

## Special Field Competencies of Classroom Teacher Candidates: Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University Example

(Sınıf Öğretmeni Adaylarının Özel Alan Yeterlikleri Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart  
Üniversitesi Örneği)

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### Abstract

As classroom teaching is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field, classroom teachers are expected to be equipped with different competencies when compared to other teachers. In this research, it is aimed to determine the special field competencies of classroom teachers. Within the frame of this main purpose, it is examined whether the special field competencies of classroom teacher candidates show significant differentiation according to the variables of gender, order of preference, type of education and academic success. The research is conducted with 207 teacher candidates studying their 4th year at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Undergraduate Program of Classroom Teaching, by using “Classroom Teaching Special Field Competency Scale” developed by Kahramanoğlu and Ay (2013). As a result of the research, it is seen that the total points (average=3.93) of teacher candidates’ special field competency are adequate and according to sub-dimensions, their competency level vary. It is conducted as a result that special field competencies of teacher candidates do not show a significant differentiation according to the variables of gender, order of preference and academic success and in terms of the variable of education type, there is a differentiation in countenance of teacher candidates studying evening education program.

**Keywords:** Teacher competencies, teacher candidates, classroom teacher, classroom teaching special field competencies.

### Özet

Sınıf öğretmenliği çok disiplinli ve disiplinler arası bir alan olduğu için sınıf öğretmenlerinin diğer öğretmenlerden farklı yeterliklerle donanmış olmaları beklenmektedir. Bu araştırmada sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının özel alan yeterlikleri belirlemek amaçlanmıştır. Bu ana amaç çerçevesinde sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının özel alan yeterliklerinin cinsiyet, tercih sırası, öğrenim türü ve akademik başarı değişkenlerine göre anlamlı farklılaşma gösterip göstermediği incelenmiştir. Araştırma Kahramanoğlu ve Ay (2013) tarafından geliştirilen “Sınıf Öğretmenliği Özel Alan Yeterlik Ölçeği” kullanılarak Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi Sınıf Öğretmenliği Lisans programı 4. sınıfta öğrenim gören 207 öğretmen adayı ile sürdürülmüştür. Araştırma sonucunda öğretmen adaylarının özel alan yeterlikleri toplam puanlarının (ortalama =3.93) yeterli düzeyde olduğu, alt boyutlara göre ise yeterlik seviyelerinin değişkenlik gösterdiği görülmüştür. Öğretmen adaylarının özel alan yeterliklerinin cinsiyet, tercih sırası ve akademik başarı değişkenlerine göre anlamlı farklılaşmadığı, öğrenim türü değişkenine göre ise II. öğretimde öğrenim gören öğretmen adayları lehine farklılaşma gösterdiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Öğretmen yeterlikleri, öğretmen adayı, sınıf öğretmeni, sınıf öğretmenliği özel alan yeterlikleri.

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## **Introduction**

Akyüz (2012) defined the teaching as a profession due to the fact that it carries the elements of performing a specific function in the society, requiring the period of growth, basing on professional and systematic specialty information, having ethical principles and behaviour rules. Again, Akyüz (2012) has mentioned the importance of raising the teachers as a professional by referring to Morrison (2003), highlighted that they should be equipped with necessary information and skills and stated that the teacher's necessity to learn increases by saying that they should constantly go through a performance assessment. Öztürk (2014), on the other hand, has defined the teacher as "someone who carries the teaching activities in formal educational institutions" (p.12). In Basic Law of National Education (1973), teaching is defined as the "specialty profession undertaking the state's education, teaching works and related administrative duties". In the same law, it is stated that "preparation to the profession of teaching is acquired by world knowledge, special field education and pedagogical formation". It is known that the profession of teaching requires a specialty and it is important that teachers have certain competencies. Şişman (2009) has defined the teacher competencies as "the whole features teachers are predicted to have regarding information, skill, manner, value and behaviour" (p.37).

