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Development of Inclusive Education Project

Technical Assistance for Increasing the Quality of the Special Education Services for Inclusive Education

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Current Situation Analysis Report

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INTRODUCTION

Although there have been many changes in the conceptual foundations of special education services, inclusive education has been the focus of special education services since the Salamanca Declaration of 1994. Inclusive education is an approach which is based on the idea that all children benefit from the education system at maximum level by embracing children with special education needs as well (Odom, Buysse and Soukakou, 2011). Findings of the researches conducted on special education for years demonstrate that this approach has positive effects on all stakeholders engaged in the process. Researchers focusing on these effects emphasise the outcomes of inclusion for the students with special education needs that benefit from mainstreaming practices as well as for the children with usual development receiving education in classrooms where these practices are carried out. The researches show that all students in the classrooms where inclusive/mainstreaming [1]practices are utilised are positively affected in terms of academic, social and behavioural development (for instance, Carter Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz,2008; Cole, Waldron, & Majd, 2004; Collins, Branson, Hall, & Rankin, 2001; Hunt, Soto, Majer, & Doering,2003). The relevant studies have demonstrated positive educational and psychosocial effects such as reading attainments (Waldron and McLeskey, 1998), psychosocial functions (Karsten, Peetsma, Roeleveld and Vergeer, 2001) and social acceptance among children based on inclusion/mainstreaming practices (Buysse, Goldman and Skinner, 2002; Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2016; Odom, Zercher, Li, Marquart, and Sandall, 2006). We can see such advantages of inclusive/mainstreaming practices since the enforcement of the Law on Children with Special Education Needs in 1983 in Turkey.

For instance, Çulhaoğlu-İmrak and Sığırtmaç (2010) reported that positive social communication behaviours of children benefiting from mainstreaming practices increased. Similarly, Çolak, Vuran and Uzuner (2013) found out that mainstreaming practices helped students with special education needs socialise and be accepted more easily. Çatak-Atik and Tekinarslan (2008) reported that the skills of understanding a word, a sentence and a text read developed in the individuals with mild intellectual disability receiving mainstreaming practices at 12-13 years of age. It is not possible to explain the social and academic development provided by the inclusive/mainstreaming practices only with the presence of students with special education needs in the classroom. It is beyond doubt that the success of inclusive/mainstreaming practices depends on the presence of all factors playing crucial roles in this success. Some of these factors are social acceptance, realising the needs of students and attaching importance to them, determining the programme-based needs of students, effective management and education, personnel-parent support and cooperation and provision of support special education services (Batu, 2008; Özokçu, 2013). These factors were listed by Smith, Polloway, Patton and Dowdy (2006) as preparation of programmes for meeting the needs of students or adapting the existing programmes according to the needs of students; use of effective instructional methods and techniques; effective classroom management and provision of the necessary support services.

On the other hand, the studies focusing on the presence of these factors listed for the success of inclusive/mainstreaming practices report that although progress has been made with respect to the

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[1] The terms "inclusion" and "mainstreaming" are used interchangeably in the text.

number of students benefiting from full-time practices and functionality of these practices, problems related to inclusive/mainstreaming practices in general prevail. High number of students, presence of many students with special education needs in the same classroom, insufficient physical conditions, lack of materials, lack of knowledge of parents and teachers, insufficiency of assessment tools and shortcomings observed in the support education services are among the main problems (Akçamete, Büyükkarakaya, Bayraklı and Sardohan, 2012). Saraç and Çolak (2012) reported based on their findings obtained from classroom teachers that the teachers could not receive adequate support from other school personnel regarding inclusive/mainstreaming practices. In another study, it was reported that schools and classrooms did not provide an appropriate physical environment for mainstreaming practices (Sadioğlu, Bilgin, Batu and Oksal, 2013). Unlike other studies, Yazıcıoğlu (2018) argued that the existing legislation was not sufficient for the implementation of certain mainstreaming models. In the compilation study of Bakkaloğlu, Yılmaz, Könez and Yalçın (2018), it was reported that teachers had knowledge gaps and limited practical skills with respect to mainstreaming and did not use education interventions within the scope of mainstreaming. Similarly, Akkaya and Güçlü (2018) stated that classrooms were not big enough, teachers could not receive adequate support from families and physical conditions of classrooms were not adequate. Additionally, it was determined that teachers and administrators had knowledge gaps and were not adequately experienced about mainstreaming and special education (Babaoğlan and Yılmaz, 2010; Demir and Açar, 2011), they did not have adequate information on individual education plans (IEPs) and could not fully implement the IEPs (Avcıoğlu, 2011; Çuhadar, 2006; Kargın, Acarlar, & Sucuoğlu, 2003), and they did not have enough information on what should be done prior to and after mainstreaming (Pınar-Sazak and Yıkmış, 2004). Apart from these, particularly teachers and administrators reported other problems such as the failure to select the appropriate students for mainstreaming education, in other words, students other than those who displayed mild inability were included in these practices as well (Saraç and Çolak, 2010) and the lack of counselling and guidance provided to them (Güzel, 2014; Ministry of National Education (MEB), 2010; Sadioğlu, 2011; Uysal, 1995; Vural and Yıkmış, 2008).

When the above-mentioned studies are considered, it is seen that assessments concerning inclusive/mainstreaming practices in Turkey have generally been made on the basis of studies conducted with limited participation, data obtained from a limited number of stakeholders, and review of the existing documents or compilation of the existing literature. When Bakkaloğlu, Yılmaz, Könez and Yalçın (2018) compiled the studies conducted on pre-school mainstreaming practices between 1992 and 2016, they reached 58 studies and found out that there were 41 descriptive studies and seven compilations. In order to see the big picture concerning the problems related to inclusive/mainstreaming specified in the existing literature, we need assessments, which go beyond descriptions and are conducted with an understanding of covering not only negative aspects but also positive aspects with a focus on the process and products. Therefore, the research presented in this report aimed to determine the current situation in Turkey in terms of inclusive/mainstreaming practices on the basis of the opinions of individuals teaching in different fields through a qualitative elaboration process. To this end, the study was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, changes in the process of inclusive/mainstreaming from past to present, legislative arrangements concerning inclusive/mainstreaming, placement process in inclusive/mainstreaming education, role of mainstreaming/inclusion in the education system, statistical information about mainstreaming/inclusion, teacher training policies regarding inclusive/mainstreaming and literature related to inclusive/mainstreaming were addressed in detail. In the second phase, a descriptive research was conducted to determine the existing situation in terms of practices. For this purpose, in-depth information and examples were collected about problems and

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existing practices through focus group meetings and individual interviews. Answers were sought to the following questions in this research:

1. What is the process from the identification of special education needs of an individual to the placement in inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
2. What are the roles of teachers in the placement of students in inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
3. What is done for preparation to inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
4. What kind of in-class practices are employed within the scope of inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
5. What kind of environmental arrangements are made within the scope of inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
6. What kind of instructional adaptations are made within the scope of inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
7. What kind of social activities are performed within the scope of inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
8. What kind of practices are used for behavioural control within the scope of inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
9. What kind of difficulties are encountered within the scope of inclusion/mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
10. What are the general characteristics of the inclusion/mainstreaming system in Turkey?
11. What are your suggestions for improving the inclusion/mainstreaming system and practices in Turkey?

First Phase of The Research: Literature Review

The main purpose of the current situation analysis is to present the functioning capacity of inclusion model as a system in Turkey in view of the existing conditions and education system in Turkey. In accordance with this purpose, proposals for solutions are presented with the aim of developing a feasible inclusion model in consideration of the Turkish education system and opportunities within the framework of the current situation and problems determined as well as successful practices in the world. In this respect, a historical overview of inclusive practices in Turkey will shed light on the development of inclusive practices in the country. In the following part, detailed information is presented on the historical process of mainstreaming/inclusion practices.

History of Special Education and Mainstreaming/Inclusive Practices in Turkey

In Turkey, special education practices started long before the establishment of the Republic. Even the first practices focusing on the rehabilitation of disability for a specific group in an isolated environment were observed in the eras of the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires. For instance, it is reported that there were education practices for gifted children in the Enderun Schools which are known to have been used in the Ottoman Empire as of the 16th century (Ataman, 1984). In late 19th century, special education classes were opened for hearing and visually impaired individuals in İstanbul. These schools were turned

into special education schools for hearing and visual impairments, in particular, beginning from early to mid-20th century (Akçamete and Kaner, 1999).

With the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, importance attached to education increased, and views favouring the abolishment of gender discrimination in education were adopted (Sucuoğlu and Kargın, 2008). Until the 1950s, mainly care-based services were delivered for children with special education needs in the institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (Özyürek, 2004). From the first years of the Republic until the 1950s, since the priority of the state was economic development, and there were economic infrastructure problems, significant progress could not be achieved in special education practices at the level of school or programme.

In the 1950s, an outstanding development was the transfer of special education practices from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). This amendment shows that special education started to be considered on the basis of education, not health (Özyürek, 2004). Furthermore, the first systematic step was taken for training personnel for the field of special education, and Special Education Branch was opened in 1952 within the body of Gazi Education Institute, which is currently known as Gazi University Faculty of Education. After a short while, this branch was closed after the graduation of its first students. In 1955, the first step for institutional organisation of special education services was taken, and the Guidance and Research Centres (GRC) were established. It is also reported that special education classes were first opened in these dates (Özsoy, 1990). On the other hand, a legislative arrangement of 1956 introduced necessary measures for the training of gifted children by the state. 1960s are important in that they were the years when both legislative arrangements with respect to special education continued, and personnel training was conducted within the body of universities (Sucuoğlu and Kargan, 2008).

The establishment of Special Education Department is important since it provided a source for training the personnel needed in the field (Enç, 1972). Delivering education at the undergraduate, master and doctorate levels, the Special Education Department aimed to meet the personnel, publication and research needs of the field and made significant contributions. With the "Special Education Teaching Certificate Programme" introduced in 1978, the department awarded special education teaching certificates to the teachers working in different fields and to primary school teachers, in particular, and trained teachers for all branches of special education (Akçamete and Kaner, 1999). In 1970s, an increasingly higher number of students with special needs started to receive education in special education schools at the primary education level. The number of separate day and boarding schools for students in different disability groups increased in these years. From the 1950s to the 1980s, although outstanding developments were observed with respect to special education, these developments were mainly related to the provision of education by the state for the individuals with special education needs; education was largely conducted in special education schools and classes, and there were no systematic endeavours towards mainstreaming (Sucuoğlu ve Kargın, 2008). Although significant progress was made in the field of special education, mainstreaming practices could not be seen in this period (Özyürek, 2004). Therefore, special education practices became widespread in special education classes and schools, which were isolated environments, in Turkey until the 1980s.

The 1980s are the years when important developments occurred in the field of special education. A structure was established throughout the country for the planning and implementation of special education services (Kargın and Sucuoğlu, 2008). For instance, special education services were managed by directorate general within the Ministry and by GRCs in the provinces (Akçamete and Kaner, 1999). In this decade, many laws were adopted in the field of special education as well. Mainstreaming practices started in 1983 in Turkey and became widespread with the adoption of the Decree Law no.573 on Special Education. When the mainstreaming practices introduced in the 1980s are examined, it stands out that institutions, teachers implementing the programme and organisation of support services are insufficient despite the sufficiency of legal basis. On the other hand, despite the shortcomings related to environment and personnel, it can be stated that mainstreaming of students with special education needs into regular classes within the scope of education and inclusion programmes regardless of their needs and performances is a positive development.

The 1990s are the years when the developments related to special education and mainstreaming continued by further increasing. In this decade, increases were observed in the numbers of personnel, studies and publications (Sucuoğlu and Kargın, 2008). Mainstreaming practices became fully widespread after the Decree Law no. 573 entered into force in 1997 and the Special Education Services Regulation entered into force in 2000 (MoNE, 2000). The 1990s witnessed legislative arrangements and international conventions related to mainstreaming practices, quantitative developments such as the increasing number of students benefiting from mainstreaming practices as well as acceleration of scientific works.

In the Special Education Services Regulation dated 2000, special education services to be offered to the individuals with special education needs were explained in detail from the phase of identification to the placement and assessment services. The regulation in question was updated in 2009, 2010, 2012 and finally in 2018. In the Special Education Services Regulation published before 2018, the principles and criteria of inclusion are explained in detail under the title of "Education Practices through Mainstreaming", while the principles and criteria are provided under the title of "Education Practices through Mainstreaming /Inclusion" in the last published regulation (2018). According to the data obtained from the database of Ministry of National Education Information System (MEBBIS), the total number of students benefiting from mainstreaming/inclusion practices in primary and secondary schools was 54,309 in 2006, this number increased to 72,425 in 2009. While 70,563 of these students were studying in the primary schools, the number of mainstreaming/inclusion students in the secondary education institutions was 1,862 (MEB, 2010).

In the 2010s, mainstreaming practices became widespread and accordingly, the number of students with special education needs benefiting from mainstreaming practices increased rapidly. For instance, according to the data of 2012-2016 Official Statistics Programme of the Ministry of National Education, the total number of students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in the primary and secondary schools in the 2013-2014 academic year is 173,117. 152,485 of these students studied in the primary and lower secondary schools. The number of mainstreaming students in the upper secondary education institutions was 20,632 (MEB, 2014). These figures show that the increase in the number of students with special education needs studying in the general education classes has continued in an accelerated

manner in Turkey. In parallel to this increase, new special education classes and special education schools are opened.

As the number of students placed in mainstreaming programmes and separate school programmes has increased, personnel shortage in the field has increased as well. This brought a rapid increase in the number of undergraduate programmes on special education, which is responsible for the training of special education teachers as the leading personnel working in the education of individuals with special education needs. For instance, while the number of special education departments actively providing undergraduate education was eight at the beginning of the 2000s, this number is 36 currently. In recent years, Science and Art Centres (BİLSEMs) have become widespread for the education of the gifted children in Turkey. The number of these centres, which are opened to provide the gifted children with after-school support training, is rapidly increasing. Furthermore, it is striking that support education rooms within the scope of support special education services, which are one of the significant factors of mainstreaming practices, have started to become widespread as of 2010s.

As a result, it is observed that the developments related to special education and mainstreaming were led by legislative arrangements in Turkey while the developments related to mainstreaming practices were initiated by the families in the world. In Turkey, special education practices started before the establishment of the Republic, halted from time to time and have been evolving into practices allowing the individuals with special education needs to receive education with their typically developing peers along with interventions supporting their developments via support services. In this context, with the legislative arrangements becoming widespread, a quantitative development allowing the conduct of education in general education environments instead of special environments on the basis of the principle that learning environments should not be restrictive, to the extent possible, has been observed. It is also observed that mainstreaming practices have developed in parallel to the development of special education practices and quantitatively under the shadow of legal developments. As an inevitable result of these developments, significant progress has been made in the training of teachers. Today, project-based works continue for the development of special education practices and mainstreaming practices under the leadership of the MoNE and with the support of universities, civil society organisations and private sector.

The Shifting Process from Mainstreaming to Inclusion in Turkey

In the USA and Western Europe, in addition to the legislative arrangements on mainstreaming, factors such as the problems caused by education in the special education classrooms, court decisions, changes in attitudes, the concepts of least restrictive environment and normalisation, technological developments, higher acceptance level for early education and the increase in the number of research conducted with individuals with special education needs in the general education environments have directed the development of mainstreaming practices. As for Turkey, preference of mainstreaming environments over isolated environments as the education environment of individuals with special education needs started with legislative arrangements. From the 1950s to the 1980s, special education practices were employed mainly in special education schools and classes without any systematic endeavours towards mainstreaming. With a legislative arrangement taking effect in 1983, this situation started to change. The Law on Children with Special Education Needs focused on the concepts,

principles, institutions and duties related to special education and provided explanations on the identification and placement of the children with special education needs. With this law, processes of identifying the children with special education needs and placing them into schools were put under legal guarantee. In Turkey, mainstreaming practices were launched following the first law adopted in 1983, numerous children from different identification groups started to benefit from primary and secondary education institutions, and the number of children with special education needs participating in the practices started to increase year by year (Sucuoğlu, 2004). In the 1990s, discussions on the education environments of individuals with special education needs continued in the National Education Councils and scientific meetings, workshops and scientific researches related to special education. In the relevant council or board meetings, it was decided to focus more on day schools and to disseminate the mainstreaming programmes. Also, it was acknowledged that the education of students with special education needs included in mainstreaming programmes should be planned individually and that the education should be provided and monitored by the specialists of the field. On June 10, 1994 in the city of Salamanca of Spain, 92 countries including Turkey adopted the Salamanca Statement which states that: "*regular schools with inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system*". After the Decree Law no. 573 adopted in 1997, many legislative arrangements were introduced with respect to mainstreaming on the basis of the Special Education Services Regulation dated 2000. In this respect, definitions concerning mainstreaming were made, and the personnel to be engaged in mainstreaming practices and their roles were determined. As of the 2000s, the number of students with special education needs placed in the general education institutions within the scope of mainstreaming practices has increased. In the Circular titled "Education Applications via Mainstreaming Practices" adopted in 2008, measures needed to be taken in the classrooms depending on the type of disability of the students with special education needs included in the general education institutions were identified. Therefore, with a perspective of education for all in the general education environment, concrete steps were taken for a shift towards inclusion on the basis of a policy characterised by physical arrangements, behaviour management and instructional adaptations for students with special education needs. In 2013, the MoNE published a guideline to provide guidance on inclusion practices. In 2017, the above-mentioned circular was published again with the name of "Educational Practices via Mainstreaming/Inclusion Implementations". In the Regulation on Special Education Services updated in 2018, the process regarding how to carry out mainstreaming/inclusion practices was explained in detail, and the whole text included the concept "mainstreaming/inclusion". Within the framework of the project titled "Strengthening Special Education (ÖZEGEP)", which is co-financed by the Republic of Turkey and European Union and coordinated by MoNE Directorate General for Special Education and Guidance Services, studies were carried out to strengthen institutional capacity in order to strengthen inclusion. Within the scope of ÖZEGEP, policy recommendations on inclusive education have been developed and studies have been carried out to raise awareness in the society, to improve the competencies of teachers in the field of special education and to spread the implementation of barrier-free school/inclusive education practices. In addition, within the scope of ÖZEGEP, adaptation studies of psychological measurement tools were carried out. Other important activities carried out within the scope of ÖZEGEP include raising awareness on the integration of people with disabilities to the society increasing the professional competencies of teachers in the pilot provinces regarding special education needs, improving the quality of educational diagnosis and measurement services in GRCs, and improving the
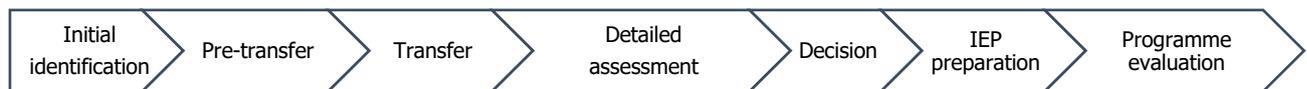
quality of work and vocational education for people with disabilities. The Barrier-Free School Model designed for the learning needs and characteristics of individuals in pilot provinces has been implemented in 10 pilot provinces. Finally, the 2023 Education Vision declared by the MoNE stresses the acceptance and education of the individuals with special educations needs in the general education environments.

In Turkey, the shift from mainstreaming to inclusion has taken place on both scientific and political spheres. As in the case of mainstreaming, a vertical mobility from the central organisation of MoNE towards schools stands out in the development of inclusion practices. The studies on the effects of measures taken towards mainstreaming/inclusion on the learning environments are quite limited. Discussions on different systems as general education and isolated education environments continue with the necessity of establishment of a school environment sensitive to inclusion in line with the perspective of education for all without discrimination in local education units on one hand and separate systems in the form of general and special education classes and special education schools on the other hand.

The Process from Assessment to Practice in Mainstreaming/Inclusion in Turkey

In education practices through inclusion in Turkey, the process of decision making for taking an inclusion measure for an individual is a systematic process, which is set in the Decree Law no. 573 on Special Education, Special Education Services Regulation and Circular on Education via Mainstreaming/Inclusion Practices, and it is composed of several steps. The detailed educational assessment conducted by the Guidance and Research Centres (GRCs) is a multi-dimensional process requiring the assessment of the students from cognitive, emotional and social aspects. The Special Education Services Regulation adopted in 2000 in Turkey envisages that the Educational Identification, Monitoring and Assessment Team conduct the detailed assessments on the students. Guidance teacher, classroom teacher, special education teacher, psychologist and people from other areas of specialisation, if required, are members of this team. (Kargın and Sucuoğlu, 2007). Figure 1 shows the steps followed in the inclusion practices.

| Initial identification | Pre-transfer | Transfer | Detailed assessment | Decision | IEP preparation | Programme evaluation |

Figure 1. Educational assessment process in Turkey (Kargın, 2007).

The main aim of the initial identification step is to determine the students who have difficulty in meeting the main requirements of the school/class, fall behind/go ahead of the peers due to their learning features and are in need of support. At the end of the initial identification process, classroom teachers initiate the pre-transfer process for the students who have difficulty in following the general education programme. The main aim of the pre-transfer process is to prevent the stigmatisation of the student and to ensure that the student can follow the general education programme without the need for individual education practices. This is a process in which the classroom teacher adapts the instruction methods, materials, arrangements in the physical environment of the classroom, objectives and, when

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necessary, homework and strives for keeping the student in the general education class before the student is referred to the GRCs for detailed educational assessment (Kargın, 2007). If the student continues falling behind or going ahead of the programme despite the adaptations and support provided to ensure that the student follows the general education programme, the transfer process is initiated for the student. In this step, measures adopted for the student, all adaptations, adaptation results and all information about the student are collected in a report. In this way, the student is referred to the detailed educational assessment process with more information. It is highly important that this report elaborates on the weaknesses and strengths of the student, who is thought to have special education needs, in terms of learning or development while following the general education programme as well as explaining the adaptations previously made and their effects on the progress of the student. The classroom teacher and guidance teacher shall prepare the report together. This report prepared in the referral step is called as the personal development report. The decision to refer the student for detailed educational assessment should be taken by the classroom teacher, school counselling service and the family of the student together (Kargın, 2007; MoNE Special Education Services Regulation). The family of the student, parents or legal custodian have the main and legal responsibility for the student. However, even if the decision of the family and/or custodian(s) is negative, the transfer process is initiated with the positive decision of the classroom teacher and counselling service. The student is referred to the GRC located in the region where the school is located. Following the referral step, detailed educational assessment process starts. The main objective of this process is to decide whether the student is suitable for the special education services. Detailed educational assessment process is a formal process, and standard tests, which are formal assessment tools, are utilised in this process (Kargın, 2007). Standard tests are intelligence tests or standardised development inventories suitable for the age of the student. Detailed educational assessment process is conducted by the GRCs. Pursuant to Special Education Services Regulation published in 2006 and updated in 2018, there should be a written application by the parent of the individual or school and institution administrators for that individual to be subject to educational assessment and identification, and for the students enrolled in a school, classroom teachers have to prepare a personal development report. If the parents demand support education from rehabilitation centres, the individual should have a "Health Board Report for Disability" received from a full-fledged hospital.

Following the detailed educational assessment, the process for decision making on the relevance of special education services starts. At the end of the detailed assessment and decision-making by the "Special Education Evaluation Board" in GRCs on whether the student needs special education services if it is decided that the student does not need special education, the student continues education in his/her current class. If it is decided that the student needs special education, he or she can be placed in a separate school, special education classes or general education classes to benefit from inclusive practices in accordance with his/her performance and needs. For the students with a decision taken by provincial or district special education boards for placement in classes where inclusive practices are applied, the next step is the preparation of the individual education programme (IEP). The IEP team consisting of the student, classroom teacher, family, counselling service and other branch teachers prepares a programme where short-term and long-term objective is set for the academic year in line with the general education programme, current performance level of the student and needs of the student and the family, and the programme is put into practice by those responsible for the student. Following the IEP implementation, IEP team evaluates the programme. The monitoring process is

finalised after discussions on the objectives achieved at the end of the academic year as well as the objectives that remain to be achieved and reasons behind it.

