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METAPHORS ON THE NULL CURRICULUM

Research article

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Abstract

This research focuses on metaphors stated by prospective teachers regarding the concept of the null curriculum, and under which themes these metaphors were collected. The qualitative research method was applied within the research. The data were collected through metaphors. 173 prospective teachers participated in the study group determined through criterion sampling. In the research, as a data collection tool, an open-ended question pattern in fill-in-the-blank form ("Null curriculum..... is like". Because") was administered. According to this pattern, each prospective teacher was asked to write a sentence. A total of 161 valid metaphor sentences were included within the scope of the analysis. As a result of the analysis, three themes emerged: The definition of the null curriculum, its structure, and its results. The most repeated metaphor was the metaphor of a puzzle with one piece missing. In the metaphors highlighting the tempting aspect of the null curriculum, especially the elements containing bad habits such as gambling, smoking, and junk food were mentioned. According to the perceptions of prospective teachers, this situation can be evaluated in the sense that overlooking a curriculum can make this situation usual and turn into a bad habit. It has been observed that the metaphors overlap with the null curriculum definitions in the relevant literature. It can be asserted that prospective teachers are aware of the null curriculum and generally express opinions that curricula should not be overlooked. It is recommended that future research should include studies aimed at identifying and eliminating the null curriculum issues, as well as application-oriented research.

Keywords: Curriculum, metaphor, null curriculum, prospective teachers

1. Introduction

The concept of "curriculum" was first introduced in literature as of the 19th century (Demeuse & Strauven, 2016). The concept of curriculum, which is of Latin origin, is derived from the French word *currere*, meaning "to run, to walk", "a track to run". In English, it means the path followed, route, race field, place of action, and race (Eisner, 1979; Ellis, 2015; Bobbit, 2017). This concept implies a path, a series of obstacles or tasks that a person must deal with, or something with a beginning and an end that a person aims to complete (Eisner, 1979). Based on the word "path", some authors and thinkers prefer to use the word *syllabus* instead of curriculum (Demirel, 2020). Oliva & Gordon II (2018), likening the concept of curriculum to blind people identifying an elephant, state that there are many interpretations of the curriculum, especially under the influence of philosophical beliefs since it has an undefined structure.

Some of these interpretations can be listed as content, a set of subjects, a set of materials, a set of lessons, a set of fields of study, what is taught in and out of school, everything happening in school, everything planned, and everything experienced. On the basis of these comments, it can be observed that the curriculum is used in both narrow and broad meanings (Oliva & Gordon II, 2018). According to Bobbit (2017), the curriculum is the sum of what children and young people need to do and experience to become adults in every respect. According to Eisner (1979), the curriculum is all the experiences the child has under the control of the school. According to Ertürk (1982, 95), curriculum or "yetişek" in Turkish, as defined by Ertürk is an

order of valid learning experiences. Varış (1994, 18) states that the curriculum includes all of the activities an educational institution offers to children, youth, and adults to achieve the objectives of national education and the institution. According to Demirel (2020, 4), a curriculum is an arrangement of learning experiences offered to the learner via planned activities at and out of school.

The source of the curriculum is the values that society aims to develop. These values are expressed within the general goals of the educational system. In this sense, the curriculum presents a holistic vision with planned, designed guidelines ensuring the implementation of instruction according to expected outcomes (Demeuse & Strauven, 2016). Each curriculum represents a choice of how to approach students' education (Posner, 1995). The curriculum components are the learning to be achieved, learning-teaching strategies and processes, educational and instructional resources, course contents, testing conditions, and arrangements for the management of the curriculum (Demeuse & Strauven, 2016).

Posner (1995) divided the curriculum into its functions and classified it as formal, explicit, implicit, extra, and null. Similarly, Eisner (1979) classified the curriculum as formal (explicit), implicit, and null. The formal curriculum is a written program containing guidelines. The explicit curriculum is how the teacher interprets the formal curriculum, what and how he/she teaches in the classroom. The implicit curriculum is not included in the formal curriculum and includes the norms and values of society. An extra curriculum includes supporting activities other than the formal curriculum. The null curriculum consists of subjects that are not taught (Demirel, 2020). A null curriculum (empty or non-existent program) reminds program planners to question what is being ignored. For instance, what forms of knowledge have been omitted, and what is their significance? What is the potential result of a null curriculum? Because decisions on inclusion and exclusion are among the most critical decisions that program planners can make. We need to consider not only the formal (explicit) and implicit curriculum of schools but also what schools do not teach, and what we do not teach can be as important as what we do (Eisner, 1979).

