
In-service Training of Teachers in Turkey at the Beginning of the 2000s^[1]

BEKIR OZER

Anadolu University, Eskisehir, Turkey

ABSTRACT The In-service Training Department of the Ministry of National Education is responsible for the teachers' in-service training at the pre-school, primary and secondary education levels in Turkey. Important developments in in-service training have occurred since 1960: the foundation of the In-service Training Department. In 2000, 4292 in-service training activities were held locally as well as centrally. A total of 213,444 teachers attended these activities. However, in a survey, it was found that although most of the teachers stated they needed professional development, only a small number of teachers attended in-service training programs willingly. Today, in spite of the developments, there are still some important problems to be solved and essential measures to be taken about the in-service training of teachers in Turkey.

Introduction

In Turkey the education system has been in its present form for 79 years. Today, primary education, which covers 8 years, is compulsory for all citizens. Education at the other levels is optional. In addition to formal education, which is offered face to face, people are also provided primary, secondary and higher education through distance education. There are currently 16,090,785 students in 48,940 schools at the levels of pre-school, primary and secondary education, including non-formal institutions. The number of teachers employed at these institutions is 578,805. In addition, 1,727,520 students (including distance education students) attend 76 universities across the country and 66,750 teaching staff (including research assistants) (2001) work for the universities (MEB, 2001a, pp. 27 and 156). The schooling rates for each level of education in the 1999-2000 academic year in Turkey were as follows: 9.8% in pre-school education, 97.6% in primary education, 59.4% in secondary

education and 27.8% (18.7% of which is for formal education) in higher education (DPT, 2001, p. 87).

Education has been given priority since the foundation of the Turkish Republic (1923), which is why improving the education system and teacher training are the main subjects, never lose their importance and are always put on the agenda of the country. There is a great effort to increase the numbers of teachers and schools, and the schooling rates at all levels of education where the set targets are not achieved. In addition, for the purpose of increasing the quality of education, a school development model has been put into practice: schools are equipped with computers and other instructional technologies, more student-centered instruction has been initiated and in-service training programs have been provided for teachers. The Ministry of National Education is working very hard to expand these services. However, it has to be accepted that there is still a lot to be done and to achieve in this sense.

Pre-service Training of Teachers

The teacher training system in Turkey has undergone quite important changes within the last 79 years, since the foundation of the Republic, and has reached the structure found today. As a result of those changes, today, all the teachers in schools at all levels of education are trained through degree programs at the higher education institutions. To become a pre-school, a primary school or a vocational and technical school teacher, a 4-year education at the undergraduate level is required. This task has mainly been given to the faculties of education within the universities. As a recent development, since 1999, a Master's degree in education is required to become a high school teacher and these teachers are trained at graduate schools.

There are 78 faculties of education in Turkey: 57 of them general faculties of education, and 21 of them faculties of vocational and technical education. In order to get a degree in pre-school or primary education, a minimum of 144 credits is required. A pre-service training program includes courses on the teaching profession, general culture courses and courses on the students' teaching subjects. Theoretical courses are supported with observations and teaching practices at schools. On the other hand, graduate schools and faculties of education cooperate in order to train subject teachers for high schools. University graduates of related departments with adequate curricula have to attend a Master of Education degree program for three semesters if they wish to become subject teachers in high schools. A graduate program comprises 45 credits, including courses on the teaching profession, and observations and teaching practices in high schools.

Other models are also used to train teachers in order to solve the teacher shortage problem in selected subjects. For example, in 2000, the

need for pre-school and English teachers could not be met via regular undergraduate programs. The Ministry of National Education asked Anadolu University, an expert in distance education, to train pre-school and English teachers. A model for this purpose was developed and a curriculum was agreed, based on a semi-distance education approach. Currently, 17,923 students are enrolled in these two 4-year degree programs.

Legislation on the In-service Training of Teachers

It is accepted in Turkey that the in-service training of teachers is just as important as pre-service training. Thus, arrangements have been made to construct the legal bases of the in-service training of teachers.

