



Views of the classroom teachers working in resource rooms about support education activities

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Abstract. Resource rooms include proper teaching materials and equipment in accordance with the students' educational performance, needs and disability type. The aim of the study is to reveal the views of classroom teachers who worked at resource rooms on the practices about these learning spaces. The study is designed as a case study which is part of qualitative research methods. The participants of the study were chosen using the criterion sampling that is one of the purposive sampling techniques. The data of the study were collected using the semi-structured interview form developed by the authors. The data obtained were examined through the descriptive analysis technique. The findings of the study indicate that the classroom teachers sampled considered resource rooms to be beneficial. However, it is also found that their knowledge on resource rooms is limited and that they need to participate in training activities on resource rooms.

Keywords: Resource room, special education, inclusive education, classroom teachers

Received: 01.02.2019

Accepted: 16.07.2019

Published: 15.04.2020

INTRODUCTION

Education is not specific to a segment or group of the society. Instead, it is one of the basic human rights for all. The right to education is guaranteed by law in Turkey like in many parts of the world. All individuals living in the society regardless of their faith, race, gender and economic status have equally this right. No individual shall be deprived of his or her right to education regardless of their age (Ada and Keskinliç, 2006). National and international organizations operate to realize their access the right to education. Since the early years of the Republic, various initiatives have been taken to ensure the right to education in our country. Some examples of these initiatives include the attempts to increase literacy levels and the practices such as public schools and community centers etc. (Albayrak, 1994; Oral, 2002). Today various alternatives have been developed for adults who cannot be educated for various reasons or who had to abandon their education. The ministry of national education initiated open education primary schools and open education high schools within the public education centres to educate those adults who cannot attend formal education institutions. In addition, there are also open education faculties to make undergraduate education much more widespread. Therefore, it is possible to argue that through such activities by the ministry of national education and education foundation education in Turkey has become common. The projects and activities carried out via the Internet and the media reach larger audiences, making it easier for people to be informed and educated (Özer, 1989).

In addition to these alternatives for adult education in formal education the number of schools, classrooms and teachers has been increased (Karakütük, 2016). These efforts are increasing day by day for students to get healthier and more quality education. Compared to the past, the budget allocated to education has increased and the physical infrastructure of schools has improved (BYEGM, 2017). There are also national projects such as EBA and Fatih which aim to integrate technology in educational activities. Through these projects, technological tools such as smart boards, projectors, photocopiers, computers were sent to schools in many parts of the country, and as a result, the quality of education was improved (MONE, 2017). It is promising to

develop and implement such projects in order to improve the quality of education. These projects are very important to ensure fast and long-lasting student learning in classrooms where the other physical conditions of the school are sufficient and the number of students in classrooms is on average (Boozer and Rouse, 2001; McGiverin, Gilman and Tillitski, 1989; Hedges and Stock, 1983; cited in Altun and Çakan, 2008).

It is assumed that schools with the necessary physical infrastructure as well as educational materials and technology provide optimal opportunities for students to learn (Altun and Çakan, 2008). This assumption often applies to the majority of students. However, some students' learning problems are not entirely related to the physical infrastructure of the school or the attitude of the classroom teachers. Some individual characteristics, which are either innate or caused by environmental factors, adversely affect student learning (Yeşilyaprak, 2008). Such students are called those with special needs and may learn in regular classrooms with their peers without any problem (Bayar, Özaşkın and Bardak, 2015). Unlike their peers these students learn faster or slower, and their major educational problems are not either the educational programs or teaching and learning materials employed. These students mostly attend inclusive classes. Special education regulations require that if there is one student with special needs in the classroom, the number of students there should be thirty-five. On the other hand, if the number of students with special needs is two in the classroom the class size should not exceed thirty-five. However, in some instance due to crowded class size these requirements cannot be met, and students with special needs and their peers cannot sufficiently benefit from educational activities. In such conditions the students with special needs require one-on-one attention to eliminate their learning deficiencies (Şişman, 2008). On the other hand, in crowded classrooms teachers are not able to provide necessary attention to the students with special needs as well as their peers. As stated earlier the related regulations state that inclusive education should not be provided in crowded classrooms (MONE, 2006). However, it is not always possible to implement regulations. In short, there are some inclusive classes which have more students than stated in the regulations. It is possible to say that this situation creates a negative learning environment for all students.