A very critical component in improving the quality of mainstreaming/inclusion practices is support special education services. Support special education services are support practices offered to students with special education needs and teachers. The support special education service defined within the scope of the Special Education Services Regulation updated in 2018 is the support education room. The support education room is defined in the related regulation as an environment for providing support education services to the students and talented students who continue their education through full-time mainstreaming/inclusion in the areas that they need support. For individuals in need of special education, regardless of the educational identification, appropriate environment arrangements are made in schools where full-time mainstreaming/inclusion is provided, and support training room is opened. In Article 25 of the Special Education Services Regulation, detailed descriptions of which teachers will take part in the implementation of the support training room are provided. In accordance with the proposal of the Provincial or District Special Education Services Board, support education room is opened by the Provincial or District Directorates for National Education for the students who continue their education through full-time mainstreaming/inclusion in pre-primary, primary and secondary education schools. The students who will receive education, the courses that will be taught to the students and the weekly course hours that the students will take are determined according to the decision of IEP development unit. This planning is carried out in a way that does not exceed 40% of the total course hours per week. For example, for a student who studies 30 lessons per week, the mentioned plan is applied with a maximum of 12 lessons (30x40 / 100 = 12). This limitation on the total number of hours is quite positive in terms of preventing the student from being severely separated from the general education environment. On the other hand, the work programs of the teachers to be assigned in the support education room are carried out by the school administration. According to the number of students who will receive support education, more than one support education room can be opened in schools. In the support education room, one-to-one education is carried out considering the educational performance of the students. However, in line with the decision of the IEP development unit, in addition to the one-to-one education with the students who have the same level of educational performance, group education can be provided where maximum 3 students will be educated together. In line with the planning of the support education IEP development unit, it can be planned at the weekend during or out of school hours. In support education rooms, students with special education needs and gifted students who can continue their education in the same class with their peers with usual development within the scope of education through mainstreaming/inclusion in schools and institutions. In the support education room, special education teachers, classroom teachers and field teachers and special education teachers working in GRCs or teachers in other schools and institutions are assigned according to the educational needs of the students as primarily among the teachers of the school. For the teachers to be assigned in the support education room, before the teachers start to provide education service in the support education room, training seminars are organized by Provincial/District National Education Directorates to cover the type and characteristics of disabilities, special education methods and techniques, and other necessary topics within the scope of the planning to be realized by the Provincial / District Special Education Services Board. Planning is made by the school administration on the days and times for the students who will be trained in the support education room and the teachers who will provide training services. Students' attending to the school, monitoring etc. is recorded by the school

administration to the class book. Based on the programs followed by students with special educational needs, IEP is prepared in line with educational performance and needs. The IEP should include information on the type, duration, frequency of the support education services necessary for the student and where and by whom the support education services are provided. In the IEP development unit, all the teachers involved in the education process of the student who needs special education are included, and in the general achievement evaluation of the student, the evaluation results made in the support education room are taken into account in addition to the classroom evaluation. In the support education room, enrichment and expansion practices are conducted for differentiating and individualizing the program. For the students who are trained in the support education room, in the courses that require practical skills training, support education service can be provided in a way that will include one-to-one training within a group in a classroom, workshop, and laboratory etc. environment in line with the opinions and suggestions of the IEP development unit. Assessment is made in line with IEP by using measurement and assessment tools for differentiation of teaching. The measurement tools, worksheets / notebooks used in the evaluation processes related to the courses in which the student is trained in the support education room are delivered to the school administration with the final report.

Flexibility such as providing support training rooms through group education and working at the weekend can have advantages in reducing the time/cost burden on teacher recruitment for individuals with special educational needs who have similar performance levels to get support but may create a disadvantageous situation for students who need intensive individual education. On the other hand, if the student is to receive education during the course hours, the education could be provided during the course that the student is planned to receive support education. In addition, the courses that talented students follow in accordance with their talent fields are provided by differentiation through enrichment and acceleration in the support education room. In the support education rooms in primary and secondary schools, branch teachers working in upper levels can also be assigned to provide training for talented students. In the 2006 Special Education Services Regulation, which is abolished, while the teachers to be assigned in the support education rooms are designated as mobile teachers, classroom teachers and branch teachers primarily together with the classroom teachers of people with visual, hearing and mental disabilities according to the educational needs of the students, the priority branch field is not specified in the Special Education Services Regulation of 2018. While this may have the advantage of providing flexibility in the assignment of teachers to the general education schools where special education teachers are not available, or the access is difficult because of the region that they are located, it poses the disadvantage of employing other branch teachers who are not experts in the field instead of special education teachers in general education schools where special education teachers are present with subjective perspectives.

Other than support training rooms, one of the institutions that operates to provide support to the students who are diagnosed as gifted in Turkey is BİLSEMs. BİLSEMs are special educational institutions that are opened to provide support education to students attending formal education institutions and recognized as gifted in the areas of general mental talent, visual arts or music in order to improve their abilities and use their capacities at the highest level. The selection of teachers for BİLSEM is carried out by the Ministry according to the guidelines published in line with the appointment criteria determined by the General Directorate of Human Resources of the Ministry of National Education and the General Directorate. The BİLSEM teachers' board consists of deputy managers and teachers, chaired by the

BİLSEM manager. Research and development unit in BİLSEM consists of at least four teachers, chaired by the vice principal. The team is formed by the BİLSEM teachers' board at the beginning of the academic year. BİLSEMs, which provide education programs for gifted students to enrich and differentiate their education in order to make them understand their potential and contribute to themselves and the society, provide service in 81 provinces. Education and training activities to be held in BİLSEM are planned on weekdays and / or weekends outside the hours of the student's formal education. In order to produce original products, projects and productions at BİLSEM, a project-based, interdisciplinary, enriched and differentiated education program is applied and educational activities are organized. In addition, education and training services in BİLSEMs are carried out in the form of individual and / or group training. Education and training activities in BİLSEMs are carried out according to the common annual work schedule prepared by the Ministry during the academic year. In addition, summer school, winter school and student camps can be organized during the break holidays, semesters and summer holidays. Students enrolled in BİLSEMs are included in programs for a) adaptation, b) support training, c) awareness of individual talents, d) development of special talents, e) project production and management. (MoNE Directive on the Science and Art Centres, 2019).

Administration and Organisational Structure of Inclusion Practices in Turkey

Within the scope of the right to education, which is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, executive power and duty to related to education-training services are used and performed by the President in line with the Constitution and laws. Ministry of National Education is responsible for delivering the national education services in line with the Law no.430 on Unification of Education and National Education Basic Law no.1739 as well as development plans and programmes. In accordance with the purposes and main principles of the Turkish National Education, the Ministry of National Education is entrusted with the performance of education and instruction activities on behalf of the State. Within the central organisation of the Ministry of National Education, the Directorate General for Special Education and Guidance Services (DGfSEGS) is responsible for the delivery of special education and guidance services for the individuals with special education needs benefiting from inclusion practices. As per Article 11 of the Decree Law no.652 on the Organisation and Duties of the Ministry of National Education, the duties of this Directorate General are (a) determining and implementing policies for the education and training of students and management of special education classes, special education schools, GRCs, business schools and business education centres and similar schools and institutions in cooperation with relevant ministries and (b) preparing the education and training programmes, course books and education materials of special education schools and institutions or getting them prepared and presenting them to Education Board in cooperation with the relevant ministries.

Department of Special Education and Mainstreaming within the body of Directorate General for Special Education and Guidance Services is directly responsible for the implementation of inclusion and mainstreaming practices. The duties of this department are (a) determining the principles and procedures concerning special education practices, (b) taking actions related to the education services for the students with special education needs, (c) determining the principles and procedures with respect to the mainstream education system and practices, (d) cooperating in the opening and closing and procedures of special education schools and institutions, (e) conducting the actions and procedures

related to the students with special education needs, (f) ensuring that the standards determined for education environments are applied and disseminated in the schools and institutions, (g) determining the administrators, participants and instructors to participate in the in-service training programmes, courses and seminars to be organised on inclusion, (h) delivering opinion on the cases transferred to the courts with respect to inclusion and (ı) providing support to the projects and works related to inclusion.

GRCs working under the Provincial National Education Directorates in the MoNE provincial organization as a human resources management are connected to the General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services in terms of the operation of the legislation determined within the framework of laws in the implementation of the inclusion practices. GRCs that operate in order to plan and coordinate the execution of special education services and guidance services in provinces or districts, to monitor and evaluate the services provided consist of guidance services department and special education services department. The guidance services department consists of a sufficient number of staff assigned by the GRC manager under the responsibility of the head of the department. The special services department consists of a sufficient number of staff assigned by the GRC manager under the responsibility of the head of the department. The work and procedures related to the educational assessment and diagnosis of individuals are carried out by the Special Education Evaluation Board formed in GRCs. The first application regarding the educational assessment and diagnosis of individuals is made to the RAM by the school management, the parent or the person who is over 18 years old with no mental disability and by the staff that the institution will assign with the official letter for the individuals who benefit from the care and shelter service in the official institutions. Educational assessment and diagnosis is carried out in appropriate environment, with measurement tools suitable for the individual's characteristics. The work and procedures related to the educational assessment and diagnosis of those who are unable to come to GRCs due to health problems are carried out in environments where these individuals are present. The necessary precautions regarding the student's adaptation to school and access to education are followed in cooperation with the school guidance service in line with the planning of the GRCs in the schools where the students who have a placement decision by the Provincial or District Special Education Services Board will continue. In line with the planning of the GRCs, necessary information activities are carried out for teachers, managers, families and students in cooperation with the school guidance service. GRCs can make school visits to the classrooms of school managers or teachers in general education schools for information and consultancy.

GRCs have such duties as conducting identification, assessment and placement procedures in the province or districts; suggesting the best education environment for the students having difficulty in following the general education programme by discovering the reasons of failure through individual exams and intelligence tests; taking necessary actions for the students found suitable for special education services; presenting the placement proposal to the provincial special education board; conducting the works for the establishment of the monitoring assessment team at the level of province; attending the provincial special education board; and in addition to these duties, providing counselling services and assisting the special education classroom teacher in the preparation of the education programme for the individuals with special education needs for whom IEPs are applied.

Within the scope of inclusive education practices implemented by the GRCs, schools are responsible for the procedures of the students who are deemed suitable for special education services such as enrolment to schools, placement in classrooms, preparation and implementation of IEPs, programme monitoring and assessment, initial identification and the process prior to referral. In inclusion practices, schools are also obliged to make the necessary arrangements in line with the needs of the student with special education needs in relation to physical, social and psychological conditions. In Turkey, pre-primary education is compulsory for students with special education needs. For all students, the duration of compulsory education is 12 years. Compulsory education covers 4 years primary, 4 years lower secondary and 4 years upper secondary education. Schools are affiliated with the relevant directorates general in terms of legislation such as regulations, circulars etc. Pre-primary institutions, primary schools and secondary schools are affiliated with the Directorate General for Basic Education, all kinds of high schools are affiliated with the Directorate General of Secondary Education and vocational high schools are affiliated to the Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education. On the other hand, schools are affiliated with the Provincial Directorates of National Education as the provincial structures of the MoNE for the management of human resources.

Individuals with special education needs in Turkey can continue their education in two ways as full-time with the peers or part-time in special education classrooms through inclusion/mainstreaming. Detailed information on how to implement inclusion/mainstreaming practices is provided in Article 22 of the Special Education Services Regulation (2018). In the regulation, it is stated that individuals with special education needs can continue their education of all types and levels through inclusion/mainstreaming in accordance with the Special Education Evaluation Board report. In special education schools where pre-school education, primary education or vocational and technical education programs are applied, education through inclusion/mainstreaming could be provided. It is compulsory to establish a IEP development unit in schools where education is provided through inclusion/mainstreaming. Cooperation with the IEP development unit is made in the decisions to be taken about the students who continue their education through mainstreaming/inclusion in the Student Behaviour Evaluation Board and the Award and Discipline Board. In Article 23 of the Special Education Services Regulation, it is mentioned that within the scope of full-time mainstreaming/inclusion practices, it is necessary to provide suitable environment arrangements and open a support education room for students with special education needs in schools where education is provided through full-time mainstreaming/inclusion for students with special education needs. Individuals with special education needs are placed in classes in equal numbers and not exceeding two students in each branch, taking into account their developmental characteristics, in schools where full-time mainstreaming/inclusion is implemented. However, this number can be increased in accordance with the needs in schools where multi-grade class teaching is applied. In addition, in special education schools that provide education through mainstreaming/inclusion, the class size is set to a maximum of 14 students in pre-school education, five of whom are individuals with special education needs, and 15 students in other levels. Figure 2 presents the management and organisational structure of inclusion practices in Turkey:
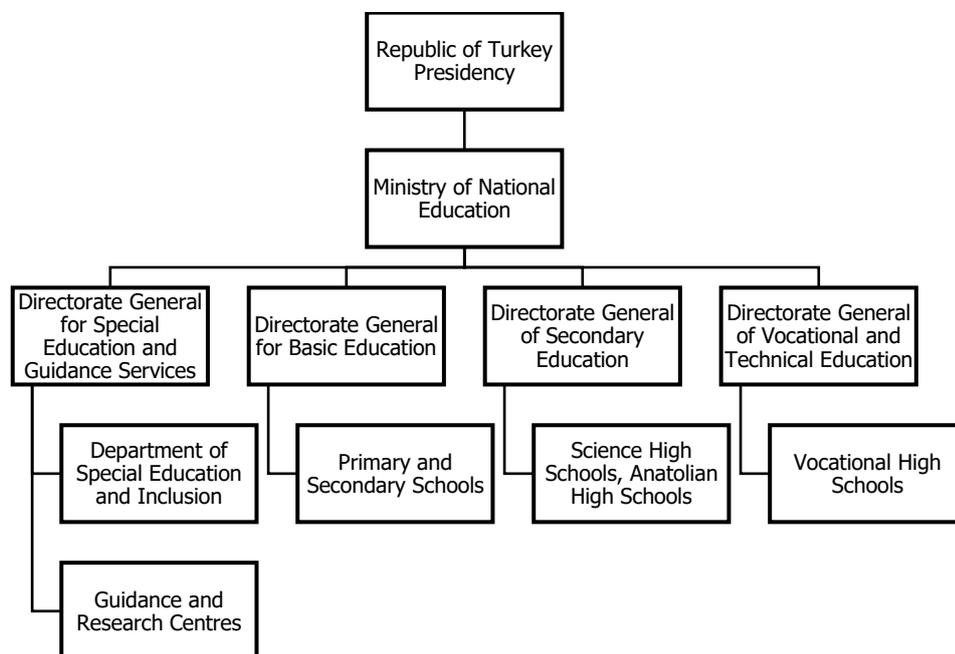
Figure 2. Management and organisational structure of inclusion practices in Turkey

Legislative Arrangements Related to Inclusive Practices in Turkey

Article 8 of the National Education Basic Law no. 1739 adopted in 1973 defines special education services within the general education system as follows: "*Special measures are taken for educating the children with special education needs and protection*". The Decree Law no. 573 adopted in 1997 is another legislative arrangement concerning students with special education needs in Turkey. The decree law is of paramount importance for the identification of services ranging from assessment to education and final programme evaluation until a decision is made for the placement of the individual with special education needs in the inclusive practices. In the second part of the second section of the decree law, under the title of "Education Environments" mainstreaming is defined as "*Education of individuals with special education needs is conducted in schools and institutions of all types and levels with their peers in line with individual education plans by utilising appropriate methods and techniques*" (MEB, 2000). Also, this decree law defines the principles of preparing and implementing IEP. Although mainstreaming practices started in the 1980s in Turkey, they became widespread only after the introduction of the Decree Law no. 573 on Special Education. Furthermore, in the Special Education Services Regulation, which entered into force in 2000, special education services to be offered to the individuals with special education needs were explained in detail as identification, placement and assessment services. In this regulation, mainstreaming is addressed under chapter seven as a separate title, and the principles and criteria of mainstreaming are presented under this title. In the regulation, mainstreaming is defined as "*special education practices where support education services are provided based on the principle that individuals with special education needs continue their education with their typically developing peers in public and private pre-primary, primary education, secondary education and non-formal education institutions*" (MEB, 2000). The regulation includes detailed provisions on how and by whom inclusive practices are conducted from the initial identification step to the final assessment step. Another

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significant development concerning inclusive practices is the Law no. 5378 on the Amending the Disabled Law and Certain Decree Laws published in 2005. Article 15 thereof states that "*Under no circumstances, the right to education of the disabled can be hindered, and the disabled children, young and adults are granted the right to education on equal footing with typically developing individuals in integrated environments by taking their special needs and differences into account"*, and with this provision, it is aimed to ensure that individuals with special education needs participate in mainstreaming environments and that social integration is achieved.

With respect to inclusive practices in pre-primary education, the Circular on the Pre-primary Education of the Children with Special Education Needs entering into force 1987 states that the children with identified needs for special education should receive education in special education nursery classes and pre-primary institutions with adapted programmes. Following the Decree Law on Special Education adopted in 1997, pre-primary education became compulsory. Later on, Special Education Services Regulation was adopted in 2000, and it states that the children older than thirty-six months old can benefit from mainstreaming practices.

In the Circular on Education Inclusion/Mainstreaming, published in 2008 and updated in 2017, it is stated that inclusive/mainstreaming education aims to ensure that individuals with special education needs interact with other individuals in all types and levels of schools and reach their education goals at the maximum level. Within the scope of these practices, different models were identified based on the principle that individuals with special education needs receive full-time or part-time education with their typically developing peers in the same classroom. Furthermore, the circular is of great importance in that for the first time, it defined the responsibilities of teachers having students with special education needs in their classes in terms of physical arrangements, behaviour management and education adaptations depending on the type of inability of the student. At this point, it should be noted that Turkey has a highly detailed legislation in terms of the principles and arrangements related to inclusive practices. On the other hand, in terms of the organisational structure and legislative arrangements related to inclusive practices, it is striking that support mechanisms within the organisational structure for actively conducting inclusive practices lack any structure/arrangement for coordination among the mechanisms. Additionally, although there are arrangements concerning classroom teachers who play a key role in the support special services and the functioning of support education room service for the students with special education needs, there are no arrangements on the functioning of special education counselling and in-class assistance services. On the other hand, the duties and responsibilities of the teachers were determined in the 2017 Circular on Mainstreaming/Inclusion Practices. These tasks and responsibilities can be considered as the fields of regulation of physical environment, adaptation of teaching, behaviour management and measurement-evaluation according to the specific needs or educational identification of the student as well as the development and implementation of IEP. For example, verbal assessment of students having difficulties in writing and adjustment in the font size of exam questions for students with visual impairment were included. Responsibilities such as cooperating with the families of children with special education needs for guidance teachers along with classroom, special education or subject teachers and providing support to families are identified. Figure 3 demonstrates the legislative arrangements regarding inclusive practices in Turkey.
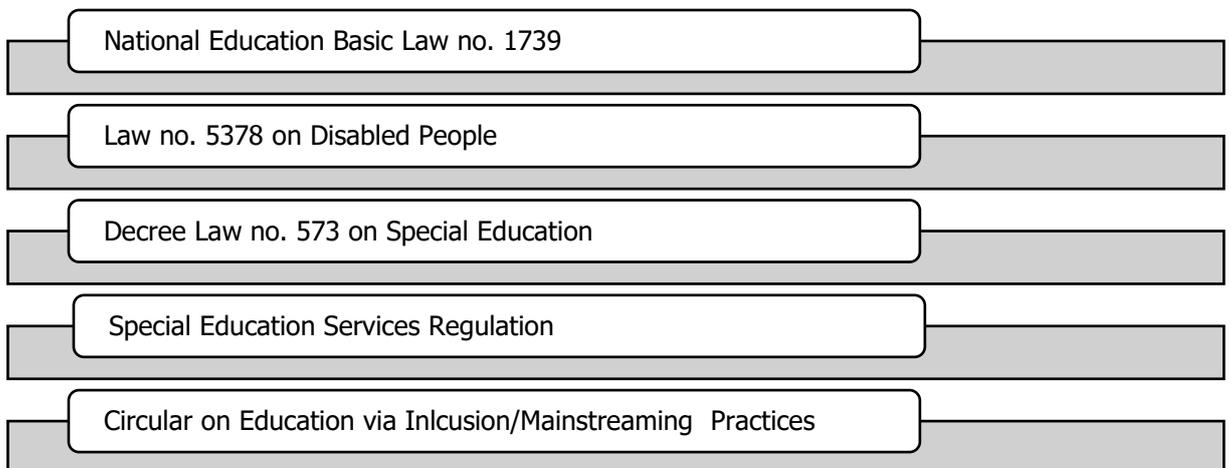
In 2018, the Regulation on Special Education Services, which was published in 2006, was abolished and revised. Definitions have been introduced and services have been diversified unlike 2006 Special Education Services Regulation. 2018 Special Education Services Regulation defines inclusion/mainstreaming practices as *"full-time or part-time education provided to individuals with special education needs in special education classes together with their peers in order to enable these individuals to interact with other individuals at all types and levels and to realize their educational goals at the highest level by also providing support education services"*. In the same regulation, although it forms a basis that individuals with special education needs should continue their education in all types and levels through mainstreaming/inclusion, it is also stated that special education institutions or special education classes can be opened for these individuals. Defining mainstreaming/inclusion practices to be offered to individuals with special education needs in a way that will include the support education services in the regulation is of importance. However, considering the least restrictive environment principle of special education, there is no detail as to how the mainstreaming/inclusion environments are in this definition (for example, a general education school in the area where the individual with special education needs resides as a natural environment). In the same regulation, Education Practices through Mainstreaming/Inclusion is considered as a separate section in the fifth chapter. In this section, the basic elements of mainstreaming/inclusion practices such as preparation and implementation of IEP in the education of individuals with special education needs, support education room practices as support special education service and limitation of class sizes as physical environment are included in the practices. Considering the insufficiency of physical environment, which is one of the main sources of the difficulties in maintaining mainstreaming/inclusion practices, it is even more important to make class/branch arrangements and to define support training rooms in a flexible manner. However, in the regulation, support special education services in mainstreaming/inclusion practices are limited to the support education room. In the literature, along with the support education room (also known as resource room) practice, there are other support special education services such as special education counselling and in-class assistance. Particularly, special education counselling is a widely recommended type of support education in terms of being the least restrictive type of support for the individual in full time mainstreaming/inclusion practices. Therefore, it is observed that there is a need for diversification of support special education services in terms of future legislative studies.

National Education Basic Law no. 1739

Law no. 5378 on Disabled People

Decree Law no. 573 on Special Education

Special Education Services Regulation

Circular on Education via Inlcusion/Mainstreaming Practices

Figure 3. Legislative arrangements regarding inclusive practices in Turkey

Lastly, another issue that should be dealt with in terms of legal regulations is the development plans determined and implemented in recent years. In these development plans, targets have been determined and implementation steps have been taken in order to increase the quality of life of individuals with special education needs and the quality of education services to be provided to them. For example, during the Tenth Development Plan period, it has been reported that the human and physical infrastructure in education have improved, the number of teachers has increased, the schooling rates have been increased in all levels of education, especially for girls and disadvantaged students, and the number of students per classroom has significantly reduced. In the 11th Development Plan announced by the Presidency in 2019, important targets have been set regarding the education of individuals with special education needs. It is aimed to diversify and expand the social services offered to individuals with special education needs, to implement policies for their participation in education, social life and labour market and to develop general education services.

Teacher Training Policy in relation to Inclusion in Turkey

In 2006, 6 main general competence areas for teachers were determined by MoNE within the framework of workshops, stakeholders and pilot implementations attended by experts. These fields are: a) personal - professional values-professional development, b) student recognition, c) learning and teaching process, d) monitoring and evaluation of learning and development, e) school, family and community relations f) program and content knowledge. Within the framework of these qualifications, 14 special field competences have been determined in other branches such as Turkish and Mathematics in the primary level including classroom and special education fields. When evaluating the general ans special field competences in terms of subject matter knowledge, creation of learning environments and sub-fields of communication, in order to ensure the acceptance of individuals with special education needs in mainstreaming/inclusion practices, it is very important to implement and maintain the basic principles in terms of teacher attitudes, behavioural management, developing and implementing IEPs, adapting teaching, evaluating students and family participation.

On the other hand, within the framework of the 2017-2023 National Teacher Strategy Document, 11 teacher action plans were determined on 6 main themes (pre-service training for teachers, selection and employment of candidates for the teaching profession, candidateship and adaptation training, career development and rewarding, status of teaching profession, continuous professional development). Among these action plans, in the case of the implementation of action areas such as conducting teaching practices with certified teachers, restructuring faculty-school cooperation processes, and developing standards for teacher training programs, it is evaluated that positive reflections on increasing the quality of training of pre-service teacher candidates who will take part in mainstreaming/inclusion practices in Turkey might be seen. In addition, within the scope of the 2023 Education Vision, it is aimed to provide classroom and branch teachers with in-service training on special education to support classroom practices in order to improve the possibilities of education practices through inclusion/mainstreaming.

It is observed that the roles of teachers working in primary schools and lower and upper secondary schools have changed as a result of the implementation of mainstreaming/inclusive practices. In primary schools, in particular, classroom teachers stand out as the first persons who need to meet the

Development of Inclusive Education Project

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This project is co-financed by
the European Union and the Republic of Turkey.

educational needs of students with special education needs in mainstreaming practices. Therefore, classroom teachers are expected to assume, in addition to their existing roles, different and new roles such as preparing education-training programmes and plans in accordance with different skills and learning levels, making the necessary adaptations and arrangements in these programmes and plans, developing materials, managing the classroom and increasing social acceptance of the student with special education needs within the classroom. Teacher training policies are highly important for classroom teachers to fulfil these roles in an effective manner. In this respect, in Turkey, the Higher Education Board (YÖK) is responsible for the preparation and implementation of teacher training undergraduate programmes. YÖK included "Special Education and mainstreaming" course in all undergraduate programmes updated in 2018 with the aim of ensuring that teachers gain knowledge and skills related to special education and mainstreaming these programmes. This course includes knowledge and skills related to main concepts of special education; principles and historical development of special education; legislative arrangements concerning special education; identification and assessment in special education; individualisation of education; inclusion and support special education services; participation of family in education and cooperation with the family; characteristics of different incompetence and skill groups; education approaches and teaching strategies for different groups; effective strategies in classroom management; and information and skills concerning behaviour management. Including this course in new undergraduate programmes is important since it targets to enable teachers, before their start working, to gain different professional roles and responsibilities such as making arrangements in the education programmes and plans for different personal characteristics of students, using different educational materials, determining individual needs of students and adopting necessary measures within and outside the classroom.

Also, the new undergraduate programme of the Special Education Teaching Department, introduced in 2018, includes a course titled "Inclusion in Special Education". This course covers topics such as placement approaches in special education, joint and separate education; definition of inclusion; concept of the least restrictive environment and its history, legal basis and types; special education support services; counselling, in-class support and support room; cooperation in inclusion: definition, importance and types; inclusion process in Turkey, inclusion from past to present; inclusion in the legislative arrangements related to special education in Turkey; factors affecting the success of inclusion and researches on inclusion. Although the special education teaching undergraduate programme defines special education teacher "as the personnel who are primarily engaged in mainstreaming support special services", it does not include an applied course on support education room services or other special education support services.

