Turkish in-service and pre-service EFL teachers' views on professional development and related activities

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ABSTRACT

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the issue of teacher professional development in the EFL context. However, there have been relatively limited studies regarding the comparison of in-service and pre-service teachers' perceptions of professional development. This study, therefore, aims to present in-service and pre-service teachers' perceptions of some professional development activities and to investigate whether differences exist between these two groups regarding their attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions. The participants of the study consisted of six in-service and six pre-service EFL teachers from a state university in Turkey, all of whom participated in the study voluntarily. The participants were e-mailed and asked about their beliefs about the potential contribution, necessity, and future intention to use professional development activities. Their responses were analyzed by content analysis. The findings indicate that both groups of teachers think positively about professional development and professional development activities and are willing to pursue professional development.

Introduction

Teacher professional development has been the focus of a lot of research articles, and EFL contexts are no exception to that. To start with, Özbilgin et al. (2016) investigated how 12 Cypriot EFL teachers viewed professional development and what action they took to keep their teaching skills up-to-date. The researchers concluded that the participants' awareness of professional development was high and that they can pursue their development should the opportunities provided by the ministry of education or school administrations fall short. In a similar vein, Topkaraoğlu (2017) made an effort to scrutinize how EFL teachers perceived professional development activities and to find out the factors that were so-called obstacles for the participants of his study. Similar to Özbilgin et al. (2016), Topkaraoğlu (2017) concluded by articulating that tertiary level EFL practitioners could provide methods for their professional development, but both groups of participants wished they were equipped with these through the governing bodies. Although it was carried out in an Iranian high school context, Alibakhshi and Dehvari's (2015) study presents similar voices as regards EFL teachers and their perceptions

about professional development. Namely, Alibakhshi and Dehvari (2015) reported that the participants of their study believed professional development to be an ongoing process, that they can hone their skills while performing their posts, and that they were eager to attend workshops and formal education if provided.

In a like manner, after an immersion professional development program, Novozhenina, and López Pinzón (2018) collected the views of their participants, 35 in-service EFL teachers in Colombia who expressed few contributions of the project, and stated that the more frequently practitioners are provided with training programs, the better the results will be in the long run. Another study on the perceptions of EFL teachers was carried out by Babanoğlu and Yardimci (2017). The researchers' primary aim was to see whether there was a difference between the ways state and private school EFL teachers think of professional development, and they found that there was a significant difference when those practitioners had to cater their journey of professional development. That is to say, while teachers working in state schools anticipated professional development programs to be designed, planned, and delivered to them via third parties, teachers working for private schools were reported to be more autonomous, looking for ways to improve themselves even in the absence of formal training sessions. Şener and Çokçalışkan (2017) also investigated how Turkish EFL teachers in different stages of their careers perceived professional development, and what they found seems to be in line with the previous studies in respect to the participants' awareness about professional development. However, Şener and Çokçalışkan (2017) also asserted that teachers at different stages of their careers perceived the concept of professional development differently; practitioners in the mature stage, for example, counted more on their experience and tended to attend fewer trainings and seminars as those did not rank among their priorities now. One other study carried out by Meng and Tajaroensuk (2013) focused on the problems tertiary in-service EFL teachers face while they are trying to develop professionally. The participants, 55 EFL teachers at Guiyang University, China, stated that the activities/programs being disconnected from the real teaching environment, their irregular distribution, the unsustainable nature of most of those activities, and the heavy workload teachers have were the main factors that the participants viewed as obstacles against their desire to continue to develop professionally.

There seems to be an abundance of studies available on the professional development of EFL teachers (Aghabarari, & Rahimi, 2020; Cinkara, & Arslan, 2017; Cirocki, & Farrell, 2019; Önkol, 2011); however, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, not many of the articles compared what in-service and pre-service teachers thought about professional development in general; namely, whether they had utilized any professional development initiatives on their own, and how, if at all, they would continue to try to develop professionally. The researcher, therefore, decided to investigate the concept from an EFL tertiary school and ELT departmental context. In-service teachers and pre-service EFL teachers were interviewed to find answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference between the perceptions of in-service EFL teachers and pre-service EFL teachers in terms of the following as regards professional development:
   a. general perceptions
   b. workshops
   c. self-monitoring/ self-observation

d. teacher support groups

e. teaching journals

f. peer observation

g. teacher portfolios

h. peer coaching

i. action research

2. What methods do in-service EFL teachers and pre-service EFL teachers intend to use for their professional development in the future?

Literature Review

Professional development has been defined in various ways in educational contexts. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) assert that the process that teachers take part in and the activities that they employ to ameliorate their teaching practices, update their knowledge about teaching, and improve their students' learning are all gathered under the term professional development. Similarly, Parpucu (2019) states that the goal of professional development is to improve and modernize teachers' knowledge of teaching and their teaching-related skills. Additionally, Smith and O'Day (1991) state that professional development is considered an essential mechanism for deepening teachers' content knowledge and developing their teaching practices. They also add that professional development could be a cornerstone of systemic reform efforts designed to increase teachers' capacity to teach to high standards. Hassel (1999) defines it as the process of improving the skills and competencies teachers need to obtain desirable educational results for students. As reported in the 2015 UNESCO report:

> "An education system is only as good as its teachers. Teachers are essential to universal and quality education for all: they are central to shaping the minds and attitudes of the coming generations to deal with new global challenges and opportunities. Innovative, inclusive, and results-focused teaching is crucial … if we are to provide the best possible opportunities for millions of children, youth, and adults worldwide." (UNESCO, 2015, p. 3)

Professional development is a fundamental property for the improvement of the skills of a teacher, the standards of the school they work in, and the success of the learners (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2014). As such, Mizell (2010) asserts that teacher professional development benefits teachers in that they learn new knowledge and skills; use in class what they have learnt from their participation, and increase their students' learning through the new approach of teaching leadership that they have been immersed with. To support this claim, Borko (2004), Fullan et al. (2006), Nye et al. (2004), and Yoon et al. (2007) emphasize that teachers are the most potent agents that contribute to students' success in a school environment. However, for years, it has been the administrators or policymakers who have decided on what professional development activities teachers should engage in, an attitude stemming from the popular "one-size-fits-all" belief (Pitsoe & Letseka, 2014, p.373). In a like manner, the one-size-fits-all approach is assumed to ignore teachers' previous experiences and knowledge, and it often fails to recognize the requirements of the practitioners' local teaching contexts (Galaczi et al., 2017).

It has been observed that the students of today demand to be taught in more contemporary and personalized ways (Archibald et al., 2011). The learning that the students of the 21st century await seems to be more complex and more comprehensive than before (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Hence, the quality of teaching is an issue to scrutinize and elaborate on for numerous researchers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Gore et al., 2017). Bellibas, and Gumus (2016), just like Stronge et al. (2007), claim that teacher quality and student achievement are interwoven. Similarly, Supovitz and Turner (2000) claim that the development of the staff and students of a school are indispensable from each other; thus, the higher the quality of the teachers' professional development is, the better the students' achievement will be.

There are various types of activities to contribute to language teachers' professional growth such as workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, keeping teaching journals, peer observation, teacher portfolios, peer coaching, and action research (Richards & Farrell, 2005). It has been repeated over the literature that using only one will never be enough. Possibly due to this reason, Önkol (2011) made an effort to depict what instructors and administrators at a tertiary EFL setting in Turkey understood by the term "professional development," and the professional development methods suggested by Richards and Farrell (2005) above. Önkol's (2011) study concludes that the participants preferred collaborative activities to individual ones. Examining the professional development activities more in detail, Yoon et al. (2007) say that workshops have an abysmal track for changing teacher practice and student achievement. They found that one-shot workshops had no effect on student achievement in the same study. Self-monitoring, also known as micro-teaching, through which teachers observe themselves to obtain a deeper understanding of their behaviors and their consequences on behalf of the students (Kpanja, 2001) leaves others out; it gives teachers the chance to reflect on their actions, and it does not require much of an extra effort (Kalis et al., 2007).

In addition, teacher support groups, through which teachers share some knowledge or experience, would offer practitioners a chance to review and reflect on teaching, to develop materials and research projects, to teach more effectively, to feel more motivated towards the job, to have a greater awareness, to feel less isolated, to enhance self-confidence and to discuss ways of teaching learning strategies (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Another activity to improve oneself in teaching is to keep a teaching journal through which the teacher reflects their feelings and observations throughout that day's teaching. Using a journal "allows us the opportunity to step back from the action to record our impressions, feelings and thoughts" (Holly, 2002, p.5). Similarly, teaching journals enhance the teacher the chance to reflect on the events and ideas later, and to think deeply about teaching (Richards, et al., 1994).

Peer observation may also be a helpful tool to help teachers improve their teaching practice. It may provide an opportunity for teachers to see different teaching styles and to develop collegiality (Lakshmi, 2014; Peel, 2005). Through peer observation, teachers collaborate and support each other mutually by going over and by exchanging ideas about the lesson they observed; which might all lead to a reflection of every kind of interaction that took place throughout the lesson and the comment part afterwards (Bell, 2005).

Keeping teacher portfolios, documents that prove the accomplishments one has gained as a teacher (Seldin, 2006), has been on the rise as another professional development activity.

Along with describing one's teaching accomplishments and documenting their teaching effectiveness, teacher portfolios can serve as a source of review and reflection, and they can create opportunities for collaboration with other teachers. (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Peer coaching helps teachers examine what they have been doing, what they have learnt and how they feel about it along with the chance to observe another teacher and do the same for them. Since all the issues are evaluated with a "peer", peer coaching is less stressful but more fruitful. Peer coaching makes it possible to foster a deeper learning and a much more integrative and applied understanding of learning and development, according to Schön (1991), because learners must "reflect-in-action" and "reflect-about action." What gives peers that chance is the fact that they are sharing an atmosphere in which they feel secure, away from the pressure of a manager (Schön, 1991). Moreover, Showers and Joyce (1996) state that teachers who have a coaching relationship practice new skills and strategies more frequently and apply them more appropriately compared to those who prefer to work alone.

Another useful and popular professional development activity is action research. It is an efficient tool to help teachers overcome their problems and enhance teaching and learning practices (Deghan, & Sahragard, 2015). It is very helpful since it addresses a local problem or issue, which means that the teacher can research an issue in his classroom without worrying about making generalizations. Action research offers many benefits for educators committed to a critical, investigative process of improving school practice, policy, or culture (Hine & Lavery, 2014). It enables researchers to develop a systematic, inquiring approach toward their practices (Frabutt et al., 2008). Teachers could also feel more confident, connected to their students, more interested in research, and more valued while and after conducting action research (Edwards, 2016).