Concerning the students with special needs the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are developed by a special education team at schools at the beginning of each school year, and such programs guide the education of inclusive students (Akay, 2011). However, the IEPs cannot always be implemented under certain negative conditions, including crowded class size, absenteeism, the lack of knowledge on the part of teachers and legal instability, the lack of care on the part of parents and the lack of necessary material (Nayır and Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2013; Can, 2015; Yazıcı and Durmuşoğlu, 2017). On the other hand, the general education program may not be proper for educating the students with special needs. The IEPs are developed to complement the education program, but if these programs cannot be implemented inclusive students come across some disadvantageous situations (Kargın, 2017). As stated above the regulations for special education necessitate a certain number of students in inclusive classes. However, it becomes hard to follow this requirement due to some problems such as the conditions of schools, demands, limitations etc. (Çulha, 2010). Studying in crowded classrooms makes it difficult for students with special needs to fully achieve the expected benefit from the inclusive education. When the IEPs cannot be fully implemented, inclusive students may not be able to demonstrate their full potential in the learning process. In such conditions they may have an educational support. Based on such concerns in 2006 the ministry of national education issued a regulation for special education activities in which resource rooms were officially initiated for the students with special needs.

This regulation defines special education is a type of education which is delivered by educators who are trained to meet the educational and social needs of the individuals with special education needs and through specific educational programs and teaching and learning methods in the learning environments which are designed considering the developmental characteristics of these individuals and their academical capacities (MONE, 2006). Some of the students with special needs may be sent to the rehabilitation centers and some of them may become inclusive students. Inclusive students may need one-to-one education. Due to their need the ministry of national education started the practice of resource rooms at schools.

In the related regulation issued by the ministry of national education (2006) resource rooms are defined as learning spaces designed to support both inclusive students and gifted students in the areas they have needs (MONE, 2006). Zigmond, Kloo and Volonino (2009) described resource rooms as a complementary training for these students in addition to the inclusive education in which their learning is monitored through teacher guidance. Swanson and Vaughn, (2010) defined it as a teaching and learning environment to meet the educational needs of the students with special needs. The related regulation issued by the ministry described how such rooms are operated and how these rooms should be designed in detail. It states that resource rooms should be designed to include the teaching materials which are consistent with the special needs of the students. In the rooms students should feel themselves comfortable and safe. Given that physically and mentally relaxed students become open to learn the design of the rooms should take into consideration these points. In regard to this topic the related regulation states that resource rooms contain the equipment and educational materials appropriate to the type of disability and educational needs of students.

There are numerous advantages of resource rooms for the students, teachers and parents (Çağlar, 2016). Since individuals with special needs differ significantly from their peers in terms of individual and developmental characteristics and educational qualifications for various reasons, they continue their education through the IEPs that are specifically developed for them as well as through the general education program. The success of the IEP implementation closely depends on school principal, guidance service at the schools, parents and teachers.

The best way for the student with special needs to show their potential is the existence of a cooperation between the stakeholders. Failure to fulfill the responsibility of any stakeholder can cause the student with special needs to have problems understanding the course (Thurlow, Ysseldyke and Algozzine, 1983). When the problems experienced by the student with special needs are not solved, a difference would occur in the level of learning between inclusive students and their peers as the topics progress over time. Over time this difference becomes more apparent and the student with special needs may not continue studying the topics thinking that he cannot close this gap with his peers. This situation negatively affects the student so much that he may become alienated from the school after a certain period of time (McNutt and Friend, 1985). On the other hand, the teacher's motivation is reduced when he observes that the student does not attempt to learn and then, the teacher discontinues his efforts and neglects the student after a while. This negative process for both students and teachers may lead to more negative conditions. In such conditions resource rooms become a good opportunity for students with special needs. Especially in crowded classrooms, the support education room has an important place in order to solve the problems of the mainstreaming student who has difficulty in learning.

Given that there are less students in resource rooms whom teachers pay attention, it is very beneficial for inclusive students. Students who have enough time to learn and receive one-to-one attention learn the subjects comfortably and succeed. In addition, the teacher's one-to-one training makes the student feel special, which makes him much more motivated to learn. In this way, the student finds an opportunity to transfer his better performance in the resource room to the classroom environment, and the interest he loses due to neglect in the classroom is revived (Haynes and Jenkins, 1986). On the other hand, it has also some positive effects on teachers. For instance, teachers become happy to see that their students are able to learn the topics studied and make more effort for students to learn. It also has some positive effects on parents. The parents of students who observe that their children are cared for develop a positive attitude towards the school and the teacher and become volunteer to actively participate in their children's education process. They also become happy to see that their children can learn the topics and recognize that the learning problems of their children can be eliminated through such attempts.