Within the central body of the Ministry of National Education, Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development is responsible for the training of teachers. The Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development organises in-service training courses or seminars in coordination with the relevant directorates general (such as Directorate General for Special Education and Guidance Services), civil society organisations (for instance, TOHUM Autism Foundation) or universities with the aim of increasing knowledge and skills of teachers on inclusion/mainstreaming. Also, it conducts projects or participates in ongoing projects for this purpose. In addition, Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development are responsible for providing pre-vocational and in-service training on mainstreaming/inclusion practices for the teachers of the ministry and staff of special education

institutions on request, opening courses for their development, organizing specialization programs, seminars, symposiums, conferences and similar events, cooperating with public institutions and organizations, universities and non-governmental organizations, working with them, organizing study, research and training programs with these institutions, setting up advisory boards and commissions. Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development, in coordination with the General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services, routinely organizes in-service training programs for classroom and branch teachers in the form of seminars in order to increase teacher competencies in the mainstreaming/inclusion practices. In terms of organizational structure, in-service trainings of teachers are carried out in line with the in-service training requests of classroom or branch teachers regarding mainstreaming/inclusion practices, or by providing in-service training courses under the coordination of relevant general directorates and provincial/district national education directorates.

In order to maintain the in-service training of teachers in the field of special education, the routine work of the General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services continues, and projects are carried out by the Ministry of National Education. In addition, MoNE supports projects which are carried out by the external stakeholder and aimed at increasing the professional competence of teachers in the education and mainstreaming/inclusion of individuals with special education needs as funder or beneficiaries.

Acceptance Process Approach in Turkey and Feasibility of the Existing Inclusion Services
According to the Ministry of National Education 2018 Special Education Services Regulation of Turkey, the identification and assessment of individuals with special education needs are carried out by the Special Education Assessment Board created in GRCs. The identification and assessment of students registered to school are carried out by GRC in the region where the school is located. For those who are not enrolled in any school, it is carried out by the Guidance and Research Center in the region where the institution that the student resides or benefits from the care and accommodation service is located.

The work and procedures regarding the educational assessment and diagnosis of individuals are carried out by the Special Education Evaluation Board established in GRCs. The first application for the educational assessment and diagnosis of individuals is made to the GRCs by the school administration, the parents or the individual over the age of 18 who do not have a mental disability, and by the staff to be assigned by the institution with an official letter for the individuals who benefit from the care and accommodation services in official institutions. Educational assessment and diagnosis are made in all types and levels of education by evaluating the characteristics of the individual in all areas of development and his/her competencies in academic disciplines together with their educational needs.

In the process of identification and assessment, the characteristics of the individual in all areas of development and the competence in the fields of academic discipline and the educational needs of the individual are determined. In addition, it is determined whether the individual in need of special education needs special education and suggestions are made regarding in which environment it is appropriate for her/him to receive education. The opinion of the family is very important in this process. The family can provide information about the child to the board and tell them where they want their

child to receive education. Special Education Evaluation Board Report and Training Plan are prepared for the individual who is identified as having special education needs as a result of identification and assessment. These documents are renewed every year for students who receive education and support training services from private educational institutions. Identification and assessment are carried out in the transitions of all types and levels of education by evaluating the characteristics of the individual in all development areas and the competencies in the fields of academic discipline and educational needs together. In addition, in line with the educational performance and educational needs of the individuals, it is repeated upon the written request of the parent or school.

The Special Education Evaluation Board is formed in GRCs upon the proposal of the GRC directorate and the approval of the provincial or district national education directorate. This board consists of a) head of special education services department, b) at least one guidance teacher, c) at least one special education teacher, under the presidency of the deputy manager. The parent or the person concerned attends this board as a member. It is ensured that the personnel of the relevant institutions and organizations participate in the board so that their opinions are consulted when necessary.

The Special Education Services Board within the National Education Directorate places the individual with special education needs in the most appropriate official school or institution in line with the Special Education Evaluation Board Report and Educational Plan. The Special Education Services Board is established in Provincial National Education Directorates and District National Education Directorates having GRCs. This board consists of: a) at least one head of special education evaluation board, b) at least one official special education institution manager or one from the institutions providing education through inclusion/mainstreaming, c) at least one guidance teacher, d) at least one special education teacher under the presidency of the special education and guidance services branch manager. When necessary, the participation of the parents of the individual and the staff from the relevant institutions to the board is ensured so that their opinions can be consulted.

In order to ensure that their children receive the most appropriate education as the people who know the individuals who are in need of special education, it is very important for parents to be included in the Special Education Services Board in order to be in compliance with the principles of impartial evaluation in special education and the right of opinion of the family as a decision maker.

On the other hand, within the scope of the mentioned Special Education Services Regulation published in 2018, foreign individuals who continue or will continue their education in Turkey benefit from educational identification and assessment services offered in Guidance and Research Centers. Special Education Evaluation Board Report is prepared for those individuals who are identified as having special education needs as a result of educational identification and assessment. Taking into consideration the high number of Syrian students in Turkey, this regulation is of great importance. Within the scope of the "Project for Supporting the Integration of Syrian Children into the Turkish Education System 2" (PICTES 2) which is conducted by the Ministry of National Education and Delegation of European Union to Turkey for Syrian children in the Turkish Education system in 2018, it is aimed that Syrian children under temporary protection reach education and integrate into society. It has been reported that Syrian

children in the provinces supported within the scope of this project have access to education, the quality of education offered to Syrian students has been increased, the operational quality of educational institutions and staff has been improved, and the social integration of Syrian students and their parents has been increased. On the other hand, due to the differences in the mother tongue of the individuals, regulations regarding the adaptation measures to be taken for the educational identification and assessment and measurement tools of foreign individuals have been brought into practice. The 'Handbook for Teachers with Foreign Students in their Classes' prepared by the General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development has been published. In order to support Syrian students' access to qualified education and their adaptation processes, a project titled 'Education of Ministry of National Education Teachers with Foreign Students in their Classes' was carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of National Education and UNICEF. Within the scope of this project, non-verbal measurement tools were developed in order to evaluate and diagnose the psychosocial development of Syrian students. It was aimed to improve the quality of educational assessment and diagnosis service by ensuring that Syrian educators supported by UNICEF are assigned to GRCs in the regions where the project is implemented. In-service trainings were organized for Turkish teachers working with Syrian students on in-class adaptations.

IEP, which is a significant outcome of educational assessment process, contains three main concepts as individualisation, education programme and plan. Within the framework of these concepts, IEP is the written document stipulating that the individual with special education needs should make best use of the appropriate education environments (school, special education school, special class, vocational training centre etc.) and support services (support room, in-class assistance, language and speech therapy, physical rehabilitation etc.) to ensure the personal development of the individual with special education needs and to meet the educational requirements of the discipline areas required by the programme applied. This document is prepared in cooperation of the family, teacher and relevant experts and is implemented with the approval of the family (Vuran, 2004). In Turkey, the Decree Law no. 573 envisages that the family actively participates in the assessment of the child, preparation of the IEP, education and assessment of the education. The detailed assessment process, undertaken by GRCs in Turkey, is finalised with classification and placement, and important decisions are made about the education future of the student. Therefore, this process should be carried out with due consideration of the core principles of educational assessment (Kargın, 2007).

There are scientific studies on the feasibility of the educational assessment practices envisaged in the legislative arrangements related to the educational assessment processes for the students with special education needs. Akçamete (2001) reported certain problems such as qualitative and quantitative insufficiency of the measurement tools employed by the GRCs, failure of the special education evaluation team to conduct its works in a functional manner and qualitative and quantitative inadequacy of the in-service training organised towards the personnel working in the GRCs. Özak, Vural and Avcıoğlu (2008) found out that the referral, identification, placement, monitoring and assessment processes are implemented in the GRCs step by step, but problems are encountered in the implementation of each step. In the research conducted to determine the problems of the special education services department in the GRCs, Tiryakioğlu and Avcıoğlu (2013) examined the problems under such titles as general features of the institution, referral of individuals to the centre, medical diagnosis, educational assessment and identification, referral, placement and monitoring, IEP and mainstreaming problems.

Bozkurt (2009) reported that there are significant shortcomings in the identification processes of the students diagnosed with mental incompetence as well as the information sent by the school and health facilities. Kırbıyık (2011) made a study to determine the views of guidance teachers working in the special education evaluation board about the problems experienced in the educational assessment and identification process and concluded that the budget allocated to the GRCs was insufficient and that workload of the personnel was heavy. Bal (2011) conducted a study to make an organisational analysis by examining the qualitative situation of the personnel working in the GRCs and determined that the number of personnel, screening services and works related to other education institutions are inadequate and that GRCs have significant problems in terms of physical structure and equipment. The relevant research shows that there are problems concerning the feasibility of the educational assessment services in inclusive practices. These problems can be summarised as qualified personnel and infrastructure-related deficiencies. On the other hand, the lack of any scientific study conducted on the feasibility of the initial identification and pre-referral processes, which are envisaged to be conducted in the schools, of the educational assessment process in Turkey shows that there is an information gap about the feasibility of these processes. As a result, we cannot deliver opinion on the current situation regarding this issue in the light of institutional reports or scientific studies. Therefore, views of the relevant stakeholders involved in the educational assessment process should be sought in-depth with the aim of revealing the current situation in these processes. Furthermore, the results of assessment and monitoring activities in inclusive practices should be monitored through studies to be conducted with large samples in cooperation of the Ministry of National Education and universities.

Statistics for Inclusive Practices in Turkey

Number of Individuals with Special Education Needs at Compulsory Education Age

According to the data obtained from MoNE Information Systems (MEBBİS), the number of individuals with special education needs attending primary school between January 1, 2019 and November 30, 2019 within the scope of formal education is 113,519, the number of students attending secondary school is 126,497, and the number of students who continue high school education is 38,678. These numbers are reported to be 279,001 in total.

Breakdown of Individuals with Special Education Needs by Identification

In the MoNE system, the individuals identified with special education needs fall into the following groups: Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Language and Speech Impediment, Emotional Dysfunction and Behavioural Disorder (those with Social, Emotional Cohesion Difficulty), Mild Intellectual Disability, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Physical Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Specific Learning Disability, Cerebral Palsy and Gifted Individuals. Table 1 shows the numbers of students from each group attending pre-primary and primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education institutions.

Identification	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total

(1) ADHD	0	36,395	44,078	136	80,609
(2) Language and Speech Impediment	56	13,283	5,950	404	19,693
(3) Emotional Dysfunction and Behavioural Disorder	2	222	355	36,049	36,628
(4) Mild Intellectual Disability	121	33,458	49,204	1,030	83,813
(5) Visual Impairment	4	1,356	2,011	174	3,545
(6) Hearing Impairment	28	4,832	5,479	370	10,709
(7) Physical Disability	72	12,188	9,562	242	22,064
(8) Autism	16	3,123	1,346	77	4,562
(9) Specific Learning Disability	6	8,190	8,002	173	16,371
(10) Cerebral Palsy	2	470	356	0	828
(11) Gifted	0	2	154	23	179
Total	307	113,519	126,497	38,678	279,001

Table 1. Breakdown of the individuals with special education needs by identification (MEBBİS, 2019).

Breakdown of Students with Special Education Needs by Placement Environments

The number of students with special education needs who continue inclusive education is 284,224, the number of students attending special education classes is 65,339, the number of students receiving education in the special education schools is 52,385, the numbers of students receiving education in the hospital and at home are 1,488 and 10,725 respectively, and the numbers of students attending BİLSEMs and ARGEMs (Research, Development, Education and Implementation Centres) are 39,455 and 167 respectively. The total number of students with special education needs attending different schools is 453,843. According to the MoNE statistics, total number of support education rooms available in the inclusive schools is 12,807. (MEBBİS, 2019)

Breakdown of Students with Special Education Needs Receiving Inclusive Education Practices by Identification

The relevant figures are presented in Table 2 for each group of identification.

Identification	Number of Student
(1) ADHD	80,609
(2) Language and Speech Impediment	19,693
(3) Emotional Dysfunction and Behavioural Disorder	36,628
(4) Mild Intellectual Disability	83,813
(5) Visual Impairment	3,545
(6) Hearing Impairment	10,709
(7) Physical Disability	22,064
(8) Autism	4,562
(9) Specific Learning Disability	16,371
(10) Cerebral Palsy	828
(11) Gifted	179
Total	279,001

Table 2*. Breakdown of the students with special education needs receiving inclusive education practices by identification (MEB, 2019)*

While the number of students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in primary and secondary education institutions was 54,309 in 2006, this number increased to 72,425 in 2009. 70,563 of these students were enrolled in primary schools while the number of students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in the secondary education institutions was 1862 (MEB, 2010). When the statistical data for 2019 are examined (Table 2), it is seen that the numbers of students with special education needs receiving inclusive education have increased significantly.

An Overview of the Researches on Inclusive Practices in Turkey

As of the 1980s when mainstreaming practices started to gain popularity in Turkey, scientific studies on mainstreaming/inclusive practices have gained impetus as well. The lack of scientific research before the 1980s implies that mainstreaming practices started with a law in Turkey, views of the society were not sought about the practices to be introduced, and preliminary steps such as raising awareness among/changing opinions of teachers, parents or others and making the circumstances favourable were not carried out (Sucuoğlu, 2004).

Until the end of the 2000s, mainstream education or mainstreaming practices were used for mainstreaming as a scientific term in the research. In recent scientific studies, however, inclusion or inclusion practices have come into use as terms. It can be stated that this change shows parallelism with terminology changes in the legislative arrangements. Furthermore, it is observed that the terms of mainstream/inclusive education and mainstreaming/inclusive practices are frequently used interchangeably in the literature. Although it is known that inclusion is a placement system, the perspective for considering it as a method can be observed in the literary language of the scientific research. However, strikingly, studies examining similar environments, similar samples or similar variables continue using these terms interchangeably. Inclusion is more comprehensive than mainstreaming, but it differs from the latter not in terms of educational practices but in terms of ethics and philosophy. Inclusion rests upon the belief that education is a fundamental human right and should be provided to the entire society. Philosophically, all individuals have the right to education regardless of their characteristics or difficulties. As for mainstreaming, it is based on the condition that special education support services are provided for an individual with special education needs to continue the general education programme. In this respect, mainstreaming is based on the structuring of special education programmes within the general education system with the understanding that students with special education needs receive support education in separate environments. In inclusion, the individual with special education needs is considered as the natural member of the school in the region where the individual resides, and provided that the human and material resources in the school are integrated, there is no need for separate systems within the general education system. From the perspective of general education should be made flexible and sensitive to provide education not only to students with special education needs but also to all students. Despite the philosophical differentiation between mainstreaming and inclusion, it can be said that the contradiction in these terms has remained prevalent from past to present.

The studies conducted from the 1980s until mid-2000s can be grouped into the following topics: definition of mainstreaming practices (Özyürek, 1989); students studying in the undergraduate teacher training programmes (Orel, Zerey and Töret, 2004); views or attitudes of the teachers (Batu, 1998) or school principals (Gözün and Yıkmış, 2004) working in the primary schools, secondary schools or high schools towards the mainstreaming of students with special education needs; and effects of mainstreaming practices (for instance, special education support services) on the academic success levels of the students with special education needs (Batu and Topsakal, 2003). Strikingly, it is seen that there are so many studies on the views and attitudes of relevant stakeholders on the inclusion of students with special education needs. In the studies conducted in this period, mode of application of the mainstreaming model and problems related to the system were commonly addressed. These studies underlined the need for mainstreaming and concluded that mainstreaming practices could not go beyond physical presence in the same environment and mainstreaming was carried out in quantitative terms, not qualitative terms, and in small sample groups, it was determined that mainstreaming practices contributed to increasing the academic success levels of the students with special education needs (e.g. Kırcaali-İftar and Uysal, 1999). In another study conducted by Ankara University (2009), in the light of the findings obtained from the implementation of the "Mainstreaming Model Development Project", it was concluded that it is important to propose a model which offers education-training services and support services for supporting the education of students with special education needs in

the least restrictive environment, which ensures that the support personnel and personnel working in the school cooperate effectively and which seeks the support of the immediate circle and relevant institutions and organisations.

As of the 2000s, studies where experimental works are conducted within the classroom in the field of mainstreaming/inclusion have gained impetus. For instance, in addition to the research conducted on teachers, typically developing children and children with special education needs with respect to pre-primary mainstreaming, there are studies conducted with the aim of determining how mainstreaming practices can be rendered more effective and which variables affect the quality of mainstreaming (e.g. Bakkaloğlu, Sucuoğlu and Yılmaz, 2019). When the studies conducted in recent years are examined, it is seen that they mainly focus on (a) views concerning the sustainability of the inclusion practices in a wide range from pre-primary environments to secondary education (e.g. Babacan, 2014), (b) impacts of special education support services (for instance, support education room) in the inclusion practices on academic success levels and social behaviours of students with special education needs (e.g. Gürgür, 2008), (c) impacts of counselling programmes offered to classroom teachers in relation to education or behaviour on the academic skills or positive behaviours of students (e.g. Akay and Gürgür, 2018; Atbaşı, Karasu and Tavil, 2019), (d) effects of the preparatory activities for mainstreaming performed in the classes with the students with special education needs prior to the mainstreaming/inclusive practices (e.g. Özkubat, Sanır, Töret and Babacan, 2016), (e) behaviours of students with special education needs and teachers in inclusion practices (e.g. Sucuoğlu, Akalın and Pınar, 2010). The findings of these studies demonstrate that teachers do not receive any support to meet the needs of the students; coordination should be made with the general education class and branch teachers should be assigned for the effective use of support education room; professional development processes of the teachers working in the inclusion environments should be supported with a focus on individual needs; education approaches such as cooperative education approach contribute to professional developments of teachers in terms of ensuring the active participation the students with special education needs in the courses, using course equipment, delivering lecture and assessment; and counselling programmes supported by special education specialists help students with special education needs gain positive behaviour support.

In the light of these researches, it is required that support education practices are carried out and their impacts are monitored in a systematic manner at the school level, and professional competences of the teachers assigned to support education rooms are strengthened in inclusion practices as prospective practices in Turkey. For instance, programmes are needed to inform parents, teachers and teaching assistants about the characteristics and educational needs of the students with special education needs in pre-primary education (Sucuoğlu and Bakkaloğlu, 2013). Additionally, it is recommended that further research is undertaken for the examination of environmental conditions of special classrooms, support rooms and general education classes where the students with special education needs receive education as well as teacher and student behaviours with an ecological perspective and through environmental assessment methods and that counselling is provided in such areas as cooperative learning approaches or positive behaviour support in a more widespread manner and their results are monitored with large samples in inclusion environments.

As a conclusion, with respect to the current situation in Turkey, it can be stated that family education programmes should be developed for all parents, regardless of whether or not they have children with special education needs, and teachers should be supported via in-service training, counselling, coaching etc. to ensure their active participation in programme development, implementation and assessment phases and thus, actions, legislative arrangements and practices, which will contribute to increasing the quality of inclusive practices, are needed. Strengthening the current practices is of great importance to develop an integrated education model, which helps all stakeholders reach public accord in this respect.

Special Education Methods, Techniques and Tools

Curriculum, Adaptations and Instruction in Mainstream Education in Turkey

Inclusion/mainstreaming practices refer to a process in which learning needs of all students whose effective instruction and learning needs vary in a broad range need to be met through effective curriculum and instruction techniques and practices (Falvey, 2004). Curriculum-based teaching practices of today's modern education systems require a process in which the information clustered in different categories are transferred to the students through predetermined teaching techniques. In other words, schools start education with a predetermined "curriculum". Nevertheless, this is against the idea that education should start with the "child", which is the cornerstone of mainstreaming education (Falvey, 2004).

When the teaching approaches and methods primarily used by the MoNE from pre-primary education to primary, secondary and high school education are examined on the basis of the official documents and web sites of the MoNE, it stands out that an approach emphasising individual values with a holistic approach is taken as basis. As a matter of fact, the approach followed in the development of the curricula announced by the MoNE is defined as a "harmonic" approach based on scientific information and human knowledge (MEB Öğretim Programları, 2019).

In summary, contrary to the teaching practices, teaching methods and techniques of MoNE, which are frequently observed in today's schools, it is seen that there are many aspects in the explanations about teaching approaches, teaching methods and techniques that coincide with the philosophy of mainstream/inclusive education. It is clearly seen in many different documents that the MoNE lays emphasis on the individual education plans of the students with special education needs. Despite all education policies announced in the official documents of the MoNE, it is commonly observed that teaching practices in the schools are based on large group teaching, based on one method and open expression method, and teachers who strive for completing the topics included the curriculum can take individual learning needs of students into consideration at minimal level.

According to the MoNE data, 18 million 108 thousand 860 students were receiving education in the pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education institutions in the academic year of 2019-2020. This student population, which is larger than the total populations of many countries in the world, makes the Turkish education system and schools much more competitive. From pre-primary to primary education or from upper secondary education to university education, it is now a priority for considerable number of families to ensure that their children receive education in higher quality schools,

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which target higher academic achievements. In Turkey where academic success and high competition are accepted to be equal to school success, academic success of classes is primarily seen as the success of the teacher in the excessively competitive environment in the schools. This is a significant problem in the process of meeting individual learning needs of all students along with those with special education needs as clearly expressed in the education policies of the MoNE.

In addition to the problem of competitive education climate, the number of courses taken by students in schools is numerically higher than the educational models accepted among good education practices. In addition to the numerical excess of the courses, the subject and scope extensiveness of the existing courses is also a current topic of discussion in Turkey. This situation may directly affect the quality of the education in the mainstream/inclusive education provided to the students who need special education in the education system. Children with special education needs in these competitive school climates can be referred as students who slow down the teaching speed in classrooms and sometimes prevent group teaching. (Özdemir, 2018)

The roadmap of effective mainstream/inclusive education practices around the world has been established through assessment and teaching models such as curriculum-based assessment, differentiated teaching, response to intervention approach. In effective mainstreaming/inclusion practices in the class, the teacher is expected to implement teaching practices, also matching the learning level and requirements of the student, to the students with learning needs whose academic requirements do not correspond to the general level of the class and differ from the main teaching components applied in the curriculum within the framework of individual education plans and within the curriculum theme. (Özdemir, 2018) In this context, first of all, in effective mainstream/inclusive education practices, curriculum-based assessment is an important starting point in determining the learning needs of students with special education needs in the curriculum. Regarding the topic in question, in a national project for which the studies have started and still continue under the leadership of MoNE Directorate General for Measurement, Assessment and Examination Services and with the support of UNICEF Turkey, it is aimed to establish an evaluation framework based on monitoring the progress of students in mainstream/inclusive education practices for the students who need special education and need support. (https://odsgm.meb.gov.tr/www/engeli-olan-cocuklar-icin-okul-oncesi-egitim-ve-ilkokulda-degerlendirme-cercevesi-gelistirilmesi-calismasi/icerik/366). On the other hand, the goal should be to adopt a curriculum-based assessment system in all schools beyond the framework program. Second, successful mainstream/inclusive education is based on differentiated instruction in the dimension of teaching practices. In this context, the practices based on the Response to Intervention approach have not yet been achieved in formal education settings. (Özdemir, 2018) A curriculum-based assessment system is used in the Response to Intervention approach, and the learning needs of the students who are in the process of continuous evaluation are met through evidence-based practices. All these practices, in other words, curriculum-based evaluation, differentiated instruction and Response to Intervention practices are not considered as possible in the absence of systemic reforms without a team work, without employing special education teachers in all schools where mainstream/inclusive education is provided, without bringing into action the implementation of support teacher practice for students with special education needs in classrooms and without the establishment of education systems to support the knowledge and practices of all teachers working in mainstream/inclusive education, in other words, all teachers working in the MoNE system.

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When examining educational infrastructure of mainstream/inclusive education practices within the framework of laws and regulations in Turkey, it is pointed out that Article 67 of the Special Education Services Regulation, which entered into force in January 2000, defines the mainstream/inclusive education and the principles of implementation of mainstream/inclusive education are listed in Article 68. In addition, Article 69 of the Regulation includes the criteria for the implementation of mainstream/inclusive education. While Article 72 describes the duties and responsibilities of individuals involved in mainstream/inclusive education, in Article 73, the process of evaluation of the students who have received mainstream/inclusive education is included. In the article, evaluation principles of children with different disabilities are discussed separately (Diken and Batu, 2010). Following this arrangement in the regulation in 2000, the Special Education Law was published in 2005 and the Special Education Services Regulation was updated on 7 July 2018 (MoNE, Special Education Services Regulation, 2018). When the teaching methods and techniques of mainstream/inclusive education practices in Turkey are examined, one of the most important problems is that children with different disabilities cannot have access to the existing education curriculum beyond all kinds of evaluation, teaching models and techniques. An example that could be provided for a better understanding of this problem is the problems of access to curricula for students who benefit from mainstreaming/inclusion practices with visual impairment. Students with visual impairments do not have access to the content of STEM courses curriculum, especially in the secondary education and high school education. In today's educational practices, students with visual impairment are connected to their teachers' computers via Bluetooth through Braille writing tool, they can follow the "seeing writing" practices through Braille writing and the teacher can also control the student's learning outcomes on his / her computer in the classroom and provide feedback to the student (Kirboyun, 2018). This basic access cannot be provided to students and teachers affected by visual impairment in today's mainstream/inclusive education environments.

