



# The Need for More Effective In-service Training for Professional Development of English Language Teachers

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## Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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## ABSTRACT

Both prior to entry into the profession across teacher education programs and in-service practices, there has been a growing emphasis for sustainable and high-quality professional development opportunities. Even though candidates start to get acquainted with these opportunities prior to their entry into profession, their experiment with those opportunities matureate once they enter the profession. However, to what extent the professional development opportunities have been cultivated is yet to be studied. It is widely recognized that appropriate professional development opportunities result in the transformation of beliefs and practices in a positive way. However, designing programs detached from the practitioners' perspectives would be poorly grounded as in-service teacher perspectives will help design the subsequent opportunities better. This article aims at describing the impact of in-service training activities for professional development of English language teachers in Turkey. As well as informing both national and international audience about the general in-service training (INSET) programs of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) of Turkey, the study reports on the findings of empirical research into 297 English language teachers' participation in and perspectives of in-service professional learning programs. Implications are discussed and developments in practice are suggested.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of an increasingly complex society and rapidly changing economies, schools today are facing ever-increasing challenges, and are required to support individuals with high academic achievement. Helping individuals attain the desired higher levels requires successful learning and skillful teaching. Therefore, in many countries, the roles of schools as well as expected teacher profiles are changing [1,2]. According to TALIS report, teachers today, among many other responsibilities, are expected to handle the diversity in the classrooms, incorporate the needs of individuals of different backgrounds, be armed with an efficient use of technologies, be accountable for planning and evaluation, and be continuously cooperative with parents [3]. Being equipped with content knowledge and new learning methods, cooperating with the colleagues and revising the curriculum as well as developing strategies for working with children could help them deal with these varied expectations [4].

Avalos [5], for example, states that teacher professional learning is a complex process and highlights the need for both cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively. Therefore, it is believed that pre-service training may not itself be adequate to help teachers to meet the unprecedented expectations of students, schools, and the society [6]. To this end, in-service professional development opportunities could be of great help in mitigating the gap in building and investing in high-quality workforce.

The purpose of this study was to inform the international audience on INSET programs of Ministry of National Education in Turkey in general and specifically those for English language teachers along with sharing the results of a locally implemented study with 297 teachers of English.

### 1.1 Background to the Study

In-service training is usually equated with professional development and usually these two are used interchangeably, even though differences are likely to arise in meaning. Professional development and in-service teacher education seems to be mutually inclusive especially with respect to the range of activities

that contribute to the practicing teachers [7]. One can claim that INSET is part of a teacher's professional development and only adds to their repertoire of teaching skills, knowledge, expertise and the characteristics of the teacher. Moreover, in-service training is considered to be a deficit model and is usually associated with assumption that people in authority should provide teachers with information or skills [8].

Since professional development practices are varied [9], a single definition of professional development may not capture the diversity of the activities or development opportunities. Fullan [10] defines professional development of teachers as a 'broad area which includes any activity or process intent on improving dexterity, attitudes, understanding or involvement in current or future roles' while Heidemann [11] takes a different perspective and states that:

The professional development of teachers goes beyond a merely informative stage; it implies adaptation to change with a view to changing teaching and learning activities, altering teacher attitudes and improving the academic results of students. The professional development of teachers is concerned with individual, professional and organizational needs (p. 4).

According to the OECD report [12], in-service education and training refers to the 'identifiable learning activities in which practicing teachers participate' (p. 18). The intention of such training is to increase and improve the professional knowledge, skills, attitude and capabilities of teachers in a defined area in order for them to educate children more effectively. There are also those who note that INSET, especially in developing countries, is the only form of preparation some teachers gain without being qualified [13].

Changing epistemological perspectives into professional development of teachers have shown an evolutionary progression from the traditional perspective of professional development structures which are designed by someone *for teachers* or *to teachers* [14] while reflective teaching practices, self-directed and more participatory activities [15,16,17] have replaced the conventional model [18,19]. However, the evolutionary tendency in question has not seriously been felt in some contexts.

Professional development activities or in-service training opportunities are usually confined to the workshops which fail to help teachers become equipped with the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills [20,21,22]. Thus, it is clear from the literature that the distinction between the two terms, in-service training and professional development remains unclear. Based on the literature review, in this article, both terms will be used interchangeably to describe all professional activities and learning that teachers are involved in.

