacher students learned that when the teacher trusts the pupils and encourages them to be creative, the results are good. The houses the groups planned were at the same time imaginative and such that it was possible to build them of gingerbread dough. In addition, the houses were all different. Several teacher students mentioned that group work seemed to be a good method in this kind of project. All pupils within the groups were actively involved in the project and all their ideas were valued in the conversations.

*It was great that it was possible to combine art and home economics lessons in this project. In addition, it was good that the pupils were offered a possibility to take part in a longitudinal project of this kind. The teacher allowed them to be creative and believed in their abilities. (F55)*

*The teacher showed the pupils examples of imaginative gingerbread houses and helped them to get started. However, it did not hinder the pupils' own creativity. The results showed that the groups had planned houses that differed greatly from the ones the teacher had showed them. A good teacher trusts his or her pupils and gives them the responsibility of the work. (F57)*

### **Discussion**

It seems that the guided observations improved the student teachers' observation skills. During the last observation, they were all able to detect something that was important for a prospective teacher. Also Chung and van Es (2014) found that shared observations could provide a stronger foundation for teacher students' professional decisions. When they watch other teachers teaching by themselves, they do not carefully analyse what is happening in the classroom. Similarly, Star and Strickland (2008) state that teacher students do not have well developed observation skills at the beginning of their studies. Therefore, it is important that teacher educators enhance their metacognition in the discipline of teaching. They should be guided to understand teaching in ways that are dissimilar from their own experiences as students and become conscious of the complexity of the classroom and respond to it. (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Martin & Russel 2009.)

The observations proved to have been able to help the first year teacher students to start analysing the experienced teachers' work in a way that helps them in their own teaching practice. Also the structured observation forms seemed to serve the teacher students well. This is congruent with the results of Chung and van Es (2014) who reported that shared observation helps the students to analyse teaching especially well if they have tools for analysing. The tools help them to understand the complicated interactions in a classroom and to connect practical experience with theoretical knowledge. In our study, many teacher students reported that observing a lesson using the form was more fruitful than doing it by themselves without any instructions what they should follow during the lesson. They found several important aspects that they should bear in mind when planning their lessons. For instance, it is important to plan the lessons well, to have a clear goal for the lesson, and to understand what is essential. The teacher should motivate and engage all pupils by using interesting materials and creating an encouraging atmosphere in the class. He or she should give explicit instructions, trust the pupils, and give them opportunities to be creative. Furthermore, the student teachers found that pupils' working in pairs and groups was useful in a number of ways. However, it has to be carefully planned so that all pupils are active and nobody takes the role of a free rider. The individualising of instruction is necessary in all grades, but it is often a demanding task for the teacher.

### **Conclusion**

As teacher educators, we conclude that the observations related to the first year teaching practice course gave us valuable knowledge that helps us to link our lectures more closely to practice. It was interesting to view the lessons through the eyes of our students and help them to focus on important features related to the teacher's work. The five observations focused on different aspects. This caused some practical difficulties. Not all teachers had understood what the focus of our observation in their lessons was, and consequently it was sometimes difficult for the student teachers to complete the observation form. For instance, sometimes when we went to observe how

bilingual learning was put into practise, English was not used during that particular lesson at all. Luckily, the student teachers had all seen bilingual learning during another lesson. We could base our discussions on that and on the knowledge of the teaching method the first author's lecture had given them.

Although the objectives of the training course were met, there is still much to be improved in teaching practice. We have to strengthen the co-operation between the tutors, the mentors, and the student teachers. The timing of the observed lessons should be improved in order to make them meet the objectives of different themes of guided observation. It is also important that the student teachers at first observe the experienced teachers, not their peers. This happened in some of the classes we observed during data collection procedure for the current study.

## **Özet**

### **Giriş**

2005 yılında, Finlandiya'daki öğretmenlik eğitiminde Bolonya sürecinin iki aşamalı diploma sistemine geçilmiştir. Sınıf öğretmenliği eğitimi iki akademik diplomadan oluşan bir sistem üzerine kurulmuştur; 180 krediden oluşan ve üç senede tamamlanan daha düşük akademik diploma öğrencilere lisans diploması sağlamaktadır ve 120 krediden oluşan ve iki senede tamamlanan daha yüksek diploma öğrencilere yüksek lisans diploma hakkı vermektedir (Jakku-Sihvonen & Niemi, 2006).