Research focusing on the views of teachers, which is the practical dimension of teaching methods and techniques to be applied in mainstream/inclusive education, shows that teachers' knowledge and skills about adapting in mainstream/inclusive education are limited (Sadioğlu et al., 2013). This situation negatively affects the access to general education curriculum of the students with special education needs in terms of teacher competencies. In the IEPs that teachers prepare for students with special education needs, they do not prefer making content adaptations such as selecting objectives and simplifying these objectives, they select objectives from lower classes or special education programs; moreover, they do not include practices and adaptations for the teaching of these objectives. The problems experienced in the teaching of the selected objectives are frequently emphasized in the literature (Heward et al., 2016; Kwon et al., 2012; Miller, 2012; Pretti-Frontczak & Bricker, 2000). It is clear that students with special educational needs cannot achieve these objectives without any instructional adaptation only for themselves through open expression and large group teaching arrangements. The problems encountered in practice also confirm this situation. Research focusing on the solution of the problem shows that teachers' professional competence in special education methods and techniques can be increased by supporting teachers in general education classes with teacher trainings, in-service trainings and coaching practices, and that the students with special education needs can reach the objectives in the IEP after the teaching provided by these teachers. (Fidan, 2018; Tekin-İftar, Collins, Spooner & Olcay-Gul, 2017; Tunç-Paftalı, 2017). In terms of which special education methods and techniques should be provided to teachers, the concept of scientifically based practices which have been demonstrated to be effective through researches emerges. Considering that teachers' working time with these students is short, but the instructional objectives determined for the students

are numerous, the necessity of selecting the teaching methods that will result in more effective and efficient learning for the students with special education needs will be understood.

In the basic aspect summarized, although the basic principles reflected by the curriculum approaches, teaching methods and techniques explained by the MoNE reflect the expectations of ideal education practices, it is widely observed that in the existing intensive curriculum contents and competitive school environments, the main concern of teachers is to finish the curriculum on time primarily in their classes. Education problems of the students who receive mainstream/inclusive education become more apparent when the knowledge and skill limitations of classroom teachers and branch teachers in formal education in areas such as individual training plan implementations, curriculum and teaching adaptations are included in the intense and competitive program problems (Sucuoğlu, 2004). In crowded classrooms, teachers providing group-based education state that they have problems in allocating time to students with special education needs among all students with different learning needs in classrooms. Lack of special education teachers who will work together with the teachers and guide them in the individual education plan implementation in the mainstreaming/inclusion classes, not implementing in-class support practices in Turkey yet and the lack of support education systems, in which the teachers who are in the effort can get answers to their questions, points to systemic problems. In the sub-dimension of teaching methods and techniques, lack of curriculum-based assessment, differentiated teaching and response to intervention approach result in teachers who provide education in classes being left alone in overcoming all problems and ineffective mainstreaming/inclusion education practices. In summary, when teacher competences and all systemic problems are taken into consideration from a holistic perspective, systemic deficiencies can be clearly identified and the road map to be followed can be identified in the inability to implement the teaching model that is sensitive to individual differences expressed in MoNE's education policies in real education environments. Within this framework, collective efforts and collaborations with MoNE, universities, state institutions, private institutions and finally non-governmental organizations will ensure the implementation of the creation process of the system for effective and successful mainstreaming/inclusion practices.

Second Phase of The Research: Descriptive Research

Method

In the research conducted, the general situation of inclusion/mainstreaming services in Turkey was determined on the basis of the views of teachers who provide education and counselling services to the students with special education needs. The aim of this research, which was patterned as a holistic case study research where the individuals determined as participants were deemed as data sources (Yin, 2009), was to gather in-depth information about the inclusion/mainstreaming system (situation) in Turkey. The inclusion/mainstreaming system in Turkey represents a case in itself with its institutions, identification-placement-education process and characteristics of teachers providing education. According to the common path followed in inclusive/mainstreaming practices in Turkey, after the identification in the Guidance and Research Centres (GRCs) or hospitals, placement decisions are taken for individuals, and education-monitoring-assessment processes are followed for those placed in schools. In full-time inclusion/mainstreaming process, the students with special education needs receive education with their typically developing peers in the same environments and under the same conditions. In part-time inclusion/mainstreaming process, the students with special education needs

receive education with their typically developing peers in the same environments and under the same conditions only at determined courses and hours within the day. The situation summarised here is multi-dimensional and displays the features of a holistic system. Therefore, it is necessary to make an in-depth assessment about the system through a holistic case study analysis. Detailed information on the individuals participating in the research are presented under the title "participants".

Participants

In the research, focus group meetings were held with five different groups of teachers, and individual interviews were held with two special education teachers. The data concerning the teachers participating in the focus group meetings and individual interviews are presented in Table 3.

Characteristics of Data Collectors

In the second phase of the research, data were collected by four instructors working in Hacettepe University, Department of Special Education. Focus group meetings with the special education teachers and classroom teachers were carried out by a researcher, who has a PhD in special education, has worked in special education and rehabilitation centres for 10 years, conducts studies on mental incompetence and ASD and is experienced with focus group meetings and qualitative research. The focus group meetings with the branch teachers were conducted by a researcher, who has worked in special education and rehabilitation centres as language and speech therapist for seven years, specialised in this field and has experience with focus group meetings and qualitative research. The focus group meetings with the guidance teachers were carried out by a researcher, who worked as special education teacher for three years and has been conducting qualitative studies for about two years. As for the discussions held with the teachers working in BİLSEMs, they were carried out by a researcher, who has experience in research and practices related to gifted children and has been conducting qualitative and quantitative research in this field for 15 years.

Group	Number	Sex		Type of interview
		Male	Female	
Special education teachers	10	6	4	Individual interview
Classroom teachers	9	-	9	Focus group meeting
Branch teachers	10	6	4	Focus group meeting
Guidance teachers	7	1	6	Focus group meeting
Teachers working in BİLSEMs	7	4	3	Focus group meeting
Total	43			

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Table 3. Data concerning the breakdown of teachers

Data Collection Tools

Focus group meetings and individual interviews were held for the purposes of data collection in the research. To this end, data were collected through a semi-structured interview form. The questions in the interview form were developed by a panel of experts on the basis of the literature. This panel consisted of three experts with PhD in the field of special education and two experts experienced in special education teaching. Once the semi-structured interview form was developed by the researchers, expert opinions were received from the experts of the project and the MoNE experts about the questions in the form. The form was finalised upon the receipt of opinions from the experts. Before the interview questions, individual information form was used to collect information about the individuals. Also, permissions of the participants were officially recorded through "informed consent form". Questions directed to the participants are presented in Table 4. Since teachers from different branches were interviewed during the research, adaptations were made in the questions by sticking to the main framework. For instance, Question 5 was asked in two different ways for the special education teachers. First, the question was formulated as "Can you talk about your in-class practices?" and "What kind of practices do you use with your students with special education needs?" and then as "What kind of practices are used for the students with special education needs in mainstream education classes?" and "What are your observations in this respect?". Therefore, the views of teachers were sought with respect to both their own practices and the practices used in the mainstream education classes.

Focus Group Meeting Questions

1. Can you introduce yourself?
2. Considering the process from the identification of the special education needs of a student to the placement in mainstreaming practices, what do you say about the process of placement in mainstreaming practices in Turkey?
3. What do you think your role is in the placement process?
4. What kind of studies do you make at the beginning of academic year for the students for whom a mainstreaming decision is made?
5. Can you mention your in-class practices? What kind of practices do you use with your students with special education needs?
6. What kind of environmental arrangements do you make for your students with special education needs in your class?
7. What kind of adaptations do you make in instruction for your students with special education needs?
8. What do you do to ensure the participation of the students with special education needs in social activities?
9. What do you do to establish control over the behaviours of students with special education needs in the class?
10. Considering all the processes we have mentioned so far, what kind of difficulties do you encounter during these practices?
11. What are your views about the mainstreaming system implemented in Turkey?
    a.   What are the strengths of the system?
    b.   What are the weaknesses of the system?
12. What do you suggest for improving your in-class practices and the overall system?

Table 4. Interview Questions

During the individual interviews, the same questions were asked to different participants. The data obtained from both focus group meetings and individual interviews were recorded. Later on, these records were transcribed for analysis. Two different researchers examined the accuracy of the records by listening three randomly selected records. It was determined that the records were complete.

Data Analysis

The transcribed data were organised for analysis, and those performing the analysis read all the data sets. Later on, analyses were carried out through inductive content analysis. In this process, open coding, creating categories and theme development (abstraction) were used as processes (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). In open coding, sample explanations in the data set are addressed, and those thought to be reflective are given a code. Based on the common features of the codes, then, categories were created, and a conceptual representation to which these categories corresponded was reached, and themes were developed. In data analysis process, the consistency of the analyses conducted by different researchers on the same dataset was examined to increase the validity of the research. It was determined that the consistency of two different researchers was 86% on the basis of themes. Also, the consistency between the findings obtained from the analyses of focus group meetings and those obtained from individual interviews was used to increase the validity of the research. To achieve data source triangulation, data were collected from different groups of teachers, and focus group, individual interview and literature analysis were carried out to achieve triangulation in terms of measurement tools. Since the students in BİLSEMs have highly different characteristics in the other identification groups and the roles of the teachers working in BİLSEMs in relation to the inclusion/mainstreaming process are different from the roles of the special education teachers, classroom teachers, branch teachers and guidance teachers, the data of this group were analysed separately during the data analysis. The scheme concerning the data analysis is presented in Figure 4.

Explanations In The Text Regarding The Interview	Open Coding From Texts	Developing Categories From The Codes	Developing Themes/Abstraction From The Categories

Figure 4. Summary of data analysis process

Findings

Before the start of the interviews, questions were directed to the teachers to determine the groups they worked with, informative events they participated in, people and information sources that they received support from, training needs that they expressed and their suggestions concerning the training which will develop their professional developments. The findings related to these questions are presented below.

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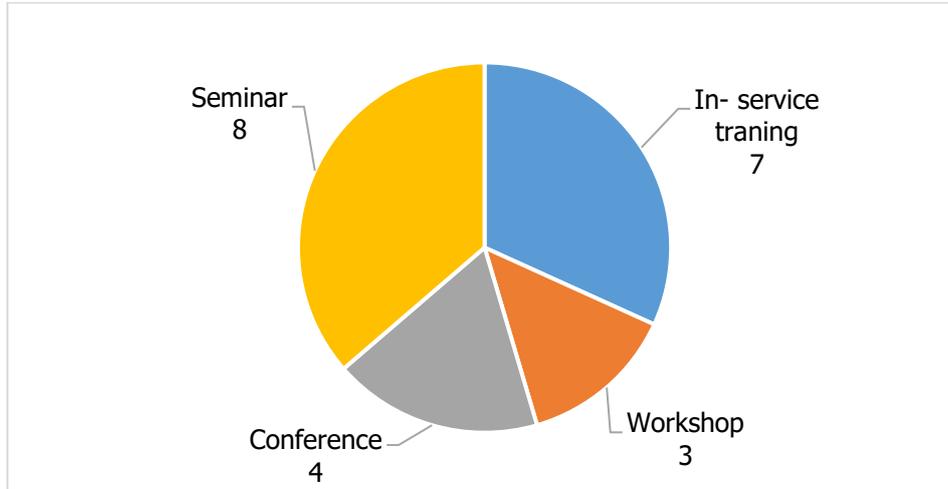
Findings related to the Special Education Teachers

When the answers of teachers to the question about the groups they work with are examined, it is seen that two teachers worked with visually impaired students, two teachers worked with students with physical disability, seven teachers worked with students with mental disability, three teachers worked with students with learning disability, seven teachers worked with students with autism spectrum disorder and two teachers worked with students identified with language and speech impediment. Professional experience among teachers varies between 1 to 17 years (avg.=6.5).

Special education teachers were asked whether they needed support while working with students with special education needs. Eight teachers stated that they need support while working with these students while two teachers stated that they do not need support. Of the teachers needing support, four teachers received support from the GRC, four teachers received support from the families, two teachers received support from the school principals, two teachers received support from the other teachers, two teachers received support from field experts, three teachers received support from academicians and one teacher received support from the counselling service. Also, teachers stated that they resorted to such information sources as internet (n=5), books (n=7), articles (n=8) and social media (n=1) when needed.

According to the answers of teachers to the question regarding the informative events that they participated in on the topics of special education and students with special needs, seven teachers participated in in-service training, three teachers participated in workshops, four teachers attended conferences and eight teachers participated in seminars. Seven teachers stated that they benefited from the courses they received during their undergraduate education. Figure 5 presents the data concerning the informative events the special education teachers participated in.

Figure 5. Informative events that special education teachers participated in

Detailed information concerning the training that the teachers attended are presented in Table 5.

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Subject	Duration	Method	Status of Satisfaction	Number of teachers participating in the training
Special education	(30 hours-7 days)	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	2
Early childhood	(2 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Sexual development	(2 hours-3 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	2
Practice houses	(7 days)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
ASD	(3 hours-4 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	2
EU projects	(2 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Braille	(5 days)	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
Visual impairment	(5 days)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
YL	(2 years)	Theoretical/Applied	Satisfied	1
Regulation	(6 hours/1 week)	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	2
Sports for people with disabilities	(3 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Special Education EBA (EIN)	(30 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Legal rights	(3 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Gifted children	(3 days)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Inclusion	(15 days)	Applied	Satisfied	1
ASIS Applied	(15 days)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1

Table 5. Information on the training that special education teachers received

Special education teachers were asked if they demanded training from relevant public institutions concerning special education and children with special education needs, and it was determined that, out of 10 teachers, only one teacher made three requests to relevant public institutions about special education and children with special education needs and that these requests were met. Three teachers

stated that they participated in these training programmes voluntarily, while the rest did not express any opinion.

When special education teachers were asked about their suggestions for the improvement of the training offered to them and for new training programmes to be offered; two teachers asked for training on mainstreaming, one teacher on coping with behavioural problems, one teacher on autism spectrum disorder (ASD), one teacher on helping children with mental disabilities gain professional skills, and one teacher on identification. Also, two teachers stated that these training programmes should be continuous and be delivered by academicians. Another teacher suggested training for improving the professional knowledge and skills of the GRC personnel. Figure 6 presents the breakdown of the suggestions of special education teachers.
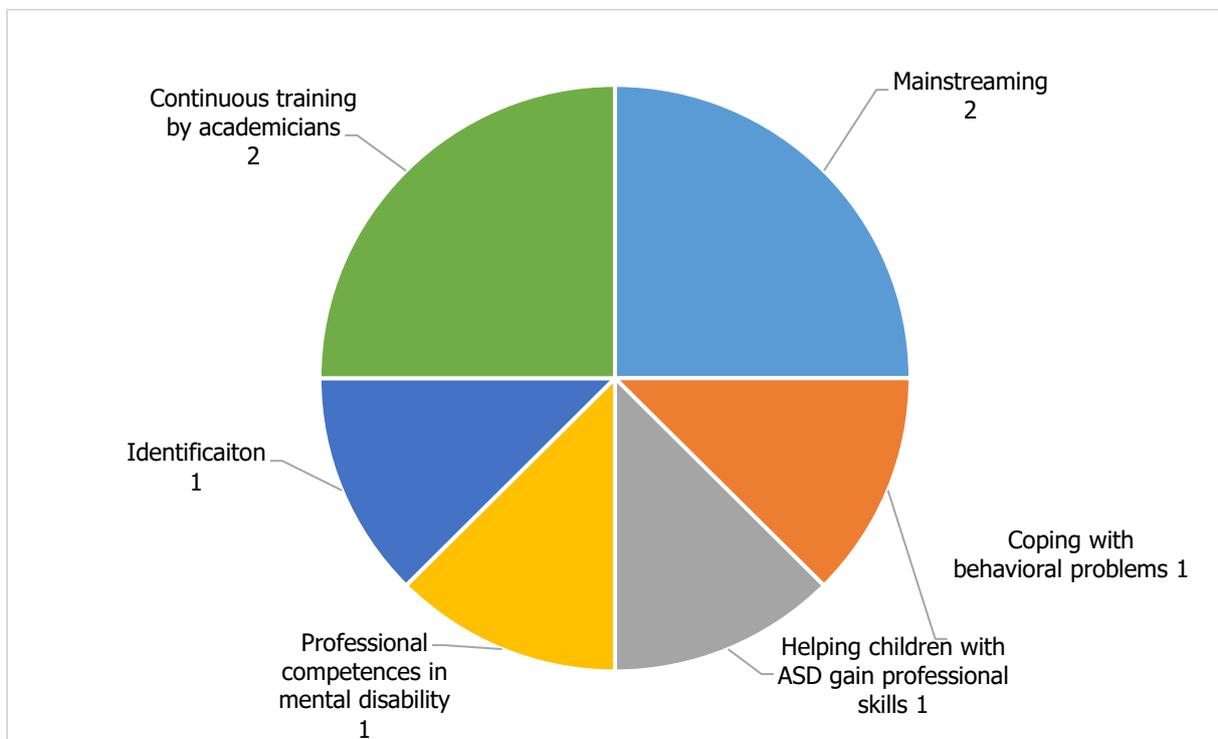
Figure 6. Suggestions of special education teachers related to training

Findings related to Classroom Teachers

Classroom teachers were asked whether they had students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in their classes, and eight teachers stated that they have at least one student benefiting from mainstreaming practices in their classes while one teacher does not have any student benefiting from mainstreaming practices. Out of the teachers with students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in their classes, five of them were working with students with mental disability, five with students with learning disability, three with gifted students, two with physical incompetence and two with students affected by language and speech impairment. Furthermore, one teacher stated that he/she had one

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student identified with ASD, one teacher had a hearing-impaired student, and one teacher had a visually impaired student in his/her class. The years of experience of classroom teachers in working with children with special education needs range from 2 to 7 (avg.=3.5).

When classroom teachers were asked if they needed support while working with children with special education needs, all teachers stated that they need support. While five teachers received this support from the GRCs, four teachers received support from the families; three teachers received it from the field experts, two teachers from the other teachers and one teacher from guidance teacher, one teacher from special education teacher, one teacher from administrator and one teacher from academician. Also, teachers stated that they resorted to sources of information such as internet (n=9), books (n=8), articles (n=4), social media (n=1), brochures (n=1) and seminar (n=1) if needed. When teachers were asked if they participated in informative events concerning special education and individuals with special education needs, seven teachers stated that they participated in in-service training, six teachers participated in seminars, and three teachers attended conferences. While one teacher received a course during the undergraduate education, one teacher did not participate in such training. Information concerning the informative events that the classroom teachers attended is presented in Figure 7 while the subjects and other details of these training programmes are given in Table 6.
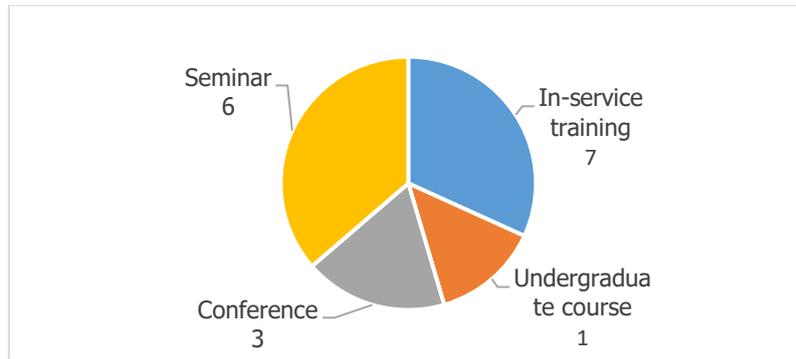

Figure 7. Informative events that classroom teachers attended

Subject	Duration	Method	Status of Satisfaction	Number of teachers participating in the training

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Special education certificate programme	(540 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	2
Gifted children	(1 day-2 weeks)	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	2
Counselling	(1 week)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Special education	(1 week)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Creative drama	(1 day-4 days-1 week)	Theoretical	Satisfied	3
Psychoeducation	(1 week)	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Learning styles/multiple intelligence	(4 days)	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
Mainstreaming	(1 day)	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
Learning disability	(1 day)	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
ASD	-	Theoretical	Satisfied	2
IEP preparation	-	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Classroom management	(30 hours)	Theoretical	Satisfied	2
Story telling	-	Theoretical	Satisfied	1

Table 6. Information concerning the training received by classroom teachers

Classroom teachers were asked if they demanded training from relevant public institutions on the topics of special education and children with special education needs, and only one teacher stated that he/she made a request and that this request was met. Additionally, while six teachers stated that they participated in these training programmes voluntarily, three teachers did not respond to this question.

Classroom teachers were also asked to make suggestions for the improvement of the training offered to them and for new training programmes to be provided, and three teachers stated that the seminars should be organised more frequently, two teachers stated that training should be practical training, one teacher emphasised the issue of continuity in training, and one teacher stated that training should be delivered to families. Apart from the suggestions related to training, it was also suggested to increase the numbers of special education teachers in schools and to enrich the classrooms in terms of materials. Figure 8 presents the suggestions made by classroom teachers.

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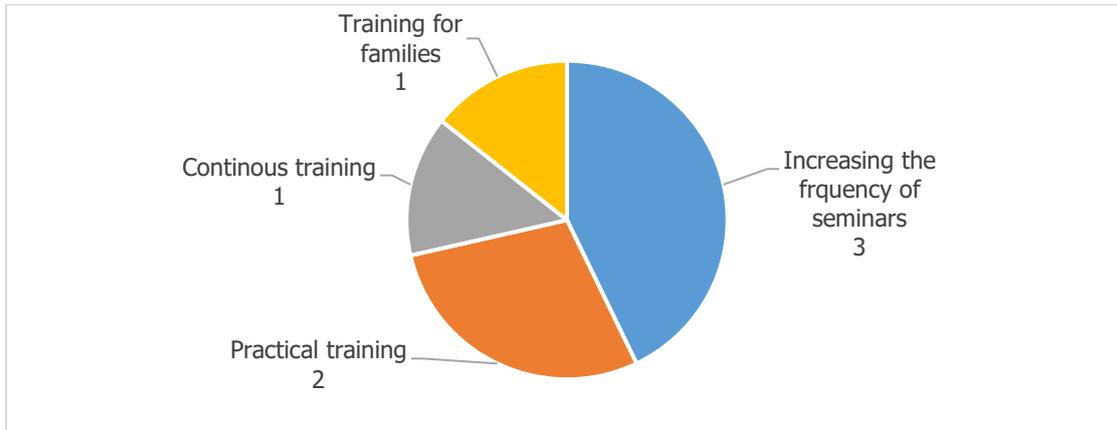
Figure 8. Suggestions of classroom teachers related to training

Branch Teachers

When the breakdown of the branch teachers participating in the focus group meetings is examined, it is seen that there are two mathematics teachers and one teacher from all other branches, which include science, computer and instructional technologies, music, guidance, Turkish language and literature, physics, physical education and Turkish. Branch teachers were asked if they had students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in their classes, and all teachers stated that there is at least one student benefiting from mainstreaming practices in their classes. Eight teachers stated that they have students with learning disabilities, six teachers have students with mental disabilities, five teachers have students with physical disabilities, three teachers have visually impaired students, three teachers have students with language and speech impediments, and one have students identified with ASD. It is seen that the professional experience of teachers in working with the students with special education needs varies between one year to six years (avg.=2.5 years). While nine branch teachers participating in the meetings stated that they need support for better serving the students with special education needs, one teacher stated that he/she does not need support. Of the teachers reporting support need, seven teachers received support from other teachers, five teachers from the families, three teachers from administrators, three teachers from the GRCs and one teacher from the guidance teachers. Also, when the sources of information utilised by the teachers were examined, it was seen that they benefited from internet (n=8), books (n=2), articles (n=1) and social media (n=2).

When teachers were asked if they participated in any informative event concerning special education and individuals with special education needs, seven teachers stated that they did not participate in any event. Of the teachers stating that they participated in informative events, one participated in an in-service training, one teacher attended a seminar and one teacher received a course during undergraduate education. All teachers stated that they participated in these events voluntarily. However, they did not give details about the content, duration and method of these training programmes. Additionally, branch teachers were asked if they demanded training from relevant public institutions on the topics of special education and children with special education needs, and only one teacher stated that he/she asked for it and that his/her request was met. Informative events that the branch teachers attended are presented in Figure 9.

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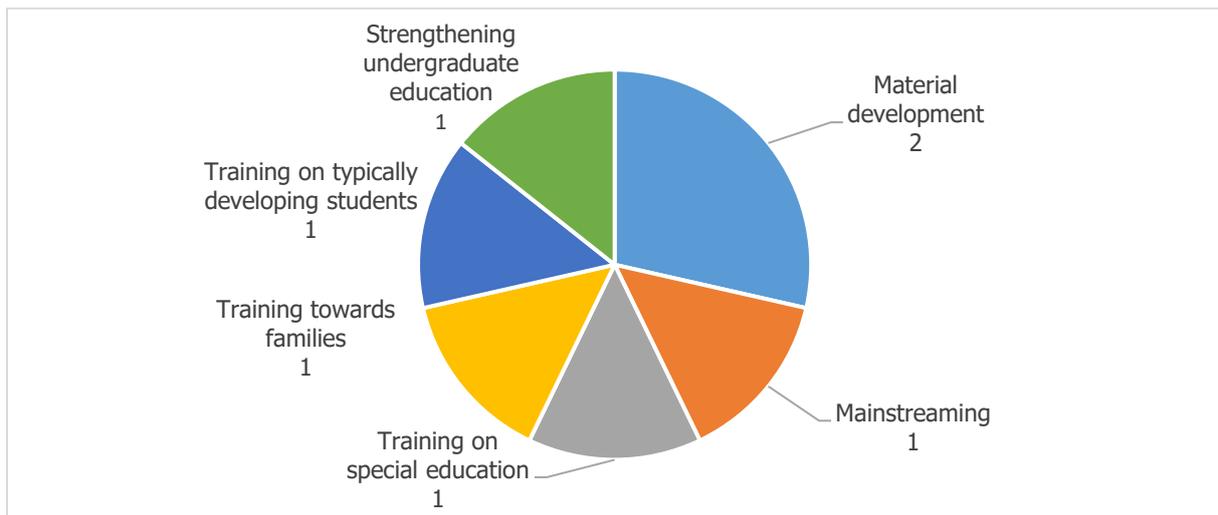the European Union and the Republic of Turkey.