For this reason, in this research, the concept of the null curriculum has been addressed, enabling us to focus on what we cannot teach and what we cannot include in the context of the curriculum. The null curriculum is the curriculum that includes the subjects that are excluded from the formal curriculum, not taught, and the reason why these subjects are not taught (Demirel, 2020, 4). It is a type of curriculum in the formal curriculum but not taught by administrators, teachers, and supervisors, not given the necessary importance or skimmed over (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2015, 53-54). Two main dimensions can be considered in defining the null curriculum. One of them is the intellectual processes that schools underline and ignore. The other is the content or subject areas that exist and do not exist in the school curriculum (Eisner, 1979, 83). The null curriculum includes topics not included in the formal curriculum (qtd. from Apple, 1993, Pinar et al., 1995). The concept of the null curriculum initiates a critical curriculum analysis of what is missing, left out, or overlooked about how the curriculum is conceptualized, created, and enacted. In guiding a focus on what is not present, the null curriculum brings to the field of curriculum studies, an essential theoretical tool to consider what is not offered to students and the potential educational significance and impact of such neglect. In this way, the null curriculum keeps alive the classical curriculum concern and question, "Which knowledge is most valuable?" expressed by Herbert Spencer in 1860 (Kridel, 2010). Assemi & Sheikhzade (2013) divided the null curriculum into three types: intended, implemented, and experiential. An intentionally ignored curriculum is when policymakers, textbook writers, administrators, or politicians in an educational system omit or exclude certain subjects from the curriculum. The null curriculum in implementation is the exclusion of some parts of the textbooks by school authorities or teachers owing to the students' lack of interest

and needs. The curriculum that is ignored experientially is expressed as the student's failure to consider some parts of textbooks that are not in their own abilities and interests. Orhan and Acar (2018) named the same classification as the curriculum ignored by the decision-makers, the principal or teachers and students, respectively.

Most of the studies in the national and foreign literature on the null curriculum consist of literature reviews and systematic reviews (Flinders, Noddings & Thornton, 1986; Moy, 2000; Watson et al., 2005; Graham & Sims-Gunzenhauser, 2009; Gholami, et al., 2016; Assemi & Sheikhzade, 2013; Yang, 2016; Chaka, Lephala & Ngesi, 2017; Rezaei & Yamani, 2017; Orhan & Acar, 2018; Cahapay, 2020; Peng, & Cui, 2021; Cahapay, 2021). On the other hand, there are scale development studies regarding the null curriculum (Marzoghi et al., 2017; Kazemi et al., 2020). While McLaren (2011) questions why some information regarding the null curriculum constitutes the dominant culture and some information is pushed to the background, Tatar & Adıgüzel (2019) analyzed primary and secondary education curricula regarding the null curriculum via the document analysis method. Karaca (2022), in her master's thesis entitled "Teachers' Views and Experiences on Middle School English Language Teaching Curriculum According to Posner's Curriculum Types" considered the null curriculum as a sub-dimension. Karaca (2022) scrutinized the null curriculum under two themes: expectations for the dimensions that should be included in the formal curriculum and dimensions that could not be implemented despite being included in the formal curriculum.

In Tatar's (2019) doctoral dissertation on the investigation of controversial issues in the null curriculum, it was concluded that controversial issues are included in the null curriculum in the context of the purpose, content, and learning-teaching processes of the curricula of compulsory courses taught in primary and secondary schools. Orhan & Acar (2018), in their review study regarding the null curriculum, asserted that the lack of any articles, theses, or papers on this type of curriculum in the national literature is a critical deficiency. In spite of the passage of time, it is noteworthy that there is only one study belonging to Ataş et al. (2021) (Tatar, 2019) on the null curriculum focusing on the topics and rationales of the curriculum research. In the context of the literature, it is apparent that very few studies directly deal with the null curriculum (Wojcik & Titone, 2015; Gottlieb, 2017; Chowdhury & Siddique, 2017; Tatar & Adıgüzel, 2019). In some studies, conclusions have been reached regarding the null curriculum that has been directly ignored (Erdamar & Akpınar (2020); Karaca 2022; Mutluer & Bavlı, 2022). Considering the current situation, it can be inferred that research on the null curriculum is ignored. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to make a scientific contribution to this neglected area of curriculum studies.