Teacher competency is a subject which is dwelled on for many years in many countries. The competencies related to the profession of teaching takes place as the standards of the profession of teaching despite teacher competencies in foreign sources. The reason why the word 'standard' is used instead of the term 'competence' is due to the importance given to the definition for the features that the teachers should have in a more wider and flexible frame (T.E.D., 2009). In many works conducted in international scale, it is highlighted that the teachers are raised well. For example; the reason why the OECD (2004) students had low performance is associated with the limited numbers of teacher and that the teachers were not at the expected level in terms of quality. It is stated in this report that; teacher's expectations from students, teacher-student relations, teacher's attendance at the work, teacher's effort to respond to the individual needs of the students and their desire to reach these students to the highest success within their potential affects the period of teaching-learning. In the same report, it is emphasized in several places that teacher's manner, behaviour and relation with the students affect the learning. International Labour Organization ILO (2012) stated that it raises major problems when the teachers are not equipped with necessary competencies and listed the problems that affect the quality of a teacher as; signing short-term contracts, low wages, crowded classrooms and insufficiencies during the education of the profession. As an example, some African countries are given where the teachers are educated for 3 months and as a result, the quality is negatively affected and thus it has expressed the importance of acquiring standards related to the profession of teaching. Skyes (2003), within the movement of "No Child Left Behind-NCLB", has highlighted the importance of the need for teachers raised equipped, information and usage competence of teachers for methods and techniques, their approach towards the children and their education status as these elements affect the learning of students. Mentiş Taş (2004) has supported this view by stating that the education level of teachers affect the student's learning and their

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reaching the level so as to compete with the students raised in other countries. Gözütok (1995) has stated that the teachers hold the power to shape and affect the students.

The key professionals during the learning period of students are the “teachers” (ILO, 2012). When considered from this point of view; besides providing good education for teachers during their undergraduate program, they should be supported with constant on-the-job training, their wage and working conditions should be improved and with such arrangements, their commitment to the profession should be increased and the prestige of the profession of teaching should be raised.

The Ministry of Education has determined the “General Competencies of the Profession of Teaching” and “Special Field Competencies” for elementary school teachers including the information, skill and manners that the teachers should have in order to enhance the performance of their work. When looked at the special field competencies developed for classroom teacher’s counselling, it is seen that within the concept, there are the indicators of competency field, context, competencies and performance. The competency fields are divided into 8 fields as;

- learning-teaching environment and development,
- observing and assessing,
- individual and professional development-relations with the society,
- art and aesthetics,
- improving language skills,
- scientific and technologic development,
- individual responsibilities and socializing
- physical education and security,

After expressing the concept for each field, the competencies related to them are explained separately. For each competency, the performance indicators are included in three levels as; A1, A2 and A3. A3 is the most extended level and it includes A2 and A1. Level of A2 includes A1. It should be the final objective to reach the performance indicators of the teachers to the level of A3.

Although there have been many studies regarding the subject of general competencies that the teachers should have (Şeker, Deniz and Görgen, 2005; Özbek, Kahyaoğlu and Özgen, 2007; Köksal, 2008; Özer and Gelen, 2008; Yerlikaya and Öner, 2009; Aydın, Bıçak and Kaya, 2010; Demiral, Baydar and Gönen, 2010; Yurdagül, Erdem and Seferoğlu, 2011; Bülbül and Slogar, 2011; Kahyaoğlu and Yangın, 2007), there have been few studies (Kılıç, 2007; Kuşuoğlu, 2004; Akpınar and oth., 2004; Kahramanoğlu and Ay,2013) regarding the special field competencies of classroom teachers.

In this research, special field competency of classroom teachers will be tried to determine by working with the candidates of teachers with whom the children spend almost more time with them than their families in the period when they can be easily shaped. In this context;

- a) What is the level of special field competency points of last grade teacher candidates studying at the undergraduate program of Classroom Teaching at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University?

- b) Special field competency points of last grade teacher candidates studying at the undergraduate program of Classroom Teaching at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University according to gender,
- c) Special field competency points of last grade teacher candidates studying at the undergraduate program of Classroom Teaching at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University according to order of preference,
- d) Special field competency points of last grade teacher candidates studying at the undergraduate program of Classroom Teaching at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University according to the type of education,
- e) Do the special field competency points of last grade teacher candidates studying at the undergraduate program of Classroom Teaching at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University vary according to their academic success? These questions will be searched for an answer.

