

**İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN MESLEKİ GELİŞİM  
ARACILIĞIYLA SINIF UYGULAMALARINDAKİ DEĞİŞİM  
VE İLERLEMELERİNİN İZLENİLMESİ:  
GAZİANTEP İLİ ÖRNEĞİ**






**TRACKING CHANGES AND PROGRESS IN EFL  
TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PRACTICES THROUGH  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:  
THE CASE OF GAZİANTEP**

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This work named "Tracking Changes and Progress in EFL Teachers' Classroom Practices Through Professional Development: The Case of Gaziantep" by Hatice YAĞCI has been approved as a thesis for Master's Degree in the Program of English Language Teaching, Department of Foreign Language Education, by the below mentioned Examining Committee Members.

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## ETHICS

In this thesis study prepared in accordance with the spelling rules of Graduate School of Educational Sciences of Hacettepe University,

I declare that

- all the information and documents have been obtained in the base of academic rules,
- all audio-visual and written information and results have been presented according to the rules of scientific standards,
- in case of using other works, related studies have been cited in accordance with the scientific standards,
- all cited studies have been fully referenced,
- I did not do any distortion in the data set,
- and any part of this thesis has not been presented as any other thesis study at this or any other university.



Hatice YAĞCI

# İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN MESLEKİ GELİŞİM ARACILIĞIYLA SINIF UYGULAMALARINDAKİ DEĞİŞİM VE İLERLEMELERİNİN İZLENİLMESİ: GAZİANTEP İLİ ÖRNEĞİ

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## ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı İngilizce öğretmenlerinin geçmiş ve mevcut mesleki gelişim deneyimlerini araştırmaktır. İngilizce öğretmenlerinin ihtiyaç alanları belirlenmiş ve sınıf içi uygulamaları gözlenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda çeşitli mesleki gelişim uygulamaları yapılmıştır. Yapılan mesleki gelişim etkinliklerinin öğretmenlerin sınıf uygulamalarını nasıl etkilediği incelenmiştir. Araştırma deseni olarak nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmacı sahaya katılımcı gözlemci olarak katılmıştır. Araştırma verileri altı aşamada toplanmıştır. Katılımcılar, üç farklı devlet lisesinde çalışan altı İngilizce öğretmenidir, ve aynı zamanda mesleki gelişim uygulamalarını yapan, bir vakıf üniversitesinde görevli yedi uzman eğitimidir. Veriler; odak görüşmeler, katılımcı gözlem ve saha notları, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler, ses ve video kayıtları aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Nitel veriler taban teorisi yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın güvenilirlik ve geçerliğini sağlamak için veri üçlemesi, akran denetimi ve katılımcı denetimi süreçleri yürütülmüştür. Verilerden elde edilen bulgular dört kategoriye ayrılmıştır: İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişime dair geçmiş deneyimleri, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin mesleki gelişim imkanlarına katılırken karşılaştıkları güçlükler, gelişim ihtiyaç alanları, daha iyi bir İngilizce öğretmeni olma yolunda ilerlemelerdir. Bu çalışma mesleki gelişim üzerine literatüre katkıda bulunması ve ihtiyacı nispeten karşılaması yönüyle ve uygulamacılara, uzmanlara, öğretmenlere ve akademisyenlere önerilerde bulunmasıyla önemlidir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Mesleki gelişim, hizmetiçi eğitim, ihtiyaç analizi, yansıtıcı öğretim, okul-üniversite ortaklığı

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# **TRACKING CHANGES AND PROGRESS IN EFL TEACHERS' CLASSROOM PRACTICES THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF GAZİANTEP**

**Hatice YAĞCI**

## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to explore the past and present experiences of EFL Teachers with regard to professional development (PD). Additionally, EFL teachers' areas of needs were determined and their daily practices were observed. In line with research goals of this study, several PD sessions were offered. Finally, the study examined how the PD activities informed the teachers' classroom practices. Qualitative research methodology was used as the study design. The researcher was a participant observer at the research sites. The data for the study were collected in six phases. The participants were six EFL teachers from three different public high schools, and also there were seven EFL teachers working at a foundation university who offered the PD sessions. The data were collected through focus groups, participant observation and field notes, interviews, audio and video recordings. The qualitative data were analyzed by using grounded theory method. In order to establish the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation, peer checking and member checking processes were carried out. The findings from the analysis of the data were organized under four categories: EFL teachers' previous experiences with PD, challenges preventing EFL teachers to engage in PD opportunities, areas in need of improvement, progress toward becoming a better EFL teacher. This study was significant in meeting the need and closing the gap in the literature about PD and sharing further implications for practitioners, policy makers, teachers and university faculty.