In this research, the null curriculum was investigated via metaphors. Upon checking the current field literature on the concept of the curriculum, various metaphorical studies have been found. In this research, the curriculum (Yurdakul, 2015; Akinoglu, 2017), educational curriculum (Gültekin, 2013; Özdemir, 2012; Aykaç & Çelik, 2014; Semerci & Özçelik, 2018; Yıldız & Korkmazgil, 2021), training curriculum (Çırak Kurt, 2017; Şahin & Kumral, 2013), implicit curriculum (Alkan, 2017) and modular training curriculum (Duman & Sargın, 2019) have been investigated via metaphors. Oyetoro & Kareem, (2022), on the other hand, focused on metaphors related to the relationship between the curriculum and teaching. These studies indicate that metaphorical perceptions of the concept of the curriculum are an essential field of study. One of the reasons for this might be the assumption that metaphor represents a fundamental tool of human thought (Kliebard, 1982). Stating that the literature and scope of metaphors are extensive and cover at least two thousand years (Kliebard, 1982), Kliebard also points out that metaphors started from the profound speculations of Aristotle and continued until today through the work of distinguished linguists, literary critics, philosophers, anthropologists, and political scientists. In fact, Aspin (1984) also stated that metaphors have

started to be widely used in education, but this does not reduce the innovative and creative power of metaphorical expression. Metaphors are widely used in the educational process to enable people to understand the subject by using their imagination instead of the textual expression. This process helps the student to visualize new ideologies independent of philosophical and disciplinary boundaries (Ibrahim, 2016). Since the research on the null curriculum is quite limited and metaphors are an effective form of intellectual expression, the null curriculum was scrutinized through metaphors in this research.

The research aims to disclose the metaphors of prospective teachers related to the concept of "null curriculum." The research questions in the context of this purpose are as follows:

1. What are the metaphors prospective teachers developed about the null curriculum concept?
2. Under which themes and categories are the metaphors developed by prospective teachers related to the concept of the null curriculum collected?

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

In the study, the qualitative research design was adopted based on the metaphors about null curriculum. Metaphors can be used for descriptive purposes as a qualitative data collection method. When used in this way, a situation, an event, or a phenomenon is depicted as it exists (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2018). In a typical metaphor-oriented data collection process, very rich metaphors can be obtained with one or several open-ended questions. In the research, the "null curriculum", included in Posner and Eisner's curriculum classification, was described through metaphors from the perspective of prospective teachers.

2.2. Study Group

The study group of the research was determined via the criterion sampling method. In this context, a total of 173 prospective teachers studying in the second year of Social Studies, Turkish Language, Classroom, and Science Teaching in the Faculty of Education of a state university located in the Western Black Sea Region of Turkey and taking the teaching principles and methods course constituted the study group of the research. Taking the teaching principles and methods course has been determined as the main criterion. This is because Posner and Eisner's curriculum classifications have been processed under the title of basic concepts, which is the first topic of the current course. In this sense, collecting data from prospective teachers who know the concept of the null curriculum has been preferred in collecting valid and reliable data from the research.

2.3. Data Collection Tool and Analysis of Data

In the research, as a data collection tool, "Null curriculum..... is like". Because,", an open-ended question pattern with fill-in-the-blank was applied. According to this pattern, each prospective teacher was asked to write a sentence.

The permission of the ethics committee was obtained before the research data were collected. The data were collected outside the face-to-face class hours of the prospective teachers. During the data analysis process, metaphors were examined one by one, appropriate theme names were determined, and related metaphors were grouped. The metaphors grouped in different themes were analyzed again. The categories that appeared for each theme were named. A total of 161 valid metaphor sentences written by prospective teachers were included in the scope of the analysis, while twelve sentences were excluded from the analysis because they did not comply with the logic of the open-ended question.