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

In the research, special field competency status of classroom teacher candidates is tried to be defined as it is in its own formation. For that reason, this research is modelled with the scanning model, which is among the descriptive models aiming at describing without interfering with the situation (Karasar, 2000).

### **Study Group of the Research**

The study group of the research is consisted of 207 teacher candidates studying at the 4th grade of Classroom Teaching undergraduate program at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in the school year of 2014-2015. In this group, 59 of the teacher candidates are male and 148 of them are female. 143 of the teacher candidates have listed this program in the first five in their order of preference. 39 of them listed it between 1-5, 12 of them between 11-15 and 13 of them between 16-.... In this case, %69.1 of the teacher candidates in the group have registered in the program upon listing it between the preference order of 1-5. 103 of the teacher candidates study daytime education while the 104 of them study evening education. 14 of the candidate teachers have 1.75-2.50 grade of average, 117 of them have 2.51-3.00 and 76 of them have 3.01-4.00.

### **Data Gathering Tool**

In the research, the "Classroom Teaching Special Field Competency Scale" developed by Kahraman and Ay (2013) in 5 point likert scale and with 8 factors is used based on the KMO value 0.72 and Barlett test result [6248.175/  $p < 0.000, df = 741$ ] prepared in consideration with "Classroom Teaching Special Field Competency" prepared by Ministry of Education General Directorate of Teacher Training and Education. Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale is found as 0,75 by the researchers. Cronbach Alpha coefficient in this research is calculated as .95. In the interpretation of this scale, Kahramanoğlu and Ay (2013) stated that 1.00-1.80 as very insufficient, 1.81-2.60 as insufficient, 2.61-3.40 as medium,

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## Analysis of Data

The data gathered in the research is analysed via SPSS package program. In the analysis of the data, whether there is a differentiation in gender and type of education is examined with t-test and whether there is a differentiation in order of preference and grade point average is examined with ANOVA test statistics. Additionally, percentage and average descriptive statistics are performed on the data.

## Findings

In this chapter, the findings from the research is introduced in the line so as to answer the research questions.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics Regarding the Special Field Competency Levels of Classroom Teacher Candidates*

|  | <i>N</i> | <i>Minimum</i> | <i>Maximum</i> | <i>Mean</i> | <i>Std. Deviation</i> |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Total  | 207      | 1.64           | 4.64           | 3.93        | .38                   |
| Learning-teaching environment and development  | 207      | 1.50           | 3.75           | 2.93        | .31                   |
| Observing and assessing Individual and professional development-relations with the society | 207      | 1.50           | 5.00           | 4.16        | .58                   |
| Art and aesthetics   | 207      | 1.25           | 5.00           | 4.30        | .53                   |
| Improving language skills  | 207      | 1.00           | 5.00           | 3.85        | .67                   |
| Scientific and technologic development   | 207      | 1.00           | 5.00           | 3.39        | .55                   |
| Individual responsibilities and socializing  | 207      | 1.25           | 5.00           | 4.29        | .47                   |
| Physical education and security  | 207      | 1.50           | 5.00           | 4.23        | .49                   |

Descriptive statistics related to the special field competencies of teacher candidates take place in Table 1. According to these findings, total points of special field competency (average=3.93) are sufficient. According to sub dimensions, the competency levels vary. It is seen that in learning-teaching environment and development (average=2.93), scientific and technologic development (average=3.39) sub dimensions they are at medium sufficiency level, in observation and assessment (average=4.16), individual and professional development-relations with the society (average=4.02), developing language skills (average =3.85) sub dimensions they are at the sufficient level and besides these, in art and aesthetics (average=4.30), individual responsibility and socializing (average=4.29), physical education and security (average=4.23) sub dimensions they are at very sufficient level.