### **Kuramsal Çerçeve**

Öğretmen eğitimi yaklaşımları çok teorik kalmakla sürekli eleştiri konusu olmuştur. Uzun süre devam eden sorunlardan birisi teorik temelli bilgiyi, uygulama temelli bilgi ile birleştirmektir (Darling-Hammond, 2014; Grossman ve diğ., 2009.) Ancak, öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik becerileri deneyim ile teori arasındaki etkileşim olmadan gelişemez. Örneğin, hedef öğretmen adaylarının öğrencilerinin duygularına karşı hassas olmalarına yardım etmek olduğu zaman, adaylar gerçek sınıf ortamında bu durumla baş edebilmek için teori kadar beceriye de ihtiyaç duyarlar (Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2009). (van der Linden ve diğ., 2015). Öğretmen olarak başarılı olabilmek için öğretmen adaylarının araştırmaya dayalı bilgiye, gözlem yapmak için araçlara, çalışmalarında kanıt ve nasıl sonuç çıkaracaklarını bilmeye ihtiyaçları vardır (Niemi & Nevgi, 2014).

Öğretmen adayları eğitimlerine başladıkları zaman, öğrencilik yıllarındaki deneyimlerine dayalı olarak öğretmenliğin ne demek olduğuna dair güçlü fikirlere zaten sahip olmaktadır. Adaylar öğretmenlik eğitimi süresince yeni teorileri ve bakış açılarını, öğretme ve öğretmenlikle ilgili geçmiş bilgilerine dayandırarak değerlendirmektedirler (Furlong, 2013; Lanas & Kelchtermans, 2015). Be nedenle öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenliği öğrenciliklerindeki kendi deneyimlerinden farklı bir şekilde algılamaları için yönlendirilmeleri önemlidir. Adayların bir öğretmen gibi düşünmeyi ve davranmayı öğrenmeleri gerekmektedir. Ayrıca sınıf ortamının karmaşıklığının farkında ve bunu yönetmeye hazır olmalıdırlar (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Öğretmenliğin zorluğu, öğretmen adaylarının sahip olup olmadıklarını bile anlamadıkları eği-

timsel kavramları zenginleştiren ve çeşitlendiren eylemleri başlatmaktır (Martin & Russel, 2009). Bazı araştırmalar, eğitim ortamlarını gözlemlerken öğretmen adaylarının genellikle geçmiş bilgilerini, önyargılarını ve inanışlarını kullandıklarını göstermiştir (Eilam & Poyas, 2009).

Öğretmen adayları, belirli bazı özelliklere odaklanmak üzere inançlar geliştirmiş olabilirler veya diğer öğretmenlerin sınıflarını gözlemlemek için beceri geliştirmemiş olabilirler (Star & Strickland, 2008). Yapılan çalışmalar paylaşılan gözlemlerin gelecekteki pedagojik kararlar için sağlam bir temel oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Adaylara öğretmenliği analiz etmek için araç sağlamak, onların öğrenme ve öğretmeyi sistematik bir şekilde gözlemlemelerini ve bunu öğrenmelerini kolaylaştırır. Bu araçlar öğretmen adaylarının bir sınıf ortamındaki karmaşık ilişkileri anlamasına ve uygulama deneyimi yaşamalarına imkan sağlar böylece pratik bilgilerini teorik bilgi ile birleştirmelerine yardımcı olur (Chung & van Es, 2014)

### ***Araştırmanın Yöntemi***

Finlandiya'da Turku Üniversitesi, Rauma'da bulunan Öğretmenlik Eğitimi bölümünde, öğretmenlik uygulaması okulunda yapılan destekli gözlemler birinci sınıf öğretmenlik bölümü öğrencilerinin öğretmenlik uygulaması derslerinin önemli bir parçasıdır. Bundan da önce, öğrenciler gelişim ve eğitim psikolojisinin temel teorileri ve kavramlarını öğrendikleri derslere katılmışlardır. Öğretmen adayları öğretmenlik uygulaması süresince, kendi bölümlerinden bir danışman hoca ile 10-11 kişiden oluşan gruplar halinde 1-9. sınıflara ait beş tane sınıf öğretmenliği dersini ve beş tane de alan dersi hocalarının derslerini gözlemlemişlerdir. Her bir dersten sonra, öğrenciler ve danışmanları beş farklı konuya odaklanarak tartışmışlardır. Tartıştıkları konu alanları: *Özel ihtiyaçları olan öğrenciler, değişik yaştaki öğrenciler, iki dilli öğrenme, kişiselleştirilmiş öğrenim ve öğretimin amaçlarıdır.* Gözlem ve tartışmalar süresince öğretmen adayları gözlemlerini temel bakış açılarına odaklanmalarına yardımcı olan bir forma kendi yazmışlardır. Ayrıca, bütün adaylar ilk öğretmenlik deneyimleriyle ilgili görüşlerini ortaya koymayı hedefleyen elektronik bir anket doldürmüşlerdir.