The advantages of the use of resource rooms are not limited to children's academic achievement. It also positively affects the children's development, socialization, communication skills and self-confidence. Resource rooms have also other benefits for the other stakeholders. Classroom teachers are assigned to resource rooms. The views of these teachers about the practice of resource rooms are very critical to improve the education offered to the students with

special needs. There are a limited number of studies dealing with the classroom teachers' perceptions, attitudes and capabilities about resource rooms. This study will contribute to the field through a description of the practices at resource rooms at primary schools. Therefore, the aim of the study is to uncover the views of the classroom teachers who taught at resource rooms about this practice.

In line with this aim the study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the knowledge of the classroom teachers about the resource room?
2. What do they think about the advantageous of the resource room?
3. Which criteria are taken into consideration in assigning teachers to resource rooms?
4. What kind of difficulties did the classroom teachers face while working in resource rooms?

METHODS

Design of the study

The study is designed as a case study which is one of the qualitative research methods. Case study is a method used to investigate the factors related to a situation adopting a holistic approach and to investigate the ways in which these factors affect the situation at hand (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). In case studies the data are collected through various techniques including observations and interviews (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2015). The type of study in which a topic or an event is explored in depth, defined and made specific depending on time and space is defined as case study (Mcmillan, 2000; cited in Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2016).

Participants

The participants of the study are twenty-two classroom teachers working at five different public schools in Van province center. They were chosen using the criterion sampling that is one of the purposive sampling techniques. The criterion sampling is used based on pre-established criteria (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). The criterion employed in the study is having an educational experience at resource rooms. Table 1 presents the demographical informations:

Table 1. Demographical information about the participants

Code	Gender	Teaching experience at resource rooms (Year)	Teaching experience (Year)
T1	Male	1	9
T2	Male	1	13
T3	Male	2	7
T4	Male	1	4
T5	Male	1	19
T6	Male	1	2
T7	Male	1	4
T8	Male	2	6
T9	Female	1	8
T10	Female	1	4
T11	Female	1	18
T12	Female	3	6
T13	Erkek	2	9
T14	Female	3	4
T15	Female	2	4
T16	Male	2	6
T17	Female	1	10
T18	Male	1	3
T19	Female	4	6
T20	Female	2	2
T21	Male	2	11
T22	Male	2	23

Table 1 shows that nine participants are female and thirteen are male. Half of the participants have one-year teaching experience at resource rooms, eight classroom teachers have two-year

teaching experience at resource rooms and three teachers have more than two- year teaching experience at resource rooms. Teaching experience of the participants varies between 2 years and 23 years, and the majority of them have more than five years teaching experience. It is possible to say that the information obtained in the study is varied since the views of the classroom teachers having different teaching experience are taken.

Data collection and data analysis

The data of the study were collected through semi-structured interview forms developed by the authors. The semi-structured interview forms, which allow the researcher to collect information by asking specific questions about the topic at hand to the participants, are one of the ideal data collection tools for in-depth research in qualitative studies (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2015). Some of the advantages of these interview forms include the practicality of the analysis, allowing interviewees to express their thoughts and obtaining in-depth information (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2016).

Appointments were taken from the participants, and the face-to-face interviews were carried out by one of the authors when they were available. Interview times vary between 15-20 minutes. The interviews were recorded. When a participant did not want to be recorded the author took written notes about the topics discussed in the interview and these written notes were confirmed by the participant. The items contained in the interview form are given as follows:

Item 1: What do you know about resource room? What level of knowledge about it do you think you have? Please tell it.

Item 2: Have you worked in the Resource Room activity? If yes, how many years have you served there? How was it assigned to you? Were you paid for this activity?

Item 3: Did you participate in any training activity (seminars, courses, in-service training, etc.) about the resource rooms? If so, which body organized this training activity? How long did it last? What are the contributions of this training? If you did not take any training about the resource rooms, do you need to have it?

Item 4: Did you review the regulations issued by the ministry of national education about special education and resource rooms? If you reviewed the regulations are these documents clear, understandable and easy to read? Do these regulations have any insufficient points? If so, what are these points? If you did not review the regulations, do you need to analyse them?

Item 5: Do you consider resource rooms to be beneficial? If so, what are these benefits for teachers, students and parents? If not, could you please explain your reasons?

Item 6: What are the major problems experienced in relation to the resource rooms? (those problems related to teachers, school principals and infrastructure) Which solutions can you offer to solve these problems?

The data collected were examined using the descriptive analysis technique. Descriptive analysis is a data analysis technique to describe the situation at hand as it is (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). The data in descriptive analysis are summarized and interpreted based on the pre-established themes. In the study the data collected through interviews were transcribed and put under the categories produced in line with the interview items. The findings are presented together with the related quotations. The reason for including these quotations is to present the findings based on three activity steps (data reduction, presentation of data, inference and verification) (Türnüklü, 2000). The selection of quotations used in the presentation of the findings was done taking into consideration the criteria of multiplicity, explanatory and diversity (Ünver, Bümen and Başbay, 2010).