Methodology

As qualitative research enables researchers to understand "certain attitudes, trends or opinions of a population" (Jackson et al., 2007, p. 22), and since the researcher aimed to define the participants' perceptions and attitudes pertaining to professional development, a descriptive qualitative study design was employed throughout the current study. To elaborate, the randomly chosen participants were asked the same set of questions via e-mail, and because the research population was relatively small compared to those of quantitative studies (Fraenkel et al., 1993; Vaismoradi et al., 2013), a qualitative research design was employed. The responses of the participants were analyzed through the content analysis method employed by Creswell (2012).

Participants

Twelve participants constitute the research population of this study. The first group of participants consists of six instructors, three females and three males, who have been teaching English at Gaziantep University School of Foreign Languages. All instructors have a teaching experience of a minimum of four years. The youngest of the instructors was 28 years old, and the most experienced instructor was 41 years old.

The second group of participants consists of six fourth-year ELT students from Gaziantep University Faculty of Education. Three of the pre-service teachers were female, and the other

three were male. Four of the students were 21 years old and two of them were 22. All of the participants expressed their consent to take part in the study verbally.

Data collection tools

The data in this study were collected through e-mails, which are reported to provide the time and logistics needed both on the researcher's and the participants' side.

Data collection and data analysis

Necessary permission was taken from the administration of the School of Foreign Languages of Gaziantep University and Education Faculty, Department of English Language Teaching. The participants were asked to answer the questions which were sent to them via e-mail. The minimum word count on the entries to the interview questions was 30 words and the maximum response consisted of 129 words.

To identify in-service teachers' and pre-service teachers' perceptions of professional development activities that contributed to their learning and to get a general picture of how they intend to continue with their professional development, a qualitative research design was employed in this study. Based on constant reading from the relevant literature, the researcher decided on using the list of professional development activities documented by Richards and Farrell (2005) and asked the participants their general perceptions about those activities. The data collected was analyzed through the qualitative content analysis scheme belonging to Creswell (2012). The data analysis started with the researcher reading the data several times and becoming familiar with the data. Next, the researcher started coding the data, putting the themes that were assumed to share common meanings in the same category (Weber, 1990). For the trustworthiness of the analysis, the researcher then asked a colleague with a doctorate degree in ELT to analyze the data for reliability and validity purposes. Once the two coders reached a consensus on the coded items, the irrelevant parts were discarded and the final version of the codes was given to another expert in the field, whose coding was taken as the basis in the current research.

Findings

To see whether there was a difference between in-service and pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions about professional development and to see what methods, if any, they were planning to pursue in the future, the data that were collected through the e-mails were scrutinized by content analysis. The findings and the relevant themes are presented as follows:

Findings for Research Question 1a) General perceptions regarding professional development

Table 1. *Views about professional development*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Awareness	developing an understanding of their profession, skills and abilities	Awareness	understanding that university education is not enough; performing extra studies; following innovations
Improvement	gaining a wider perspective; continuing to learn; making a conscious effort; improving skills and knowledge on profession	Improvement	ongoing, not stopping improvement; lifelong learning; improving skills and knowledge on profession
Role modelling	being a role model for students		

The categories and themes that emerged for both in-service teachers and pre-service teachers about the term professional development can be seen in Table 1. Except for one category, the two categories of awareness and improvement were common for both groups.

For the group of in-service teachers, professional development meant improving one's abilities and skills in teaching. They also agreed on the continuing or ongoing quality of professional development, and they thought that they could have wider perspectives via professional development. In addition, they added that through professional development, teachers could provide good role models for their students. One of the in-service teachers expressed his ideas as follows:

> "*To me, a teacher must continue his/her education all through his teaching experience as a teacher. If a teacher stops learning new things, methods, techniques, etc., he/she can't teach his/her students anything professionally. Teacher development is something beyond simple in-service workshops. Teachers themselves should seek out professional development opportunities which are ongoing and aligned with standards and assessments. In other words, continue learning as well as teaching. By this way, you could be a role model for your students and they are taught how to learn" (IsT2)*

Similarly, the pre-service teachers thought that professional development was about continuing to improve as a teacher while performing the job. It could be said that the pre-service teachers gained an awareness and understanding about learning to be an ongoing process. To them, professional development also meant to follow the latest trends and innovations in the field, as to be seen in the following excerpts:

> *"Learning is an ongoing process. Teachers don't stop learning new things after being teacher. They go on learning to improve themselves." (PsT2)*
> *"Professional development is an extra study that people do. It is extra but it is really necessary to do their work successfully. People read new articles and news about their field, follow the innovations and form their working style according to those innovations. They don't think that the education taken in the university is enough and they want to go on learning throughout their life." (PsT5)*

Findings for Research Question 1b) Contributions of Workshops

Table 2. *Contributions of workshops*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Improvement	providing chances for innovation; refreshing their knowledge related with their field	Improvement	learning about new methods, techniques and changes; keeping knowledge fresh
Collaboration	opportunities to share and exchange ideas; being able to see what others do	Collaboration	opportunities to interact and share work and ideas
		Awareness	gaining an awareness and criticizing themselves and/ or friends; seeing/ realizing their own mistakes

As regards workshops, the common categories that emerged for both groups of teachers were improvement and collaboration as can be seen in Table 2. To start with, both sides mentioned improvement as workshops helped teachers learn about innovations in pedagogical approaches. Both the in-service and pre-service teachers also asserted that workshops could endow them with chances to share knowledge and exchange ideas with colleagues.

