

## Values Education Experiences of Turkish Class Teachers: A Phenomonological Approach

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### Suggested Citation:

Yildirim, K. (2009). Values education experiences of Turkish class teachers: A phenomonological approach. *Egitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 35, 165-184.

### Abstract

*Problem Statement:* Teachers endow children with values through education. The effective role they play in the teaching of values has been documented through extensive research. These studies have shown that teachers should act as favorable role models reflecting values accurately inside and outside schools, creating ethical classroom environments, and using different strategies to provide children with various value-related experiences formally in the classroom and informally outside of the classroom. Naturally, individuals with democratic citizenship skills who will contribute positively to their society can only be raised by teachers who are equipped to offer values education. For these reasons, the opinions and experiences of teachers regarding the process of values education are important.

*Purpose of the Study:* The study aims to identify the values education opinions of class teachers who have a critical role in transmitting the basic values of the society to children, and to describe their thoughts and experiences regarding this process.

*Method:* In line with the problem and the general aim of the study, a qualitative research paradigm was used. As the study aims to identify the opinions and experiences of primary school class teachers, it is a phenomenological case study. The data was collected through focus group interviews using a semi-structured form based on the literature. Participants were selected using convenience, homogeneous, and criterion sampling. The data was analysed with content analysis and NVivo2.0.

*Findings:* Data obtained from the focus group interviews was analysed and the findings were presented using the "Category (theme) based data display approach." Teacher opinions regarding the process of values education were collected under three categories. The "meanings attributed to values" category refers to how teachers perceive values and the general meaning of the concept of value. The "process of values education" category explains why values need to be taught; where, when and by

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whom they should be taught; and how teachers equip children with values. The “values education and problems” category denotes the problems encountered by teachers during the process of values education.

*Conclusions:* The results showed that teachers: prioritised “patriotism” among the values to be taught to children; tried to explain values using other concepts such as belief, attitude, virtue, character, ethics, esthetics, or morals; believed that values education should start at home and parents should play a more active role in the process until schools take over; organized different activities in and out of the classroom to equip children with values; and encountered numerous problems in the process of values education stemming particularly from the insufficiency of the family and the environment.

*Keywords:* Education, instruction, class teacher, values, values education