3. Findings and Comments

The findings are presented according to three themes that emerged from the data analysis and named as the definition of the null curriculum, its structure, and its results.

3.1. "Description of the Null Curriculum" Theme

In the theme of the definition of the null curriculum, metaphors were grouped under six categories. The categories expressed in sentences are as follows: "A null curriculum is a curriculum that is not cared for", "A null curriculum is a curriculum that is not paid attention to", "A null curriculum is a curriculum that is ignored", "A null curriculum is a curriculum that is unnecessary", "A null curriculum is a curriculum that is used when needed", "A null curriculum is a curriculum that is skipped". The categories, metaphors, and frequency (f) values related to the definition of the null curriculum are offered in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of the Null Curriculum

Categories	Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f
A null curriculum is a curriculum that is not cared for	Apple Peel	1	Encyclopedia	1
	Crack outside the house	1	Human	1
	Our Health	1	Talking on the phone	1
	Ex-lover	1	The lighter side of the scale	1
	Low credit course	1	Love	1
	Mask	1	Subconscious	1
	Fourteen February	1	Plastic bag	1
	Insensitivity to femicide	1	TOTAL (Σf)	15
A null curriculum is a curriculum that is not paid attention to	The flower forgotten to be watered	2	Farm	1
	Life	2	Soil	1
	Health	1	Working parents	1
	Withered rose in a pot	1	Child not receiving attention	1
	A rose that dries up because it is not watered	1	Our elderly	1
	Poorly cultivated plant	1	Food	1
	Mask and distance	1	A cracked glass	1
		TOTAL (Σf)	16	
A null curriculum is a curriculum that is ignored	Death	1	Broccoli	1
	Unrequited love	1	Black grape peel	1
	Cleaning at home	1	A part of life that is ignored	1
	The little boy who was tricked	1	Boy	1
		TOTAL (Σf)	8	
A null curriculum is a curriculum that is unnecessary	Worthless thing in the chest	1	Water taken from the sea with a bucket	1
	Appendicitis	1	A small error	1
	The armor of the tank	1	Total (Σf)	5
A null curriculum is a curriculum that is used when needed	The person who does see the doctor	1	Reading poetry	1
	Medicine	1	Coffee not drunk at night	1
	To do sports	1	Total (Σf)	5
A null curriculum is a curriculum that is skipped	Wind	1	Bus	1
	Hopscotch game	1	Green traffic light	1
	Seat belt	1	TOTAL (Σf)	5

Fifty four metaphors were generated on the theme of the definition of the null curriculum. From these metaphors the flower forgotten to be watered (f:2) and life (f:2) metaphors have been repeated more than once. "A null curriculum is like an apple peel. Because we peel before eating the apple, but the most useful place is the peel. "In the null curriculum, although it is useful, we discard some lessons, we ignore them." This statement points out that this type of curriculum is ignored; "The null curriculum is like a flower that is forgotten to be watered. Because just as a flower begins to wither and eventually dies unless it is watered, null

curriculum atrophies over time." "A null curriculum is like life. Because it exists, it continues, it is important, but some aspects of it are always ignored." In these statements, the ignored status of the said curriculum was emphasized. A prospective teacher associated the null curriculum with death, saying, "A null curriculum is like death. Because we know that it exists but pretend it does not." With this statement, the participant revealed the way the curriculum is ignored with personal perception.

"The null curriculum is like appendicitis in our body. Because when that organ is removed, there is no change in the functioning of the body; one can live without it. The statement "education continues even if the curriculum is ignored" is an example of the perception that this type of curriculum is unnecessary, while the statement "A null curriculum is like doing sports. Because sports should actually be done regularly, we need it, but it is an action that is constantly neglected." is an example of this type of curriculum being used in case of need. On the other hand, a prospective teacher who likened the null curriculum to a hopscotch game said, "The null curriculum is like a hopscotch game. Because we do not dwell on it, we skip it. Some points are not focused on in null curricula". With this statement, it is emphasized that this type of curriculum is skipped from time to time. If the metaphors and themes generated for the definition of the null curriculum are summarized, it can be stated that they are primarily compatible with the definitions of the null curriculum in the literature and mostly explain the way the curriculum is neglected.

