Araştırma Makalesi

Research Article

Perceptions of K-12 English Language Teachers on an Online In-Service Training Program

K-12 Düzeyi İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Çevrimiçi Eğitim Programlarına Yönelik Algıları

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted in collaboration with the US Embassy Education Department located in Ankara and the Local Directorate of National Education (DoNE). The study aimed at designing an online in-service training program based on the needs and expectations of K-12 English language teachers; and to identify their perceptions regarding the online in-service-training program to make implications for the design of future online in-service programs. A needs analysis survey was conducted, resulting in an online program which included topic areas, such as use of technology, engagement of students in online classes, effective teaching and assessment of speaking and writing skills, use of drama techniques, professional development, the profile of next generation learners, as well as pedagogical approaches. The focus group meetings with the participant teachers at the end of the program revealed that the teachers in the study benefited from the online program in terms of improving their overall online teaching and assessment skills, contributing to their professional development, and improving their own language proficiency levels.

Keywords: online in-service training, K-12 English language teachers, evaluation, teacher perceptions.

ÖZ

Bu araştırma, İzmir Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü ve İzmir'de bulunan bir vakıf üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu öğretmen eğitimcilerinin işbirliği ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırmanın amacı ilk ve ortaöğretimde çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ihtiyaçlarına dayalı bir hizmet-içi eğitim tasarlamak ve tasarlanan hizmet-içi eğitime ilişkin öğretmenlerin algılarını belirleyerek bu eğitimin değerlendirmesini yapmak ve ileriye yönelik önerilerde bulunmaktır. İhtiyaç analizi sonuçlarına göre İngilizce öğretmenleri, teknoloji kullanımı, çevrimiçi öğretimde öğrenci katılımı, yazma ve konuşma becerilerinin etkili öğretimi, mesleki gelişim, yazma ve konuşma becerilerin değerlendirilmesi, drama tekniklerinin kullanımı, gelecek nesil öğrenci profil özellikleri ve pedagojik yaklaşımlar konularını hizmet-içi eğitim programında görmek istediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Çevrimiçi öğretmen eğitimi sonrasında yapılan odak grup çalışma analizleri, öğretmenlerin, çevrimiçi öğretim becerileri ve teknoloji kullanımlarının iyileştiğini, öğrencilerin derse katılımlarının arttığını ve öğretim süreçlerinin iyileştiğini, mesleki gelişimlerinden tatmin olduklarını, yazma ve konuşma öğretme becerilerinin geliştiği ve bu becerilere ilişkin değerlendirme kalitesinin arttığını, kişisel gelişimlerine olumlu katkı sağladığını, İngilizce dil yetkinliklerinin arttığını ve eğitim içeriğinin MEB İngilizce programları ile tutarlı olduğunu göstermiştir.

INTRODUCTION

Extensive reforms have taken place in Turkish education system in recent years due to the inevitable changes in teachers' and students' roles, teaching approaches and methodologies. These changes have highlighted the significance of professional development (PD) and in-service training (INSET) in terms of teachers' adaptations to them, and fulfilment of national education policy and philosophy. In the simplest terms, PD refers to all career-related trainings and education. Owen (2003) defines professional development as activities which support the professional and individual development of teachers within the system. Similarly, Stone (2014) refers to planned, unplanned, formal, and informal efforts that contribute to personal and professional development in a positive way. In-service training activities are part of the PD activities for in-service teachers, experienced or novice, to update their knowledge and practice. INSET programs aim to increase the quality of instruction by improving teachers' knowledge and teaching skills through a wide variety of activities, such as journal writing, teaching portfolios, peer coaching, peer observation, case studies, one-to-one and group activities, action research, and teacher support groups (Fullan, 2001; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