Although there seems to be a consensus on the importance of professional development in achieving or maintaining higher education standards, reviews of professional development and research results regularly reveal the substandard effectiveness of most INSET programs [23,24,25]. Most authors in the field agree that effective professional development should be continuous, be supported by training, practice and feedback, and reinforced by follow-up support [26,27]. Professional development opportunities help teachers become involved in learning activities they are likely to use in their classes and encourage them to develop a sense of professional identity [28]. Garet et al. [29] point that professional development activities which are tailored to the teachers' immediate teaching practices are more likely to affect the instructional practices in a positive way. Moreover, two novice teachers who took INSET training course in Personn and Yigitoglu [30] pointed to the controlled teacher talking time, the assessed observations and tutor feedback, which were not congruent with the classroom reality. The restricted talking time assigned for teachers, assessed observation environments which failed to be natural, and tutor feedback which was required to be short and concise, which in turn ended up with further clarifications, were representative of an INSET course which was poorly-rewarding. Moreover, Ünal's study [31] demonstrated that practical guidance rather than theoretical information was more necessary for students.

In parallel with our recognition of teaching to learn, professional development has gained more attention. Professional development is more than attending lectures or seminars and actually it denotes a long-lasting process which covers various opportunities and experiences, and the teacher is likely to benefit from it so long as it is carefully designed [32,33] and critically reflected [34]. For quality professional

development programs, teachers should cater to the needs of learners of diverse backgrounds, be supported by inquiry, reflection, and mentoring practices, thereby promoting teaching that results in learning [35]. Professional development of teachers should evolve in constructivist nature rather than sticking to transmission models. To this end, active involvement, observation, and reflection help teachers become active agents [36,37]. In order for this to happen, appropriate monitoring is necessary and indispensable to triggering change [38,39].

## 1.2 INSET and English Language Teachers in Turkey

The centralized structure of higher education in Turkey helps much to promote the standardization even though the mushrooming number of universities makes it a difficult challenge. Modern university education was developed in the 1940s and 1950s and, by the end of the 1970s, there were 11 universities in Turkey. As of 2015, there are 193 universities (109 state universities, 76 private/foundation universities and 8 foundation vocational schools) throughout the country and it should be noted that the number of universities is changing so rapidly, which makes it difficult to keep the track. Although universities are considered to be autonomous institutions, they are highly under the control of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). Teacher Education is also operating within the university system in the faculties of Education since 1982. Therefore, the control of the teacher education programs including their contents and structures is controlled by YÖK.

At the time of writing this article in 2015, under the jurisdiction of the Higher Education Council, there were sixty-five English Language Teaching (ELT) Departments; fifty-two Departments of English Language and Literature; four Department of Linguistics; eight Department of American Literature and Culture; twenty-nine Department of Translation and Interpretation supplying English language teachers. These departments were mostly located in Turkey and there were also the ones located in Cyprus, Azerbaijan and Bosnia Herzegovina. Except for the graduates of ELT departments, other graduates of above mentioned departments should receive pedagogical formation courses and need to have a certificate to be a teacher. As for 2015, there were 46,563 teachers of English at basic education schools (eight

years compulsory) and 25,342 at secondary education [40]. However, the national education system alone, except from private sector, requires more 75,000 teachers of English [41]. English language teachers, not surprisingly, take the front seat in recruitment as the demand is high [42]. The Ministry of Education announced the hiring of 40,000 native English language teachers in 2012, but no action has been taken so far. According to the plan, these teachers would share the classes with their Turkish colleagues to minimize the possible problems, which would also help the Turkish teachers of English to improve their communication skills [43,44].

The need for more qualified teachers, aligning with the expectations of a rapidly changing student population, instituting sustainable educational reforms and developments in language learning are placing a number of new demands on English language teachers. Curtain and Pesola [45] that foreign language teachers "require a combination of competencies and background that may be unprecedented in the preparation of language teachers". Therefore, strong professional development is inevitable on the way to promoting teacher competencies.

The General Directorate for Teacher Training and Development of MoNE is responsible for in-service training of both newly-appointed and practicing teachers. It organizes in-service training activities in collaboration with related institutions and organizations, with the aim of increasing the quality and the effectiveness of the education the students should receive. In recent years, priority has been given to the following areas: Intercultural Communication, Computing, Effective teaching Techniques, Teaching Methods for Foreign Language teachers (Arabic, English, French and German), Alternative Teaching Methods, Evaluation and Testing, and Educational Management and Time Management. In addition, INGED (English Language Education Association) offers a range of programs for teachers' continuing education, including afternoon sessions and workshops at universities and local schools. However, when it comes to the effectiveness of these in-service seminars, there appears to be little satisfaction with the top-down structuring as the teachers are not truly involved in these development opportunities [46,47]. Recently, some teachers were reported to have gone as far as to get fake

medical report in order not to attend the in-service seminars [48].