Validity and reliability

In order to establish the validity and reliability of the study several steps were taken. Firstly interview form and items included in the form were reviewed by field specialists. The items were developed in parallel to the aim of the study. Based on the feedback taken from the specialists some items were eliminated and the others were added, and the interview form was finalized. When the statements used by the participants during the interview were not clear they were

asked such questions as “do you mean it?” without directing their answers. Following the transcription of the interview data all statements of the participants were reviewed to establish internal reliability. Each statement of the participants to the items were also analysed in terms of their consistency. Concerning external reliability the transcribed statements were coded by two researchers to see whether or not these codes are similar.

RESULTS

In this section, the findings are presented in the categories developed in line with the interview items asked to the participants and their answers given to them.

Level of information of the participants about the resource rooms

In regard to the information the participants have about the resource rooms they were asked the following item in the interviews: *What do you know about resource room? What level of knowledge about it do you think you have? Please tell it.* More than half of the participants stated that they have information about resource rooms. However, three of the participants reported that they do not have any information about resource rooms.

Some of the participants stated that they got this information through their personal experience, from the people around them and from the special education institutions they worked at. For instance, a participant, namely T16, reported that he got information about the resource rooms during his work at these rooms. Some of the participants reported that they got information about resource rooms from the people around them. For instance, T7 explained his views as follows: *“I have more hearsay information about the resource rooms.”* A participant who had experience in special education, coded T5, stated the following views: *“I have knowledge because I work in special education. I have 8 years of special education experience.”* Some of the participants pointed out that although they have information about resource rooms, it is very limited. For instance, T1 reported his views as follows: *“I believe that my information on resource rooms is very limited. Because it is the first time I teach at resource rooms.”* Another participant, T10, stated her views as follows: *“I have as much information as I hear from the people around me. We were not given enough seminars and courses on this subject.”*

Working at resource rooms and being paid for the work there

Concerning the previous experience at resource rooms the following items were asked to the participants in the interviews: *Have you worked in the Resource Room activity? If yes, how many years have you served there? How was it assigned to you? Were you paid for this activity?*

All of the participants reported that they worked at the resource rooms. Half of the participants worked there for the first time. In addition, eight participants had been working at resource rooms for two years. The number of the participants whose experience at resource rooms was more than two year is three.

Regarding the reasons for being assigned to work at the resource rooms some participants stated that they were chosen to work there due to the fact that there was no other eligible teacher at the schools. On the other hand, three participants reported that they voluntarily accepted this task, but they also added that there was no other teacher that could be assigned to work at resource room. For instance, T2 told his experience as follows: *“It was obligatory. When no one of our teachers took this task, we had to take it.”*

There were nine participants who stated that they considered the resource room as an opportunity for both themselves and inclusive students so that they accepted the task completely voluntarily.

The participants also asked to answer an item about being paid for the work the resource rooms. This question was answered by the majority of the participants in a way that they were not paid. The other participants stated that they were given additional tuition fee for the time they taught at resource rooms and that if they did not take this task, the additional course fee would be discontinued.

Training on teaching at resource rooms

The participants were asked the following questions about their previous training on teaching at resource rooms: *Did you participate in any training activity (seminer, kurs, hizmet içi eğitim vb.) about the resource rooms? If so, which body organized this training activity? How long did it last? What are the contributions of this training? If you did not take any training about the resource rooms, do you need to have it?* The majority of the participants stated that they did not receive any training about the resource rooms and that they needed to receive training on this issue. On the other hand, there were four participants who reported that they did not receive any training about the resource rooms and that they did not need any training on this subject.

Some of the participants who participated in seminars or in-service training activities about resource rooms reported that this training was one-day activity and organized by the district directorate of national education. Only one of the participants stated that he took a course on special education which lasted for one month. They added that these training activities were beneficial for them and that they were informed about the development of the IEPs. For instance, T13 indicated that he learnt to develop IEPs through these activities. Another participant, T8, explained his views on the benefits of the training about resource rooms as follows: *"In these trainings, I got information about developing lesson plans, how to approach students and the related regulations."*

Information about the regulations on resource rooms issued by the Ministry of National Education

In order to analyse the information of the participants on the regulations concerning resource rooms issued by the Ministry of National Education the following questions were asked to the participants in the interviews: *Did you review the regulations issued by the ministry of national education about special education and resource rooms? If you reviewed the regulations are these documents clear, understandable and easy to read? Do these regulations have any insufficient points? If so, what are these points? If you did not review the regulations, do you need to analyse them?*