In Turkey, INSET programs and activities for K-12 education are conducted by either General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development, Ministry of National Education (MoNE), or the schools themselves (Babanoğlu & Yardımcı, 2017; Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2018; Özer, 2004). INSET activities in Turkey started in 1960s, delivered via the In-Service Training Department, which was established specifically for this purpose (Özer, 2004). As of 2000, these activities were conducted in the form of short-term courses and seminars, rather than long term intensive programs, to meet the contextual needs of teachers, and they were mainly focused on computer and Internet applications, foreign language teaching methods and total quality management in education (Özer, 2004). The MoNE has recently provided an overview for 2023 to improve foreign language education quality and teacher qualifications, which due to the number of language teachers involved, has a special emphasis on online trainings (MEB, 2018). In fact, the MoNE started offering online in-service training over the last few years, because the traditional face-to-face INSET approach failed to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of K-12 English teachers in Turkey (MEB, 2018). In general, the studies in the field of K-12 in Turkey show that the quality and quantity of the face-to-face training programs are not at the desired level, since teachers from all fields and disciplines struggle with changing educational paradigms (Babadogan & Olkun, 2007) and feelings of lacking competence (Elmas et al., 2014; Taneri & Engin-Demir, 2011). Research on the PD and INSET policies of the MoNE revealed that, with some exceptions, in general, English language teachers are discontented with these activities, finding them ineffective due to the quality of trainers, inappropriate training methods, and lack of support given (Balta et al., 2015; Odabaşı et al., 2010; Koç, 2016; Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2013; Uysal, 2012; Uztosun, 2018). In their study, Korkmazgil and Seferoğlu (2013) pointed out that teachers expected PD activities which could support their classroom management skills and use of technology; and also refresh English language knowledge and raise awareness of the target culture. Also, Koç (2016) revealed that the content of the PD activities was not relevant to teachers' needs. A comprehensive report on K-12 English language teachers at state schools in Turkey (British Council, 2013) found that grammar-based and teacher-centred approaches persisted, resulting in lack of opportunities for communication and interactions between language learners. Thus, the report highlights the need for developing a comprehensive and sustainable system of INSET for English teachers' continuous professional development, which aims to increase overall competency.The report also recommends collaboration between universities' Faculties of Education, Schools of Foreign Languages and MoNE for in-service training and

continuous professional development activities in order to train teachers on communicative approaches, student centred teaching, and use of technology (British Council, 2013).

While the above-mentioned research identified the issues in face-to-face INSET activities, the spread of COVID-19 as of March 2020 created additional problems in the form of an abrupt shift from face-to-face to remote forms of teaching and learning. This was a difficult and sudden transition for all teachers, including English language teachers (Dhawan, 2020; Hazelrigg, 2019). This transition showed that it is important to offer opportunities for in-service teachers to experience online training through professional activities (Akayoğlu, et al., 2020; Simonson, 2019). In fact, some, but an insufficient amount of online trainings had already been provided to teachers pre-COVID, but COVID-19 accelerated the transition to online PD and INSET activities during the time of uncertainty.

The related research sums up the advantages of online PD and INSET as flexibility in time and place, cost-effectiveness, and peer support (Arslan, 2018; Başaran, 2020; Kasap & Usul, 2018; Kabilan, 2004). Arslan (2018) suggests that, as teachers have tight schedules and great responsibilities, online training can offer some flexibility regarding time and place, such as the in convenience of working from home or another convenient place. Başaran (2020) argues that online training gives teachers opportunities to adjust the training according to their own pace and level by repeating, playing, and replaying the content of online training activities. Kasap and Usul (2018) state that offering online PD activities is a more cost-effective choice compared to face-to-face ones due to the substantial number of English language teachers in the country. Additionally, Kabilan (2004) suggests that online training increases motivation and teaching quality as teachers can communicate and collaborate while developing interactive competence awareness towards technological tools. Krishnan, et al. (2020) found that teachers were able to improve their language skills, and motivation and willingness to participate in professional development activities. In their study, Rosangela and Xia (2014) suggested that these trainings contributed to teacher efficiency in class, and likewise increased students' language level. Similarly, emphasizing the professional benefits of in-service training in his study, Uztosun (2018) lists the benefits as learning new methods and techniques, becoming competent in using new technology and developing materials, broaden perspectives, and establishing cooperative communication among colleagues. All these studies emphasize the benefits of exchanging materials and resources, expanding professional networks, reflecting on their own teaching practices, and learning from peer-support.

Recent research also reveals practical tips regarding online trainings. In his research, Şahin (2012) states that teachers prefer application-based approaches and short training sessions as well as sharing practical ideas as part of PD activities. British Council and TEPAV research (2013) recommends that training programs should offer current and up-to-date ELT methodology. In a similar vein, Korkmazgil (2015) proposes that teachers prefer practice-based and hands-on activities rather than theory-driven ones. Gümüşoğlu (2016) emphasizes the role of age in the appreciation of in-service training, suggesting that teachers aged 36-40 are more positive about in-service training than those aged 22-30; and teachers with 21-25 years of experience have more positive attitudes than those with 26 years and above. The study also indicates that the participants are particularly interested in 21st century skills (e.g., creative thinking, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, communication skills), technology, material design, classroom management as well as improving teaching productive skills (speaking and writing). Similarly, the research by İleri (2019) highlights a need for a focus on speaking assessment and technology use.