3.2. "Structure of the Null Curriculum" Theme

Metaphors related to the theme of the structure of the null curriculum was grouped under five categories. The categories expressed in sentences are as follows: "In the null curricula, there are obscurities; there is no compensation of the null curriculum," "The null curriculum is an important part of the curriculum," "The null curriculum is tempting," "Impossibilities cause the null curriculum." The categories, metaphors, and frequency (f) values related to the structure of the null curriculum are available in Table 2.

Table 2. *Structure of the null curriculum*

Categories	Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f
There are obscurities in the null curriculum.	Virgin forest	2	Unexpected stone	1
	Stone of rice	1	Unexplored cave	1
	Reading the book by skipping	1	River that does not reach the sea	1
	Spoilt egg	1	TOTAL (Σf)	8
There is no compensation for the null curriculum.	Flowing water	1	Pullover left in the cupboard	1
	Missing a plane	1	Passing time	1
	Dried flower	1	Water	1
	A small tear	1	TOTAL (Σf)	7
The null curriculum is an important part of the curriculum.	Seat belt	1	Football team	1
	Milk	1	Butterfly cone	1
	Subconscious	1	Making magic	1
			TOTAL (Σf)	6
The null curriculum is tempting.	Gamble	1	Cigarette	1
	Junk food	1	Get sick	1
	Rose	1	TOTAL (Σf)	5
The null curriculum is caused by impossibilities	Distance education	2	Girls in the east	1
	Giving zakat	1	TOTAL (Σf)	4

Thirty metaphors have been generated on the theme of the structure of the null curriculum. From these metaphors, the virgin forest (f:2) and distance education (f:2) metaphors have been repeated more than once. A prospective teacher pointing out the obscurities of the null curriculum stated, "A null curriculum is like a virgin forest. Because we have not learned what

both of them can offer us." "A null curriculum is like missing a plane. Because failure to process the issue we are going to process will cause losses and will not get us to our goal, our destination.". This statement indicates that there is no compensation for the null curriculum "The null curriculum is like a safety belt. Because the seat belt may not always protect us, but it is a great protector in important situations. Whatever is neglected in the curriculum may be vital.". The seatbelt metaphor mentioned in this statement draws attention to the importance of this type of curriculum. In the metaphors emphasizing the tempting aspect of the null curriculum, especially the elements that are characterized as bad habits such as gambling, smoking, and junk food were included. "A null curriculum is like gambling. Because neglecting is tempting even though it is not good behavior. Not dealing with that issue is like gambling even though it is not a good thing; it seems beautiful and logical at the time, but in fact, it is a great deficiency and evil." statement can be given as an example for this situation.

The perceptions of some prospective teachers are that curricula have to be neglected because of impossibilities. For instance, a prospective teacher explained this situation with this statement: "The null curriculum is like distance education. Because it is compulsory to participate in distance education, but some people cannot do what is necessary and should be done due to internet problems and impossibilities. The null curriculum also needs to be implemented. Nevertheless, it cannot be realized owing to financial impossibilities of the school and some conditions." As a result, while some of the prospective teachers pointed out the importance of the null curriculum, a significant number of them particularly emphasized the obscurity and irretrievability of the curriculum.

3.3. "Results of The Null Curriculum" Theme

The metaphors about the results of the null curriculum have been collected under three categories. The categories expressed in sentences are as follows: "The null curriculum causes the program to be incomplete," "The null curriculum causes negative results," and "The damages of the null curriculum occur later." Categories, metaphors, and frequency (f) values belonging to the theme of the results of the null curriculum are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *Results of the null curriculum*