Turkey has a long history of organizing INSET facilities intended to stimulate the professional development of teachers. The in-service training of teachers has been carried out by the MoNE since 1960. Since then, there have been significant initiations, changes and improvements in terms of quantity and quality on in-service training. In 2011, the General Directorate for Teacher Training and Development became responsible for in-service training of teachers. This institution is responsible for planning and implementing in-service training programs for all teachers at different levels, teaching different subjects and for different lengths of time throughout the country. Until 1993, in-service training activities used to be held centrally; however, these activities proved to be very inadequate in terms of both quality and quantity [49]. Therefore, local educational directorates were given the authority to organize local training programs for local needs in corporation with the General Directorate for Teacher Training and Development of MoNE.

Although the number of in-service training activities is determined at the beginning of the year, they are open to change according to the demands made by the local education directorates. All national and local programs are posted on the web page of the General Directorate for Teacher Training and Development in October or November. Applications are made electronically but the local school directors must approve the application. Teachers and other staff have the right to apply five different programs but they can attend only one of them. There are some criteria for selection, especially for centrally-planned activities, such as experience and city quotation to participate in one activity. The duration of the activities change according to the content but they usually end in a week and take 30 contact hours. Centrally-organized in-service training institutes are located in different parts of the country: Aksaray, Ankara, Erzurum, Mersin, Rize, Van and Yalova.

Table 1 illustrates the total number of centrally organized INSET programs, the total number of participants, the total number of centrally organized INSET programs for English language Teaching (ELT) teachers and the total number of participants for the period 2003-2014.

**Table 1. Number of INSET and ELT INSET programs for 2003-2014**

| Year  | Number of INSET | Number of participants | Number of ELT INSET | Number of participants | Percentages of ELT INSET |
|-------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2003  | 453             | 19,727                 | 15                  | 731                    | 3,31                     |
| 2004  | 526             | 34,154                 | 18                  | 956                    | 3,42                     |
| 2005  | 543             | 33,156                 | 17                  | 965                    | 3,13                     |
| 2006  | 634             | 44,006                 | 17                  | 933                    | 2,68                     |
| 2007  | 614             | 44,808                 | 15                  | 804                    | 2,44                     |
| 2008  | 751             | 44,783                 | 14                  | 851                    | 1,86                     |
| 2009  | 930             | 45,102                 | 13                  | 1080                   | 1,39                     |
| 2010  | 957             | 48,629                 | 4                   | 698                    | 0,41                     |
| 2011  | 1,156           | 51,557                 | 3                   | 123                    | 0,25                     |
| 2012  | 286             | 13,071                 | 1                   | 59                     | 0,34                     |
| 2013  | 290             | 13,634                 | 0                   | 0                      | 0                        |
| 2014  | 309             | 19,735                 | 1                   | 110                    | 0,32                     |
| Total | 5,408           | 314,365                | 113                 | 7,018                  | 2,08                     |

Data in Table 1 reveal that the percentage of the ELT INSET programs, considering the total number of INSET programs, is definitely insufficient and especially starting from 2010 the number of INSET programs decreases dramatically [50]. The reasons of this insufficiency both on programs and participants could be various. And this result alone seems to be a good point to make further research on the causes.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1 Participants and Research Instrument

The survey method was used to determine the perceptions of Turkish teachers of English about their involvement in in-service training activities. Participants were 297 teachers of English working in State schools in Kayseri, Turkey. Of these participants, 34% were males and 66% were females, ranging in age from 22 to 55, with a median age of 33. They were requested to take a 16-item questionnaire including a personal and a professional section of eight items in each section. The questionnaire was mainly adapted from the TALIS 2013 Technical Report. The TALIS refers to the Teaching and Learning International Survey and it is an international survey which gathers data from teachers and school principals, and it covers themes such as teacher education and professional development, teachers' beliefs, practices and appraisal, school climate, feedback to teachers and school leadership. This survey provides a comprehensive picture of the countries in general, without going into further detail about the local climate.

### 2.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire, being developed to obtain the intended information, was pilot-tested beforehand on a group of 120 representative teachers. These teachers were all teaching English language in State schools in Kayseri, Turkey. After the necessary minor editing and rewording have been made by a group of experts including the author, the final draft was obtained.