Teachers are obliged to attend in-service training programs either at home or abroad by laws such as the Civil Servants' Law No. 657 (Devlet Memurlari Kanunu, 1965, a.214) and the National Education Principal Law No.1739 (Milli Egitem Temel Kanunu, 1973, a.48). According to these laws, the In-service Training Department of the Ministry of National Education is responsible for the in-service training of teachers. On the other hand, the Higher Education Institutions' Organisation Law No. 2809 (1983, a.5) assigns universities to offer in-service training to teachers.

Some regulations were made in agreement with the main laws mentioned above in order to plan and carry out the in-service training of teachers: Regulation of Civil Servants' Foreign Languages Centre (MEB, 1974), Regulation on Raising Teachers through In-service Training (MEB, 1976), Regulation on Organisation and Administration of the In-service Training Department (MEB, 1977), Regulation of Teacher Training Centres of the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 1980), In-service Training Regulation of the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 1994), Regulation on Training of Civil Servant Candidates of the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 1995).

Chief Events in In-service Training of Teachers

The in-service training of teachers at the pre-school, primary and secondary education levels has been carried out by the In-service Training Department since 1960. Since then, there have been significant initiations, changes and improvements in terms of quantity and quality in in-service training. The following developments have taken place since 1960.

The Bureau of Teacher Training on the Job (1960), currently known as the In-service Training Department (1975), was founded to provide in-service training to teachers and other personnel employed by the Ministry of National Education. The In-service Training Department has been planning and regulating in-service training programs for all teachers,

at different levels, teaching different subjects and for different lengths of time throughout the country. The department decides on program locations, trainees and course instructors. The department also provides in-service training opportunities abroad in fields or subjects of need. In addition to these services, the department publishes materials for in-service training purposes (MEB, 1977; MEB, 1994). The In-service Training Department with its 51 employees with different backgrounds (HEDB, 2002) is a unit that endeavours to meet the in-service training needs of teachers.

In-service training institutes, whose sole function is to provide in-service training, were initiated by the Ministry of National Education. There are six institutes of this kind, which have been functioning since 1982 (MEGSEB, 1988, p. 12). These institutes are located in different parts of the country: Ankara, Izmir-Bornova, Icel, Aksaray, Hatay-Belen-Guzelyayla and Yalova-Esenkoy. They provide reasonable accommodation and training facilities to trainees. In these institutes, in-service training programs are implemented throughout the year for local teachers and teachers from all over Turkey.

With the 'school development model', the functionality and the meaningfulness of in-service training from the perspective of teachers have been increased. In 1992, the 'laboratory schools model' (MEB, 1999a) was implemented in order to improve the quality of education, as well as student success in 147 primary schools and in 61 high schools, totalling 208 schools. This is a school model that believes in total quality, applies a student-centered education program and reflects technological advances. Depending on the results of the application in these 208 laboratory schools, it has been agreed that this application will be extended as a school development model to all schools in primary and secondary education (MEB, 2001b, p. vi). In the school development model, in-service training is compulsory for teachers, as well as school administrators and other staff members. In-service training is especially important in the maintenance of continuous professional development. Hence, in-service training constitutes one of the 13 basic principles of the laboratory school model (MEB, 1999a, p. 124). Consequently, this has led to the in-service training of teachers both at primary and high schools becoming an integral part of professional development.

The increased cooperation between the Ministry of National Education and the universities has resulted in an increase in the variety, number and quality of in-service training programs. The responsibility for teacher training was taken from the teacher training institutes, which were once affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, and given to the universities, which in turn resulted in the foundation of faculties of education in many universities. Consequently, it has increased the cooperation between the Ministry of National Education and the universities with regard to teacher qualifications and the pre-service

training of teachers. This cooperation has eventually been extended to cover the in-service training of teachers. Also, conferences, seminars, courses, certificate programs, bachelor's degree completion programs and graduate programs have been implemented by the faculties of education to meet the in-service training needs of teachers at work. These in-service training activities still continue to expand.