The research on online INSET activities also indicates limitations, such as restricted opportunities for interaction between the trainer and the trainees; drop-out rates, and lack of experience in using technology tools or Learning Management Systems (LMS) (Jung, 2001). Hall and Knox (2009) report that online trainings may miss the human touch, and fail to provide a feeling of community, and online communication may reduce the amount of visual support and

increases chances of misunderstandings. The report by European Joint Research Centre (2017) highlights the importance of digital competency for online activities, indicating that teachers should be able to communicate and collaborate to save time and gain technological skills to avoid wasting time and misusing technological tools.

The studies on advantages and disadvantages of online training activities emphasize the importance of needs analysis in designing an online in-service teacher training to avoid short-termism in educational policies and thus, ineffective programs in Turkey (Günel & Tanrıverdi, 2014). In general, the needs analysis research results to date reveal priorities for assessment of speaking, improving target language skills, material design, classroom management, 21st century skills, recent ELT methodology, ICT utilization, and practice-based activities. However, literature review confirms the lack of research on online INSET activities; and therefore, ways of improving the efficiency of these activities needs to be explored (Göksoy, 2014; Karasolak, et al., 2012). Thus, the primary aim of the current study was to identify K-12 English language teachers' needs and to design an online in-service training program accordingly, and to support them during times of uncertainty through opportunites for consultation throughout the training program. The secondary aim was to identify their perceptions of online in-service training in order to contribute to more effective future INSET activities.

The purpose of this study is twofold:

1. to design an online in-service training program based on the needs and expectations of K-12 English language teachers

2. to identify their perceptions regarding the online in-service-training program designed according to their needs and expectations.

METHOD

This research was conducted in collaboration with the US Embassy Education Department located in Ankara and the Local Directorate of National Education (DoNE) in İzmir during the fall semester in the 2021-2022 Academic Year. Prior to the research, official approval was obtained from the Directorate of National Education in İzmir; and care was taken to ensure ethic standards were applied, , such as participants' informed consent and confidentiality. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the training program, data collection, and data analysis were all conducted online. A team of seven people worked on this project, including the two researchers.

Firstly, an official call was made by the DoNE in İzmir for volunteers for an online in-service training program; and 51 K-12 English teachers showed interest. Secondly, an online survey including items about teaching skills, methodology and techniques, and technology was shared with those interested English language teachers in İzmir. In a separate part of the survey, the teachers were also invited to make suggestions for the topics to be covered in the program, as well as their expectations and the challenges that they anticipated. The purpose of the survey forwarded to 51 teachers was to identify their needs, and based on these, to design an online in-service training program. Table 1. below shows the results of the needs analysis conducted.

Table 1

Needs Analysis Results

Themes	*f*	*%*
Next Generation Profile	12	24%
Pedagogical Approaches	12	24%
Effective Teaching of Productive Skills	29	57%

Assessment of Productive Skills		18	35%
Student Engagement in Online Teaching		35	69%
Use of Drama Techniques		14	27%
Professional Development		19	37%
Use of Technology		41	80%

Upon the analysis of the needs, prior to the program, a 45-minute focus group meeting was conducted with 24 volunteer teachers to gather in-depth information about the participant teachers' expectations and challenges. Table 2 presents the common expectations and challenges along with direct quotations from the focus group meeting.

Table 2

Expectations and Challenges

	Themes	Sample Quotation
Expectations	Self-development	*"I expect to learn some tips for my professional development via self-reflection"*
	Improvement of Teaching Skills	*"I would like to extend my knowledge about assessing the productive skills"*
	Networking/Communication	*"I expect to expand my network and collaboration with new colleagues"*
	Improving Language Proficiency	*"I would like to practice my English as I believe it is getting rusty"*
	Improving Student Learning	*"I hope to get my students more willing to learn a language"*
	Effective Use of Technology	*" I expect to learn about tech variety to create more effective online lessons"*
Challenges	Technical Difficulties	*"I am worried I might have internet connection problems"*
	Time	*"Adjusting my time for both my own online lessons and the training sessions might be a challenge"*
	Mode of Training	*"As the training is online, I might get distracted easily; I may not focus for 60 minutes. I might feel overwhelmed"*
	Language	*"Because I am teaching at primary schools my English skills are getting rusty: therefore, I might have difficulty in understanding the native speaker trainers in the program"*