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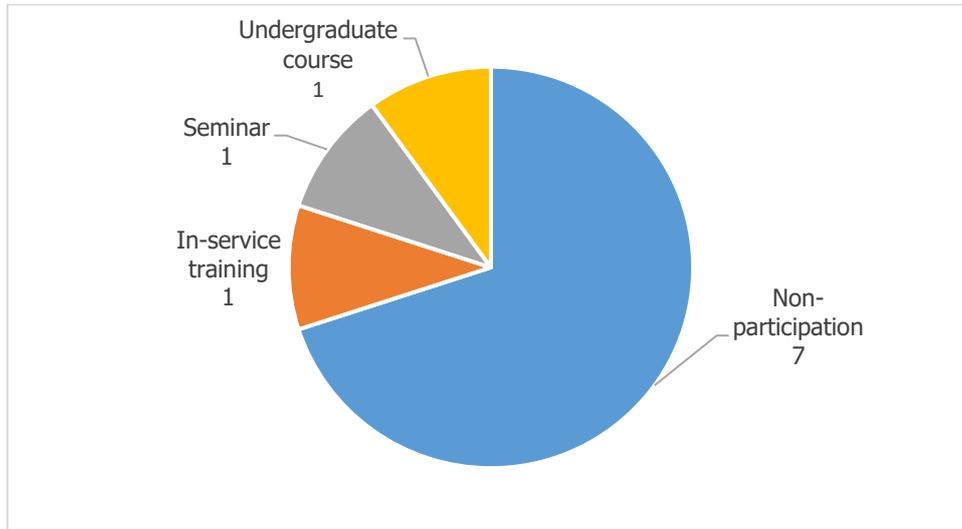
Figure 9. Informative events attended by branch teachers

Branch teachers were also asked to make suggestions to improve the training offered to them and about new training programmes to be delivered, and two teachers stated that they want to receive training on material development. Apart from them, one teacher suggested training on mainstreaming while one teacher suggested training on special education. Additionally, one teacher stated that training should be organised for families while according to one teacher, training should be organised on typically developing children as well. Finally, one teacher stated that undergraduate education should be strengthened. Figure 10 presents the suggestions of branch teachers.

Figure 10. Suggestions of branch teachers related to training

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Guidance Teachers

Guidance teachers were asked if they have students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in the schools they work. All teachers stated that they have students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in their schools.

When the identification groups of these students were examined, it was seen that six teachers work with hearing-impaired students, four teachers work with visually impaired students, six teachers with students with physical disabilities, seven teachers with students with mental disabilities, six teachers with students with learning disabilities, four teachers with students with ASD, six teachers with students with language and speech impediment and one teacher with gifted students. Professional experience of guidance teachers varies between 5 to 25 years (avg.=13).

When the guidance teachers were asked if they need support for better serving the students with special education needs, all of them stated that they need support while working with these students. When the sources of support of the guidance teachers were examined, it was seen that seven teachers received support from the GRCs, four teachers from families, three teachers from administrators, four teachers from other teachers, four teachers from field experts and two teachers from academicians. Additionally, the sources of information that the guidance teachers used were examined, and it was determined that they benefited from internet (n=6), books (n=7), articles (n=3) and social media (n=1).

When the answers of guidance teachers to the question about the training they received on the topics of special education and students with special education needs were examined, it was seen that four teachers participated in in-service training, one teacher participated in workshops, three teachers participated in conferences and four teachers participated in seminars. Four guidance teachers stated that they benefited from the courses they received during their undergraduate education. Figure 11 presents the informative events that the guidance teachers participated in.
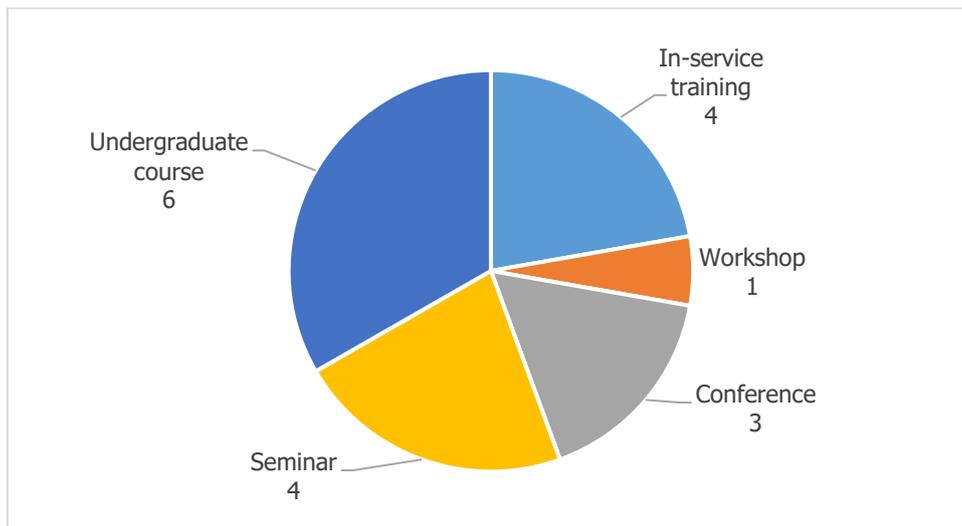
Figure 11. Informative events that guidance teachers participated in

Information on the training that the guidance teachers received, including their subjects, is presented in Table 7.

Subject	Duration	Method	Status of satisfaction	Number of teachers participating in the training
IEP	1 week	Theoretical	Satisfied	3
Mainstreaming	2 hours	Theoretical	Satisfied	4
Dyslexia	-	Theoretical	Satisfied	2
Respect for individual differences	-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	2
Awareness about the visually impaired	-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
Special education practices	-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	2
Family education	-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	2
WISCR	-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
Stanford Binet	-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
Leither	-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1

Table 7. Information on the training that guidance teachers received

While four guidance teachers represented in the research demanded training from relevant public institutions on the topics of special education and children with special education needs, three of them did not make any request. One guidance teacher stated that his/her request was met while three guidance teachers stated that their requests were not met. Three guidance teachers reported that they participated in the events voluntarily while two teachers participated in the training as participation was obligatory. Two guidance teachers did not respond to this question.

Guidance teachers were also asked to make suggestions for the improvement of the training offered to them and for new trainings to be provided. Three guidance teachers stated that the number of applied training should be increased while four teachers considered that all teachers should be offered training on the topic. Two teachers stated that the IEP training should be disseminated; one teacher expressed that job descriptions should be clearer; one suggested that training on certain groups of disability should be increased and finally, one teacher stated that one special education teacher post should be created in each school. Figure 12 presents the suggestions made by guidance teachers.
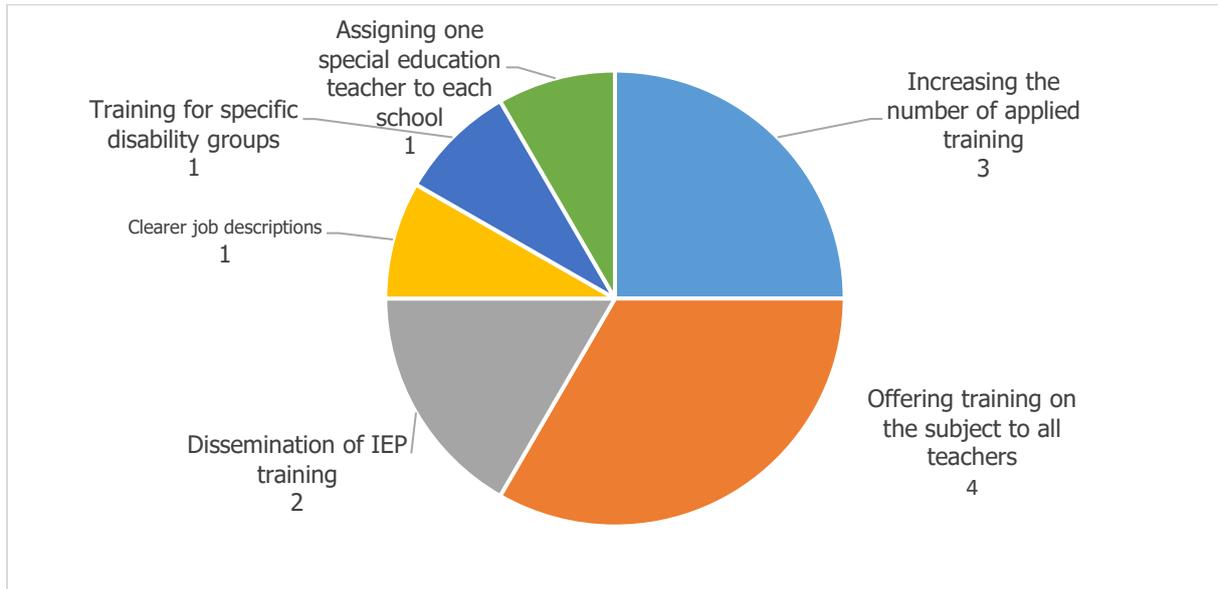
Figure 12. Suggestions of guidance teachers related to training

Findings related to the Teachers Working in BİLSEMs

Among the teachers who participated in the focus group meetings and were working in BİLSEMs, there was one teacher from the branches of mathematics, physics, science, music and Turkish language and literature while another two teachers were working as classroom teacher and guidance teacher. When the teachers working in BİLSEMs were asked if they had students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in their classes, four teachers stated that they have students benefiting from mainstreaming practices in their classes, and one teacher stated that he/she does not have students benefiting from mainstreaming practices while two teachers did not answer this question. With respect to the identification groups of students, five teachers stated that they work with gifted children while one teacher works with students with visual impairments and physical disabilities. Professional experience of the teachers varies between 2 to15 years (avg.=7).

When the teachers working in BİLSEMs were asked if they need support to better serve the students with special education needs, all of them stated that they need support to better serve their students. To this end, six teachers received support from other teachers, five teachers from academicians, four teachers from families, three teachers from administrators, one teacher from the GRCs and one teacher from the field experts. Additionally, the sources of information that the teachers used were examined, and it was determined that they used internet (n=4), books (n=6), articles (n=6) and social media (n=3).

Teachers were also asked if they participated in informative events about special education and individuals with special education needs. All of them reported that they participated in such events. According to their answers, six teachers participated in in-service training, six teachers participated in seminars, five teachers attended conferences, four teachers participated in workshops, and one teacher received course during undergraduate education. The informative events that the teachers working in BİLSEMs participated in are presented in Figure 13.

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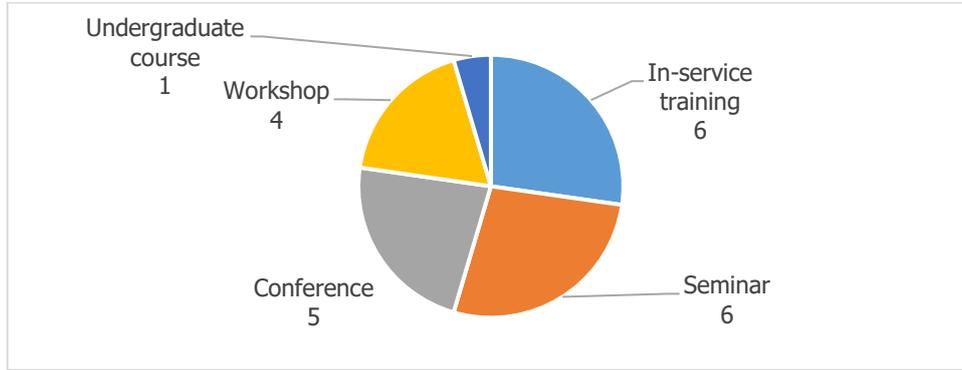
Figure 13. Informative events that BİLSEM teachers participated in

Detailed information on the training that BİLSEM teachers received is presented in Table 8.

Subject	Duration	Method	Status of satisfaction	Number of teachers participating in the training
Gifted trainer training	-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
In-service training	1 week	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Education of the gifted children	1 week	Theoretical	Satisfied	2
Project development	1 week	Theoretical	Satisfied	1
Development of the gifted children	1 week	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	1
Support education room awareness	8 hours	Theoretical	Dissatisfied	1
Programme development	5 days/-	Theoretical/applied	Satisfied	2
In-service mainstreaming training	-	Theoretical	Satisfied	1

Table 8. Information on the training that BİLSEM teachers received

When the teachers working in BİLSEMs were asked if they asked for training from relevant public institutions about special education and students with special education needs, only three teachers stated that they demanded training and that their requests were met by the institutions. Also, they stated that they participated in these activities on a voluntary basis.

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BİLSEM teachers were also asked to make suggestions for the improvement of the training offered to them and for new training to be provided, and three teachers stated that in-service training should be organised while two of them focused on new instruction approaches for the gifted children, one focused on patent processes. One teacher suggested that technical aspects of the training be strengthened. Figure 14 presents the suggestions made by BİLSEM teachers.
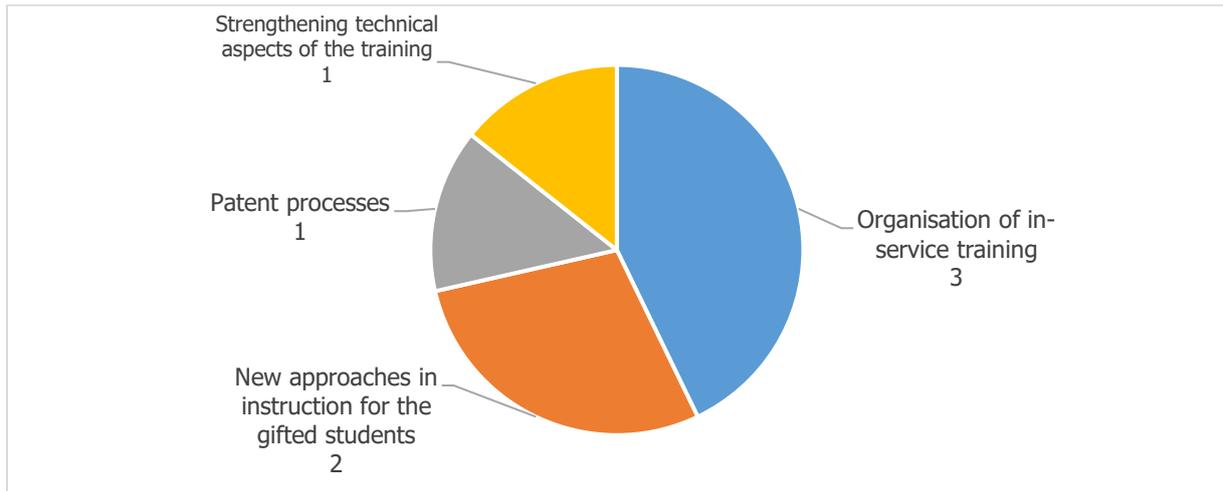
Figure 14. Suggestions of BİLSEM teachers with regard to training

As a conclusion, focus group meetings were held with 43 teachers, and individual interviews were conducted with two teachers within the scope of the research. While 39 teachers (90.6%) stated that they need support with respect to special education and related practices, four teachers (9.4%) expressed that they do not need support. When the sources of support were examined among the teachers, it was seen that 20 (46.5%) teachers received support from the GRCs, 21 teachers (48.8%) from families, 11 teachers (25.6%) from administrators, 21 teachers (48.8%) from other teachers, 10 teachers (23.2%) from the field experts, 10 teachers (23.2%) from academicians, three teachers (6.9%) from the counselling service and one teacher (1.1%) from special education teachers.

According to the findings of the research, the sources that the teachers used for obtaining information about special education and practices are as follows: 32 teachers (74.4%) obtained information from internet, 30 teachers (69.8%) from books, 22 teachers (51.2%) from articles, eight teachers (18.6%) from social media, one teacher (2.3%) from brochures related to the topic and one teacher (2.3%) from seminars.

Teachers were asked if they ever participated in informative events concerning special education and individuals with special education needs, and according to their answers; 28 teachers (65.1%) participated in in-service training, eight teachers (18.6%) in workshops, 15 teachers (34.9%) in conferences and 26 teachers (60.5%) in seminars while 16 teachers (37.2%) received courses during their undergraduate education. Seven teachers (16.3%) reported that they did not participate in such events.

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Teachers represented in the research were asked if they ever demanded training from the relevant public institutions on the topics of special education and children with special education needs. While 10 teachers (2.3%) stated that they asked for training, 11 teachers (25.6%) stated that they did not make such a request. It was determined that 10 teachers made 11 requests in total, and while eight requests (72.7%) were met, three requests (27.3%) were not met. 15 teachers participated in the training on a voluntary basis while two teachers participated compulsorily.

When the suggestions of the teachers regarding special education and children with special education needs are examined, it is seen that 29 teachers (67.4%) make suggestions on the education of the gifted children, 14 teachers (32.5%) on training about IEP and mainstreaming practices, six teachers (13.9%) on curriculum development and project preparation and four teachers (9.3%) on intelligence tests. Also, it was determined that four teachers (9.3%) made suggestions on different topics such as education of family, legal issues related to people with disabilities and regulations.

Findings Obtained from Special Education, Classroom, Branch and Guidance Teachers

Following the collection of the data summarised above, focus group meetings were held with the teachers on the basis of their branches/fields. At the end of these discussions, 10 themes were determined. These themes are placement; role of the teacher in mainstreaming, preparation for mainstreaming, in-class practices and adaptations, participation in social activities, behavioural control, difficulties experienced in mainstreaming, positive aspects of mainstreaming, suggestions supporting mainstreaming practices and feelings about mainstreaming respectively.

Themes

In the following topics, explanations are provided by making direct quotations from the expressions of the participants regarding each theme. While providing direct quotations, the abbreviations such as KÖ for special education teachers, KS for classroom teachers, KB for branch teachers, KR for guidance teachers, and KBI for teachers working in BİLSEMs were used. The numbers next to the abbreviation show which teacher in the relevant group was quoted. For example, an abbreviation in the form of KB5 indicates that quotation is made based on the fifth branch teacher. The numbers following the citations made to the participants show the line number of the relevant statement in the interview transcripts.

Theme 1: Placement

Under the theme of placement, six categories were determined, and they are problems related to noticing, referral, assessment/functioning of the GRC, systematic problems and positive aspects of the system. Figure 15 presents the categories and sub-categories under this theme. Two teachers expressed views related to noticing. With respect to the fact that students are noticed late and included in the system late, one of the teachers stated that "*Well, for instance the case of a 10th grade student with unidentified special education needs... I noticed the student in my class, and referred him/her, until that time, the student had failed in many courses, and even there was no eye contact. Until that time, no one has noticed the situation* (KB5, 264-267)."

In the category of problems related to referral, views were expressed on three sub-categories as early referral, cooperation problems and non-employment of the response to intervention approach. Three teachers expressing views on the sub-category of early referral emphasised the problems experienced

since children are referred right at the beginning of the academic year, without getting to know them well. One of the teachers expressing news on these sub-categories expressed this problem as such: "*Previously, students would be referred to the GRC with the request of educational assessment in the first grade only after the completion of 70 working days. Last year this practice was abolished. This development is not good for us. This is mainly about the duration of adaptation process of the children to the school. As you know, the children of today grow among four walls with tablets, which delays their adaptation processes, and increases have been observed in such identifications as special learning, attention deficit, hyperactivity disorder etc. in a short time. Thus, it is early to refer a student by identifying with special learning needs when that student is very active, cannot adapt easily, cannot learn letters or cannot learn how to write and read, for instance, in two or three months (KÖ2, 31-29).*"

Three teachers expressed their opinions on the sub-category of cooperation problems. An example for this sub-category is as follows: "*Really, classroom and branch teachers, as my colleague has pointed out, do not want to fill in, and they create extra workload for us. We explain to them, we have to remind them, this is not pleasant (KR1, 288-290).*"

In the sub-category of non-employment of the response to intervention approach, problems caused by the referral of students without the implementation of pre-referral process were emphasised. One of the teachers expressing opinion on this sub-category stated that "*When we read some sources, it is stated that teachers should wait for a while by taking certain measures before the student is referred for identification even if they presume that there is abnormality, retarded development or need for identification. These measures include educational arrangements, physical arrangements etc. Unfortunately, in our country, let alone these measures, we do not even take measures during the phase of assessment after the decision has been taken and the student has been referred for assessment (KÖ8, 57-62).*"

Another category under the theme of placement is about the problems related to assessment/functioning of the GRC. Three sub-categories were determined in this category as well, and highest number of opinions were expressed about the sub-category of wrong educational assessment and identification (n=9). An exemplary statement for this category is "*According to the report, the child has mental disability, but the child actually does not have a mild mental disability. Let alone educational assessment, the moment I stepped in the classroom, I assumed that the child had moderate mental disability. The educational performance of the child also showed that the child had moderate mental disability, but the report prepared states that the child has mild mental disability* (KÖ1, 215-219)." The second sub-category with the highest number of opinions delivered in this category is the lengthy process.

One teacher expressing views in this sub-category explained this situation by stating "*Appointment processes are too lengthy in the GRCs (KS4, 72-73)*" while another teacher stated that "*GRCs can make appointments too late, sometimes one semester can be wasted (KR3, 77-79).*" For the sub-category concerning the fastness of the assessment, four teachers expressed views. One of the teachers pointed out the speed of the assessment and identification processes in the GRCs with the following statement: "*… well, the child is directly referred for identification and is identified in a very short time, although the identification process is lengthy, the assessment in the GRC is too fast (KB5, 264-267).*" Teachers delivering opinion in this category attributed these problems to the high number of clients per expert in the GRCs (KÖ4, 418-419) and insufficient knowledge of the personnel (KÖ1, 80-82).