> *"Professional development is to continue learning about your profession via in-job training, seminars and some other ways that help you improve your knowledge on your profession and have a wider perspective. (IsT5)*
> *"When teachers attend workshops, they keep their knowledge fresh. They learn the changes and apply these changes to their work. Also, they share their work and ideas with their colleagues". (PsT5)*

The category of awareness, on the other hand, emerged only for the pre-service teachers, who stated that workshops granted teachers the chance to criticize themselves or other teachers thanks to the learning that took place during the workshops. Workshops also provided teachers the opportunity of seeing their weaknesses, the pre-service teachers thought.

> *"They contribute to teachers in these ways: Teachers can see their mistakes in the teaching process and try to correct them. If there are new methods of teaching, they can be acknowledged via these workshops."*
> *(PsT3)*

Findings for Research Question 1c) Self- monitoring / self- observation

Table 3. *Views about self-monitoring*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Awareness	evaluating weak sides; analyzing deficiencies; finding solutions	Awareness	seeing/realizing and correcting students' and own mistakes; realizing own weaknesses empathizing with students
Objectivity	evaluating oneself without being judged no exaggeration facing pluses and minuses	Improvement	learning about students' needs criticizing themselves deciding on new methods; learning about time management
Improvement	developing oneself safely		

As seen in Table 3, the in-service teachers agreed on self-monitoring being a chance for awareness, objectivity, and improvement. According to them, self-monitoring is a tool to help a teacher analyze their teaching skills, abilities, and weaknesses; evaluate themselves as teachers and finding remedies in case of weaknesses. They also stated that self-monitoring is an unbiased way of evaluating themselves. The pre-service teachers foregrounded the category of awareness as a contribution of self-monitoring. To elaborate, the pre-service teachers described self-monitoring as a venue to realize their own mistakes as teachers along with their students' mistakes. To them, self-monitoring also gave them the chance to realize their liabilities, and it additionally endowed them with the power to empathize with their students, which leads them to change their teaching style accordingly.

The following excerpt shows how one of the in-service teachers thinks about self-monitoring:

> *"Evaluating or being evaluated for his/her weak sides in the profession is one of the hardest things for a teacher that represents authority in the classroom. Self-observation is one of the safest ways a teacher can use to analyze his/her skills and abilities for the profession and provides a great opportunity for professional development without being judged by others. Being appreciated is a thing that every professional wishes, hopes, even craves in some cases, but few people can stand to be told the weaknesses of himself/herself. At that point self-monitoring becomes the best approach to develop yourself safely." (IsT1)*

Another in-service teacher elaborates on this issue as follows:

> *"Nobody, I believe, is the one he sees himself. We never want to accept our deficiencies and imperfections both in our character and in our profession. We tend to assume ourselves as the best. May be that is true to some extent because I believe most of us try to do the best and to be the best, but, on the other hand it is not sensible to ignore the reality. If we assume ourselves as perfect, we can never have a chance to develop professionally and to get closer to the perfect. On that point it would be really useful to record our classes to watch our teaching way. I believe it is one of the best ways to analyze the deficiencies in our teaching methods." (IsT4)*

One of the pre-service teachers expressed his ideas as follows:

> *"I think when a teacher makes self-monitoring; he can be able to see what mistake he has made, whether he could down himself to the age of students and whether he could suitably give instructions considering their proficiency levels. He can learn their behaviors and he can get to know them easily. This makes the teacher more professionally developed in that he knows his students and he can act and prepare activities that may be useful for all of them." (PsT6)*

Findings for Research Question 1d) Teacher support groups

Table 4. *Views about teacher support groups*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Awareness	seeing strengths and weaknesses; becoming aware of other people's perspectives;	Awareness	learning about different perspectives; realizing weaknesses; correcting own mistakes; beneficial results
Collaboration	sharing ideas; synergy; seeing different methods; motivating themselves	Improvement	developing effectiveness; gaining motivation; positive reinforcement; learning from human resources
		Collaboration	sharing experiences; finding solutions as a group

Table 4 shows that both groups of the participants believed that teacher support groups would cause awareness about their post as teachers and that there was going to be an air of collaboration. The in-service teachers, for example, agreed that teacher support groups help a teacher develop professionally since when teachers come together, they can help each other, share ideas, see and overcome their weaknesses and collaborate. However, they added that teachers in the teacher support group must be well-equipped and share similar personality traits.

> *"Well, I guess, it depends on the teacher's personality because while some people love to be in a group as they are social and outgoing, some others are keen on working alone as they are more introverted. Then, I don't think it is a good idea to push people to collaborate and work in a group. If someone loves to work alone and he believes he can do better a job alone, then we must give him that freedom. I do not have the opinion that working in a group is always effective for everybody. (IsT4)*
> *"It may be useful if they are both well-equipped teachers. By sharing their experiences and materials, they can create different variations for the same class. On the other hand, if they are working on different skills, such collaboration could create synergy. Teaching methods would show a difference so that the students could benefit more. Teachers could also motivate themselves better in group work." (IsT6)*

In a like manner, the pre-service teachers showed that they had some awareness about teacher support groups. Teachers who were part of such groups could see different perspectives and become aware of their assets and liabilities. In addition, they thought that teachers could become more motivated and effective via teacher support groups, and they could collaborate and benefit from each other's experiences.