The analysis of the stated expectations and challenges determined the content of the sessions, which were designed by the training team and the two researchers. Based on the analysis of the survey, the researchers designed the training program considering the main themes identified; namely, *21st Century Student Profile, Next Generation Pedagogy, Drama, Adding Tech Variety, Professional Development for ELT Teachers, Speaking, Speaking Assessment, Writing, Writing Assessment, Gamification, Student Engagement and Collaboration when teaching online.* A 5-week training program with 12 synchronous sessions was designed (see Appendix A.).

The challenges (see Table 2) stated by the teachers were also taken into consideration and addressed when designing the training programme. To alleviate concerns about possible clashes between the training sessions and their own lessons, the sessions were scheduled in the evening, after work hours. Teachers were also concerned about maintaining focus over a 60-minute online

session. Keeping this concern in mind, all the trainers in the program planned their sessions to be as interactive as possible to promote engagement. Another concern was the possibility of not fully understanding the native speaker trainers. The two researchers, therefore, talked to the native speaker trainers about this particular concern; and asked them to grade their language. These challenges noted by the course participants were also stated in similar research on online INSET activities. As noted in the introduction part, the limitations mentioned in other studies were limited chances for interaction between the trainer and the trainees; drop-out rates, inexperience in using technology tools or Learning Management Systems (LMS) (Jung, 2001) as well as the lack of human touch and sense of community along with reduced visual support which may lead to some misunderstings (Hall & Knox, 2009).

In order for the teachers to benefit further from the training, the researchers reduced the number of participants in sessions by dividing them into two groups, and planned the training programme accordingly. The sessions were offered concurrently for each group three times a week, in the evenings with hands-on interactive activities. These sessions were delivered by the seven teacher trainers, two of whom are native speakers, working in the Teacher Development Unit of the School of Foreign Languages at a foundation university in İzmir. Upon the completion of the training program, the participant teachers were granted a certificate of completion. One important aspect of the program was to encourage the teachers to implement the newly-learned tools, approaches and techniques in their online classes in the following term. In order to get them to share their real online teaching experiences, a dissemination conference was planned at the end of the spring semester. Those who were interested in participating in the conference were paired up with trainers to work on their presentations. The trainers provided consultation to the teachers on a regular basis throughout their presentation studies, which allowed teachers to get feedback, and to shape their presentations. The teachers were also given a special session on how to conduct small-scale action research as a preparation for the conference. At the dissemination conference held online, 19 out of the 51 teachers shared their experiences with their colleagues. 209 K-12 teachers from İzmir, including the director of education, and school directors attended the online conference, and the presenters and the participants were given a certificate of attendance. The conference was well-received, with substantial amount of positive feedback.

2.1. Participants

51 volunteer K-12 English language teachers participated in the online in-service training upon the official announcement made by the DoNE. Of the 51 participants, three were male and 48 were female, with teaching experience varying from 8 to 20 years. The teachers were all from primary and secondary schools, except for two high school teachers. Participation in the program was entirely voluntary. No personal information that would identify the participants was collected, and no incentive was offered.

2.2. Data Collection

The data was collected by the researchers through surveys and focus group discussions. Prior to the program, the researchers collected data via google forms to identify the teachers' needs. The form also included a brief section on demographic details, such as gender, experience, and school/level. The researchers also conducted a focus group meeting with 24 volunteer teachers to identify their expectations and challenges regarding the program. This further helped the researchers to choose content aligned with identified needs and expectations and also taking into consideration the challenges they anticipated.

Upon the completion of the program, 41 teachers shared their feedback on the online training using the Padlet platform. This helped the researchers identify the teachers' perceptions, feelings and concerns regarding the online in-service training offered. In addition, an online focus group meeting was organized with 16 volunteers to elicit candid views on online training and to discuss the points raised in the surveys and the written feedback. The online focus group meeting

lasted approximately one and a half hours; the researchers recorded the meeting and took detailed notes.