The final draft has been distributed to three hundred teachers during the 2014-2015 academic year. However, only two hundred and ninety-seven questionnaires were eligible to be used in the study.

The reason some participants were excluded was mainly incompleteness of the questionnaires properly.

The results were analyzed through the computation of descriptive statistics. All percentages reported are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### 2.3 Limitations of the Study

Although the research has reached its aims, there were some unavoidable limitations. First, the research was conducted only in Kayseri, a city in Central Anatolia and with somehow limited size of population (n=297) working in state schools. Therefore, to generalize the results for larger groups or national levels, the study should involve more participants from different parts of the country. Second, the participants were all working at state schools, therefore, perhaps, different results might have been obtained if teachers working at private schools were included.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Personal Information

Table 2 reveals the reported length of time that respondents were in the teaching profession.

**Table 2. Teaching experience**

| Year of experience  | %    | N   |
|---------------------|------|-----|
| Less than 12 months | 5%   | 14  |
| 1-2 years           | 7%   | 22  |
| 3-5 years           | 22%  | 64  |
| 6-10 years          | 29%  | 86  |
| 11-15 years         | 21%  | 64  |
| 16-20 years         | 9%   | 27  |
| Above 20            | 7%   | 20  |
| Total               | 100% | 297 |

The data reveal that more than half of the participants (64%) have been teaching less than 10 years. This finding seems to be in line with the fact that Turkey has a very young generation and nearly fifty percent of the population (72,561m according to the 2010 census) is under 30 years of age with a median of 28,8.

The second area focused on the period of time they have been working in the school they are now. Respondents were asked to indicate how long they were in their present employment (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Stability in work place**

| Stability in work place | %    | N   |
|-------------------------|------|-----|
| Less than 12 months     | 19%  | 57  |
| 1-2 years               | 25%  | 74  |
| 3-5 years               | 32%  | 96  |
| 6-10 years              | 16%  | 49  |
| 11-15 years             | 7%   | 19  |
| 16-20 years             | .3%  | 1   |
| Above 20                | .3%  | 1   |
| Total                   | 100% | 297 |

It is obvious that the great majority of the participants (76%) have been working in the same school less than six years. Stability in the workplace is an important issue in modern world. Therefore, it is hoped that length of time teachers devote to work at the same school will increase. In today's competitive, globalized market, job stability weighs heavily from the employer's perspective, since work opportunities are omnipresent. Overwhelming majority of the participants (86%) pointed out that they had tenure track positions, while 6% of the teachers

were working on contract bases and the remaining 8% were working on remunerative conditions.

As for the participants' level of education, an overwhelming majority of the participants (90%) hold a bachelor's degree and only 10% hold a master's degree. Moreover, 90% of the participants declared that they do not work in another school, whereas 10% stated that they also work in another school.

The last item in the personal information section was about the participants' typical week day and how much time they spend on each activity in the school. Participants indicated that they devote most of their time to teaching students. They devote nearly twenty-three hours of their weekly time on teaching to students. They approximately spend four hours on planning and preparation of lessons per week and spend nearly one hour on administrative duties. Devoting four hours on planning and preparation of lessons per week seem very limited compared to their colleagues in other countries; for example, public school teachers in the US spent approximately eleven hours each week outside of school in activities related to their teaching assignments in 1990-91 [51].

#### 3.2 Professional Development

Participants were asked to reveal the impact of the professional development activities on their personal professional development as a teacher (see Table 4).

**Table 4. The impact of professional development activities on professional development**

| Type of activity   | %   | N   |
|--|-----|-----|
| Learning innovations in main subject field                                   | 72% | 213 |
| Learning and developing innovative teaching techniques                       | 71% | 212 |
| Teacher-student relationship   | 69% | 206 |
| Adapting new teaching technologies and using them in their teaching          | 65% | 194 |
| Cooperating with colleagues  | 61% | 180 |
| Learning new assessment techniques   | 53% | 157 |
| Increasing learning desire & being able to do more objective self-evaluation | 49% | 146 |
| Managing life-long & sustainable change                                      | 40% | 120 |

Data reveal that the participants benefited most from activities including learning about innovations in their main subject field (72%) followed by learning and developing innovative teaching techniques (71%). This finding is in line with the participants' eagerness to catch up with 'new theories and practices of ELT' and 'use of technology in ELT' in [52] and the participating teachers' ranking of 'specific teaching techniques' as the most favourable topic among the professional knowledge/practice areas in [53]. The next two most benefited activities were improving teacher-students relationship (69%) and adapting new teaching technologies and using them in their teaching (65%). This could be interpreted as suggesting that future INSET programs would rather include new teaching techniques and innovations in English language teaching, new ways for effective classroom management for better teacher-student relationship and new technologies for effective teaching in order to be effective and meet the needs of the participants. The data could also be interpreted as participants would be keen to integrate the techniques, innovations and technologies into their practice— for their INSET learning to make a difference to practice and the learning of learners.