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The fourth category of the theme of placement is about the problems related to placement. In this category, wrong placement and problems caused by wrong placement were emphasised. One of the four teachers expressing views in this category stated that "*As pointed out by my colleague, students with 80% and above, my current class consists of children with mild autism, all students have 80% and above… (KÖ2, 260-262).*" Additionally, teachers also pointed out problems stemming from the families in relation to wrong placement, and four teachers stated that placements were made in accordance with the requests of the parents. With respect to this, one teacher said that "*I think the request of the parent should not be at the forefront. I mean, the child should return to that class only if he/she could adapt to that class or school. Otherwise, if there is wrong referral, then both teacher and the rest of the class will be affected from it. The focus is on placing the student in anywhere, yes, and the right to education but… (KÖ1, 86-90).*"

Another category standing out under the theme of placement is about systematic problems. In this sub-category, problems experienced in the areas of identification, placement, providing education etc. due to the system were addressed. Ten teachers participating in the meetings expressed views on systematic problems. The statement of one teacher is as follows "*I don't know whether you have experienced such problems, but I have been teaching for 11 years, and in the last year, there is something that I want to mention. There are affection houses (Sevgi Evleri") affiliated with the Social Services [Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services]. They have a really interesting practice. The children in the other classrooms, of course, they are problematic children, they have problems. Because of this, they do not care about academic attainments, education etc. They have behavioural problems; they have really bad habits. Since they have the potential to affect the other children and the other classrooms are crowded, as a weird practice, they identify these children as children with mild mental disabilities and send them to our classes (KÖ7, 516-523).*"

Another teacher expressing views in this sub-category pointed out a systematic problem experienced in the support education as such: "*In full-time schools, in English courses, in branch courses, the child is taken out of the classroom and support education is provided. I don't think that this is useful (KS5, 103-104).*"

The last sub-category of the theme of placement is about the positive aspects of the system. This sub-category includes the statements highlighting the successful and positive aspects of the current system. Two teachers expressed views in this category. The opinion of one of the teachers is as follows: "*İYEP distinguished between the lazy student and the mentally disabled student. I mean, it eliminated the idea that all lazy students would get an intellectual identification (KÖ3, 129-130).*"
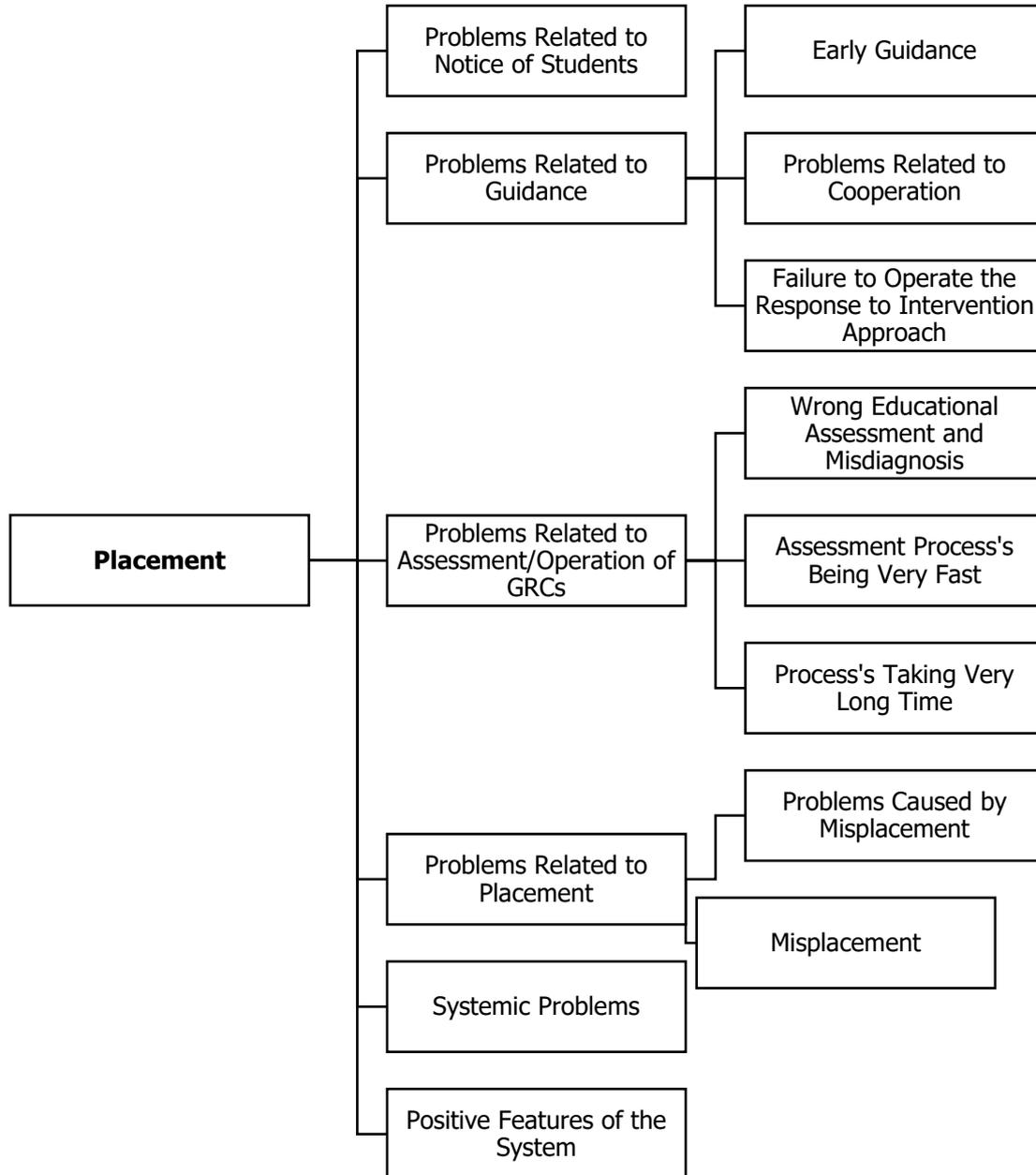
Figure 15. Categories and sub-categories under the theme of placement

Theme 2: Role of The Teacher in Mainstreaming

Teachers were asked about their roles in the process from the notice of the students benefiting from mainstreaming practices to the placement, and 14 teachers shared views on this theme. Figure 16 presents the categories and sub-categories under this theme. While 13 teachers stated that they had a role in this process, one teacher stated that he/she did not have a role in the process. 10 of the teachers stating that they had a role mentioned their roles in the pre-referral step. One teacher explained his/her role in this process by saying "*Observing the student is our role but what we write in that report, in that*
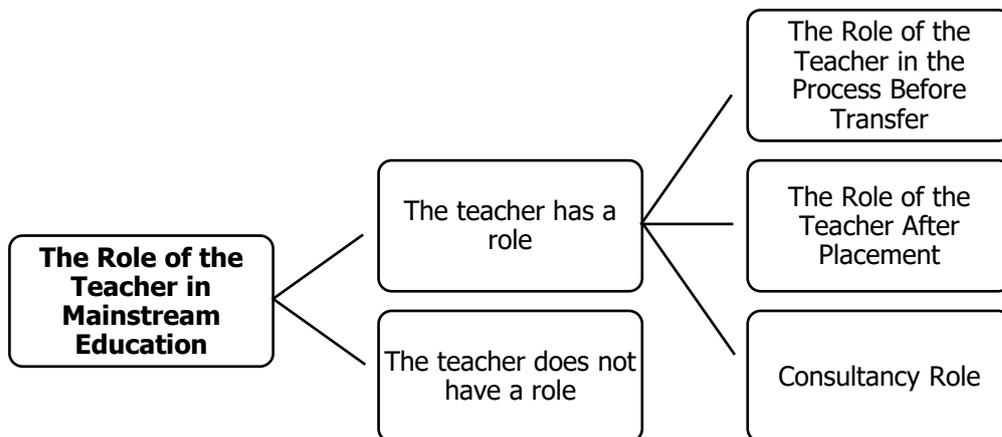
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form about the student is our views, our observations. I believe that our observations affect the decision of the GRC (KR7, 230-232)." Two teachers think that they have roles in the process following the placement. One of them explain this role as such "When a child misbehaves in the class, they do not send him/her to the counselling service right away. They follow the student for a while, since a child displays a problematic behaviour, it is certain that he/she is trying to avoid something. Parents can be invited to the school to find out whether there is any change in the house, or maybe in the school, something disturbing the child happened in the playtime. It is important to determine the variables correctly, and only after that, maybe, you can send the child to the counselling service. But, in the meantime, if you eliminate a variable, maybe that problem will not be repeated. We try to do such things (KÖ9, 215-222)."Three teachers defined their roles in this process as providing counselling. One of the teachers emphasising the role of counselling explained this situation by saying "Likewise, what my colleague has just mentioned is actually a good thing; I don't mean that you don't say so. It is good when a teacher comes and consults to special education teacher, this means coping with a problem in collaboration (KÖ7, 334-337)."

One teacher who stated that he/she did not have a role in the process explained the situation by saying "I don't have a specific role (KS6, 280)."Apart from these sub-categories, two special education teachers pointed out their roles in transition from special education class to mainstreaming. One of them explained his/her role in this process with the following statement: "In our class for children with mild autism, we had two students with severe autism. Thus, we made a request for the transfer of the children with mild autism to a mainstreaming class. We sent three children at different times. We did not have a problem in this respect, I mean, in the transition process. We made our application, we discussed with our guidance teacher, and even we went to the GRC and met with our colleagues and they responded positively to our request. We did not have a problem in communication, and the decision was taken (KÖ3, 178-183)."

Figure 16. Categories and sub-categories under the theme of the role of teacher in mainstreaming

Theme 3: Preparation for Mainstreaming

The opinions of teachers concerning preparation for mainstreaming were sought in two categories as existence of preparatory actions for mainstreaming and lack of preparatory actions for inclusion. Figure

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17 presents the categories and sub-categories of this theme. Three teachers stated that no preparatory actions were performed in their schools. The answers of the teachers, who stated that preparatory actions were performed in the schools, were examined in five sub-categories. Also, there are five teachers who stated that the preparatory actions performed with the students about whom mainstreaming decision was taken were planned in the seminar period and in the boards. One of the teachers emphasised the actions performed in the seminar period by saying: "*At least we do the following. We certainly have meetings in the seminar periods. We make relevant decisions there (KB9, 106-107)."* Six teachers expressed that teachers were informed about the preparation for mainstreaming. One of them explained this situation with the following statement: "*I generally provide an information letter about the characteristics of the student according to the type of disability for the purposes of* mainstreaming*. I mean, what he/she can do apart from those stated in the legislation, what he/she can do in case of mild, moderate or severe disability. I was giving such information letters, one or two pages, concerning each type of disability. This is a good practice; it is good for them to recognise the characteristics of the student. They like this (K6, 838-836)."*

Ten teachers stated that they held IEP meetings at the beginning of the academic year about the students benefiting from mainstreaming practices. One of the teachers stated that IEP meetings were held and underlined the importance of these meetings with the following statement "*We try to organise our IEP meetings in coordination with deputy principal in the primary school, our guidance teacher, our special education teacher, and if the student has been sent, the* mainstreaming *classroom teacher since this is what needs to be done, and the most important thing is support. It is necessary to coordinate the support environment very well (KB9, 115-1189."*Another sub-category in this category is related to the cooperation between family and institutions. Under this sub-category, teachers stressed the cooperation established among the family of the student, the special education centre that the student attended and experts following the child at the beginning of the academic year. One of the six teachers expressing views on this sub-category explained the situation with the following statement: "*For instance, special education institutions, families are going, we talk to people coming to the institutions one-to-one, I tell them the needs of the students, in which areas they have problems, I am in contact with the teachers there in this respect, they ask my opinion and I ask their opinions, this is cooperation and I find it very useful (KS5, 94-98)."* Another sub-category is about the preparatory activities for mainstreaming. In this sub-category, four teachers emphasised the information activities they carried out for the parents of the students with special education needs and typically developing peers and their parents. One teacher expressed her/his opinion about this sub-category as such: "*For preparation for* mainstreaming*, first, I talk to the parents of the student of* mainstreaming*. I request them to come to the class one hour late since I need to prepare the other students for the student of inclusion (KS6, 282-284)."*

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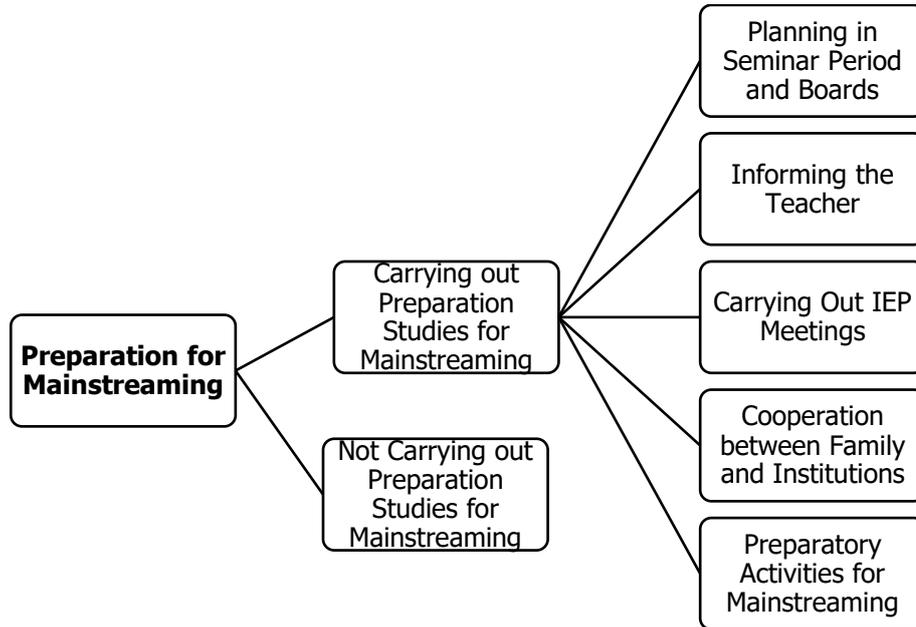
Figure 17. Categories and sub-categories under the theme of preparation for mainstreaming

Theme 4: In-class practices and adaptations

Under the theme of in-class practices and adaptations, four categories were determined, and these categories are the factors affecting in-class practices, environmental adaptations, instructional adaptations and assessment adaptations respectively. Figure 18 presents the categories and sub-categories under this theme.

In the category of the factors affecting in-class practices, there are four sub-categories as teacher attitude, class size, number of children with special education needs and other. Three teachers expressed views with regard to the sub-category of teacher attitude. An exemplary opinion is "*I think that the attitude of teacher works as full support for the student with special needs (KS6, 149-150)."* Six teachers expressing views on the class size sub-category pointed out the problems experienced due to class size. One of them explained this situation with the following statement "*Our classrooms are too crowded; we have about 60 students in the school. None of the teachers can pay attention to the students of* mainstreaming *(K1, 93-95)."* Four teachers expressed views on the sub-category related to the number of children with special education needs. One teacher stated that "*When the number of children with special education needs or gifted children is high in a classroom, it means an increase in the class size (KS8, 308-310)."* In the "other" subcategory, which covered different situations related to the issue, three teachers delivered their opinions. These teachers focused on the use of only support room as practice (KÖ5, 636), stated that students had difficulty in adapting to courses due to lengthy playtimes (KÖ3, 548-556) and pointed out the lack of standards in the classrooms where mainstreaming practices were utilised in terms of materials, environment, etc. (KÖ2, 781-783).

The sub-categories of the category related to environmental adaptations are seating arrangement, access and lack of environmental adaptations. In the sub-category of seating arrangement, 10 teachers expressed views. One teacher stated that "*The number of students in the class has decreased a bit, now the total number is 28, the child can now hear me well. He/she has already been sitting next to*

me to hear me better (KS9, 227-228)" while another teacher stated "*In the classroom, we made a seating arrangement so that he/she can see clearly without turning his/her eyes, head, neck or neck muscles (KS8, 527-528).*" In the sub-category of access, three teachers mentioned the adaptations made for the access of students to the sections in the school. An exemplary statement is "*The family had a special toilet constructed for the child in the school so that he/she can enter with his/her key and use (KS8, 607-658).*" Finally, four teachers expressed views on the sub-category of the lack of environmental adaptations. The exemplary statement of a teacher is "*I do not put the student with special education needs separately in order not to isolate him/her from other students (K/, 384-385).*"

The category of instructional adaptations has two sub-categories as content adaptations and process adaptations. In the content sub-category, eight teachers expressed views in total. Teachers reported that they made adaptations to attainments "*I add or omit attainments according to the situation of the student (K10, 327-328)*" or "*As a requirement of my branch (science), I can teach the lesson to students with special education needs by reducing the attainments (K1, 433-434).*"

19 teachers expressed views related to the sub-category of instructional adaptations. Two of the teachers stated that they personally worked with the students through instructional adaptations by saying: "*I would make him/her sit next to me. His/her disability was advanced; he/she had speech and walking problems. We were keeping a separate notebook with him/her. I was doing everything separately for him/her (KS3, 169-171)*" and "*I said, well, let's do this, this is very simple. What does he/she like doing? He/she likes painting. Okay, give him/her a piece of paper, so he/she can draw while the others are writing. After painting for five minutes, tell him/her that he/she can walk around for five minutes. Step by step, in this way, this kid now can sit for 45 minutes, listens the lesson like the other children and actually, he/she is normal (KÖ9, 233-239).*"

Another important component of instructional adaptations is the adaptations made in the use of materials. 11 teachers stated that they made adaptations with respect to the utilisation of materials. The statement of "*When the student tended to write without leaving space while he/she was writing words on the board, I had a small plastic object in my hand. While the student was writing, I was putting it there as a joke. I mean I was creating the space (KS6, 498-501)*" is an example for the adaptation made by using a material. Another teacher delivered opinion on this sub-category as such: "*I put stickers at the starting points of the students so that they started writing on the left. I warned them to start from the side with the stickers (KS8, 714-715)*".

The category of assessment adaptations has three sub-categories as exam questions and instructions, exam time and duration and exam preparation. Eleven teachers expressed views on the sub-category related to the exam questions and instructions. These teachers stated that they prepared separate questions for the students, reduced the number of questions and revised the question form. One of the teachers stated that he/she prepared separate questions, "*I print out different questions for them… (KS8, 746)*" while another teacher explained how he/she decreased the number of questions by saying: "*In the exams, I generally do like this. If it is a classical exam, I ask 10 questions, but I ask the student of mainstreaming to answer five of them (KB10, 477-484).*" One teacher delivering opinion on the exam time and duration stated: "*I give them extra time (KÖ2, 816)*". Only one teacher delivered opinion in the sub-category of exam preparation. The teacher expressed his/her opinion in this respect by stating "*I give them exam questions beforehand (KÖ2, 816-817).*"
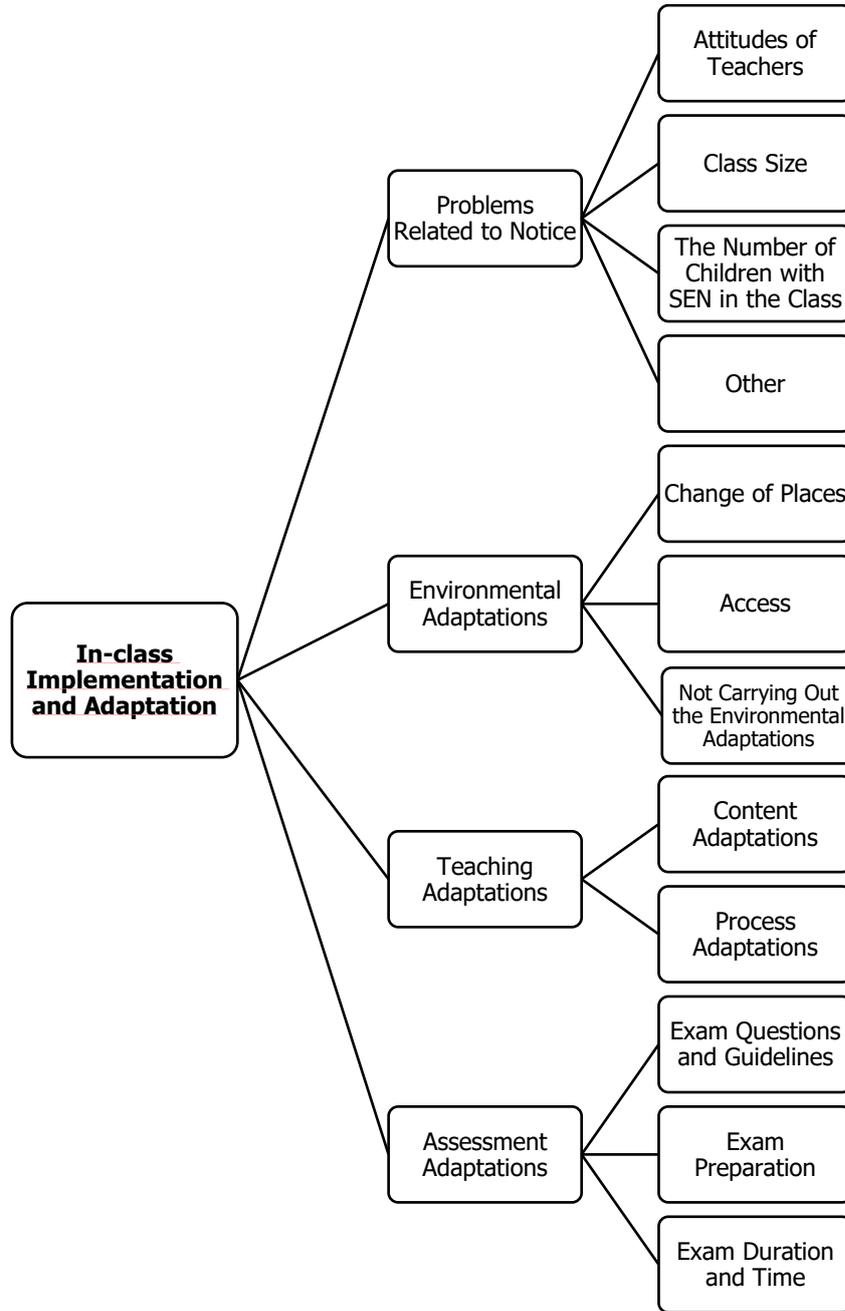
Figure 18. Categories and sub-categories under the theme of in-class practices and adaptations

Theme 5: Participation in Social Activities

Under the main theme of participation in social activities, participation in social activities, non-participation in social activities and factors affecting socialisation were determined as categories. Figure 19 summarises the theme and its categories. Seventeen teachers expressed views related to the category of participation in social activities. These teachers mentioned "graduation ceremony, dramas,

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national ceremonies, poem recitations, chess tournaments, TÜBİTAK science fair, reading festivals, museum visits and choirs" as examples of social activities that the students participated in. Concerning the activities, one of the teachers stated that "*In 23 April celebrations, reading festivals or graduation ceremonies, we give active duties to the students so that they can develop sense of responsibility and self-confidence (KS5, 602-604).*" On the other hand, two teachers stated that mainstreaming students in their schools did not participate in any social activities. Within the scope of the last category, five teachers expressed views on the factors affecting socialisation. Teachers stated that individual differences of teachers, attitude of the school administration, lack of a standard on the participation in social activities and dependence of participation on individual efforts affected participation and socialisation. Regarding the attitude of the school administration, one teacher made the following explanation "*There is such a dimension in participation in social activities, unfortunately, since school administrators do not have sensitivity towards the issue at all, and since they are not aware of the fact that special education classes within schools include* mainstreaming *practices, as well, and these students need to be together with their typically developing peers in the playtimes or the other social activities, we receive such feedbacks: 'please do not take your students out during the playtime, maybe you can take them out after the other students go in' or in any activity in the school "if you wish, you don't have to come'…Thus, it is not possible for us to include special education class students in any social activity (KÖ8, 858-866).*"
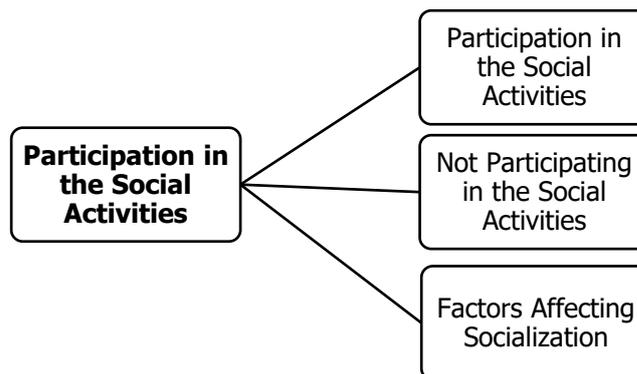
Figure 19. Categories under the theme of participation in social activities

Theme 6: Behavioural Control

In line with the views of the teachers concerning their control over the behaviours of students with special education needs, three categories were determined as experiencing problems in behavioural control, reasons of problems experienced in behavioural control and behavioural control methods. Figure 20 presents the categories under this theme. Seven teachers stated that problems were encountered in establishing control over the behaviours of the students in the class. One of the teachers stated that "*Our students or students of* mainstreaming *education, all of them test [the limits of] their teachers. How many days I can spend, certainly there is test situation. In this situation, more than half of the classroom teachers do the same thing when they have problems. Every time the student causes a problem, he/she is taken out of the classroom. He/she is sent to the support room. He/she goes to canteen. This is the common solution. There is no behavioural control. Afterwards, when problems become frequent, continuing education in the classroom becomes problematic as well. Teachers, classroom teachers absolutely need to receive training in this respect (KÖ4, 961-968).*"

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Apart from the teachers stating that they had problems in behavioural control, four teachers delivered opinion on the reasons of these problems. Three teachers attributed these problems to insufficient knowledge of teachers (KÖ8, 969-971; KÖ2, 975-978; KÖ3, 982-986). In the last category under this theme, eight teachers provided information on the behavioural control methods they applied. These methods include assigning responsibility, warning, drawing attention, cooperation with the family, reinforcement, functional assessment and ignoring. One of the teachers expressed opinion with respect to the functional assessment approach as follows *"How frequently does the student behave like that, what happens beforehand and what is the reaction of the student to the people around after the behaviour? It is necessary to observe these factors very carefully before the intervention (KÖ9, 89-91)."*
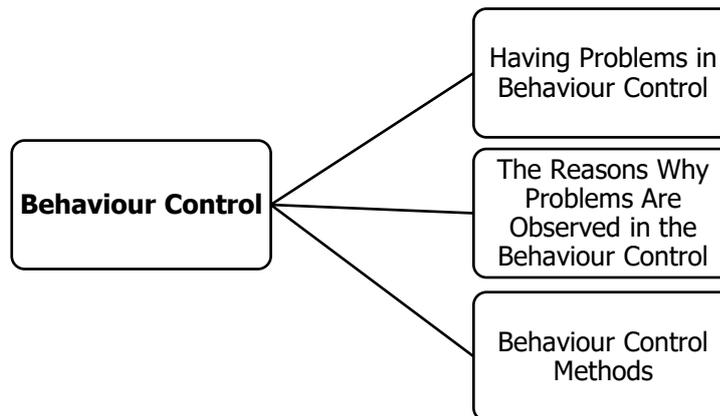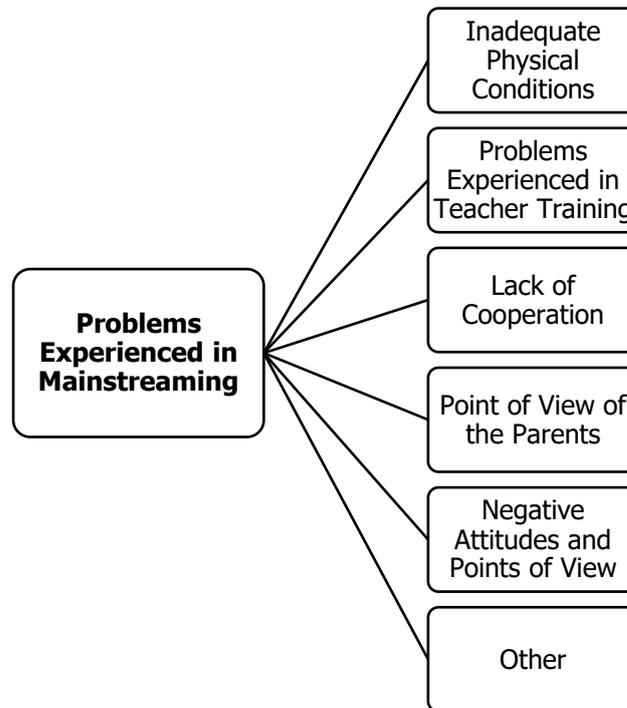

Figure 20. Categories under the theme of behavioural control

Theme 7: Difficulties Experienced in Mainstreaming

Six categories were determined for the theme of difficulties experienced in mainstreaming. These categories are poor physical conditions, negative attitudes and perspectives, difficulties experienced in teacher training, lack of cooperation, parent perspective and other. Figure 21 presents the categories under this theme. In the category of physical conditions, five teachers expressed views. One of them emphasised poor physical conditions with the statement of *"We have material deficiency. We do not have a support education room; we have programme deficiency. In such an environment, teachers should not be expected to be motivated. They should not also be expected to implement. Due to lack of motivation, most of the teachers cannot warm to students of mainstreaming. We first need to look at how realistic the programme developed by the Ministry of National Education is and to what extent they provide opportunities for it (KB2, 1005-1008)."* Eight teachers expressed views on the category of negative attitudes and perspectives. As an example of the negative attitudes towards mainstreaming students, one teacher stated that *"Recently, last week, my colleagues were struggling; they were saying that they did not want to deal with them in their classes. For the students with reports, instead of normalizing the children by exerting a little more effort, they would rather get rid of them, and even they were telling the parents that 'they have reports' etc., unfortunately… (KS1, 124-126)."* The third category of this theme is about the difficulties experienced in teacher training. In this respect, eight teachers expressed views. Concerning the difficulties experienced in teacher training, one teacher stated that *"I have not received any training about students of mainstreaming to date, I do not know how to treat these students (K6, 44-45)."* On the other hand, one teacher pointed out another difficulty experienced in the training and employment of teachers as such *"If the paid teacher is not a graduate*

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of faculty of education, he/she cannot teach anything to that child (K7, 414)." Regarding the lack of cooperation, which is the fourth category, five teachers expressed views. One of them pointed out the difficulties experienced in cooperation with the following statement "None of the teachers in BİLSEMs contacted us. For four years, now I have, for example, eight grade students; no one contacted us about them as well (KS6, 834-836)." The fifth category under this theme is parent perspective. Under this category, opinions on the denial reaction that the families of the children with special education needs display when they learn that their children are different from their typically developing peers and have a disability or incompetence as well as on the attitudes of families in the process of receiving report for their children. The statement of one of eleven teachers expressed views on this category is as follows "When we understand the problem related to the mainstreaming, if the parent does not accept it, it is very difficult to convince them (KS4, 71-72)." The last category of this theme is the "other" category. Ten teachers delivered opinion on this category. Difficulties standing out in this category include uselessness of mainstreaming in practice, inefficiency of mainstreaming for the student with special education needs, wrong education plans and problems experienced in the implementation of the regulation.