2.3. Data Analysis

Before the analysis, the researchers agreed that all the data collected (verbalizations/notes taken) would be transcribed in order to avoid having to relisten to the data. After the transcription was finalized, an inductive analysis was employed. In the course of analysis, initially, the data were analysed independently by two researchers, who then worked together to revise the coding. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), coding fractures the data, and opens interpretation to higher levels of abstraction. The analysis process was finalized after the two researchers reviewed and reanalysed the data thoroughly based on the final coding. Finally, inferences were drawn based on the codes and categories. After the coding and the themes were identified, descriptive statistics were employed. Frequency of occurrence of themes was calculated from lowest to highest, as well as the percentages, to incorporate the total number of scores into the calculation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to design an online in-service training program based on the needs and expectations of K-12 English language teachers. The results of the needs analysis indicated that the main needs stated were use of technology (80%), student engagement in online teaching (69%), effective teaching of productive skills (57%), professional development (37%) and assessment of productive skills (35%). The participant teachers were also interested in learning more about drama techniques (27%), next generation profile (24%) as well as pedagogical approaches (24%). The following teacher expectations were identified: self-development, improvement of teaching skills, networking and communication, improving language proficiency, improving student learning and effective use of technology. These were taken into consideration in designing the training program.

The needs and expectations of the participant teachers in the current study are parallel to the findings of the studies conducted by Gümüşoğlu (2016), Korkmazgil and Seferoğlu (2013), İleri (2019) and British Council and TEPAV (2013). Gümüşoğlu (2016) indicates that 21st century skills, use of technology and effective teaching of productive skills were among the most commonly stated needs. Similarly, Korkmazgil and Seferoğlu (2013) found that use of technology and refreshing English language knowledge were the main needs in an in-service training program. İleri (2019) also confirmed similar needs regarding teaching and assessing productive skills as well as technology use. The majority in his study (81.5%) reported a need for training on how to assess the speaking skill. British Council and TEPAV (2013) also proposed the inclusion of current and up-to-date ELT methodology in training programs.

Another aim of the study was to identify their perceptions regarding the online in-service-training program designed according to their needs and expectations. The data collected and collated from the written feedback and the focus group meeting is presented below as direct quotations from the participant teachers' written and oral feedback:

Table 3

Post-training Perceptions

Themes	ƒ	%	Sample Quotations
Improving Online Teaching Skills/Use of Technology	41	80%	*"I tried breakout rooms for the first time. My students loved it. It was so useful"* *"This training gave me a chance to actually put into practice the new things I learnt in the sessions; i.e. Nearpod, Flippidity, Jamboard"*
Relevancy of Training Program to MoNE Curriculum	15	30%	*"The content of the program was very relevant to our school curriculum. We received lots of positive feedback from our students"*
Improving Student Learning	37	73%	*"My students learnt that they could be active in online teaching too"* *"With the help of this training program, peer interaction among my students considerably increased"*
Professional Development	38	75%	*"Attending this program gave me an academic satisfaction"* *"As an old-school teacher, I was not feeling competent in using technology. This training was a life saver for me"* *" By forming our WhatsApp groups we shared our experiences and interacted a lot, which contributed to our professional development"*
Personal-Development	21	45%	*"I felt encouraged to try out new technological tools in my lessons"* *"To be able to make a conference presentation boosted my self-confidence"*
Teaching and Assessing Productive Skills	40	78%	*"I was feeling lost about assessing writing. Now, I have a much clearer idea about what to do by using the new writing criteria I was introduced in the course"* *"We improved teaching skills by using peer correction, feedback, group/pair work in breakout rooms"* *"I will put more emphasis on student production rather than teaching them discrete grammar items"*
Improving Teachers' Language Proficiency	13	26%	*"This training gave us a chance to practice our English as we don't have it in our school settings"*
Others	12	24%	*"It was fun, I saw the positive impact on my students' learning"* *"We put ourselves into the students shoes, we got to experience what they were going through"* *"It was great to share my colleagues' experiences and to realize that I am not alone in this adventure. We learnt ever so much from one another"* *"Trainers in the course were great motivators and role-models for us. They actually used all the techniques they were presenting in the sessions"* *"Flexibility of time and not having to travel to other places were some of the huge advantages of the online program"*

As can be seen in Table 3, the main themes shared by the teachers were as follows: improving online teaching skills/use of technology (80%), improving student learning (73%), professional development (75%), teaching and assessing productive skills (78%), personal-development (45%), improving teachers' language proficiency (26%) and relevancy of the training program to MoNE curriculum (30%).