**Keywords:** Professional development, in-service education and training, needs analysis, reflective teaching, school-university partnership

**Advisor:** Assoc. Prof. Dr. Arif SARIÇOBAN, Hacettepe University, Department of Foreign Languages Education, Division of English Language Teaching

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of teachers,  
who lost their lives in educating the children of the world.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ELT:** English Language Teaching

**EPI:** English Proficiency Index

**INSET:** In-service Training and Education

**K-12:** Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

**PD:** Professional Development

**TESOL:** Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the background to the problem is introduced, the problem is stated, the purpose of the study and the research questions are defined, and finally the definitions of the terms commonly used in this study are explained.

### 1.1. Background to The Study

With the globalization of the English language as a communication tool, the number of people learning English has increased. In terms of a language for international communication, English plays a major role (Crystal, 1997; Coleman, 2006; Graddol, 2006; Hoffmann, 2000). The Economist (2001) indicates that English is everywhere with almost 400 million people speaking it as their mother tongue and perhaps two-thirds as many again as their second language, and also it is predicted that by 2050, fifty percent of the world will be proficient in it more or less. Different countries conduct various English Language Teaching (ELT) policies to meet this demand.

Turkey also went through different reforms to improve the teaching of English ([www.meb.gov.tr](http://www.meb.gov.tr)), yet they have not been sufficient. With the introduction of the educational reform in 1997, children started learning English at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. However, the teachers were not used to teaching young learners. Later in the beginning of the 2000s, constructivism was introduced to Turkish educational system and the curricula at all levels were changed (Mirici, 2006). The new curriculum highlighted the thinking processes of students instead of memorization (Akınoğlu, 2008). Most of the language teachers were not able to conduct constructivism in their classes, as they had not been trained professionally.

When the Education First English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) 2013 report is analyzed, it is obvious that Turkey ranks very low on the list. There are many reasons contributing to this fact. Also when report published by the British Council (n.d.) is examined, it was estimated that two billion people will be using English – or learning to use it by 2020. Due to the crowded classes, poor physical conditions, unqualified teachers and the mistakes made while conducting the language policies and the new language teaching techniques, language learning deteriorates (Haznedar, 2010). Among all these, the burden is on the shoulders of

the teachers of English. They need professional development (PD) programs to support and motivate themselves.

With the increased use of technology and web tools, the profile of learners and the characteristics of learning are in rapid change. Hart (2008) listed some of the characteristics of today's learners as being multi-taskers, social, visual, experiential and independent learners, having short attention span and needing immediate feedback and ideas from the others. The teachers of these learners, especially the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers should improve themselves to meet the needs of this new generation of learners. They need to follow up with the new education policies; moreover, they need to polish their knowledge and beliefs with the new trends and the EFL teaching methods as the old language teaching methods most probably will not work with these learners.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

With the whole world of learning changing rapidly, it is of utmost importance for teachers to follow the new educational trends. Year by year their content knowledge and teaching techniques lag behind the everyday changing needs of their learners. As teachers' content knowledge becomes outdated in time, they should develop themselves professionally.

The education received during the pre-service education years would not be enough for teachers for a whole life. The theory learnt at undergraduate years definitely differs in practice. Teachers need professional support and education while combining the theory and practice and experiencing the language teaching in their own classes (Freeman, 1989). The more experienced a teacher becomes the more they should develop themselves and inquire about their teaching. Johnson (2000) defined teacher development as a continuing process beginning with teachers learning in their classrooms and going on as participants in development programs and reflecting on their teaching.

Like in any other country there have been many educational reforms enacted in Turkey since 1990s. This signifies that teachers have been through many systematic and curricular changes. In order to meet the needs of teachers, Turkish Ministry of Education offers in-service education and training (INSET) programs; however, they are not consistent and the teachers are not separated by their

grade levels or needs (Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2006). This type of 'one-size-fits-all' models lacks sustainability and continuous follow-up. (Yoon et al., 2007). Additionally, the teachers evaluated the INSET seminars as not being an effective source of knowledge (Büyükyavuz & İnal, 2008).