Categories	Metaphor	f	Metaphor	f
The null curriculum causes the program to remain incomplete	A puzzle with missing pieces	3	Button	1
	Vitamin	2	Unsalted buttermilk	1
	A skipped meal	2	Letters	1
	Book	2	Lemon	1
	The missing piece of a big puzzle	1	An unsalted food	1
	Single key not working on the keyboard	1	Missing ropes of a bridge	1
	Piano without a key	1	Unvisitable places of a city	1
	A car with a flat tyre	1	A braid with a missed stitch	1
	Building stolen from the material	1	Undiluted soup	1
	An unfinished sport	1	One leg short table	1
	Apple cookies without cinnamon	1	The missing wheel of a machine that does not work properly	1
	Building construction	1	Ex- lover	1
	A small gear inside the clock	1	The painter whose colors were taken away	1
	Salt	1	Glass half full of water	1
	A spider web with one thread missing	1	Broken watch	1
	Key chain	1	TOTAL (Σf)	36
The null curriculum causes negative results	Sunken ship	2	Barren land	1
	Pit	1	Flat tyre of a car on the road	1
	Hippocratic oath	1	Steps of the ladder	1
	Food	1	Cemetery	1
	Speed bump	1	Not well-cooked bread	1
	Baby	1	Car	1
	Acne during puberty	1	Going into space	1
	Raising children	1	A burden left on the student	1
		TOTAL (Σf)	17	

Categories	Metaphor	f Metaphor	f
The damages of null curriculum emerge later	Cancer	2 An insignificant malfunction of the car	1
	Patient with coronavirus	1 Drought	1
	Smoking	1 Thirstiness	1
	Jumping with a torn parachute	1 The Forgotten password	1
	Car with a flat brake	1 Life	1
	Lack of oil in the tractor	1 Columns of houses	1
	Global warming	1 A jacket buttoned wrong	1
		TOTAL (Σf)	15

A total of sixty-eight metaphors were generated on the theme of the results of the null curriculum. Among these metaphors, the metaphors of a puzzle with one piece missing (f:3), vitamins (f:2), a skipped meal (f:2), a book (f:2), a sinking ship (f:2) and cancer (f:2) have been repeated more than once. Due to the fact that the null curriculum causes the program to be incomplete, a prospective teacher stated that *"The null curriculum is like a puzzle with a missing piece. Because without that part, we will never be able to make sense of it, because we cannot see the whole."* Here the prospective teacher used a puzzle metaphor. Another prospective teacher, on the other hand, stated that *"The null curriculum is like a vitamin. Because if you do not take it on time, a deficiency will definitely occur in the future."* In doing so, the prospective teacher matched the perception of deficiency with the vitamin metaphor. Another prospective teacher who evaluates the null curriculum in terms of the lack of food meal "stated that, *"The null curriculum is like a skipped meal. Because when you feel the lack of it by getting hungry after a few hours, you realize that it is too late to eat."* As an example of a book metaphor can be, *"The null curriculum is like a book. Because the book is a whole. But most people focus only on the plot of the book. They skip parts such as the preface, the last word, and the author's life because they see them as unnecessary. But these chapters are also part of the book and complete it. The null curriculum is just like that. It also exists in formality in a written way, it is important, but it can be ignored."* This statement is another approach that emphasizes the incompleteness of the curriculum.

A prospective teacher who drew attention to the negative results of the null curriculum claimed that *"The null curriculum is like a sinking ship. Because the more the null curriculum multiplies, the sinking accelerates. With each null curriculum, the deficit on the ship increases, and the sinking accelerates."* Another prospective teacher who thinks that the damages of negligence emerge later also states this situation as follows: *"A null curriculum is like cancer. Because just like cancer starts from a cell in the body and spreads, a null curriculum in education creates a gap and always remains a deficiency in the student. Cancer is treated, but the process is exhausting and there is a risk of recurrence. In the null curriculum, although the person wants to complete this deficiency later and tries to learn, he/she will not be able to get the necessary efficiency because he/she did not learn on time."*

4. Conclusion, Discussion, and Suggestions

The null curriculum is a type of curriculum that is included in Eisner's (1979) and Posner's (1995) curriculum classifications and constitutes the untaught parts of the formal or explicit curriculum (Demirel, 2020). Research on the null curriculum is necessary since it is not only the formal and implicit curriculum of schools that matters, but also what schools do not teach. Because what we do not teach can be just as important as what we do (Eisner, 1979). While a large part of the field research for the null curriculum is in the type of literature review and systematic review (Flinders, Noddings & Thornton, 1986; Moy, 2000; Watson et al., 2005; Graham & Sims-Gunzenhauser, 2009; Gholami, et al., 2016; Assemi & Sheikhzade, 2013; Yang, 2016; Chaka, Lephala & Ngesi, 2017; Rezaei & Yamani, 2017; Orhan & Acar, 2018; Cahapay, 2020; Peng, & Cui, 2021; Cahapay, 2021), most of the remaining research is aimed

at identifying the neglected issues (Chowdhury & Siddique, 2017; Mutluer & Bavli (2022); Karaca, 2022; Tatar & Adıgüzel, 2019). Unlike other studies, Gottlieb (2017) presented an approach to how some neglected historical topics can be included in the curriculum with augmented reality games.