Figure 21. Categories under the theme of difficulties experienced in mainstreaming

Theme 8: Positive Aspects of Mainstreaming

Positive aspects of mainstreaming practices were addressed in four categories, which are awareness-raising, benefits of support education, preventing exclusion/education with peers, and consciousness of parents. Figure 22 presents the categories under this theme. Nine teachers underlined that mainstreaming practices raised awareness. One of such statements is "The most functional aspect is that somehow it created a reverse awareness, I mean, it developed empathy and awareness among typically developing students and their families (KÖ2, 1092-1094)."

Three teachers expressed views in about the benefits of support education. In this respect, one teacher mentioned the effectiveness of support education with the following statement: *"Actually, I am pleased that state is contributing to this issue. Children are benefiting from support education out of the school as well. I think this is a positive development (KS6, 896-899)."* Ten teachers delivered opinion on preventing exclusion/education with peers. Teachers underlined the importance of education with peers for the students with special education needs and how it prevents exclusion. An exemplary statement is "*Their presence is positive in the classroom, but of course, their levels are very important. They have a lot to learn from their peers (K9, 741-742)."* The last category related to the positive aspects of mainstreaming is consciousness of parents. In this category, it was expressed that mainstreaming practices contributed to consciousness of the parents of the students with special education needs as well. As an example, one of the teachers stated that "*Families, they have general ideas. How are their children? It is very good that they know that they have rights, etc. (KÖ10, 687-689)."*
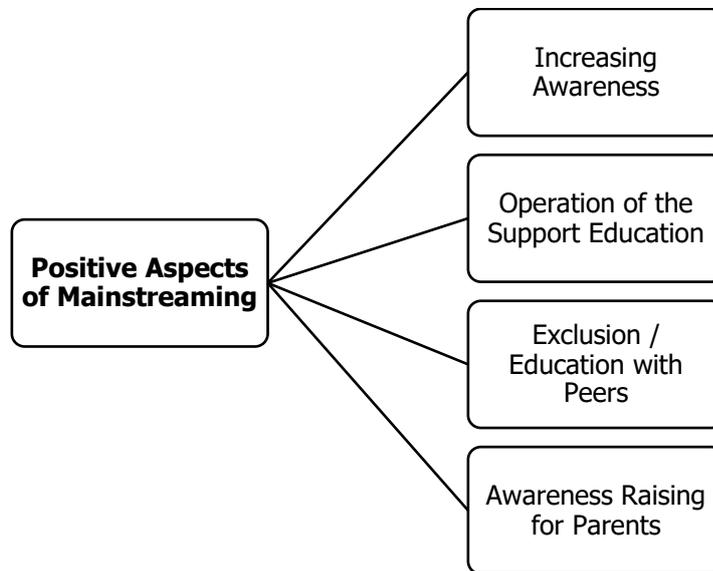
Figure 22. Categories under the theme of positive aspects of mainstreaming

Theme 9: Suggestions Supporting Mainstreaming Practices

Teachers participating in the discussions were asked to make suggestions for the improvement of classroom practices and mainstreaming system, and 17 teachers delivered opinion on this theme. Figure 23 presents the categories under this theme. Data concerning this theme were analysed under five categories as suggestions related to the delivery of training to teachers and experts, suggestions for the improvement of physical conditions, suggestions for special education counselling and guidance, suggestions on legislative arrangements and suggestions for the improvement of teacher training programmes. In the category related to the delivery of training to teachers and experts, nine teachers delivered their opinions. These teachers emphasised that classroom teachers, school principals and personnel working in the GRCs, in particular, should receive training about special education and children with special education needs and that their professional competences should be enhanced. Exemplary statements of this category are *"I think the key point is training the educator. The more consciously we perform our task, the more we contribute to the children (KS2, 941-942)"* and "It is a must to train the personnel of the GRC (Salih, 1016-1018)." Teachers expressed views concerning this

category also emphasised the priority topics of any training. These subjects include behavioural control methods and techniques (KÖ4, 967-968), legal arrangements (KÖ3, 354-358), awareness (KÖ9, 156-157) and applied behaviour analysis (KÖ9, 245-249). Additionally, teachers stated that these training should be applied, not theoretical. One of the teachers stated that, "Classroom *teachers should be offered applied training (KÖ3, 454-455)."* Another category of this theme is about the suggestions for the improvement of physical conditions. Two teachers delivered opinion in this category. These teachers stated that both physical conditions and sizes of the classes and physical conditions in the GRCs should be improved. While one teacher stated that, "There are art studios. Physical conditions of the schools should be improved, studios should be increased (KB3, 851-852)" the other teacher delivered her/his opinion with the following statement "*Improvements can be introduced, for instance, there can be 250 students per teacher, not 500 students. This will reduce the burden of the teacher and also make the time that the teacher allocates more efficient (KR4, 1289-1292)."* Under the third category, which is about special education counselling and guidance, eight teachers expressed views. This category includes opinions related to the counselling services to be provided to teachers and guidance services to be provided to the individuals with special education needs and their families for the success of the mainstreaming practices. One teacher explained his/her views on the issue as such "*Within the school, I always defended this, even in other projects in the directorate general, I stated repeatedly, but it was not accepted, I definitely think that the support education service in the* mainstreaming *practice should be special education counselling (KÖ5, 631-634)."*

In the category concerning suggestions for legislative arrangements, nine teachers expressed views. According to the suggestions in this category, legislative arrangements are needed for improving mainstreaming practices. Exemplary statements include "*Regulation should be amended, for clearer job descriptions, the current regulation should be amended (KR2, 1287-1288)", "Just like mothers are taken to routine controls when they get flu or cold, an obligation for the monitoring of such intellectual processes would be great, let's say, every year (KS1, 259-260)"* and "*Now duration of playtimes is 15 minutes, this is biggest problem of classroom teachers since the beginning of the year, in the schools located in the neighbourhoods with poor socio-economic conditions, school collapses. Teachers feel exhausted in the afternoon. Duration of playtimes should be adjusted (KÖ2, 104-1049)."* The fifth category is about teacher training. Three teachers delivering opinions on the category of teacher training stated that measures should be taken for training more knowledgeable teachers on special education and children with special education needs by introducing the necessary amendments into the graduate programmes. One of them stated that "*Maybe, the other branches of teaching are more open to interference in higher education. In internship practices, a title introducing an obligation to work with students of* mainstreaming *can be added into the internship programmes… (KÖ3, 1001-1004)."*

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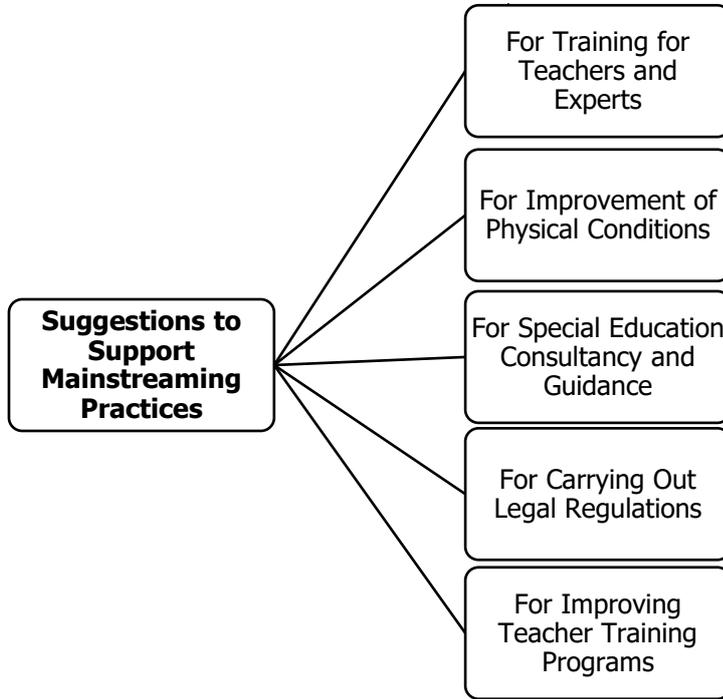
Figure 23. Categories under the theme of suggestions supporting mainstreaming practices
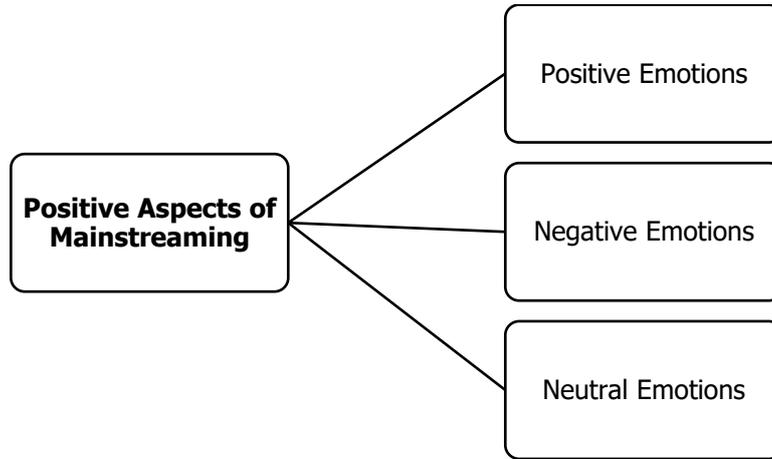
Theme 10: Feelings Towards Mainstreaming

One of the themes emerging as a result of the research is the theme of feelings towards mainstreaming. Nine teachers expressed views on this theme. Feelings of teachers were examined under three categories as positive, negative and neutral. Figure 24 presents the categories under this theme. Three teachers stated that they generally feel happy when a student of mainstreaming is placed in their classes and have positive feelings towards these students. While one teacher stated that, *"I feel much happier when a special student comes to my class since every time; I learn a lot of things that I don't know (KS8, 441-442)",* another teacher stated that, *"The feeling of helping the weak took me one step ahead of teaching, and I felt really happy. I felt as if I was a remedy to a desperate person (KS4, 413-415)."* Four teachers delivered opinion in the category of negative feelings. One of the teachers expressed his/her opinion as such: "*I feel sad, I feel sad on my behalf. In some way, we deceive parents and children. Children know that they cannot learn anything; parents also know this to some extent, but they always come with hope, and this makes me sad. I feel as if I deceived them (K6, 521-523)."* Finally, two teachers stated that they did not feel anything when a student of mainstreaming was placed in their classes. An exemplary statement is "I don't have specific feeling. This is ordinary, and we are accustomed to such things (K3, 447-449)."

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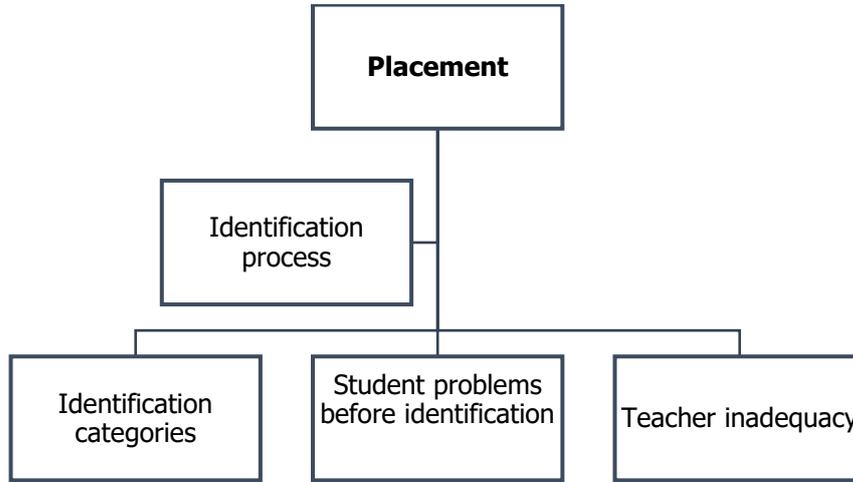**Figure 24.** Categories under the theme of feelings towards mainstreaming

Findings of The Focus Group Meeting Held with The Teachers Working in BILSEMs

As a result of the focus group meeting held with the teachers working in BİLSEMs, eight themes were determined, and these themes are placement, role of the teacher in mainstreaming, in-class practices and adaptations, participation in social activities, behavioural control, difficulties experienced in mainstreaming, positive aspects of mainstreaming and suggestions supporting mainstreaming practices. Most of these themes are similar to those obtained from the meetings held with the other groups of teachers, but their contents are different in terms of implementation and teacher opinions.

THEMES

Theme 1: Placement

There are four categories under this theme: identification process, identification categories, student problems before identification and teacher inadequacy. Figure 25 presents the categories under this theme. Three teachers expressed views on the identification process. Their opinions were about the process for the identification of the students registered in BİLSEMs as gifted. One of the participants provided information on the identification process by stating that *"BİLSEMs open exams and inform schools. Exams are held via tablets, and then children are identified in intellectual field, painting or music depending on their scores (KBİ-1, 42, 44-5)."* In parallel to this quote, the same teacher delivered his/her opinion on the identification categories as such: "*but here, the teacher needs to indicate in which field he/she presents the student as candidate; it can be only painting or music or both (KBİ-1, 46-7)."* In other words, it was stated that the fields in which the students registered in BİLSEMs had more apparent skills were determined in the identification processes.

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Figure 25. Categories under the theme of placement

Within the scope of student problems before identification, which was the third category, two teachers expressed views. One of them underlined a problem that gifted students faced in mainstreaming classes during the placement process with the following statement: *"For example, these children have some problems in their classes due to their special talents, thus, this identification is very important for them, they understand and get bored. They want to deal with something else, and when the teacher does not know this or cannot help, it is problem. For such cases, an official identification is necessary. Yes, these children need such an identification so that you can provide them different education or can say that 'you are bored, you do this' etc. (KBİ-2, 110-6)."* Another teacher delivering opinion on the third category mentioned the problem a gifted student had before identification by quoting the following statement of the student: *"Apart from taking lessons in general, I always get bored. I know all these subjects, can you ask me more difficult questions (KBİ-3, 585-6)."*

In the last category, five teachers delivered their opinions on teacher inadequacy in the placement process of the gifted students. One of the teachers emphasised the professional inadequacy of teachers with the following statement: *"The teacher does not know, maybe he/she needs second education. Teachers are recruited via interviews in all art centres in Turkey, no second education. But then, teachers ask what we are going to do now (KBİ-4, 304-6)."* Another teacher mentioned the importance of personal developments of teachers by stating that, *"on my behalf as teacher working in BİLSEMs, I mean, I think that we really need education on how projects are prepared in verbal fields."*

Theme 2: Role of The Teacher in Mainstreaming

BİLSEM teachers were asked about their roles in the process from the noticing the students benefiting from mainstreaming practices to the placement, and all of them (n=7) stated that they had a role. Under this theme, three categories stand out: post-referral roles, cooperation and information. Figure 26 presents the categories under this theme. One of the teachers provided information on his/her role in post-referral with the following statement: *"Since the teachers in the formal education institutions refer them to our centres, we don't have a role in this step. After they are referred to our centres, we have roles since we make the exams (KBİ-3, 138-140)."* Another teacher focused on the cooperation

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among teachers with the following statement: *"In general, we receive information from the other colleagues. For instance, there are teachers from whom the student has previously taken lessons; we obtain information from them during our conversations (KBİ-5, 341-3)."* Finally, the same teacher stated that they tried to receive detailed information about the student by saying: *"Well, it is about guidance issues, and generally there are files kept by the guidance service. We can receive information from them (KBİ-5, 178)."*
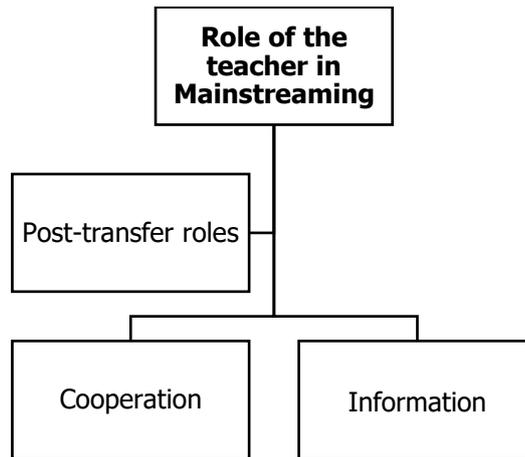
Figure 26. Categories under the theme of the role of teacher in mainstreaming

Theme 3: In-Class Practices and Adaptations

Under the theme of in-class practices and adaptations, there are three categories as environmental adaptations, instructional adaptations and assessment adaptations. Figure 27 presents the categories under this theme.
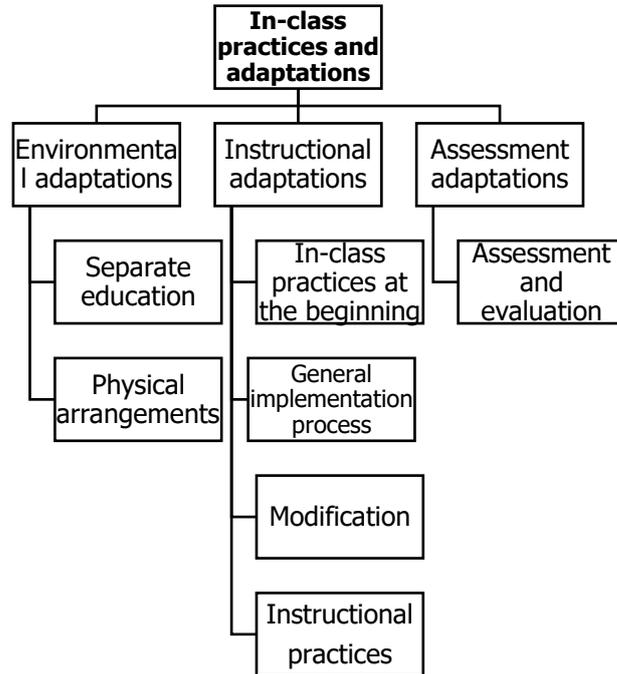
In the category of environmental adaptations, there are two sub-categories as separate education and physical arrangements. Only one teacher delivered opinion in the sub-category of separate education. His/her statement is *"We include these students into a classroom with the children with similar conditions as well. The only difference is that we include them in a different environment. In mainstreaming, the student continues in his/her own classroom (KBİ-6, 84-86)."* In this statement, the teacher emphasises that gifted students receive education in a different environment. Four teachers delivered opinion on the category of physical arrangements. One of them mentioned the physical arrangements he/she made as follows: *"There are banners and posters for reminding. They are about what it is and what it is not. Well, the promotion of guidance services, they had cooperated with the visual arts unit. There are some boards prepared by the visual arts students. We display them (KBİ-2, 529-32)."*

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                In-class
              practices and
               adaptations
        ┌───────────┼───────────┐
   Environmental  Instructional   Assessment
   adaptations    adaptations     adaptations
        │              │              │
    Separate       In-class       Assessment
   education      practices at       and
                 the beginning    evaluation
        │              │
    Physical       General
   arrangements  implementation
                   process
                      │
                  Modification
                      │
                 Instructional
                   practices
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Figure 27. Categories and sub-categories under the theme of in-class practices and adaptations

In the category of instructional adaptations, there are four categories as in-class practices at the beginning, general implementation process, modification and instructional practices. Two teachers delivered opinion on the sub-category of in-class practices at the beginning. One of them provided information on the practices he/she carried out at the beginning of the education process with the following statement: *"At the beginning of the education process, we can select the subjects, or we can decide together on the topics that they want to address by showing the snowman within the frames (KBİ-5, 153-4)."* Five teachers delivered opinion on the second sub-category of general implementation process. One of them provided information on the general implementation process with the following statement: *"In the adaptation process, we have the logic of performing a different practice in the support education room and a different practice in the special talent and project group. Those in the other classes are now in groups and they can individualise and can select branches. In special talent project, choices vary depending on the children since a child in a special talent project selects his/her topic on his/her own (KBİ-6, 165-170)."* Only one teacher delivered opinion on the third sub-category of modification. *"We have concerns, for examples, we think that our visually impaired students and students with physical disabilities can take lessons in the ground floor and we question what we can about this, etc. (KBİ-2, 228-230)."* This opinion underlines the adaptations that should be done for students in different disability groups. Six teachers delivered opinion on the last sub-category of instructional practices. One of them provided detailed information on the instructional practices they performed with their gifted students with the following statement: *"We enrich the activities. For instance, when you have an activity with children, you explain them the rules and with no need to extra efforts, the student can do it and even deepen it with coding. You can say, for example, let's do that programme. You have the child do programming, and the child combines mathematics and information technologies (KBİ-2, 598-602)."*

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In the category of assessment adaptations, there is a sub-category for assessment and evaluation. Three teachers delivered opinion on this category. One of them informed researchers about the adaptations he/she made in assessment and evaluation with the following statement: "*Since I prepare an instructional programme or activity programme before I start an activity in all groups, I generally ask them semi-structured but open-ended questions, which cover the targeted attainments but also allow them to reflect their perspectives, and I explain this to them on purpose (KBİ-2, 42-45).*"

Theme 4: Participation in Social Activities

Under this theme, two categories were determined as participation in social activities and non-participation in social activities. Figure 28 presents the categories and sub-categories under this theme. Four teachers delivered opinion on the sub-category of participation in social activities. Teachers stating that students participated in social activities gave concerts, university visits, visit to ASELSAN [*a company of Turkish Armed Forces Foundation to meet the communication needs of the Turkish Armed Forces*], symposium and seminars as examples of social activities. Regarding the activities, one of the teachers said that, "Sometimes they say, there is a concert, there is concert for children, or there is such an activity. Sometimes teachers organise activities with certain themes. They are useful for children, I believe in this and we participate in them (KBİ-4, 142-4)." The remaining three teachers stated that they did not participate in any social activity with their students.
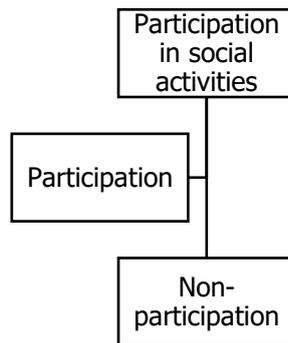
Figure 28. Categories under the theme of participation in social activities

Theme 5: Behavioural Control

In line with the opinions of the teachers for establishing control over the behaviours of gifted students, only one category was determined as behavioural control methods. Two teachers delivered opinion on this category. Among these methods, cooperation with the family and change of place were mentioned. One of the teachers expressed that he/she cooperated with the family with the following statement: "*… I absolutely discuss the situation with the parents. I try to learn if there is any problem or issue. By including the family and even questioning if there is problem with our management etc. (KBİ-2, 191-193).*" Another teacher explained the method he/she applied by stating that, "*Generally we resort to such methods as excluding the student from certain activities and changing the place of the student (KBİ-4, 188).*"

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Theme 6: Positive Aspects of Mainstreaming

Under this theme, two separate categories were determined as contributions to students and contributions to teachers. Four teachers delivered opinion on the contributions of inclusion to students. One of the teachers emphasised the contributions of the education provided to the students with the following statement: "*An industrialist gave his/her card and offered job to my student due to his/her project. Actually, this is perfect for his/her professional career since he/she will be an engineer the next year, but in terms of developmental process, he/she cannot speak properly, he/she is such a student. However, within the project, his/her communication skills are triggered, speaking skills are triggered, as the phrase goes, he/she needs to speak if he/she wants to sell the project (KBİ-5, 495-500).*" On the other hand, three teachers delivered their opinions on the contributions of inclusive education to them. For example, one of the teachers underlined that working with gifted children contributed to the developments of teachers with the following statement: "These children helped us develop ourselves. When you bring something before them, you are liable to do it, thus, you investigate or examine it. In this respect, it contributes to us."