The Ministry of National Education has given special importance to the probationary training of teachers recruited and for new teachers, and a 1-year in-service training program called the 'probationary training program' has been put into practice. The probationary training program (MEB, 1995) consists of three sub-programs: basic training, preparatory training and practical training. The basic training program lasts 50 teaching hours and covers subjects related to civil services. The preparatory training program, which is a 110-hour program, comprises information on the organisation of the Ministry of National Education, laws and regulations with regard to education and duties of teachers. The practical training program, a 220-hour program, has been designed to provide teacher candidates professional practicum. The program requires each teacher candidate to receive teaching practice at the appointed school under the guidance of an experienced teacher. Thus, the probationary training program may be defined as an intensive and important in-service training program to prepare teachers for the job. This program was started in 1995 and up to 2001, 263,847 new teachers were trained and appointed to schools (MEB, 1999b, 2001a).

The Ministry of National Education has made in-service training attendance compulsory for the candidates who wish to be appointed as school administrators, educational administrators and primary education inspectors. Since 1998, teachers who would like to be school administrators are subjected to a selection test and if successful they have to attend a 120-hour in-service training program about school administration issues (MEB, 1998a). In 1998, for instance, 1553 teachers who passed the selection test were appointed as school administrators after completing the 120-hour in-service training program (MEB, 1999b, p. 58). Also, school administrators, administrators who will work in the central organisation of the Ministry of National Education, as well as those in the provinces have to attend in-service training programs of varying intensity prior to their first appointments and promotions depending on their previous education (MEB, 1998b). On the other hand, primary education assistant inspectors may be promoted to become inspectors after completing a 240-1200-hour program depending on their previous education (MEB, 1999c). Even though the above-mentioned procedures are very recent, the in-service training aspect to train and appoint administrators of all kinds and levels within the organisation of the Turkish education system has proved itself as an important and a valuable measure.

Teachers who work in primary schools and high schools have been given the opportunity to receive higher education degrees through distance education as in-service training in a short period of time. The National Education Principal Law (Milli Egitim Temel Kanunu, 1973) made it compulsory for teachers at every level of education to have higher education so as to increase the quality of teachers and education. Hence, in the 1980s, 130,000 grade teachers at primary schools who had teaching qualifications through training at the secondary education level needed higher education urgently. To meet this need in the short term, the use of distance education was considered. As a result, the Ministry of National Education cooperated with Anadolu University, and a 2-year higher education, associate degree program was initiated in the 1985-86 academic year by the Open Education Faculty of Anadolu University. Within 4 years, 117,618 grade teachers completed the program successfully without leaving their teaching duties (Ozer, 1991). In addition to this associate degree program, undergraduate completion programs were initiated for subject teachers, who already had 2- or 3-year higher education previously, at primary and secondary schools in the 1990-91 academic year. A total of 24,097 teachers successfully completed these 1-year programs in 12 subject areas within 4 years via distance education (AOF, 2002). The latest program, which began in the 1998-99 academic year, was a 2-year completion program for grade teachers at primary schools via distance education who had associate degrees. Within 3 years, 17,310 teachers received BA degrees (AOF, 2002). All these distance education programs were, in fact, in-service training programs. These programs provided teachers working in primary and high schools with the opportunity either to receive higher education or complete their higher education on the job. Consequently, their professional skills and thus their qualifications as teachers were improved.

The in-service training for teachers that was once offered only centrally was subsequently arranged locally also. Due to the increases in the number of teachers and the in-service training needs of these teachers within particular years, the In-service Training Department failed to meet the expected in-service training needs that were only provided centrally. To solve this problem, a new arrangement was made. National Education Directorates in provinces were given authorisation to prepare and administer in-service training programs locally (MEB, 1993, 1994). As a result of this arrangement, more teachers had the opportunity to receive more in-service training services. To give an example, the number of in-service training programs organised in 1990 was 373 and the number of teachers attending these programs was 40,881. However, in 2000, the number of programs rose to 6571 and the number of teachers attending these courses went up to 312,009 (HEDB, 2002). To sum up, the number of programs increased eighteenfold, while the number of

teachers who attended the programs grew eightfold. Allowing local in-service training not only served as a means of increasing the number of programs and trainees, but also the quality of in-service training improved as the real needs of teachers could be considered.