Majority of the participants reported that they did not review the regulations concerning resource rooms issued by the Ministry of National Education. There are seven participants who analysed these regulations. On the other hand, one participant stated that he did not read the regulations, but had information about it during a seminar he had participated. Majority of the participants who reported that they did not review the regulations stated that they did not need to review these documents. These participants stated that even if they examined the regulations in general, nothing would change. For instance, T3 mentioned the problems on physical conditions stating his views as follows: *"No, I do not need to analyse these regulations. As long as the physical conditions are in this situation, it will not help to read the regulation."*

The majority of the participants who analysed the regulations concerning resource rooms issued by the Ministry of National Education argued that there is no problem in the regulations, but the real problem is the implementation of the teaching at resource rooms. However, there are some participants who stated that the regulations do not have enough details about the implementation of the teaching activities at resource rooms. For instance, T2 expressed his views in this regard as follows: *"The regulations may have some missing aspects, of course. It is just a regulation-type description about the teaching process, but there is nothing about how to approach or deal with the student at the resource rooms."* Similarly, T20 focused on the differences between the regulations and practice and expressed her views as follows: *"In other words, there is a great lack of practical dimension with what is described in the regulations. Because when we teach the child at resource rooms, we do not fully understand what to teach due to insufficient information on it in the regulations. We give students with special needs the education we give to a regular student. However, I think teaching students with special needs should be different and its process should be contained in the regulations."*

Participant views about the benefits of the resource room activity

Concerning the views about the benefits of teaching students with special needs at resource rooms the participants were asked the following questions in the interviews: Do you consider resource rooms to be beneficial? If so, what are these benefits for teachers, students and parents? If not, could you please explain your reasons? In regard to the teaching at resource rooms for teachers the participants stated that teachers could find necessary time for teaching of the students with special needs and that taking the student who was not paid necessary attention in the course to the resource for support education makes it possible for the student to have an opportunity to get one-to-one attention to complete his deficiencies. For instance, T6 expressed his views as follows: *“So if I think of it from my point of view, you have already given it to the student in the classroom environment. When you teach the child the same things again, the child learns well. Seeing that makes me feel satisfied.”*

Those participants who considered teaching at resource rooms to be beneficial reported that major advantages of resource rooms is giving the students with special needs necessary time and opportunity to learn the topics. For them inclusive students need one-to-one attention more than their peers. The participants stated that it was very difficult for teachers to effectively deal with the inclusive students, especially in crowded classrooms, so that these students were lagging behind their peers. In such a case the resource room is also stated to be a requirement for the students with special needs.

Another participant T15 stated her views on the subject as follows: *“In general, the inclusive students feel themselves somewhat excluded in the classroom. They can pull themselves back a little more. Their self-confidence improves when one-to-one care is given to them at the resource rooms. I can notice it. At least they realize that they can learn the topics. As a result, they become more active participant of their learning process and more willing to learn the courses. Therefore, students' self-confidence improves and they realize that they could be academically successful. I may not say it for every student, but some students can really make serious progress when they are taught at resource rooms.”*

Another participant T1 also emphasized the benefits of the resource rooms for social development of the students with special needs: *“Children in need of support education are also in need of one-to-one attention because they are isolated from other students in the classroom. In addition, the socialization of the students is positively affected when he recognizes that the teacher is interested in him, constantly follows his courses one-to-one and takes care of him.”* Concerning the benefits of teaching at resource room for students with special needs one of the participants T19 emphasized that the inclusive students who missed out in the classroom could overcome the deficiencies through supportive education. The participants shared the same view that supportive education makes inclusive students feel themselves special. The participants added that the student with special needs develops positive feelings towards the teacher and his motivation to learn improves, especially if the classroom teacher himself provides support education. It was stated that giving the student enough time for learning will enable the student to learn better and will please the teacher. For instance, T3 expressed his views as follows: *“It affects teachers 100%. As the child takes the lessons he has learned, the child has more opportunities to learn better.”* Another participant T7 stated that teachers could not take care of him one-to-one in classroom, but in resource rooms they have emotional comfort by completing the deficiencies through supportive education reporting *“It is a whole different feeling for the teacher. In a way, the burden of the teacher is alleviated and the child develops himself. In a way, the teacher's job is lightened.”* Similar to T7 T22 pointed out that the student can reach the level of his peers through support education and this will give the teacher an advantage in the classroom adding *“The student will come to you every day by learning more. For instance, if she is illiterate, she will begin to recognize letters or read or write. Or if he is too slow to read, he will start reading fluently. If students cannot solve something in mathematics, for example, there are four operations that teachers cannot deal with in the classroom, but if students are educated through support education, they can attend classes, go to the blackboard, raise their fingers, because his self-confidence will be improved. This will relax the teacher in the classroom.”*