> *"Yes. Because colleagues have experiences. We can benefit from their experiences. And a third person can see the events clearer than us." (PsT1)*

"Exactly they do. Taking help from one or more teachers, especially from a very experienced teacher is a useful way for teachers to develop themselves. Especially those who start their teaching career have so many difficulties as they cannot suitably manage the classroom and they will let their students control him. In a condition like that, support from another teacher will be needed. Teachers can tell their experiences and problems they have had in the class and discuss them to find a solution. They may not individually deal with them." (PsT6)

Findings for Research Question 1e) Teaching journals

Table 5. *Views about teaching journals*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Reflection	helping one improve in his/ her profession; minimizing the number of mistakes one makes; opportunity to identify the problems one lives in teaching his/ her classes	Awareness	having clear goals; seeing and correcting weaknesses; seeing accomplishments; seeing day-by-day improvement
		Improvement	becoming more planned; dealing better with problems; having a story to tell
Storing information	good place/ source to keep all the thing rather than in your memory; resource for methods	Guidance	preventing them from making the same mistakes again
Improvement	opportunity to get rid of waste practices; guide for the future		
Guidance	preventing them from making the same mistakes again		

The members of the group of in-service teachers stated that teaching journals could help them remember good and bad things, see their strong and weak sides, and prevent them from making the same mistakes. Two of the teachers added that teaching journals save time — they would not waste time on some useless activities or exercises if they kept track of their experiences.

"To tell the truth I have never kept one. Instead, I try to keep things in my memory but it will be good if you don't have any space to keep all the things in your memory. As you get older, you need to reset your memory." (IsT2)
"The biggest benefit of keeping a teaching journal is that it is the best reminder for us. As teachers, we have to meet and teach in various situations and sometimes we have to deal with problems. It is impossible to remember everything with enough details. A teaching journal might help us remember how we reacted in what situation and analyze it better. It may also become a resource for our teaching methods and strategies. Moreover, it might be guides for others." (IsT5)

For the pre-service teachers, teaching journals serve as a kind of a guide and a tool for development. A teaching journal is also an assistant in helping the pre-service teachers become aware of some points related to their goals, teaching styles, weaknesses, accomplishments, and daily progress.

"This will help teachers develop themselves as they can see, in a written form, how they are in teaching." (PsT4)

> *"If a teacher keeps a teaching journal, he\she can deal with the problems in a better way. It is the same in normal life. Sharing what you live in a day with someone is something helpful for people. Teachers write what they do on that day and in the following days they read that journal and they realize their mistakes. This is a good chance to make their work better." (PsT5)*

Findings for Research Question 1f) Peer observation

Table 6. *Views about peer observation*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Awareness	mutual trust between the observer and the teacher; realizing the necessity of being observed; becoming aware about one's own teaching thanks to the feedback	Awareness	seeing friend's mistakes and correcting them; becoming aware about one's own teaching thanks to the feedback
Collaboration	learning from each other; making comparisons	Collaboration	learning mutually; making comparisons
Reflection	seeing weak and strong sides; analyzing teaching methods; learning to see point of focus; seeing missed parts while teaching	Reflection	seeing weak and strong sides; analyzing teaching methods; learning new things; gaining new perspectives

As seen in Table 6, the categories that emerged from the ideas the participants had about the professional development tool of peer observation were the same for both groups. Namely, both the in-service teachers and the pre-service teachers showed signs of awareness, collaboration, and reflection as asides of peer observation. To illustrate, the in-service teachers expressed that they realized the necessity of regular observation and giving and receiving feedback; yet, they also emphasized that trust was an important component in such a professional activity. The in-service teachers also mentioned that they could learn from each other while observing one another, and they could see their strengths and weaknesses along with the parts they skipped while teaching. One in-service teacher expressed his ideas about peer observation as follows:

> *"While you are teaching you might be focusing on certain things and missing some other aspects. Therefore, a pair of extra eyes can view the whole session from a different perspective and give us useful feedback on things we have either missed or overlooked." (IsT3)*

Similarly, the pre-service teachers noted that peer observation would help them become aware of their teaching style along with that of their colleagues. One other contribution for the pre-service teachers was collaboration, through which they could learn reciprocally and make comparisons between teaching styles. Finally, just like the in-service teachers, the pre-service teachers stated that peer observation would serve like a mirror for both sides and that it would grant them the opportunity to learn about different approaches and teaching styles.

> *"Colleagues can direct us because they also face with same problems." (PsT1)*
> *"You can make use of peer observation in developing teaching styles of the teacher. Being observed and getting feedback from a trusted teacher can give us a new perspective on teaching." (PsT2)*

> *"The teacher can observe students and the teacher who is giving the lesson, and evaluate how the lesson was, what the advantages and disadvantages of activities done in the classroom, observe how the teacher responds students' reaction, mistakes, etc." (PsT4)*

Findings for Research Question 1g) Teacher portfolios

Table 7. *Views about teacher portfolios*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Improvement	being able to follow and continue with his/ her professional development; having a plan B; becoming more organized	Improvement	creating self-confidence; making progress; developing and clarifying teaching philosophy, methods & approaches; promotion in academic position; having a desire to develop teaching style; feedback for the future
Guidance	preventing from doing the same thing		
Reflection	identifying strengths and weaknesses		
		Reflection	seeing what and how one has taught; seeing one's own work and teaching style; seeing deficiencies and progress; assessing oneself

Table 7 shows that the emerging categories for the in-service and the pre-service teachers were slightly different as regards teacher portfolios. The in-service teachers thought of teacher portfolios as a chance to develop and guide themselves along with reminding their strengths and weaknesses. Although two of the in-service teachers mentioned that they have never seen or experienced teacher portfolios before, the remaining four teachers stated that teacher portfolios might give them a chance to review what they have done up to that day, reflect on their experiences and realize their strong and weak sides thanks to the materials/ documents they keep in that portfolio file.