The online in-service training program described in this study is similar to the one designed by Başaran (2020) in the sense that the themes covered areas such as technology use, assessment

and evaluation, personal development, teaching approaches and methodology, interactive activities, and use of materials. The similarity reflects the approach taken by both studies, i.e., basing content on identified needs. This is also confirmed by Arslan (2018) who suggests an ideal training program should be grounded on the teachers' needs with a focus on technology, classroom management and teaching skills.

The feedback collected indicates that the most prominent theme is improving online teaching skills/use of technology (80%). The quotation "*In this course I learnt so many digital teaching tools that I had never heard of before. This made me feel technologically competent*" clearly shows that the program contributed to the teachers' digital competency. This finding is in alignment with the conclusions drawn by Kabilan (2004), Uztosun (2018) and İleri (2019) regarding increased awareness towards ICT use, and greater competence in using new technology and in developing materials.

One of the main themes identified in this study was improving students' learning (43%) as can clearly be seen in the following quotation: "*I practised everything I learnt in the course; my students noticed the difference in my teaching. This had a positive impact on me as well as students.*" This particular theme was also supported by Rosengela and Xia (2014), who reported that their in-service teacher training program not only improved teacher efficiency in class but also increased students' language level by providing more opportunities for students to actively engage in learning.

The following quotation from the teachers' feedback is a reflection of the theme regarding professional development: "*As a teacher with 26 years of experience, I feel more and more encouraged to attend this kind of training activities as they have a positive impact on my professional development*". This theme also is supported by Krishnan et al. (2020), whose findings revealed that their training course was found to be very valuable, as well as suitable in enhancing professional development. Similarly, Kabilan (2004) and Macia and Garcia (2016) emphasized the value of online training programs in terms of increasing motivation and quality, increasing knowledge of technological tools, expanding professional networks and learning from others. In his study, Qura (2016) designed an online-training and found that it had a significant effect on participants' professional performance. His post training observations showed changes in participant teachers' performance. For example, they replaced traditional methods in teaching grammar with more effective strategies; they were able to make their lessons more interesting and keep students' attention via improved classroom management. It can be concluded that the contribution to professional development was the recurring theme in many similar studies.

One of the themes identified in the feedback was teachers improving their language proficiency. This theme was also supported in Bettinelli's (1998) research, which indicated that the Italian EFL teachers improved their target language skills by active involvement in the online in-service training. In a similar vein, Krishnan, et al., (2020) indicated that the teachers' language improved after a similar training program. Parallel to this finding, Qoura (2016) conducted a study to investigate the effect of an online training program in developing the communicative competence of in-service EFL teachers, finding that teachers improved their communicative competence.

The theme regarding the improvement of teaching and assessing productive skills is reflected in the following teachers' comment: "*During the online training program I gained a lot of new information about effective teaching and assessment of speaking and writing skills*". This finding confirms the outcome identified in İleri's (2019) study: teachers need to improve themselves on productive skills, in particular, speaking assessment and technology use.

Regarding personal development, the participant teachers in the current study noted the training increased their self-confidence as evidenced in the quotation that follow: *"To be able to make a conference presentation boosted my self-confidence"*. Similarly, Uztosun (2018) found

out that the participants in his study agreed that INSET widened their perspective, increased their motivation, and led to self-development.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The studies conducted in the field of teacher education at the K-12 level in Turkey indicate that the quality and quantity of the face-to-face training programs are not at the desired level. The teachers need greater support to face problems due to changing educational paradigms (Babadogan & Olkun, 2007), and not feeling sufficiently competent in the classroom (Elmas et al., 2014; Taneri & Engin-Demir, 2011). Therefore, this study was conducted to serve the purpose of designing an online needs-based teacher training program to prepare teachers for a change in their educational paradigms; i.e. switching to online instruction. This research study can also be considered as a prime example of collaboration between universities and MoNE regarding continuous professional development ventures.

The study at hand primarily focused on the advantages and disadvantages of online training programs from the participant teachers' point of views; and the findings suggest that online programs can be a valuable complement or alternative to traditional face-to-face training. The online in-service training showed that 51 participating K-12 English language teachers improved their skills and approaches in teaching and assessing writing and speaking, technology use, pedagogical approaches as well as improving their own language proficiency. They also gained valuable experience in conducting classroom-based teacher research.