The participants have two distinct opinions on the benefits of support education for parents. In regard to the benefits of the resource rooms to parents some participants reported that teaching at resource rooms makes parents pleased and parents feel that their children are valued. For instance, T3 expressed the following views *“Parents are very happy. Parents are pleased and support this practice because their children have improved through education at resource rooms.”*

However, there are also some parents who argued that parents are not interested in whether or not their children are taught at resource rooms. They therefore stated that they could not say anything about whether parents of the students with special needs regard the resource room useful. For instance, T2 reported the following views: *“I cannot say anything about that right now. It is not possible for me to answer this question about support education because we do not see any parents at school.”* Similarly, T11 reported that parents do not visit the school and have interest in the education of their children stating *“I have never seen parents at school. So I cannot say anything about whether or not support education is beneficial for parents.”*

When the participants who did not find the resource room useful are asked the reasons for their view, they cited the fact that more than one teacher gave support training to the mainstreaming students. When the implementation process at the resource rooms is examined, it is understood that more than one teacher deliver the courses to the students with special needs at the school. This situation arises when teachers are assigned to the resource rooms by the school administration since they are free during the branch class hours such as English and Religious Culture. A participant T12 stated *“For me teaching at resource rooms is useful only if only one teacher delivers the courses. However, I do not find it useful because the students with special needs is deprived of some courses and the different teachers give the lessons at the resource room. Because the courses at resource rooms are held during the branch courses at our school.”* Another participant, T18, also criticized the fact that a student with special needs is given courses by different teachers and argued that it makes the situation harder for the students. He further stated *“Each teacher has his own style of teaching. However, students cannot know which teaching style they should follow. In order for support training to be productive there should be only one teacher who deliver the courses to the students. Otherwise, students cannot handle situation and therefore, this teaching does not become productive.”*

A participant coded T9 thought that the inclusive students' education cannot be improved through support education. She further stated *“Those students who need support training should be educated at rehabilitation centers.”*

Major problems faced by the teachers concerning the teaching activities at resource rooms and their suggestions to solve such problems

Concerning the major problems experienced by the participants in regard to the teaching activities at resource rooms they were asked to answer the following: What are the major problems experienced in relation to the resource rooms? (those problems related to teachers, school principals and infrastructure) Which solutions can you offer to solve these problems? Their views about these topics are categorized into five subcategories. For them the major problem in relation to the teaching activities at resource rooms is about physical conditions of the schools. The other major problems reported by the participants are about materials, the number teachers who deliver courses at resource rooms, the nature of the assignments to resource room teaching which is not based on the principle of volunteering and support training given during class hours.

Regarding the problems on the physical conditions the participants argued that the resource room is not sufficiently heated and that the cleaning and lighting at the resource rooms are insufficient. For instance, T3 reported the following views: *“Resource room is on the 3rd floor, but the child has walking disabilities. Also there is no heating in the environment and also, it stinks.”* Another participant, T10, stated that there is no resource room at the school where she works which for her is an obstacle to offer productive support education. She further indicate *“There is no room for support training at our school, and support training is mostly carried out at teachers’*

room, library etc. which creates trouble.” Another participant T16 suggested that the ministry of national education may add a room which would be used for support training at the schools.

Some of the participants argued that the lack of materials at resource rooms is a serious problem. They pointed out that resource room does not contain the materials they need, so that support training is not attractive to the children with special needs. When the opinions of the teachers are examined in general, it is seen that their expectations and demands are in line with the regulations issued by the ministry of national education. For instance, T15 stated *“We do not have the necessary materials. Given that the students with special needs receive education in a regular classroom such an education does not attract their attention much, or I think that these teaching activities do not develop children more. I think that separate rooms should be prepared for them with specifically designed materials.”* Another participant Ö22 stated the following views in this regard: *“An equipped classroom can be designed, for example. This education should not be done with just a book and a notebook. A learning environment can be developed in which the student can be comfortable and there can be plenty of tools with visual materials, and the child can understand better by doing and can grab the topics more quickly.”*