The second item in this section asked the participants to rate on a four-point scale, ranging from 'no need at all' to 'high level of need', their development needs for various aspects of their profession. The area of greatest development need for participants was teaching students with special needs (17%). This rating was very compatible with the OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (2009) averages (28% Turkey and 31% TALIS average). Judging from these figures, it could be concluded that teacher competence regarding the students with special needs is not adequately nurtured both in Turkey and in the participating countries. Professional development opportunities seem to be more appealing for the mainstream population while the less empowered groups are attached less emphasis. Therefore, there is greater need to be more inclusive development opportunities. Moreover, the rapidly changing nature of learners in today's language classes makes it more necessary for instructors to be more embrative for the underrepresented groups or communities due much to the equity demands.

Other areas with relatively high reported needs were teaching in a multicultural setting (6%); constructive teaching and assessment

techniques, student discipline and behavior problems, and school administration (4%); classroom management, subject matter content and performance standards (3%); knowledge and understanding of instructional practices and student counseling (2%); and subject matter knowledge (1%) respectively.

Teachers reported that they do not need at all the knowledge on their main subject area (63%); school management and administration (49%) and classroom management (45%). The interpretation of these findings is not straightforward. This could be attributed to their well-preparedness, their lack of interest or their need to invest in other priorities.

Given these varying patterns of impact, it is informative to compare the impact and the participation across the different types of activities. The most participated type of activity was 'education conferences and seminars' (86%) followed by in-service training programs (78%); courses and workshops (74%) and mentoring and/or peer observation as part of formal education (39%). When asked about the impacts of the activities they have participated, the most obvious contrast between participation and impact was for education conferences and seminars (86%/25%) followed by in-service training programs (78%/24%) and courses and workshops (74/31.3%) (First percentage shows the activity type and the second percentage shows its impact).

The data reveal that the more the teachers participated in certain activities, the less impact they received for their professional development. It becomes obvious that the activity types given to the teachers should be changed and varied according to the needs of the participants.

When they were asked about whether their expectations have been met during in-service training activities they have participated, half of the participants (50%) informed that their needs have almost been met, whereas, twenty-six percent reported that their expectations have not been met at all. This insufficiency of impact seems to be in line with Borg's [54] study on condition that impact is treated with radical reversal in beliefs. The researcher explored the perspectives of 6 in-service teachers on the impact of an eight-week in-service teacher education program and the study indicated that most of the participating teachers' ideas were not radically challenged.

As for the reasons of why their expectations have not been met, 47% admitted that the activities were mostly 'hit-and-run type daily activity'; 34% claimed that 'no follow-up activities or surveys have been implemented'; 30% pointed out that the 'programs have not been prepared considering their needs' followed by 'mismatch between materials and classroom conditions' (26 %); 'they have not offered opportunities to use new technology in my classes' 23%, 'no relationship between programs' 20% and 'no chance to help student development' 19% as the main sources of dissatisfaction.

In another item, the participants were asked about their opinions of what in service training programs for professional development should include (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Teacher expectations from PD activities**

| <b>What should PD include?</b>                                    | <b>%</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---|----------|----------|
| A needs analysis survey   | 78%      | 231      |
| More practical activities rather than theoretical knowledge       | 78%      | 231      |
| Innovations on the main subject area                              | 65%      | 192      |
| Regular feedback and follow up activities                         | 62%      | 185      |
| Innovations and theories to be applied in teaching situation      | 61%      | 180      |
| Sharing and discussing what has been learned                      | 58%      | 173      |
| Let participants to research and implement what have been learned | 58%      | 172      |
| Cooperative learning environments                                 | 52%      | 154      |

A great majority of the participants indicated that a needs analysis survey should be incorporated before the program and they should include more practical activities rather than theoretical knowledge (78%) respectively. It becomes clear that INSET programs are usually carried out

without determining the needs of the participants, and teachers want to see more practical activities rather than hearing theoretical information so that they can use them in their classrooms. This result supports the discrepancy between the expected and actual in-service training opportunities for professional development. Therefore, conferences and seminars which are devoid of practical utility are of little value for the practitioners.