Staj okulları bütün bu bakış açılarını gözlemlemek üzere güzel fırsatlar sunmaktadır. Staj okulunda birinci sınıftan dokuzuncu sınıfa kadar farklı seviyede sınıflar mevcuttur; bütün sınıflarda derslerin bir kısmı İngilizce yapılmaktadır, ama ana eğitim dili Fince'dir ve bütün sınıflarda özel eğitime ihtiyacı olan öğrenciler vardır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı danışman-destekli gözlem ve tartışmalarla öğretmen adaylarının (n = 73; 22 erkek ve 51 kız) fikir ve görüşlerini araştırmaktır. Araştırma soruları şu şekilde sorulmuştur: 1) *Öğretmen adayları danışman-destekli gözlemleri nasıl buldular?*

2) *Üniversite danışmanları, staj okulundaki sınıf öğretmenleri ve öğretmen adayları arasındaki iş birliğinde nasıl başarılı oldular mı?* ve 3) *Öğretmen adayları gözledikleri derslerden neler öğrendiler?* Bu çalışma öğretmenlik bölümü öğrencilerinin bir ders süresince kendi öğrenmelerini nasıl düşünüp yansıttıklarına ve uygulamalı çalışmalarını nasıl değerlendirdiklerine odaklanmıştır. Toplamda 73 adet kişisel rapor okunmuş ve gömülü teori yaklaşımı kullanılarak bu raporlar analiz edilmiştir.

### **Bulgular**

Bütün öğretmen adayları destekli gözlemleri yalnız başlarına yaptıkları gözlemlere göre çok daha fazla faydalı bulmuşlardır. Adaylara göre bir dersin bütünü gözlemek yerine bir seferde tek bir konuya odaklanmak çok daha kolaydır. Buna ek olarak, dersten sonra yapılan tartışmaların öğretmenlikle ilgili kendilerine yeni fikirler verdiğini raporlarında belirtmişlerdir.

Danışman-destekli gözlemlerin aday öğrencilerin gözlem becerilerini geliştirdiği bulunmuştur. Son gözlem sırasında, bütün aday öğrenciler müstakbel öğretmenler için önemli bir konuyu fark edebilmişlerdir. Ayrıca, Chung ve van Es (2014) paylaşılan gözlemlerin öğretmen adaylarının profesyonel kararları için daha sağlam bir temel sağladığını bulmuşlardır. Adaylar diğer öğretmenlerin derslerini kendileri gözlemledikleri zaman, sınıfta olan biteni dikkatli bir şekilde analiz edemezler. Benzer bir şekilde, Star ve Strickland (2008) öğretmen adaylarının üniversite eğitimlerinin başında gözlem becerilerini geliştirmemiş olabileceklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bu nedenle, öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik disiplininde üst bilinçlerini geliştirmeleri önemlidir. Öğretmen adayları, kendi öğrenciliklerinden farklı olarak öğretmenliği anlamak üzere yönlendirilmeli ve sınıf ortamının karmaşıklığının farkında olup, bununla başa çıkabilmelidirler (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Martin and Russel 2009).

Birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin yaptıkları gözlemlerin, kendi sınıf içi öğretmenlik uygulamalarında tecrübeli öğretmenlerin uygulamalarını analiz etmeye yardımcı olduğu kanıtlanmıştır. Ayrıca, yapılandırılmış gözlem formlarının da adaylara faydalı olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bu sonuç da, adayların analiz etmek için gerekli araçlara sahip olduklarında paylaşılan gözlemlerin kendi öğretmenliklerini analiz etmelerine yardımcı olduklarını bildiren Chung ve van Es (2014)'ın çalışması ile uyumludur. Bu araçlar öğretmen adaylarının sınıf içindeki karmaşık ilişkileri anlamalarına ve teoriyi uygulama ile birleştirmelerine yardımcı olur.

