

Preparing Teachers as Researchers: Evaluating the Quality of Research Reports Prepared by Student Teachers

Gültekin Çakmakcı*

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Abstract

Problem Statement: The ability to carry out educational research is often cited as an attribute a teacher should possess. However, there are very little empirical data available on the evaluation of teacher research.

Purpose of study: This paper reports on an attempt to develop such an attribute in a group of 50 science student teachers in Turkey. This study aims to evaluate the quality of the research reports prepared by science student teachers during their teacher-training course.

Methods: The participants were 50 science student teachers enrolled in a course called Special Topics in Science II, in which they were introduced to techniques to critically evaluate academic articles, design and conduct a small-scale research project, and write a research report in terms of the basic methodological requirements needed in an academic paper. A document analysis of 12 research reports was undertaken to evaluate the quality of the research reports prepared by student teachers.

Findings and Results: The results suggest that student teachers who were guided by a mentor or other knowledgeable figures were capable of designing and conducting a research project, writing a research paper, and communicating their findings to others at conferences.

Conclusions and Recommendations: This study articulated ways in which a teachers-as-researchers approach can be built in the design of a course in pre-service teacher education. This study has not simply investigated the outcomes of the course—it also made explicit the actual design of it. The study contributes to the literature because it provides an example of teacher research that may be useful to other science educators with similar goals. Some possible implications for pre-service and in-service teacher education and further research are also discussed in this paper.

Keywords: teachers as researchers, teacher research, action research, teacher education

* PhD, Hacettepe University, Faculty of Education, Turkey, cakmakci@hacettepe.edu.tr