'PD programs should include innovations related to main subject field' is rated the second (65%), and is followed by 'they should include regular feedback and follow-up activities' (62%). The item which reads 'Innovations and theories to be applied in teaching situation' was agreed by 61%; 'they should allow the participants to share and discuss what has been learned' and 'let participants to research and implement what has been learned' was agreed by 58% respectively and finally 52% of the participants pointed to the necessity of the cooperative learning environments. In summary, participants want their needs to be taken into consideration, have more practical activities, learn new things about their main subject field, have regular feedback and follow activities about the things they have learnt and they want to have a sharing and friendly environment where they can easily discuss what they have learnt and reflect their perspectives.

In another question, participants were asked whether they would like to have more INSET activities or not. An overwhelming majority of the participants (95%) would love to have more in-service programs for professional development and participate in such programs. This finding alone supports the contention that in-service teachers desire to invest in their ongoing professional development. When the practitioners were asked to report on the reasons that prevented them from their onset of professional development activities, the most commonly cited reasons were 'no suitable professional development programs offered' (51%) and 'not enough time because of my family responsibilities' (49%). Other cited barriers were 'professional development programs conflicted with my work schedule' (37%), 'I did not have the pre-requisites to participate' (35%), 'professional development programs were too far to meet my needs' (27%), 'lack of administrative support' (22%) and the 'participation costs are too expensive' (14%).



#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to inform the international audience on INSET programs of Ministry of National Education in Turkey in general and specifically those for English language teachers along with sharing the results of a locally implemented study with 297 teachers of English. The number of the in-service teachers and newcomers which amounts to more than one thousand each year really makes it difficult to organize effective INSET programs. For example 3,214 new English language teachers were hired in February, 2016 [55].

Despite the long history and well-established organizational framework, in-service training activities provided by the General Directorate for Teacher Training and Development of MoNE in Turkey seem not to be well-competent to meet the needs of hundreds of thousands of teachers.

Participants' willingness to attend more in-service programs for professional development and participate in such programs is highly encouraging and should be taken seriously in order not to lose their interest and eagerness. Therefore, carefully and systematically planned INSET programs by qualified and professional staff to promote growth and development in teaching profession should be the ultimate goal of the Directorate.

Professional development should no longer be reduced to seminars or conferences instead it should be considered a long-term process which includes regular opportunities and experiences. Activity types should both be varied and designed according to the needs of the participants. Otherwise, as revealed by the data, the more the participants attend to one type of activity the less they benefit from them!

After the activities, feedback provision in terms of evaluating and measuring the positive or negative outcomes should definitely be part of the process in order not to leave the participants in a swim or sink situation since training activities followed by follow-up monitoring support will result in a better involvement of the teacher.

Becoming a good teacher is a long process. The candidates who arrive at Faculties of Education are not empty vessels. They have already made thousands of observation hours and already have some beliefs about what teaching is. Sometimes these beliefs are so deep that basic

training is unable to bring about a desired change in them [56,57]. Therefore, more effective INSET programs are needed to make such paradigm shifts.

Unless supported by long-run opportunities, accompanied by follow-up evaluations and encouraged to confer relevance to practitioners' immediate teaching environment, high-caliber professional development models through the current transmissive model is not a realistic expectation. Therefore, again a paradigm shift is necessary if professional development is to provide first class instruction to its students while keeping up with a growing list of demands, support for high quality teacher preparation and continuing professional development must be given high priority.

Professional development and change processes are highly interconnected variables. In order to enable a change to take place, one must change the values, beliefs and attitudes. Therefore, special attention has to be given to the analysis of the beliefs teachers bring with them when they start out on their professional career [58]. Research on beliefs could also be very helpful in order to understand why professional development activities have not had a positive impact on changes in teachers.

One of the main criticisms generally made about the teacher education in Turkey is that there is a big gap between theory and practice. This can only be filled by professionally designed INSET programs carried out by professionals. Therefore, there should be a strong connection between the basic training and the insertion of the professional development experiences in order to create a consistent learning system for the development of the teaching profession. And when we accept the notion of teacher development as a life-long learning process, we must provide better support for teachers starting from the early stages of their teaching careers. Teachers should be given opportunities to guide their own professional development in a flexible system that will enhance their professional approach and willingness to participate in in-service training activities.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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