



Teacher Opinion on Multiplied Classroom Programs: Turkey Example

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Abstract

The world constantly develops and with this development it continuously renews itself. The world develops rapidly and with the development it changes and updates itself all the time. Every individual who tries to live in a circulation has education right among many others. Education is one of the basic human rights in developing and changing world. Multiplied classroom programs date back to very old times when we look at the world and Turkish educational history. While these programs are applied only in under developed regions of the world, it is applied in almost half of the schools in Turkey [MEB,2005c]. According to the Turkish Constitution act 42: "No one can be avoided from learning rights". First and secondary education is compulsory for male and female citizens and free at state schools. Government supports its citizens who is deprived of economical facilities via scholarships and other meals. Government takes the necessary precautions to supports the one who needs special training. "As mentioned in this act, both in rural and urban areas, education must be provided without making distinction". This causes different applications in educational rights and inequality in opportunity in Turkish educational system. One of these is multiplied classrooms. The aim of this study is to defined the reflection of this application on both teacher and student point of view. The environment of the study is composed of teachers from seven regions of Turkey with multiplied classroom and they took part voluntarily. For this reason, in order to gather data two column writing sample is used which is a reflectional strategy. Thee collected in this application which is a qualitative study have been subject to content analysis. As a result of this study, it has been possible to see their view of multiplied classrooms, their pros and cons, and also their view about the positive and negative effects of this application in general terms.

1.Introduction

In a developing and improving world, education is one of the basic rights that an individual owns. This right takes part in both universal declaration of human rights and the constitution of the Turkish Republic and legally assured. This right constitutes of access to education without discriminating rural and urban areas. In this sense, when we consider both chance and opportunity equality differs in Turkish Educational System. One of these is education in multigraded classrooms. It is a kind of application where more than one classroom with different age groups and work together or separately and one teacher is responsible for all [MEB,1968. Sağ,2012]. This application involves all the cities and constitutes almost half of the secondary school. This system is preferred in our country because of insufficient number of students to form an independent class, insufficient number of classrooms, insufficient number of teachers due to economical substructure [MEB, 2005]. Multigraded classroom system is applied in underdeveloped or undeveloped countries because of economical factors and student number which is not enough to form a normal class [Köksal, 2006]. It is observed that this system is used in developed countries as an academic choice applied to support students' tolerance, cooperative work and autonomy besides insufficient number of students [Allen, 1997]. It is observed that this system is used in Turkey in low populated and isolated areas where socio-economical life is not very developed. The system is not applied as it should be because schools are not enough in number and there is lack of equipment, teachers are not enough and they do not come to these areas voluntarily, students achieve low and pre-teaching training of teachers are not well qualified [Sağ,2011].

2. Universe- Study Sample

While the universe of the study is composed of classroom teachers of multigraded classrooms in seven regions of Turkey, study sample includes a number of teachers taking part voluntarily from every region.



3.Data Gathering Tools

Two column writing sample which is one of the reflective thinking strategies is used as a data gathering tool. Via this tool, the ideas of teachers about advantages and disadvantages of multigraded classrooms for teachers are gathered and they reflect their thoughts on advantages and disadvantages of the system for students which give a comparison of both sides.

4.Data Analysis

The data obtained by two column writing sample is exposed to content analysis. The teachers of multi graded classrooms are asked about the advantages and disadvantages of this application for teachers and at the same time they are asked about the advantages and disadvantages of it for students with a point of view of the teachers of these classrooms via two column writing sample. The teachers's responses are categorized according to their answers and these categories are coded in themselves and analyzed thoroughly. There are four categories defined while conducting this study which are AMCAT (Advantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Teachers), DMCAT (Disadvantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Teachers), AMCAS (Advantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Students) and DMCAS (Disadvantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Students). (Table1).. Later codes as AMCAT_{1,2,3,...}; DMCAT_{1,2,3,...}; AMCAS_{1,2,3,...}; and DMCAS_{1,2,3,...} are created for these four categories. Each category is showed in a table separately and frequency (%) and percentages (%) are calculated in themselves (Table1.) Moreover, students responses to each code is shown as S_{1,2,3,4,.....} (Student 1, Student 2). Analysis is made according to these frequency and percentages.