Online teacher training has particular advantages, such as accessibility, flexibility and cost-effectives; and it lends itself to being interactive and collaboration. As highlighted in the present study, through online training, English language teachers are able to engage in interactive activities and discussions, and collaborate with other educators in distant locations both in their home country and from the globe. This can lead to the development of innovative teaching approaches and methods, enhanced student learning outcomes and higher job satisfaction.

While online in-service training has many significant advantages, it is important to ensure that the training provided is high quality and it is aligned with the needs and work context of the course participants and their learners. An online training program is effective only when it is carefully designed, interactive, engaging, and opportunities for feedback and reflection are incorporated into it. It can be concluded from this study that online in-service training for English language teachers is a very valuable tool for professional development thanks to the increasing availability and accessibility of technology as well as the provision of readily-available opportunities to enhance their teaching skills and knowledge. It is also woth mentioning that such programs have important implications for quality assurance in educational settings, highlighting the siginificance of ensuring the high quality of the programs aligned with the specific needs of teachers and their students as well as regular evaluation and improvement.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Son yıllarda yaşanan doğal afetler ve teknoloji alanında yaşanan hızlı değişimler her alanda olduğu gibi yükseköğretim alanında da kaçınılmaz dönüşümlere yol açmıştır. Öğretmenlerin bu değişimlere uyum sağlayabilmeleri ve kendilerini geliştirebilmeleri için ihtiyaçlara dayalı olarak geliştirilen hizmet-içi eğitimin önemi yadsınamaz. En yalın haliyle hizmet-içi öğretmen eğitimi, akran eğitimi, vaka çalışmaları, bire-bir veya grup faaliyetleri, yöneylem araştırmaları, destek grupları gibi yapılan tüm etkinlikleri kapsar ve öğretimin kalitesini arttırmayı, öğretmenlik mesleğinin geliştirilmesi ve iyileştirilmesini amaçlar (Fullan, 2001; Joyce & Showers, 2002; Richhards & Farrell, 2005). Ancak, alan araştırmaları, Türkiye'de düzenlenen hizmet-içi eğitimlerin arzu edilen düzeyde olmadığını göstermektedir (Babadogan & Olkun, 2007). Dil öğretimi alanında yapılan araştırmalar bu sonuçları desteklemekte, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin düzenlenen hizmet-içi eğitimleri yeterli bulmadıklarını, öğretmen eğitimcilerinin beklentilerini karşılamadığını, kendilerine verilen desteği yetersiz bulduklarını göstermektedir (Balta, et al., 2015; Odabaşı at al., 2010; Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu, 2013; Uysal, 2012). Yüz yüze yürütülen öğretmen eğitimlerinin yaşanan salgın hastalıklar ve doğal afetler nedeniyle çevrimiçi eğitimlere dönüştürülmeye başlaması, çevrimiçi eğitim faaliyetlerinin avantajları ve dezavantajlarının araştırılmasını gerekli kılmıştır. Sayı olarak oldukça yetersiz olmakla birlikte araştırmalar çevrimiçi düzenlenen öğretmen eğitim faaliyetlerinin de yüz yüze eğitimlerde olduğu gibi öğretmen beklentilerini karşılamadığını göstermektedir (Göksoy, 2014; Karasolak vd., 2012). Araştırmaların ortak bulgusu, hizmet-içi eğitim faaliyetlerinin tasarlanmadan önce mutlaka ihtiyaç analizinin yapılması, içerik planlamasının bu doğrultuda yapılandırılması ve değerlendirmeler sonucunda eğitimlerin iyileştirilmesidir (Günel & Tanrıverdi, 2014). Bu bulgulara dayanarak, bu araştırmanın amacı ilk ve orta öğretim düzeyinde görev yapan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ihtiyaçlarına dayalı bir hizmet-içi eğitim programı tasarlamak, bu programa ilişkin öğretmen algılarını tespit etmek ve ileriye yönelik daha etkili hizmet içi eğitim programların tasarlanmasını sağlamaktır.

Araştırmanın amacı,

1. İlk ve ortaöğretimde çalışan İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ihtiyaçlarına dayalı bir hizmet-içi eğitim tasarlamak,

2. Tasarlanan hizmet-içi eğitime ilişkin öğretmenlerin algılarını belirleyerek bu eğitimin değerlendirmesini yapmak ve ileriye yönelik önerilerde bulunmaktır.