**Table 2**

*Examination of Classroom Teacher Candidate's Special Field Levels in Terms of Gender*

*Variable t-test Results*

| <i>Gender</i> | <i>N</i>   | <i>X</i>    | <i>S</i>    | <i>sd</i>  | <i>T</i>     | <i>p</i>    |
|---------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| <i>Female</i> | <i>148</i> | <i>3.96</i> | <i>.392</i> | <i>205</i> | <i>-1.43</i> | <i>.153</i> |
| <i>Male</i>   | <i>59</i>  | <i>3.87</i> |             |            |              |             |

From Table 2 it is understood that special field competencies of Classroom Teacher candidates do not vary according to the variable of gender.  $p=.153$  ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table 3**

*ANOVA test Results of Classroom Teacher Candidate's Special Field Levels in Terms of Order of Preference Variable*

|                | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F    | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .421           | 3   | .140        | .951 | .417 |
| Within Groups  | 29.93          | 203 | .147        |      |      |
| Total          | 30.357         | 206 |             |      |      |

From Table 3 it is understood that special field competencies of Classroom Teacher candidates do not vary according to the order of preference variable.  $p=.417$  ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Table 4**

*Examination of Classroom Teacher Candidate's Special Field Levels in Terms of Education Type*

*Variable t-test Results*

| <i>Education Type</i> | <i>N</i>   | <i>X</i>    | <i>S</i>   | <i>sd</i>  | <i>T</i>     | <i>p</i>    |
|-----------------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| <i>Morning Class</i>  | <i>103</i> | <i>3.86</i> | <i>.38</i> | <i>205</i> | <i>-2.70</i> | <i>.007</i> |
| <i>Evening Class</i>  | <i>104</i> | <i>4.00</i> | <i>.37</i> |            |              |             |

From Table 4 it is understood that special field competencies of Classroom Teacher candidates vary in countenance of candidates studying the evening undergraduate program of classroom teaching.  $p=.007$  ( $p<0.05$ ).

**Table 5**

*ANOVA test Results of Classroom Teacher Candidate's Special Field Levels in Terms of Academic Success Variable*

|                | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F    | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Between Groups | .283           | 2   | .142        | .961 | .384 |
| Within Groups  | 30.07          | 204 | .147        |      |      |
| Total          | 30.357         | 206 |             |      |      |

From Table 3 it is understood that special field competencies of Classroom Teacher candidates do not vary according to the academic success variable.  $p=.384$  ( $p>0.05$ ).

### **Discussion**

According to the data of the research it is seen that %69.1 of the candidates have registered in the department they study by choosing it between the preference order of 1-5. This case makes us think that the teacher candidates in the study group have preferred this undergraduate program wanting to be a teacher. 14 of the teacher candidates have grade point average of 1.75-2.50, 117 of them have 2.51-3.00 and 76 of them have 3.01-4.00. In other words, we can say that the general of teacher candidates have success in middle and superior academic group. Total special field competency points of teacher candidates (average=3.93) is sufficient and when sub dimensions are considered, learning-teaching environment and development (average=2.93), scientific and technologic development (average=3.39) sub dimensions are at medium sufficiency level. Although the general competency levels are "sufficient" two sub dimensions at the medium level should immediately be considered.

It is important that the special field competency of teach candidates are tried to be reached to the highest level possible. There have been many studies examining the competency of teachers and teacher candidates. For example, similar to the results reached in this research, Şeker and others (2005) stated in the study they have conducted with teacher candidates studying at the non thesis master's degree program that they have considered the teachers, classmates, themselves and instructors at the faculty offering them service as sufficient in terms of their teaching quality. As a result of the study Köksal (2008) conducted after the first pilot study, he has reached the conclusion that this pilot study had a positive reflection on the teachers, school, Ministry and increase in the quality of education and he recommended that such applications should be popularized. As the profession of teaching requires constant development, the activities supporting the professional development should be maintained by both the ministries and school administrations. As a result of their study, Özer and Gelen (2008) have reached the conclusion that teacher candidates consider themselves more competent in terms of profession than the teachers. Akpınar and others (2004) have assessed the practice teachers from the view of teacher candidates and reached the conclusion that teacher candidates consider the practice teachers competent in general, however they consider the practice teachers at the medium level in terms of using and developing teaching material and having special field knowledge. This situation supports the views that attended teachers should have more on-the-training educations. Kılıç (2007) has reached impressive results in the study in which he studied the learning level of the courses in the program of classroom teacher training. According to these results, it is specified that 13 of the field courses are learned "well", 19 of them at the medium level and among the