Teaching of students with special needs by more than one teacher is another common problem raised by the participants. Classroom teachers are free during the period when students are given specific courses such as English language, religious culture and ethics. For instance, a participant T19 stated her views as follows: *“Teachers are given mandatory support training assignment in order to provide them additional tuition fees. Given that only one teacher cannot handle support training himself, other teachers can also be assigned to support training. Therefore, students with special needs are educated with different teachers at resource rooms.”* Another participant T14 also reported similar views as follows: *“Since each teacher has a unique teaching method and a way of assigning homework, the student is surprised which teacher to suit and cannot get used to any teacher. Hence, they cannot be align themselves with this type of education.”* T17 argued that for inclusive students it is a problem to be educated by any teacher who is free and stated *“the student constantly misses what he can learn in his class and lags behind his peers.”*

Similarly, T14 reported the following views focusing on the requirement that students with special needs should be educated by their own classroom teachers at resource rooms: *“If this training is to be given, it should be given by the student’s own class teacher.”*

Regardless of whether the teacher is voluntary or unwilling to be assigned by the school administration to the resource room is considered to be a fundamental problem by some participants. For instance, T9 stated *“Teachers’ assignment to resource rooms without their consent is one of the major problems...”* Another participant T12 argued *“For me it would be better to provide this education by volunteer teachers after school hours. It should be limited to their free time during the school hours.”* One participant, T14, stated that she is in favor of giving support training by the students’ own classroom teacher. She further argued that when it is not possible this education should be offered by one teacher who is volunteer for this task.

Some of the participants stated that support education should be provided at a separate time outside school hours. T17 who argued that when it is offered within the school hours the students cannot follow the other courses and added *“I think it should be out of school hours. This should not be given during the students’ other courses. Support training should be given at a different time period.”* T19 argued that when support training is given based on the free time of teachers it would not be beneficial for students. She further stated *“This semester I offer support training when I am free. For me it is not very beneficial. I think it would be more productive for the student if this training is given in a separate time frame. It would be also more productive for us. Because we try to fill those free hours and we cannot communicate with the student directly. For me two hours is not enough for such a teaching activity.”*

Concerning the problems experienced in regard to teaching at resource rooms the participants T8, T9 and T12 mentioned the topic about fees. The participants who reported that they had received fees for support education in the previous years stated that they did not receive any fees for providing training during the hours of the courses this year. Two participants, T9 and T12 argued that it negatively affects the willingness of teachers to be assigned to resource rooms to teach students with special needs and therefore, they consider it as an obligation. Another

participant T8 stated that support education should be given out of school hours and for a fee. Two participants, T11 and T21, stated that they have no problem in teaching at resource rooms.

At the end of the interview each participant was asked whether or not they wanted to add something. One of the participants, T7, stated his additional views as follows: “*we have, for example, received intense training in the university on special education. In other words, we took lessons and practice on this subject. But when we began to teach at schools, there is nothing. We can not see anything concerning support training. There is no parallel activities between theory and practice. I really think there is a connection.*” These statements show that teachers are not trained about education at resource rooms during the teacher training period. Other participants stated that they had nothing else to add.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

As a result of this study, which aims to determine the views of the classroom teachers about education at resource rooms, it is seen that the teachers participated in the study do not have enough information about this issue and the majority of the participants have confusion about the support education.

Looking at the statements of the participants who stated that they have information about support training, it is seen that there is no a complete consensus about it. When the teachers' explanations on this subject are taken into consideration, it is seen that the information about teaching activities at resource rooms is mostly obtained through personal inference and interpretation instead of scientific search about the topic. Most of the participants reported that their knowledge on teaching activities at resource rooms comes from their experience, secondhand sources and recommendations by other educators. Different studies report similar findings (Güven and Uyanık-Balat, 2006; Akay, Uzuner and Girgin, 2011; Özdemir, 2010; Nar and Tortop, 2017; Demir and Avcu 2018). In the study conducted by Cankaya (2010) on inclusion practices with a sample of classroom teachers, it is found that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge about this type of education. In the study by Özeydin and Çolak (2011), it is found that teachers had some information about support education but this information was not sufficient for support education. Given that similar findings are reported in different studies it can be argued that teachers should be informed through in-service activities, seminars and courses.

Teachers have negative reactions to the differential practices on resource rooms at different schools such as volunteering, time of education, receiving wages for duty. Classroom teachers working at resource rooms are paid 25% higher than regular course fee (MONE, 2016). In the guide about education at resource rooms issued by the ministry of national education it is stated that classroom teachers may be assigned to resource rooms for eight hours per week. However, in most of the schools, subject matter teachers do not deliver courses such as visual arts, music, games and physical training. Therefore, the average number of courses that classroom teachers do not deliver during school hours is around 4 lessons (such as English language and religious culture and moral knowledge). In this case, there are two options for the classroom teachers to be employed at the resource rooms. Classroom teachers will either complete eight-hour obligatory courses out of school hours or they will deliver courses only in school hours and therefore, another teacher will be required to complete the support training. It was seen that both situations existed in the schools where the interviews were carried out. Some of the teachers who provide support training outside of school hours to complete their eight-hour obligatory hours do not have problems since they do this work completely voluntarily. Providing support education in this way is more beneficial for inclusive students.