5.Findings and Analysis

Table5.1 Advantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Teacher

AMCAT	Advantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Teachers	Teacher Codes	f	%
AMCAT ₁	Gaining experience	S _{1,2,3,9,10,12,15,16,17,18,19,21,23,25,31,35,36,46,48}	19	18
AMCAT ₂	Planning	S _{4,5,16,17,19,21,24,32,44,48}	10	9
AMCAT ₃	Time management	S _{3,11,17,22,24,29,35,38,40,48}	10	9
AMCAT ₄	Being patient	S _{4,42,47,48}	3	3
AMCAT ₅	Achievement instinct	S ₄₈	1	1
AMCAT ₆	Classroom management	S _{2,4,16,17,18,19,25,28,36,37,41,43,44,45,46,47}	16	15
AMCAT ₇	Peer consultation	S _{7,18,19,37,47}	5	5
AMCAT ₈	Implicit learning	S _{8,9,13,21}	4	4
AMCAT ₉	Individual interest	S _{11,17,35,45}	4	4
AMCAT ₁₀	Interaction with different age groups at the same time	S _{4,16,18,19,24,26,28,30,41,43,45}	11	10
AMCAT ₁₁	Feeling of sacrifice	S _{15,42}	2	2
AMCAT ₁₂	Different atmosphere	S _{8,11,27,42}	4	4
AMCAT ₁₃	More active behaviours	S ₄₁	1	1
AMCAT ₁₄	Achieving interaction	S _{23,41}	2	2
AMCAT ₁₅	Life-long learning	S ₃₉	1	1
AMCAT ₁₆	Experience in managing works	S _{35,38,39}	3	3
AMCAT ₁₇	Practical method- techniques	S _{2,5,7,34,36,38}	6	6
AMCAT ₁₈	Personally applying spiral program	S ₃₆	1	1
AMCAT ₁₉	Multi angle point of view	S _{3,25}	2	2
AMCAT ₂₀	Learning individual differences	S ₂₃	1	1
AMCAT ₂₁	Being determined	S ₆	1	1
AMCAT ₂₂	Sense of responsibility	S ₆	1	1
TOTAL			108	100

As it can be seen in Table 5.1, AMCAT category is created and 22 codes are defined as AMCAT_{1,2,3,....} and so on. When the table is examined, it is seen that the students mostly wrote the opinion in code "Gaining Experience" (18%). While one of the teacher opinions AMCAT₄₈ "I can gain the experience that I can in a year in multigraded classrooms", it is followed by AMCAT₆ "Classroom Management" (15%) which includes the sample teacher opinion as mentioned in AMCAT₄₅ "It improves the classroom management skills of the teacher". The lowest frequency of this code is observed in codes AMCAT_{13,15,18,20,21,22} with 1% frequency. An example for this can be AMCAT₆ "It made me be more determined by showing me the hard conditions" and AMCAT₄₁ "You can show more active behavior in the classroom"

Tablo5.2. Disadvantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Teachers

DMCAT	Disadvantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Teachers	Teacher codes	f	%
DMCAT 1	No expert support	T _{1,4,9,11,21,46}	6	6
DMCAT 2	Intense and tiring work	T _{9,11,12,21}	4	4
DMCAT 3	Hardship in planning	T _{1,3,5,14,15,16,18,19,21,23,25,26,27,28,30,35,36,40,38,3} 9,42,44,45,46,47,48	26	26
DMCAT 4	Difficult classroom management	T _{7,9,11,13,23,25,27,30,41}	9	9
DMCAT 5	Program does not finish	T _{1,7,13,18,19,31,36,37,38,45,46,32}	12	12
DMCAT 6	Method-tecnique choice	T _{4,13,16,17,18,19,37,39,45}	9	9
DMCAT 7	Inexperience	T _{5,15,19,27,29,35,46}	7	7
DMCAT 8	Time management	T _{4,8,12,16,17,18,34,37,45,47}	10	10
DMCAT 9	Economical burden	T _{1,4,35}	3	3
DMCAT 10	Feeling of insufficiency	T _{3,5,22,24,28,32}	6	6
DMCAT 11	Teacher centered education	T _{29,33}	2	2
DMCAT 12	Difficulty in testing-evaluation	T _{10,38}	2	2
DMCAT 13	Difficulty in concentration	T ₄₂	1	2
DMCAT 14	Time allocated to students	T ₇	1	1
DMCAT 15	No social life	T ₆	1	1
DMCAT 16	Different classrooms are together	T ₂	1	1
TOTAL			100	100

When we analyze Table 5.2 the highest frequency is in code DMCAT₃ (26%), the least percentage is in codes DMCAT_{14,15,16} (1%). The sample to teacher disadvantages in DMCAT₃ is as follows. T₂₃ "the time spared for preparation of education and teaching and effort is a lot so it prevents teacher to spare time for himself". The lowest frequency T₂ states "It made students' learning difficult to be together with different level of classrooms. When teaching to one grade, the students in another grade are confused. It caused them to confuse some topics. I really had difficulty during the process".