Bizim çalışmamızda, birçok öğretmen adayı bir dersi form kullanarak gözlemlenmenin, talimat olmaksızın kendi kendilerine gözlem yapmaktan daha faydalı olduğunu bildirmişlerdir.

Öğretmen adaylarının çoğu bir ders planı yapmanın önemli olduğunu anlamışlardır. Ancak, dersin amacının ne olduğunu ve derste ne yapılacağını planlamadan önce neyin önemli olduğunu düşünmek önemlidir. İyi bir ders planı bu amaçlara ulaşmada yardımcı olur. Bu, özellikle yeni öğretmenler için zaman alır ve zor bir görevdir. Öğretmen ders planı yaparken öğrencilerinin yaşını, ilgi alanlarını ve becerilerini göz önünde bulundurduğunda, öğrencileri motive etmek daha kolay olur. Dersin yapılandırılması önemlidir. Ancak, öğretmen esnek olmalı ve gerektiğinde planı değiştirmelidir.

Öğretmen adayları bütün öğrencilerin aynı hedeflere ulaşamadıklarını görmüşlerdir. Ayrıca, öğrenciler farklı yollarla öğrenirler. Bir dersi planlarken, her bir öğrenci için hangi ders malzemelerinin ve görevlerin en uygun olacağını değerlendirirler. Bütün öğrencilerinin- hem yüksek beceriye sahip olanlar hem de ortalamanın altında becerisi olan öğrenciler dâhil olmak üzere- bir şeyler öğrenmesi ve başarıyı tatmaları önemlidir. Günümüzde öğrenme grupları gittikçe daha homojen hale gelmekte ve bu nedenle öğretmenlerin öğrencilere en uygun ve iyi öğrenme yöntemlerini sunması

çoğunlukla zor bir görevdir. Ancak kişiselleştirilmiş alıştırma ile öğrenciler motive olur, öğretmenler de onların görevlerini tamamlamalarına yardımcı olurlar.

### **Tartışma**

Birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin yaptıkları gözlemlerin, kendi sınıf içi öğretmenlik uygulamalarında tecrübeli öğretmenlerin uygulamalarını analiz etmeye yardımcı olduğu kanıtlanmıştır. Ayrıca, yapılandırılmış gözlem formlarının da adaylara faydalı olduğu gözlenmiştir. Öğretmen adayları form kullanarak bir dersi gözlemlemenin, talimatlar olmaksızın kendi kendilerine gözlem yapmaktan daha faydalı olduğunu bildirmişlerdir. Adaylar ders planı yaparken akıllarında tutmaları gereken bazı önemli noktalar bulmuşlardır. Örneğin, iyi bir ders planı yapmanın, dersin net bir hedefinin olması ve ders için neyin önemli olduğunun bilinmesi önemlidir. Öğretmen ilginç ders malzemeleri kullanarak bütün öğrencileri motive etmeli ve harekete geçirmelidir ve sınıfta cesaret verici bir atmosfer yaratmalıdır.

### **Sonuç**

Birinci sınıftaki öğretmenlik uygulamasında yapılan gözlemlerin, biz öğretmen eğitimcilerine, teorik derslerimizi uygulamayla daha sıkı bir şekilde birleştirmemize yardımcı olacak değerli bilgileri sağladığı sonucuna vardık. Dersleri öğrencilerin gözüyle görmek ve öğretmen adaylarının, dersin öğretmenin sınıf içi uygulamalarının önemli kısımlarına odaklanmalarını sağlamak ilginç bir gözlem idi. Beş gözlemde de değişik konulara odaklanılmıştır. Bu da bazı uygulama zorluklarına sebep olmuştur. Bütün öğretmenler derslerinde yaptığımız gözlemlerimizin odak noktasını anlamamışlardır ve sonuç olarak öğretmen adayları gözlem formlarını doldurmada bazen zorlanmışlardır.

Öğretmenlik uygulamasının hedeflerine ulaştıktan sonra bu süreci geliştirmek için yapılacak daha çok şey bulunmaktadır. Adayların danışman hocaları, staj okulundaki sınıf öğretmenleri arasındaki işbirliği geliştirilmelidir. Desteklenmiş gözlemlerin farklı konularının hedeflerini gerçekleştirmek için gözlemlenen derslerin zamanı geliştirmelidir. Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarının ilk önce kendi arkadaşlarını değil, deneyimli öğretmenleri gözlemlenmeleri sağlanmalıdır. Bu da gözlemlediğimiz bazı sınıflarda gerçekleştirilmiştir.

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