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formation courses, 3 courses are learned "medium", 3 courses are learned "very well" and 18 of them are learned "well" and he concluded that formation classes are learned better. This result brings forward the necessity that teacher candidates should have a better service of education during their studying period. The most shocking result reached in the study conducted by Özbek and others (2007) with teacher candidates is that they have stated they are not willing towards the profession of teaching. When the conscientious side of the teaching profession is considered, it is thought that whether the teachers with low motivation of the profession have high professional competence, they cannot use their potentials with full capacity. For that reason, the aim during the undergraduate program should be enhancing the positive manner among teacher candidates towards the profession.

In this research, it is concluded that the special field competency of the teacher candidates do not show significant differentiation according to the variables of gender, order of preference and academic success and in terms of learning type, it is in countenance of teacher candidates studying at evening program. It is possible to encounter researches dealing with the same variables in the field literature. For example; as a result of the study conducted by Yerlikaya and Öner (2009) they have found that in the social sciences teaching competency, the variable of gender do not make a difference among teacher candidates; however, the university variable differs. Aydın and others (2010) have stated that the type of graduated high school, school success average, gender, school registration order of preference and department satisfaction status variables do not have a significant differentiation among teacher candidates who consider themselves professionally competent. Kayhaoğlu ve Yangın (2007) has found in their study, examining the professional self competency of teacher candidates according to variables, that there is no difference in terms of the variables of gender, class level, type of the graduated high school and that there is a difference according the department they study (in countenance for Science Teaching) and the type of education (in countenance for the evening study program). Kahramanoğlu ve Ay (2013), in the study in which they examine the special field competency of classroom teacher candidates, have reached the conclusion that competency perceptions do not differ according to gender, candidate's order of department preference, that there is a differentiation in terms of competency perceptions in countenance for the candidates studying at the daytime study program and expressed that the competency perceptions of the candidates are mostly as "at the sufficient level". Kuşuoğlu (2004), on the other hand, has reached the conclusion that female classroom teacher candidates consider themselves more competent in terms of class management compared to male candidates and classroom teacher candidates have class management skill at medium level.

Çakmak and Civelek's (2013) studies are considered significant as the teacher candidate's gaining the competency in their field can be acquired through the teacher training programs

*Special Field Competencies of Classroom Teacher Candidates Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Example* meeting the aimed objectives. Çakmak and Civelek have examined the content of the courses taking place at the undergraduate program of Classroom Teaching determined by Council of Higher Education and the Classroom Teacher Special Field Competencies determined by Ministry of Education regarding the case whether they fulfil each other and they have reached the conclusion that this harmony is at the level of 85%. Although it is seen that this level is not low, the expected rate is that they completely fulfil each other. Sach (2003) stated in his research that introducing the standards increases the performance of teachers, develop their position, help their maintaining professional learning. Additionally, he has expressed that these standards are not stable, they should be flexible and that it should help learning be easier within and outside the school.

The quality of the undergraduate programs, providing service for the training of teachers, should be increased and the concept of quality should be considered comprehensively. The features of open mindedness (breaking the habits of prejudice and those closing the mind), sincerity (learning from mistakes and self-assessment), responsibility (enthusiasm to learn new things, intellectual responsibility), which are defined as the features, the teachers should have in order to engage the data and skills, by Dewey (1933) should tried to be acquired via undergraduate programs. However, as much as the context of undergraduate programs offered to the teacher candidates, it is important and should be considered as the primary topics to ponder that the instructors and assistants are equipped and are role models, the physical conditions of the Faculties of Education are enhanced, developments in the field of art and science are followed and more sufficient education is offered to teacher candidates in terms of physical education, the quality of the courses for training the teachers should be increased. It is also important that after being assigned, constant professional development is ensured by the Ministry and school administration. As the classroom size, physical equipment, betterment of teacher wages and reaching the profession of teaching to the prestigious position it deserves will increase the motivation of the teachers and have an indirect effect on their competency level, they are considered as the topics that should be dwelled on.

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