In cases where there is no volunteer classroom teacher to be assigned for the teaching of the students with special needs at resource rooms, teachers with free hours are assigned for this task. Given that teachers do not want to work in this way and outside the school hours, more than one teacher may deliver the lessons of an inclusive student at the resource room. However, the support education given in this way turns into a process full of problems instead of being beneficial for both teachers, parents and the inclusive students. There is no healthy communication and parent-teacher cooperation between the stakeholders as support education

is not the only teachers' responsible. The studies by Nar and Tortop (2017) and Yazıcı and Durmuşoğlu (2017) conclude that teacher-parent cooperation is very important for the participation of parents in the education process. Teacher-parent collaboration becomes more difficult when more than one teacher deliver the courses to students. It also causes problems for parents to help the students. As teachers accept this task as an obligation, they do not fully accept the student and do not feel themselves responsible for preparing and implementing the IEPs. For inclusive students support training given by more than one teacher may cause some problems. Given each teacher's teaching method is different, it is hard for the students with special needs how they will act on. In cases where teachers are not in contact, students can be assigned excessive homework. In addition, due to the characteristics of their development period, students are likely to get used to their classroom teacher and loses their motivation when different teachers other than their classroom teachers offer support education. Therefore, it is advised that support education should be provided by the classroom teachers of the students with special needs or a single teacher.

Given the class sizes where inclusive students are being educated are crowded and the physical conditions at the schools are inadequate, the problems concerning the infrastructure of the schools should be solved. Most schools do not have a specially designed space for support education. For this reason, libraries, laboratories, guidance teacher's rooms and teachers' rooms at the schools are used for support education. However, since most of these areas are common areas, it is very difficult for the teacher to provide effective education to the students with special needs. Therefore, special areas should be available for the rooms where support training will be given. Although it is important to have a resource rooms at schools, these rooms should be equipped with the teaching and learning materials in accordance with each grade level listed in the regulations issued by the Ministry of National Education. However, the majority of the schools do not have necessary teaching and learning materials. Therefore, such a condition adversely affects the educational activities offered at resource rooms. Some studies (Nayır and Karaman-Kepenekçi, 2013; Kış, 2013; Çağlar, 2016; Öpengin, 2018) suggest that teachers have problems in terms of physical conditions. The lack of a separate room for support education in many schools makes difficult the teaching at resource rooms to be productive. Therefore, strengthening the physical infrastructure is very important before the students are taken into inclusive education.

The majority of the participants reported that teaching at resource rooms is very useful. Since there is one-to-one training at the resource rooms, students and teachers interact more and as a result of this interaction, permanent learning takes place. Students who do not have the opportunity to express themselves in a crowded classroom environment have an opportunity to express their views and feelings freely at the resource rooms. Over time, the student's self-confidence increases when he manage to learn the topics successfully, and he gradually brings this success to the learning environment. As a result of the improvement in the student performance teacher becomes more interested in that student in the classroom and ensures that he reaches the development level of the class. Cheng and Ren (2010) stated that the positive development of the student motivates their teachers. A similar result is reported in the study conducted by Çulha (2010), and it was stated that support education is an important opportunity for the students with special needs. The parents of the inclusive students become happy when they see that their children are given special attention and as a result, become more willing to cooperate with the teacher (Batu, 2015). Ünay (2012) have some similar findings about the parents. It can be said that support education plays an important role in cooperating with the parents of students with special needs. In the study conducted by Ünal (2008), it is concluded that support education is effective in communication with parents.

In short the classroom teachers sampled stated that support education given through resource rooms is beneficial and that all schools where inclusive students are educated should have enough resource rooms. However, their views also suggest the teachers working at the resource rooms do not have sufficient knowledge and background information about resource rooms. Pre-service and in-service training activities should be much more widespread concerning the use of resource rooms. Physical conditions and teaching materials contained at the resource rooms are another important issue. It would be more beneficial for both the student

and the teacher to equip the resource rooms with proper physical conditions and teaching material. It is understood that the teachers who will be employed at the resource room should be volunteers and that it would be more appropriate to give them fee for their work at the resource rooms. For this reason, it is recommended that volunteering should be taken as a basis in the assignments and that a fee should be paid for the assignment. It is seen that there are limited number of longitudinal studies on the education offered to the students with special needs in resource rooms. Future studies will contribute to the field.

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