In-service Training Activities in 2000

In-service training activities designed to meet the needs of pre-school, primary and high school teachers increased in number and varied in range in terms of programs provided and included local initiatives, as well as central organisations. To give a better perspective of in-service training services provided for teachers in the Turkish education system, a complete year's activity details are gathered and summarised below. In order to achieve this goal, data from the most complete and recent year are gathered. The following details are of the in-service training activities arranged around the country for teachers by In-service Training Department in 2000.

In 2000, of the 6571 in-service training programs, 445 programs were organised centrally and 6126 programs were arranged locally. A total of 23,583 teachers attended the programs arranged centrally and 288,426 teachers attended the programs organised locally, totalling 312,009 trainees (HEDB, 2002).

In-service training programs held in 2000 were organised mostly as short-term courses and seminars. The subjects included foreign language teaching methods, computer and Internet applications, total quality management in education, communication and quality development, curriculum development and evaluation, foreign languages, and workshop and laboratory organisation. The courses and seminars organised most frequently were on computer and Internet applications, foreign language teaching methods, and total quality management in education (MEB, 2000a, p. 175). Other than the courses and seminars, in 2000 a university degree completion program and a Master's degree program were pursued (MEB, 2000b).

The duration of the programs organised in 2000 varied from 1 day to 1 year. Most of the programs lasted between 5 and 12 days. The programs were planned to cover the whole year; however, most of them took place during the summer months, i.e. 44 courses in June and 74 in July (MEB, 2000b).

In organising and implementing in-service training programs, the Ministry of National Education and its units all over the country cooperated with institutions such as the Higher Education Council (YOK), universities, the Public Administration Institute for Turkey and the Middle East (TODAIE), the National Productivity Center (MPM), the Turkish Institute for Industrial Management (TUSSIDE), the Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Council (TUBITAK), the International

Cooperation Agency (TIKA), Ataturk Culture, Language and History Institution, and the Foreign Language Center for Civil Servants. The programs were organised in in-service training institutes, teachers' guest houses, hotel management and tourism vocational high schools and boarding schools (MEB, 2000a, p. 175).

Teacher Interest in In-service Training

There is no doubt that there are quite a number of factors in bringing expected benefits from in-service training. However, the most important factor of all is probably the needs, interests and attitudes of the teachers about professional development and in-service training. That is to say, only when teachers feel the need for professional development or in-service training, and when they are willing to attend in-service training activities, may the in-service training be effective.

In a survey designed to determine the teachers' approach to professional development (Ozer, 2001), it was found that the majority of the teachers (72.8%) stated that they felt the need for professional development 'very much'. The teachers declared that they felt this need especially 'to enrich their views and understanding on general education' (35.4%), 'to renew and refresh their knowledge in their specific teaching fields' (29.3%), 'to increase their professional respect and satisfaction' (16.2%) and 'to improve their knowledge and skills in methodology' (14.3%). However, only a small number of teachers (31.3%) declared that they were willing to attend the in-service training programs organised for them. The rest of the teachers (68.7%) stated that they were not willing to attend such programs. Ozer (2001) explained this contradictory result by relating this issue with the obstacles and problems teachers consider to be preventative for their professional development. The main obstacles that the teachers declared they encountered were:

- not being able to afford to buy and read the publications on the profession (72.5%);
- lack of motivational factors for professional development (55%);
- lack of activities in schools for professional development (47.6%);
- omitting to ask for teachers' opinions before deciding on subjects and contents for in-service training programs (42.3%);
- not being able to choose the programs that teachers wish to attend (30.5%);
- not considering teacher needs in selecting trainees for the programs (29.1%);
- lack of qualified instructors in the programs (27.9%);
- accommodation and dining problems in the places where in-service training activities take place (27.5%);
- in-service training was costly for teachers (26.4%).