Tablo5.3. Advantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Students

AMCAS	Advantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Students	Teacher codes	F	%
AMCAS1	Cooperation and interaction	T _{1,2,4,9,10,12,15,16,17,18,19,23,24,25,26,31,33,34,35,36,39,4} 0,42,46,47,48	26	25
AMCAS 2	Lower-higher classroom cooperation	T _{3,5,21,30,48}	5	5
AMCAS 3	Being aware of higher classroom	T _{6,7,11,17,28,29,31,44,45,46,48}	11	11
AMCAS 4	Critical thinking	T _{26,47}	2	2
AMCAS 5	Implicit learning	T _{17,18,19,47}	4	4
AMCAS 6	Entrepreneurship	T ₄₇	1	1
AMCAS 7	Being a model- taking as a model	T _{5,11,18,31,32,42,47}	7	7
AMCAS 8	Peer support	T _{4,7,8,9,11,13,16,21,22,23,27,30,33,36,37,42}	16	15
AMCAS 9	Revision of lower class courses	T _{6,11,18,30,36,41}	6	6
AMCAS 10	Autonomy	T _{23,26,37,40,41}	5	5
AMCAS 11	Taking responsibility	T _{1,4,5,15,19,23,35,38,39}	9	9
AMCAS 12	Self management- self evaluation	T _{8,11,28,39}	4	4
AMCAS 13	Self confidence	T ₃₈	1	1
AMCAS 14	Creativity	T ₃₈	1	1
AMCAS 15	Socializing	T _{5,26,28}	3	3
AMCAS 16	Providing educational rights	T ₂₇	1	1
AMCAS 17	Easily blending in	T ₂	1	1
AMCAS 18	Peer cooperation in the classroom	T ₃	1	1
TOTAL			104	100

When we analyze Table 5.3, the highest frequency is in code AMCAS₁ (25%), the least percentage is in codes AMCAS_{13,14,16,17,18} (1%). The sample to student advantages in AMCAS₁ is as follows. T₃₆; "It helped students develop and use concepts such as cooperation, interdependence, contribution and sharing in their lives efficiently". Teacher samples coded AMCAS_{13,14,16,17,18}; T₃; "There are siblings in the classroom and they really help each other."



Tablo5.4. Disadvantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Students

DMCAS	Disadvantages of the Multigraded Classroom Application for Students	Teacher codes	f	%
DMCAS1	Little time per individual	T _{1,2,3,5,9,11,21,23,27,34,37,39,42,48}	14	14
DMCAS 2	Difficulty in students concentration	T _{2,3,4,5,7,9,11,12,13,17,21,25,32,36,37,46,48}	17	17
DMCAS 3	Students get bored	T _{6,7,13,18,26,37,48}	7	7
DMCAS 4	Heavy burden on students	T _{7,9,11,16,23,36,38,45,48}	9	9
DMCAS 5	Feeling of failure	T _{1,2,3,4,25,28,44,48}	8	8
DMCAS 6	High risk of classroom repetition	T ₄₇	1	1
DMCAS 7	Modelling bad behaviour	T _{19,21,31,41,47}	5	5
DMCAS 8	Cannot discover himself	T _{12,15,16,18,19,34,35,36,45,47}	10	10
DMCAS 9	Hard to achieve the goals	T _{6,8,10,17,23,27,42,44,46}	9	9
DMCAS 10	Close relatives in the same classroom	T _{1,38}	2	2
DMCAS 11	Different age groups can hardly get on well	T _{15,24,33,35}	4	4
DMCAS 12	Higher-lower class conflict	T _{2,4,5,14,18,24,26,29,31,34}	10	10
DMCAS 13	Lack of physical properties	T ₁₀	1	1
DMCAS 14	Environment of rivalry	T ₁₂	1	1
DMCAS 15	Little time	T ₂₂	1	1
DMCAS 16	Adaptation problem	T ₂	1	1
DMCAS 17	Hard to know the student	T ₂₃	1	1
DMCAS 18	Reflection of problems between the families into the classroom	T ₄	1	1
			102	100

When Table 5.4 is analyzed, the highest frequency is in code DMCAS₂ (17%), the least percentage is observed to be in codes DMCAS_{13,14,15, 16,17,18} (1%). The sample to student advantages in DMCAS₂ with the highest frequency is as follows; T₄₆; "Since *there is both teaching and assigning homework to students at the same time, the students with assignments have difficulty in attention*". DMCAS_{13,14,15, 16,17,18} sample; T₁₀; "Physical conditions and absence of equipments negatively affect the students".

6. Discussion and Suggestions

It is a reality that multigraded classroom has advantages and disadvantages on the teachers who apply it and the students who are the target group. This study is conducted in seven regions of Turkey on voluntary basis therefore its study area may be limited. This kind of studies can be conducted every year so appropriate regulations can be made to turn disadvantages into advantages. Moreover, this study reflects the teachers point of view towards multigraded classrooms; however, the students opinion can be asked and analyzed and updates can be done in accordance with the results. It is observed that AMCAT₁ "Gaining Experience" (18 %) is one one which the teachers benefit from multigraded classrooms, codes AMCAT_{13,15,18,20,21,22} have the lowest frequency with 1%. Additionally, the highest frequency is in code DMCAT₃ (26%) and the lowest are DMCAT_{14,15,16} (1%). The advantages of the system on the students when teachers point of view are taken into consideration are represented best in code AMCAS₁ (25%) and lowest in codes AMCAS_{13,14,16,17,18} (1%). When the disadvantages on students are evaluated DMCAS₂ (17 %) is the highest and the lowest are DMCAS_{13,14,15,16,17,18} (1%). Multigraded classroom application is considered as a past, present and future application when education- opportunity equality of the individuals are taken into consideration. The shortcomings of this system can be defined by teachers, students or the institution and in-service training for the teachers can be more common or the number of teachers teaching a class of combining four different grades can be increased. As a result of these measurements this application can continue efficiently.



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