Theme 7: Difficulties Experienced in Mainstreaming

All teachers (n=7) delivered opinion on the difficulties experienced in mainstreaming. Although no categories were determined for difficulties, the issues standing out in this category include lower levels of the students when compared to the past, limited time allocated to BİLSEM, problems in communication with parents and practical problems. For instance, one of the teachers emphasised the difficulties experienced in practice with the following statement: "*The biggest shortcoming is at the point of practice, I mean, experimental work or practice (KBİ-3, 455-6).*" On the other hand, one of the teachers expressed that he/she observed a decrease in the profiles of gifted students registered in BİLSEMs by stating that, "*In Ankara, there has been a significant deterioration in the students registered in our BİLSEM. Previously, the profile of the students coming to our centre was outstanding; as the number of BİLSEMs has increased, the profile of the students has deteriorated (KBİ-2, 394-69.*"

Theme 8: Suggestions Supporting Mainstreaming Practices

Under this theme, four teachers delivered opinion. These opinions were assessed in the category of suggestions for the improvement of the system. One of the teachers put forward several suggestions as such: "*There are initiatives to bring the graduate students together in recent years. … Bringing them together with the current students and their parents will be useful. Also, BİLSEM teachers can have meetings for their exchanges (KBİ-2, 508-10).*" As can be seen, these suggestions include having information about the students after graduation and increasing exchanges among BİLSEM teachers. Another teacher stated that, "*If we provide education as a school providing primary education in the morning hours, I mean, until the lunch, it may be much more useful (KBİ-1, 589-90).*"

Discussion and Conclusions

The aim of this two-phase research was to present the current situation in mainstreaming practices in Turkey. To this end, an analysis was conducted on the available literature concerning the current situation in Turkey in the first phase while focus group meetings and individual interviews held with different groups of teachers were analysed in the second phase. In this study, the findings obtained

from the literature review in the first phase and the findings obtained from the interviews held with the teachers in the second phase support one another. In this section, findings obtained in both phases are synthesised, and suggestions are presented for the improvement of mainstreaming practices in Turkey.

One of the significant findings reached in the first part of the study is that although the education policies determined at the macro level are fairly consistent with the philosophy of mainstreaming and inclusion and relatively up-to-date, at the micro level, the education and instruction practices implemented in the schools and institutions are based on team teaching and open expression methods, which in essence are inconsistent with inclusion and even mainstreaming. Although there are various reasons behind the failure to turn the policy into practice, the most apparent reasons include the education culture based on academic success, intensive curriculum and qualitative and quantitative inadequacies of teachers. As a result, when teacher competences and all systematic problems are addressed with a holistic approach, it can be clearly observed that the instruction model based on individual differences specified in the education policies of the MoNE could not be implemented in the education environments in the schools and institutions.

The findings obtained from the second part of the research summarised the opinions of the participants on eight significant issues, which are placement, role of the teacher in mainstreaming, in-class practices and adaptations, participation in social activities, behaviour control, difficulties experienced in mainstreaming, positive aspects of mainstreaming and suggestions supporting mainstreaming practices respectively.

One of the main points standing out in the discussions held with different groups of teachers in the study is that problems are experienced in the process from becoming aware of the special education needs of a child to the placement of the child. When these problems are addressed in detail, one of the main problems expressed by the participants is the transfer of the children to special education classes or institutions without taking measures related to the pre-transfer process and without the implementation of the practices suggested within the scope of the response to intervention approach. In the literature, it is emphasised that teachers should make adaptations in the instruction methods, materials, physical environment of the classroom, aims and when necessary, homework before the children with special education needs are directed to the identification process (Kargın, 2007). For these adaptations to be made and right decisions to be taken, teachers should get to know the child and thus, need to work with the child for a while. However, the findings obtained from teachers show that this time is too short, and the child is sent to identification before the teacher gets to know the child adequately. The intervention programme/plan applied in the pre-transfer process and its results are generally not included in the personal development reports prepared for the students referred to the GRC. This can cause the children, who can continue their education within the general education system with the appropriate adaptations and support, to be identified with a problem unnecessarily and be included in the system in a wrong way. Therefore, first of all, legislative arrangements are needed so that teachers and school administrations can implement response to intervention approach. Also, arrangements are needed to prevent the hasty transfer tendencies of teachers and administrators resulting from miscellaneous factors such as negative attitudes and/or personnel, material and space problems. In particular, when the development of special education in Turkey and the other developed

countries in the world are examined and when it is considered that special education has advanced with the support of families and civil society while state and legislative arrangements have accelerated its development in Turkey, such legislative arrangements seem highly important for Turkey. However, beyond legislative arrangements and also in support of these arrangements, training should be organised for teachers to inform them about the pre-referral process and the response to intervention approach with the aim of preventing such wrong practices.

In terms of the teachers working in BİLSEMs, it can be stated that these teachers are adequately knowledgeable about the identification phase of their placement process and are also aware of the 'getting bored' problem experienced by the students prior to identification. However, it has been concluded that BİLSEM teachers do not have adequate information on what mainstreaming is. Contrary to the findings of this study, Akdoğan, Koçak and Subaşı (2017), who conducted a study with 10 preschool teachers, reported that teachers were not adequately informed about identification. They also demonstrated that they were knowledgeable about the features constituting the criteria of identification. These two findings show that the findings obtained by these researchers are contradictory. In the study discussed in this report, findings obtained from a higher number of teachers from different fields provide more detailed information. The findings of the present study show that individuals, who work as teachers of the gifted students in schools opened for the gifted children, have higher levels of awareness in relation to the identification process. The awareness of the BİLSEM teachers concerning the 'getting bored' problem frequently mentioned in the literature about pre-identification (Montgomery, 2003; Sezer, 2015) can be associated with working in such a school and working with the gifted students.

Another significant finding related to placement is the problems experienced in the assessment process. Under this theme, the most stressed problems are misidentification and lengthy identification process despite the completion of assessment made for the identification of the child in a short span of time. This problem was associated with the problems related to the functioning of the GRCs. One of the points emphasised in the study, especially during the interviews held with the guidance teachers, is that this process could not be successfully implemented in Turkey due to poor physical conditions of GRCs and the qualitative and quantitative shortcomings of their personnel. Therefore, suggestions presented in this respect include improving the physical conditions of the GRCs, enhancing the competences of experts so that they can make detailed assessments on children in an accurate manner and making an arrangement for limiting the number of children to be assessed per day.

The finding showing that students placed in mainstreaming practices do not possess the appropriate characteristics is in parallel with the results of the previous studies conducted. It has been frequently emphasised in the previous studies that the failure in placing the students with the appropriate characteristics in mainstreaming practices negatively affects the success of mainstreaming practices (Saraç and Çolak, 2012; Thorpe and Azam, 2010). Under this theme, participants also mentioned misidentifications resulting from families and lack of family support. This finding is in parallel with the findings of previous studies as well (for instance, Güzel, 2014). Misidentification resulting from the family can have many different reasons. Although the active participation of the family in the identification process is guaranteed by law, this does not grant the family that has no expertise on the issue the right to manage and direct the identification process. Although families should absolutely be a part of the

identification process, they cannot lead the process due to many reasons including their low levels of awareness or knowledge regarding the situations of the children, having difficulty in coming to terms with the special education needs of their children or their wishes to turn the gaps in the system into opportunities for them. In the studies examining the reactions of families when they first realised the incompetencies of their children, it has been frequently emphasised that families respond by rejecting or denying the situation (e.g. O'Shea, O'Shea, Algozzine and Hammitte, 2001). Additionally, the researches, including this one, have shown that parents generally have positive views about mainstreaming although they have concerns and lack of knowledge with regard to the current practices (Baykoç-Dönmez, Aslan and Avcı, 1998; Gottlieb and Leyser, 1996; Öncü, 2003; Özbaba, 2000; Temir, 2002). In this context, training should be organised to raise awareness among families. Such training, which aim to improve knowledge of families, helps families more actively participate in the identification process.

Under the placement theme, positive opinions about the placement process in Turkey have been underlined as well. This research differs from the other researches in this respect and contributes to literature and practices by emphasising the role of a programme in the Turkish education system in this process. The programme standing out as a positive aspect of the system is the Remedial Education in Primary Schools (İYEP). Teachers sharing their opinions on this theme emphasise that İYEP distinguishes between the students with low academic achievements and the children with special education needs and prevents wrong identification. İYEP is a programme developed for helping the 3rd and 4th grade students who could not achieve the attainments included in the Turkish and mathematics curricula and determined within the scope of İYEP at the adequate levels in the previous school years due to various reasons achieve these attainments. One of the most important objectives of the programme is to help the students included in the programme achieve the expected learning levels by preventing absence resulting from academic failure (MEB, 2019). In this sense, the programme is a significant development for supporting the children both in their current grades and in the general education grades in their future education lives. The failure in gaining the attainments included in the Turkish and mathematics curricula and determined within the scope of İYEP can be associated with special education needs of a student. The reasons of such failure should be determined as early as possible, and the necessary individual arrangements, adaptations and plans should be made immediately with the aim of preventing the existing gap between these students and the others who have no problems in terms of attainments from growing further. Such programmes, which directly aim to support students with special education needs, should be supported, developed and disseminated. To this end, all classroom teachers, in particular, should be informed about İYEP and should be supported to develop consciousness and competence.

Another theme of the research was related to the roles of teachers in mainstreaming. Teachers identified their roles in the mainstreaming process as noting and directing the child, providing support after placement and providing counselling. In this context, while guidance teachers and special education teachers emphasised their roles for supporting during placement and counselling, classroom teachers and branch teachers stressed their roles in the pre-transfer process. An important finding that needs to be discussed in this respect is that teachers, who are expected to work with the child within the class and implement the IEP prepared specifically for the child, are not aware of their roles in the process following the placement. Classroom teachers generally consider themselves as the teachers of typically

developing students. For them, students benefiting from mainstreaming practices are guest students who have difficulty in following the programme offered in the general education class. Studies conducted with teachers and administrators show that they generally find mainstreaming important and useful but they think that students with special education needs have difficulty in benefiting from these practices, and their attitudes towards mainstreaming are neither completely positive nor completely negative (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Batu, 1998; Blecker and Boakes, 2010; Center and Ward, 1987; Diken, 1998; Kaya, 2003; Leyser, Kappermann and Keller, 1994; Myles and Simpson, 1989; Uysal, 1995; Varlıer and Vuran, 2006). At this point, informative activities that can raise awareness of mainstreaming and turn the attitudes of teachers into positive can prove to be useful. Also, some incentives can be introduced (exemption from keeping watch, additional course fee etc.) for teachers having mainstreaming students. The counselling role expressed by teachers has been emphasised in many researches as well, and it is one of the factors affecting the success of mainstreaming. The Special Education Services Regulation (2018) defines support education services as "*counselling services offered to the individuals with special education needs, their families and teachers and the other personnel in the school in line with their education needs by means of the necessary materials and equipment by the qualified personnel*". In this article of the Regulation, it is emphasised that counselling should be provided to teachers as support education service. However, in Turkey, support education is provided to students only through support education rooms. Studies conducted on counselling and guidance also report that teachers and administrators have problems since they cannot receive adequate counselling and guidance support from the Directorates of National Education, Guidance and Research Centres and guidance teachers in Turkey (Güzel, 2014; MEB, 2010). Counselling in special education rests upon three main assumptions. One of them is that when general education classroom teachers receive the necessary support, they can teach the students with special education needs more effectively. The studies conducted so far also support this assumption. Another assumption is that counselling allows a higher number of students to receive services. The last assumption concerning counselling is that the implementation of the response to intervention approach increases the possibility of students to continue their education without identification (Batu, 2000). When the assumptions listed are considered, it is thought that the counselling system might play a key role in solving many problems mentioned in this research. Therefore, a special education teacher can be assigned to each school, and these teachers can follow the students with special education needs. These teachers can be asked to provide counselling to the general education teachers and guidance teachers, and the support education services provided can be extended. For this purpose, training can be provided on special education counselling and guidance, and professional skills of special education teachers can be enhanced. Additionally, considering that the classroom teachers working with the students with special education needs can get more exhausted, a system can be developed for the guidance teachers in the schools to provide one-to-one psychological counselling to these exhausted teachers. Guidance teachers can receive in-service training to develop competences on this topic.

It was determined that the participants of this research were considerably knowledgeable about the role of teachers in the determination and education of the gifted. Akdoğan, Koçak and Subaşı (2017) reported that preschool teachers also had high levels of awareness about their roles in identification and education of students. This might imply that teachers, in general, are aware of their roles in identification and education in both mainstreaming practices and routine processes.

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Another theme emerging in the research is preparation for mainstreaming. Preparation for mainstreaming is a process in which students with special education needs get ready for school life while physical conditions, programmes, personnel of the school as well as students and parents are prepared for the special education students through various activities. These activities are expected to include various activities such as informing the typically developing peers and their parents and organising IEP meetings. Furthermore, the improvement of certain behaviours of the individuals with special education needs such as note-taking, doing homework and abiding by school rules is addressed in this process. The literature and experiences show that preparing all actors with a role in mainstreaming before the initiation of mainstreaming practice and providing the necessary support services after the mainstreaming is put into practice increase the chance of success in mainstreaming practices (Batu, 2000). In this context, it can be stated that the data obtained from this research are promising. In this research conducted with different groups of teachers, three teachers stated that they did not conduct preparation activities for mainstreaming in their schools at the beginning of the school year. A significant portion of teachers reported that they carried out activities such as informing those concerned, meeting with families, informing peers, cooperation with experts providing services to students and holding IEP meetings in this process. The findings of the present study differ from the findings of other studies in this regard. For instance, a study conducted with the administrators concluded that administrators did not have adequate information on the concept of mainstreaming and what needs to be done before mainstreaming for a successful mainstreaming practice (Pınar-Sazak and Yıkmış, 2004). However, the findings of the present study indicate that teachers are knowledgeable about this issue, and they include these activities in the implementation phase. It can be stated that the awareness levels of teachers have increased over the years. Moreover, it can be concluded that the courses related to mainstreaming/inclusion, which have recently been included in the teacher training programmes, have had positive impacts on increasing awareness of young preservice teachers and teachers. In this research, teachers stated that they conducted activities for peers, and this is one of the significant issues to be discussed. Such activities play a key role in maintaining the peer support in the general education classes where mainstreaming practices are conducted and making these practices successful. Researches show that preparation activities developed for the peers, which include such phases as information, animation and discussion, increase the level of peer acceptance for the students with special education needs and support positive interaction among the students (Yaşaran, Batu and Özen, 2014). Discussion of special education as a topic in almost all schools in the seminar periods and conducting such informative activities in coping with the negative attitudes towards the disabled are useful in promoting positive attitudes towards mainstreaming. Trainings organised for teachers and administrators to inform them on the type of activities they can conduct within the scope of preparation for mainstreaming should continue. Also, the MoNE should take measures by making systematic changes to ensure that such activities are carried out in all schools. Teachers stated that they held IEP meetings as a preparatory activity for mainstreaming. However, the number of the teachers stating that they organised IEP meetings is rather limited. On the other hand, all teachers reported that they prepared IEPs. The teachers, who did not mention IEP meetings, stated that they consulted with the guidance teachers and used the internet and used the IEPs available in some websites by adapting them. Considering that teachers seek support in the IEP preparation process and resort to using the IEPs available on the internet instead of preparing IEPs specific to their students, it is evident that teachers need to be informed and supported in relation to IEP preparation, determination of appropriate goals for students and planning an instruction process in accordance with these goals. This finding bears similarity with the findings of the previous studies and shows that teachers are not knowledgeable

enough about the IEP (Avcıoğlu, 2011; Çuhadar, 2006). Applied trainings should be organised for teachers and school administrators on planning and organising IEP meetings as well as the IEP preparation. Guidance teachers should cooperate with the teachers with respect to the IEP preparation. Also, families should be informed about their roles and legal rights in the IEP process.

Another theme determined during the discussions with teachers is in-class practices and adaptations while one of the categories under this theme is related to the factors affecting in-class practices. Teachers reported that negative attitudes, large class sizes and the high number of students with special education needs in one classroom affected the quality of their practices. All problems listed under this category were expressed by the classroom teachers and branch teachers who were expected to work with the students with special education needs in their classrooms in particular. This finding bears resemblance with the findings of the previous research examining the factors affecting success of mainstreaming (Batmaz, 2017; Lewis and Doorlag, 1999). The MoNE should establish a system for the monitoring of such factors as class size and the number of students with special education needs in mainstreaming classrooms which are determined by legislative arrangements. Other categories under the theme of in-class practices and adaptations are environmental adaptations, instructional adaptations and assessment adaptations. In the category of environmental adaptations, it is seen that teachers generally make arrangements to put the students with special education needs in the front row. While this is an appropriate arrangement for some students, the number of adaptations that can be made in this respect is unlimited (Tomlinson, 2001). Teachers should be informed about which adaptation can be preferred for a specific student with special education needs. In the category of instructional adaptations, adaptations made by the teachers in their classrooms were addressed in terms of content and process, and a limited number of teachers expressed opinion on these adaptations. In this respect, it can be concluded that the competences of teachers in relation to adaptations are limited. It has been observed that reducing the number of goals identified for the student or simplifying them is the only content adaptation teachers employ for the students with special education needs while adapting the material used for instruction is the only process adaptation. These findings might imply that teachers lack adequate knowledge about in-class practices and adaptations and thus, they do not provide the opportunity to support the students with special education needs in their classes. This situation has been frequently emphasised in the other studies related to this topic as well (Lalvani, 2012; Nizamoğlu, 2006; Önder, 2007; Sadioğlu, 2011). It is suggested that teachers are offered training on environmental and instructional adaptations and supported through on-the-job coaching practices. At this point, GRCs should take a leading role, prepare instructive materials about environmental and instructional adaptations and convey them to all teachers starting with those having students with special education needs. Also, GRCs should conduct interactive works on environmental and instructional adaptations. Under this theme, assessment adaptations were also addressed. Although the assessment adaptations mentioned by the teachers were more diverse when compared to the instructional adaptations, it is difficult to state that these adaptations are adequate. This finding was mentioned in another research seeking the opinions of students with special education needs on mainstreaming adaptations as well, and the students stated that their teachers did not make any adaptations for them but could not fail them, either, and thus, a minimum score of 45 was considered enough for passing the course (Olçay-Gül and Vuran, 2015). Without the adaptations listed, providing education to the students with special education needs in the classroom is not possible. Another related theme is in-class practices and adaptations. Findings obtained from the study show that BİLSEM teachers make various adaptations

with respect to instruction and assessment. It has been observed that they compare their instructions mainly with the practices in mainstream schools and give examples to show how they enrich instruction. Ayaydın and Ün (2018) reported that BİLSEM teachers emphasised that BİLSEMs should provide enriched education to their students. These findings might be an indicator of the awareness of BİLSEMs about their mission. However, it is known that instructional adaptations are not only enrichment. In brief, training teachers intensively about environmental adaptations, instructional adaptations and assessment adaptations is a must.

The emergence of participation in social activities as a theme at the end of the discussions and interviews is significant in that it points out the importance of social dimension in mainstreaming. Although most of the teachers interviewed stated that special education students participated in social activities, two teachers reported that these students did not participate in any activities. Social activities reported by the teachers under this theme can be addressed in two separate categories as school activities and out-of-school social activities. It is seen that special education students except for the gifted students predominantly participate in the social activities organised in the schools. Out-of-school activities such as visits to science centres and TÜBİTAK activities are mainly planned for gifted students. Individual differences of students, attitude of the school administration and dependence on individual efforts are reported to be among the factors affecting socialisation. Active participation of mainstreaming students with special education needs in all social activities is of paramount importance for these students, their typically developing peers and the general school atmosphere. In this respect, teachers, families and school administrators should be encouraged and supported. In particular, special athletes and artists, who have become successful in the fields of sports and art, should be invited to schools to set a role model for the whole school. Counselling services of schools can invite the well-known disabled persons or model disabled persons around them to their schools and can organise seminars, panels etc. for raising awareness in this regard.

With respect to the BİLSEM students, although the number of teachers delivering opinion was limited, activities organised with the students were mentioned. Köksal, Göğsu and Akkaya (2017) had previously determined that parents found participation in social activities in BİLSEMs inadequate. However, since teachers reported that student participation in these activities was adequate, there was a contradiction with the views of parents. This result might be related to the way of understanding the concept of "social activity". On the other hand, the opinions of the three teachers who stated that they did not participate in any activities support the views of the parents.

Teachers participating in the study also mentioned problems in establishing control over the behaviours of students with special education needs. Seven teachers stated that they had problems in establishing behavioural control in the classrooms. Only four of seven teachers delivered opinion on the reasons of problems. The general conviction is that teachers have insufficient knowledge in relation to behavioural control. The most commonly used behavioural control methods are assigning responsibility, warning, drawing attention, cooperation with the family, reinforcement, functional assessment and ignoring. The obtained data show that teachers have difficulty in establishing behavioural control over students and their behavioural control methods are limited. Learning new methods for controlling the behaviours of their students will empower teachers. Briefings and applied training on such methods can be provided

in the teacher seminars held at the beginning of semesters. With respect to the control of the behavioural problems observed ib gifted students, BİLSEM teachers gave some examples, although not at an adequate level. This finding is consistent with the literature. Vuran, Çolak and Gürgür (2003) performed an in-service training application focusing on behaviour control with teachers and officials from various branches. It was determined that teachers had some shortcomings in relation to behavioural control prior to the application but they could implement some techniques beforehand. This situation shows that teachers have limited knowledge about behaviour control and need to be included in programs where more examples of behaviour control are presented. Difficulties experienced in mainstreaming have been the subject of numerous national and international researches. In the present research, five categories were determined for the difficulties experienced. These are poor physical conditions, negative attitudes, difficulties experienced in teacher training, lack of cooperation and parent perspective. Additionally, uselessness of mainstreaming in practice, inefficiency of inclusion for the student with special education needs, incorrect education plans and problems experienced in the implementation of the regulation stand out as the weaknesses of mainstreaming. One of the most critical factors in the success of mainstreaming practices is teacher. As mentioned above, macro arrangements cannot guarantee success without the contributions of teachers. The discussions have clearly revealed that the assignment of teachers from other branches as a temporary solution to the difficulties experienced in teacher training in the field of special education is negative in terms of mainstreaming practices. For example, one of the teachers summarised the problem with a clear statement: "*If the paid teacher is not a graduate of education faculty, he/she cannot teach anything to that child (K7, 414).*" On the other hand, courses on mainstreaming have been added in the undergraduate teaching programmes, and it is targeted that preservice teachers gain different roles and responsibilities such as making arrangements in the education programmes and plan according to the different individual features of students, using different instructional materials and determining the personal requirements of the student and taking measures in and out of the classroom accordingly. In this way, it is expected that the above-mentioned problem will be sorted out in the long term.

Making the special education teaching undergraduate programmes constantly self-renewing and dynamic is highly important for the proper development of the field of special education. Also, teachers working in the field of special education should develop themselves through graduate education by going beyond in-service training.

Unlike other studies, a separate theme was created for positive aspects of mainstreaming practices in this study. Among positive opinions expressed about mainstreaming; awareness raising, functioning of support education, preventing exclusion/education with peers, and consciousness of parents stand out. Teachers working in BILSEMs also provided examples that mainstreaming had positive contributions to both the student and the teacher. Anılan and Kayacan (2015) who worked with 10 classroom teachers stated that mainstreaming has positive features such as increasing socialization, breaking down the prejudices and adapting to difference. When the teachers participating in the interview were asked to make suggestions for the improvement of classroom practices and mainstreaming system, teachers have offered a wide range of recommendations for training teachers and experts, improving physical conditions, conducting special education counselling and guidance, making legal arrangements and improving teacher training programs. It is also worth noting that this research emphasises that classroom teachers, school administrators and the personnel working in GRCs should receive training

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on special education and children with special education needs and that their professional competences should be enhanced. The main training subjects include behavioural control methods and techniques, legislative arrangements, awareness and applied behaviour analysis. It is interesting that courses related to all the subjects listed above have been included in the new special education teaching programme. Teachers stated that training should be applied rather than theoretic. They also reported that counselling to be provided to teachers and guidance services to be offered to the individuals with special education needs and their families play crucial roles in the success of mainstreaming practices. Similar findings are available in the previous studies conducted on this topic in the literature as well.

In terms of difficulties experienced in mainstreaming, BİLSEM teachers mentioned low student levels, limited time allocated to BİLSEM, problems in communication with parents and practical problems. Once again Anılan and Kayacan (2015) reported findings similar to those obtained in the present research with respect to communication with families and difficulty of providing individual education in practice. It is possible that limited time and low student levels are specific to BİLSEMs. This limitation might result from education is offered after school hours and constant changes in the identification tools. Teachers working in BILSEMs also provided suggestions for the functioning of BILSEMs as well as suggestions for mainstreaming. Teachers suggested that BILSEMs should not be after school, it should be detached schools and have the communication system with teachers and a graduate system. When the findings related to the difficulties are considered, it can be stated that being an detached school and establishing a communication network are important suggestions in terms of time problems and implementation problems. However, the lack of recommendations on the identification system and parents' communication shows that the teachers do not have a solution to these situations in the short term.

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