> *"Certainly, yes. Keeping pictures, writings, photos, extra materials, and exercises always help a teacher. A teacher must bring something to use as ''plan B'' if his /her first plan fails." (IsT2)*
> *"Portfolios are helpful especially for being organized and they show the development and the process that we go through. They are also useful because they prevent us from redoing and re-preparing the same things." (IsT5)*

For the pre-service teachers, the categories that emerged were improvement and reflection. Namely, the pre-service teachers believed in the contribution of teacher portfolios in their long journey of professional development. They mainly stated that teacher portfolios can help them develop as they would increase their self-confidence, show them the progress they have made; help them develop their teaching and understanding of teaching; push them forward in academia; motivate them to renew their teaching styles; and be valuable feedback for their future performance. The pre-service teachers also believed that teacher portfolios could show

them what and how they taught something; what their strengths and weaknesses were, and thus, provide them a chance to evaluate their teaching, as can be seen in the following accounts:

> *"Yes. In their portfolios they can see their lacks and progress. They can improve their materials by looking at their portfolios and for their future, they can design a new plan for their methods." (PsT1)*
>
> *"Yes, they help. They provide us see what we taught and how we taught. It increases self-confidence when we see our fruitful teaching styles." (PsT2)*
>
> *"Collecting documents about teacher's work help the teacher see his/her teaching style. So that he/she can find his/her mistakes easier as they can be seen easier in that portfolio. And as the teacher sees her/his lacks, he/she wants to develop himself/herself." (PsT4)*

Findings for Research Question 1h) Peer coaching

Table 8. *Views about peer coaching*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Improvement	giving and receiving feedback; fostering good personal relationships	Improvement	creating more useful ideas and techniques; learning new things and new skills; giving and receiving feedback
Collaboration	working in pairs; finding solutions together	Collaboration	sharing ideas; supporting each other
Empathy	getting to understand others; making use of their experiences	Reflection	identifying areas which need elaboration; clarifying what is known; seeing weak points

Table 8 shows that both the in-service teachers and the pre-service teachers found peer coaching an effective means of professional development. The categories of improvement and collaboration emerged for both groups, but for the in-service teachers, empathy emerged as the third category. For the pre-service teachers, the last category was reflection.

The in-service teachers stated that peer coaching provided teachers with the opportunity to give and receive feedback and maintain good personal relationships. It also was a chance to collaborate and find solutions in case of problems. Finally, the in-service teachers believed that peer coaching would help them understand their colleagues and benefit from the experiences of each other, as to be seen in the following lines:

> "*Peer coaching can be an effective way to get some feedback and help from our friends. We can observe each other in our classroom environments and give some feedback. We can also share some materials we have prepared for our classes or maybe we can do some brainstorming together to improve our teaching abilities. On that point, it is important to choose a colleague whom you feel closer to have better communication with. I don't think it will be useful to work together with a colleague your supervisors have chosen for you. It may have adverse effects if we don't have a good relationship with our partner." (IsT4)*
>
> *"Peer coaching helps teachers to understand others better. It provides opportunities to make use of other's experiences and also find solutions and develop techniques together. That's why I think it is a good way to work together." (IsT5)*

The pre-service teachers generally mentioned that peer coaching is a good way of supporting one another, learning new things, giving and receiving feedback. It was also a chance for reflection through which they could see their weaknesses and act accordingly to overcome them. Three of the pre-service teachers expressed their ideas as seen:

> *"In peer coaching the teachers support each other. Thanks to that they create more useful ideas and techniques to use in class." (PsT1)*
>
> *"Being observed and getting comment from a colleague can help us identify areas we would like to develop." (PsT2)*
>
> *"I think it is a kind of peer observation and it contributes teachers to support each other and create more useful and interesting ideas or techniques in teaching." (PsT3)*

Findings for Research Question 1i) Action research

Table 9. *Views about action research*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Pedagogical Knowledge	understanding students and their needs; analyzing situations/ problems; helping solve problems; increasing students' motivation	Pedagogical Knowledge	understanding/ realizing/observing students' needs and weaknesses; understanding the environment, teaching style and how students learn; understanding whether the subject is grasped or not
Improvement	enhancing the process of professional development helping design future classroom activities	Improvement	directing the teaching style; creating an opportunity to see the problems; becoming better in problem solving; organizing lessons accordingly; learning to do research and how to organize teaching methods

Table 9 presents the categories and themes that emerged for both groups of teachers as regards action research. The categories that emerged for action research were the same for both groups. That is to say that both the in-service teachers and the pre-service teachers thought that action research could first enhance their pedagogical knowledge and help them improve as teachers. To explain further, action research would inform both the in-service teachers and the pre-service teachers about the difficulties their students were facing in learning the subject, and it would give them the chance to adapt their teaching style in accordance with their students' needs. A remarkable point here was that one of the in-service teachers confessed that he does not know this kind of research in detail. Two in-service teachers expressed their ideas as can be seen in the following excerpts:

> *"Sometimes in order to understand what students need in the classroom teaching and learning process, a teacher can conduct classroom research. According to the findings of the research, teachers can design classroom activities, so they can enhance the efficiency of the process. Also, teachers can use this kind of researches to understand what students expect from the teacher. This method can increase students' motivation and their participation in the learning process. All of these help teachers develop themselves professionally." (IsT1)*

"Action research may be useful especially when we have some specific issues and problems to be solved since it is more like a process to analyze a specific problem and to work on it. In fact, to be honest, we come across such problems in teaching frequently, maybe every day, so I think it can be a useful method to handle that kind of problems." (IsT4)

Three of the pre-service teachers' beliefs about action research are as follows:

"Action research is a must in the professional development. You learn to make researches by yourself and that enables us to be creative in problem-solving." (PsT2)
"Thanks to action research, the teacher sees the problems in teaching and sets her/his lessons because every child is unique and every classroom is unique. As there are many kinds of people in the classroom and the teacher considers them, this helps the teacher develop herself/himself." (PsT4)
"Teachers can see the students' weak points and needs in a better way. They can understand whether students get the subject or not." (PsT5)

Findings for Research Question 2

The second research question focused on the professional development methods that in-service EFL teachers and pre-service EFL teachers thought of utilizing in their future careers. The themes regarding that question for both groups are to be seen as follows:

Table 10. *Views about future engagement in professional development*

In-service Teachers		Pre-service Teachers	
Categories	**Themes**	**Categories**	**Themes**
Awareness	knowing that there is no magic- no "one- size fits all model available; importance of willingness; ongoing teaching/ learning; being a constant observer in life	Efforts for Future Professional Growth	reading books/ articles; writing diaries; joining a support group; doing self-monitoring; doing peer observation; attending workshops and conferences; meeting and talking to others/ foreign instructors; getting student feedback;
Efforts for Future Professional Growth	changing methods; following YouTube/ online teachers; creating a suitable learning atmosphere; enhancing motivation; attending workshops; carrying out classroom research		talking to and getting help from experienced teachers; becoming members of associations; finding mentors; making scientific research; learning about all education systems and methods

Table 10 shows the categories that emerged as regards the future engagement of the participants in professional development activities. Here, the in-service teachers articulated that they had some awareness about no single activity being the ideal one for all teachers. They also elaborated that having some inner motivation and continuing to learn and to observe would be key factors for keeping themselves updated as teachers. As a final point, both the in-service teachers and the pre-service teachers emphasized that they had a lot of plans or wishes in mind to pursue their professional growth. Some of their plans were about adapting teaching methods,

following global innovations via the Internet, creating suitable learning environments, trying to be constantly motivated, attending workshops, conducting action research, and getting student feedback, as to be seen in the following accounts belonging to the in-service teachers:

> *"Trial-and-error is a very effective way to do so. A teacher should be willing to innovate and not be afraid of trying new things. I do not care what methodology books say unless I experience it first hand in my classes. That is the only way to see what works and does not work in your class and teaching." (IsT3)*
> *"There may be numerous ways to improve yourself in your job, but I think the most important point is that one should be willing to do that and should see every moment of his both professional and personal life as a chance to develop himself. And I believe, the best way to develop yourself both professionally and personally is to be a good observer in life…." (IsT4)*
> *"I do not believe that there is a "best method or approach" in teaching. … If a teacher finds better ways to communicate with his students, everything becomes easier. What is crucial is that a teacher should not try to teach the students, but does his best to enable them to find their best way to improve. …I personally follow YouTube. I create a good network and follow successful online teachers to learn useful classroom activities. The rest depends on your ability to create the atmosphere to arouse interest." (IsT6)*

The pre-service teachers mentioned a lot of activities they thought they would do in the future to continue with their professional development. Although they emphasized collaboration and support several times, they did not express any kind of web-based activity. They seem more dependent on traditional activities. They also humbly added that they would talk to experienced colleagues, get assistance from them when necessary, and maintain a mentoring relationship if possible.

Some of the pre-service teachers shared their ideas about their future intentions related to continuing their professional development as follows:

> *"We can develop ourselves with the support of our colleagues. We can write diaries to see our improvement day by day. We can talk with experienced teachers when we need." (PsT1)*
> *"I don't think to develop a special method myself. I can get some beneficial sides from each method." (PsT2)*
> *"I will read articles and books to learn more and see what others think about something I have known. I also think about watching other teachers while performing their job, if possible. I want to ask my students what kind of activities they like the most and develop myself in this way. I want to be in touch with foreign instructors because I believe they will help me both with my English and with my teaching." (PsT4)*

Overall, the category of improvement was the most popular category that emerged for both the in-service and pre-service teachers. This was followed by awareness and collaboration, respectively. Although the remaining categories received less frequency, it could still be concluded that the participating in-service teachers and pre-service teachers were open to professional development and change.

Discussion

The present study aimed at gaining a general understanding of what the in-service teachers and the pre-service teachers think about professional development. Another purpose of the study was to find out whether the participants had positive or negative views about professional

development activities. One final goal of the study was to get a general picture of what the two groups thought of their future professional development.