Yöntem

Bu araştırma, İzmir Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü ve İzmir'de bulunan bir vakıf üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu öğretmen eğitimcilerinin işbirliği ile yürütülmüştür. Araştırmaya İzmir'de ilk ve ortaöğretim düzeyinde çalışan 51 İngilizce öğretmeni, ikisi araştırmacı olmak üzere 7 öğretmen eğitimcisi katılmıştır. Öncelikle çevrimiçi bir anket uygulanarak ihtiyaç analizi yapılmış, katılımcı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin geliştirilmeye açık eğitim ihtiyaçları belirlenmiş ve ihtiyaç alanlarına yönelik bir eğitim içeriği tasarlanmıştır. İhtiyaçlara dayalı geliştirilen eğitim programında pedagojik yaklaşımlar, konuşma ve yazma becerilerinin öğretilmesi ve değerlendirilmesi, öğrencilerin çevrimiçi derslere aktif katılımının sağlanması, teknoloji kullanımı, drama tekniklerinin kullanımı ve Alfa kuşağı çocuklarının karakteristik özellikleri gibi konulara yer verilmiştir. Çevrimiçi öğretmen eğitim, haftada üç kez, dört hafta boyunca iki gruba ayrılan öğretmenlere 45 dakikalık oturumlar olarak planlanmıştır. Araştırmada anket ve odak grup çalışmaları ile veri toplanmış; içerik analizi yapılarak tema ve alt temalar belirlenmiştir. Araştırmada, yapılan odak grup çalışmalarında öğretmen beklenti ve ihtiyaçlarının yanısıra çevrimiçi öğretmen eğitimine ilişkin kaygılar da belirlenmiştir. Eğitim sonunda katılımcılara sertifika verilmiş, çalışmalarını bir konferans etkinliğinde sunmaları ve kendi aralarında bir iletişim ağı kurmaları sağlanmıştır.

Bulgular

İhtiyaç analizi sonuçlarına göre İngilizce öğretmenleri, teknoloji kullanımı (%80), çevrimiçi öğretimde öğrenci katılımı (%69), yazma ve konuşma becerilerinin etkili öğretimi (%57), mesleki gelişim (%37), yazma ve konuşma becerilerin değerlendirilmesi (%35), drama tekniklerinin kullanımı (%27), gelecek nesil öğrenci profil özellikleri (%24) ve pedagojik yaklaşımlar (%24) konularını hizmet-içi eğitim programında görmek istediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Çevrimiçi öğretmen eğitimi sonrasında yapılan odak grup çalışma analizleri, öğretmenlerin, çevrimiçi öğretim becerileri ve teknoloji kullanımlarının iyileştiğini (%80), öğrencilerin derse katılımlarının arttığını ve öğretim süreçlerinin iyileştiğini (%73), mesleki gelişimlerinden tatmin olduklarını (%75), yazma ve konuşma öğretme becerilerinin geliştiği ve bu becerilere ilişkin değerlendirme kalitesinin arttığını (%78), kişisel gelişimlerine olumlu katkı sağladığını (%45), İngilizce dil yetkinliklerinin arttığını (%26) ve eğitim içeriğinin MEB İngilizce programları ile tutarlı olduğunu (%30) göstermiştir.

Sonuç

Bu araştırma, ihtiyaçlara yönelik hazırlanan hizmet-içi eğitim programlarının yüz yüze eğitim programları kadar etkili olabileceğini ancak eğitim programlarının tasarlanırken dikkatli davranılması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Araştırma, katılımcı öğretmenlerin çevrimiçi eğitimleri ulaşılabilirlik, rahatlık, zaman yönetimi ve ekonomik olmaları gibi nedenlerle tercih edilebileceğini; içeriğin iyi planlanması ve öğretmen eğitimcilerinin iyi seçilmesi durumunda eğitimin etki dalgasının artabileceğini göstermiştir. Ayrıca, bu araştırma, MEB ve üniversite işbirliğin önemini, çevrimiçi öğretmen eğitimlerinin yüz yüze eğitimlere ilaveten çok değerli bir alternatif olduğunu, özellikle salgın hastalık ve doğal afet gibi zor zamanlarda öğretmenler için işbirlikçi bir iletişim ağının oluşturulmasının onlara iyi geldiğini de göstermiştir.