Conclusion

In Turkey, the in-service training of teachers has received and continues to receive constant attention. Since the 1960s, this issue has been a part of the development plans and the government programs. In addition, legal arrangements have been made, the problems have been discussed by the officials and field authorities, and various implementations have taken place. However, today, there are still a lot of problems to be solved about the in-service training of teachers. In order to make the in-service training system of teachers more functional, to increase the quantity and quality of the activities, and to obtain the benefits expected from the activities in Turkey, some measures need to be taken.

- The organisational structure (Beduk, 1997) and the permanent staff of the in-service training system are not sufficient to carry out its functions effectively. To solve this problem, the In-service Training Department, which is responsible for the in-service training of teachers, should become a more practical organisation with its central and local units. Both central and local units of the organisation should be supplied with the necessary personnel and equipment, as well as finances. The staff in those units should be increased in number and have the competencies to plan, administer and implement in-service training programs by using scientific methods. The universities', especially the education faculties' support should be provided for training the in-service training staff – administrators, trainers and specialists. This, of course, requires increasing the cooperation between the Ministry of National Education and schools and universities.
- Not needs, but subjectivity has been used as the criterion in selecting the teachers who will attend in-service training programs (Sahin, 1996; Ozer, 2001). Scientific research instruments and methods are not employed in assessing the in-service training needs of teachers (Sahin, 1996; Beduk, 1997; Taymaz et al, 1997). In order to plan and implement effective programs, scientific methods should be used for assessing the training needs, selecting the trainees and evaluating the programs. For this purpose, specialists are needed to work in the in-service training units of the organisation.
- The education system lacks motivational factors that persuade teachers to attend in-service training activities (Beduk, 1997; Taymaz et al, 1997; Ozer, 2001). To make teachers interested in continuous professional development and increase their attendance at in-service training, some motivating elements should be added to the system. Possibly, teachers may earn certain credits in the in-service training programs, and these may help teachers to be promoted through requiring certain standards for the programs. Apart from this, in-service training activities may well become a part of the teacher's

working schedule at school. In other words, the teachers may spend certain working hours in a week on in-service training instead of teaching students.

- The administrators of schools and other education institutions consider in-service training unimportant and consequently do not give it proper attention (Taymaz et al, 1997; Buluc, 1998). This fact has caused considerable limitations to the in-service training of teachers. To overcome this problem, school administrators should be trained and persuaded about in-service training through seminars, and be helped to gain positive attitudes towards it. Also, they should especially be informed about the objectives, content and implementation of school-based in-service training.
- The level of meeting the training and social needs of trainees in some places where in-service training programs are implemented is low (Sahin, 1996; Ozer, 2001). Therefore, the places chosen for in-service training, excluding in-service training institutes, should be supplied with essential equipment and learning materials. On the other hand, they should be suitable for trainees as adults. The accommodation and food should be of a high quality, and some social activities could be organised for teachers during the in-service training programs.
- It is rather difficult to provide continuous and face-to-face in-service training for all teachers because there are a great number of teachers at schools, and financial means for the in-service training of teachers are insufficient (Ozer, 1990; Beduk, 1997; Taymaz et al, 1997). Therefore, the channels for the in-service training of teachers should be increased. For this purpose, as an alternative, a distance education approach could be used (Ozer, 1990). Different kinds of programs with different purposes could be implemented through the Internet, radio, television and printed materials. The number of periodicals and publications could be increased; moreover, these materials could be distributed to all teachers.

Correspondence

Dr Bekir Ozer, Anadolu University Faculty of Education Department of Educational Sciences, 26470 Eskisehir, Turkey (bozer@anadolu.edu.tr).

Note

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