To start with, both groups stated that professional development is necessary as long as they continue doing the job. Both the in-service teachers and the pre-service teachers made it clear that they are aware of trying to gain different perspectives and follow innovations. Both groups agreed on the idea that professional development is an ongoing, lifelong process. It is never a one-shot seminar, panel, or lesson (Korkmazgil, 2015).

As for workshops, both groups see them as opportunities for collaboration and improvement since they can refresh their knowledge with what they see, share or learn at workshops (Deglau & O'Sullivan, 2006). If possible, some experts could be brought to schools and some workshop activities could be organized so that teachers who cannot find the time to do anything else rather than teaching in the classroom can benefit from them.

Self-monitoring is a kind of professional development activity that both groups value a lot. They think of it as a chance to evaluate themselves and see their weaknesses and/or mistakes. They express that they can criticize themselves through monitoring themselves and that they can decide on new methods to be used. Due to its non-intrusive nature, easy implementation, and timely feedback opportunity, self-monitoring has been proven to modify teachers' behaviors when needed (Kalis et al., 2007; Simonsen et al., 2017).

Teacher support groups are also appreciated by both groups. They mainly focus on the experience criterion- the mentor should be someone more experienced than the teacher observed. The collaboration that takes place in these support groups has also been documented by Henry et al. (1999) in that it helps teachers reflect on their own experiences and by Howden, and Kopiec (2002) due to it assisting the increase in the achievement grades of learners. Additionally, Bouchamma (2006) asserts that collaboration might leverage teachers' motivation, as also found in the present study.

Teaching journals are also commented on positively. Although most of the in-service teachers stated that they had never kept one, they agreed on its benefits, which are similar to those expressed by pre-service teachers: teaching journals show teachers their past and enlighten their future. Teaching journals are reported to have various benefits such as teachers' knowledge about which teaching styles to employ, how students grasp a subject better, and teachers having a chance to reflect on their teaching (Ho, & Richards, 1993; Lakshmi, 2014); thus, they should be made more frequent use of.

Peer observation, which has been documented to be an effective reflective tool for teacher professional development (Lakshmi, 2014; Peel, 2005) was also appreciated by the participants of the present study, as it assisted teachers to share their ideas, learn from each other and get instant feedback. They also add that it is a chance to see that they are not alone in the problems they have — the peer may also have a similar problem. Both groups state that the relationship between the peers is important. This could be taken as a warning by school administrators when they plan to design a peer observation study.

Teacher portfolios are also welcomed by both the in-service and teachers and pre-service teachers. Through these portfolios, teachers can evaluate themselves and see their strengths and weaknesses easily. Similarly, according to Ayan and Seferoğlu (2011), teacher portfolios empower teachers, create opportunities for collaboration and integrating theory and practice,

offer some explicitness about what teachers have accomplished until that day along with authenticity and critical thinking as to which areas teachers need to focus on more. Teacher portfolios are also a kind of investment for one's future, they stated. School administrations and the ELT departments of universities could ask teachers and student teachers to keep a teacher portfolio due to all these advantages.

Peer coaching is another way to develop professionally since it gives the teachers another option to evaluate themselves and attune themselves to their weaknesses thanks to the assistance of the peer. It is a good way to experience collaboration since the peers share their knowledge and/ or materials, and it provides a feeling of safety as it is non-evaluative, reusable, and inexpensive (Goker, 2006).

The in-service teachers and the pre-service teachers state that action research is a fruitful activity. It can help teachers overcome their problems in class in a systematic way, and therefore it will make them familiar with scientific research. In line with what Edwards (2016) proved in her study in the Australian context, teachers will have a chance to solve their problems in a more serious manner owing to action research, and they will be proud of themselves for conducting their research.

All the participants of this study expressed their willingness to continue to develop professionally. They gave a lot of beneficial alternatives as examples along with the ones that have been questioned throughout this study. Except for one participant who stated he would not try to develop a special method and added that he would make use of the available ones; all the remaining participants stated that they would do some research, read articles, be a good observer, use trial-and-error, discuss with colleagues, make use of the Internet, and never stop teaching and learning. Hence, it could be said that the professional development activities that were the foci of the present study proved to be important in that they can raise awareness of the concept. Teacher educators might also make use of these tools in their curriculums as they seem to be providing various contributions for teacher candidates, such as collaboration, refining teaching skills, criticizing oneself, broadening perspectives, and gaining self-confidence.

Conclusions

It might be commented that the awareness of the in-service and pre-service EFL teachers on the concept of professional development was high and that they perceive it as a way for self-improvement. They stated that they found workshops, self-monitoring/ self-observation, teacher support groups, teaching journals, peer observation, and peer coaching useful and added that they could benefit from them while continuing their posts. Additionally, it was also seen that teacher portfolio and action research needed to be explained in detail and exemplified if possible. The participants provided a lot of precious insights as to use hybrid models of professional development tools along with the ones listed in this study during their journey of teaching, which could confirm the idea that it is not easy to find a single ideal way to continue to develop professionally.

To see an overall picture, similar studies could be carried out with larger research populations in various EFL contexts, and the research design could be altered as both quantitative and qualitative. Next, the data collection tools could also be diversified if the

conditions are ripe enough. Finally, the professional development activities mentioned in this study might be included and emphasized in the teacher education courses.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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