In this study which was conducted to determine the metaphors of prospective teachers related to the concept of null curriculum, a wide variety of metaphors emerged. Some of them can be listed as a pit, wind, cemetery, apple peel, hopscotch game, keyboard key that does not work on the keyboard, distance education, gambling, ex-lover, vitamins, death, flat tire car, cracked glass, broccoli, life, health, butterfly cone, virgin forest, appendicitis, spoiled eggs, junk food, cancer, and unsalted buttermilk. A large part of the metaphors is targeted at the fact that ignoring curricula can lead to serious problems in the future. This result is in line with Zare & Marzoghi's (2022) view that the null curriculum leaves undesirable personal and social effects and results. Although it is few, there is an emphasis that the curriculum, which is neglected in a few metaphors, does not affect the educational process, is unnecessary, or is used when necessary. This result brings to mind the opinion that it might be considered normal for prospective teachers to neglect curricula based on the idea that they are unnecessary. Because it is clear in research that there is teacher-related negligence from time to time. For example, Tatar & Adıgüzel (2019) found that controversial issues addressed by educational stakeholders are mostly not included in the curricula of primary and secondary compulsory courses and are overlooked. On the other hand, in Erdamar & Akpınar's (2020) study analyzing the curriculum literacy skills of classroom teachers from the perspective of administrators, classroom teachers' partially independent implementation of formal curricula in the form of the null curriculum was described as an accidental and unconscious movement. This situation is predicted to lead to a difference between theory and practice in the teaching process. It has been mentioned that this difference carries the risk of hindering the macro goals of the Turkish Educational System with the micro achievements of schools.

It can be said that the metaphors developed for the definition of the null curriculum overlap with the definitions of the null curriculum in the existing literature. Most themes related to the null curriculum include expressions such as not paying attention to, not being cared for, being ignored, and being considered unnecessary, all of which actually explain the null curriculum. This result coincides with the explanations under the title of "dimensions of the null curriculum that could not be implemented despite being included in the formal curriculum" in Karaca's (2022) study that was conducted with teachers.

The most repeated metaphor is the one about the result of the null curriculum a puzzle with one piece missing (f:3). In the results of the research, what is interesting is that such metaphors as the mask, distance, virus, etc. were used. This result can be considered a reflection of the COVID-19 process. On the other hand, the conclusion that the COVID 19 process has also added new ones to the null curriculum can be seen in Mutluer & Bavli's (2022) research. In this research, classroom teachers working in disadvantaged elementary schools specified that they could not use standard measurement tools because of the null curriculum in the emergency distance education process.

Most metaphors were produced about the results of null curriculum (f:68). This was followed by the definition of the null curriculum(f:54) and the structure of the null curriculum(f:30). The theme of null curriculum causing the curriculum to be incomplete (f:36) was the theme with the highest number of metaphors and was included in the theme of the results of the null curriculum. This result is in line with Zare & Marzoghi's (2022) view that the null curriculum causes disruptions and deficiencies in the learning of knowledge, values, and skills that learners need.

Considering the structure of the null curriculum, some of the prospective teachers pointed out the importance of the null curriculum, whereas a significant number of them focused especially on the obscurities and irretrievability of the curriculum. In the metaphors that emphasize the tempting aspect of the null curriculum, bad habits such as gambling, smoking, junk food were mentioned in particular. According to the perceptions of prospective teachers, this situation can be evaluated in the sense that overlooking a curriculum can make this situation usual and turn into a bad habit.

It can be asserted that prospective teachers are aware of the null curriculum and generally express opinions that curricula should not be overlooked. Although some prospective teachers can accept the null curriculum as normal, this result is believed to add value to the research in terms of reflecting the reality. It is recommended that future research should include studies aimed at identifying and eliminating null curriculum issues, as well as application-oriented research.

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