Even if the Turkish EFL teachers believed in the necessity of professional development (PD), they sometimes do not attend PD or INSET opportunities offered by outside bodies. According to İyidoğan (2011), the reasons might be the teachers' marital status and having many years of experience in the field, but the salary did not affect their choice of attendance. Also Ünal (2010) discovered some other reasons for non-attendance in INSET programs offered by the National Ministry of Education: inconvenient time and location, mandatory attendance, seminars not meeting the needs of the teachers, and teachers were not given an opportunity to evaluate or reflect on the INSETs offered. Due to many inconsistencies in the rapidly changing curricula, system of education and lack of PD or INSET offered to EFL teachers in Turkey, the teaching and learning of English becomes difficult.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to explore the past and present experiences of EFL Teachers with regard to PD. Additionally, EFL teachers' areas of needs were determined and their daily practices were observed. In line with research goals of this study, several PD sessions were offered. Finally, the study examines how the PD activities inform teachers' classroom practices.

The following research questions guided this research study:

1. What are EFL teachers' previous experiences with PD activities?
2. What are the PD needs of EFL teachers working at public schools in Gaziantep?
3. How do the PD sessions inform EFL teachers' instructional practices?

### **1.4. Significance of The Study**

The researchers feeling the urge to offer PD and INSET opportunities for the EFL teachers to meet the need were successful in various ways. For example, Atay (2001) observed significant professional growth in teachers' practices through the

collaborative dialog and the knowledge transmission technique between the pre-service and in-service teachers. Daloğlu (2004) found out in her research that the primary school EFL teachers benefited from the PD programs and reported increased self-confidence and communication among teachers. Kirazlar (2007) expressed how the EFL teachers started to observe and question their teaching through the use of diaries as a PD technique. However, the need for more PD and INSET opportunities is high; the research offering them and looking at their impacts are really few (Hoş & Topal, 2013). Therefore, this study was significant in offering PDs to EFL teachers, looking at the effects they created on the teachers' daily practices and beliefs and closing the gap in the literature in this respect.

While creating PD opportunities for EFL teachers, exploring their previous experiences and giving them a voice in developing further PDs are important (Atay, 2008). This research was valuable in providing the PDs considering the opinions of the EFL teachers. The PD activities offered for the purposes of this study were unique as they were conducted in the everyday classes of the participating teachers with their own students. Turhan & Arıkan (2009) supported this idea by suggesting that INSET or PD activities should be conducted in the home institutions, which teachers are affiliated with and they should be relevant to meet the needs of the teachers. Finally, the findings of this study will provide perspectives to researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in designing new PDs.

### **1.5. Definitions of Terms**

**Professional Development (PD):** PD is “the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience in examining his or her teaching systematically” (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 41).

**In-Service Education and Training (INSET):** It refers to the educational and the training activities attended by teachers, which are often offered by an outside body for a short period of time (e.g. ministry of education) (Gardner, 1995).

**English as a Foreign Language (EFL):** Richards and Schmidt (2002) defined EFL as learning “English in a formal classroom setting, with limited or no

opportunities for use outside the classroom, in a country in which English does not play an important role in international communication” (p.180)

**English Language Teaching (ELT):** Cook (2003) explained ELT as “the teaching of English as a first or additional language” (p. 30).

**Teacher Trainer:** A teacher trainer is somebody who has recent and varied experience in ELT and capable of demonstrating professional involvement in ELT. He or she trains teachers on a variety of topics such as classroom management, skills teaching, material development and adaptation, and etc.

**Reflective Teaching:** Reflective teaching is a teacher’s thinking over their own performance, analyzing their beliefs, experiences and hypothesis, gathering information continuously and getting to an end by concluding their studies with critical reflection (Richards & Lockhart 1994).

**Teacher Efficacy:** Teacher efficacy is “a teacher’s belief in their capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context” (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 233)



## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, a comprehensive review of the related literature on PD is provided to offer a deeper understanding. The review of literature is organized into four sections. In the first section the difference between the terms PD and INSET is discussed. In the second section the need for PD in K-12 schools is examined. In the third section different PD types inspiring the model used in this study are described. Finally, in the fourth section things to consider when planning and implementing PD opportunities are explained.

### 2.1. In-Service Education and Training vs. Professional Development

Teachers need to empower themselves by following the new trends in their field. In order to improve their practices and update their knowledge, they need to attend both short-term and long-term activities. When we think of the short-term activities, generally the INSET programs come into mind.

The general aim of the INSET programs is to offer courses for unqualified teachers or to train teachers about curricular changes in the educational system (Greenland, 1983) to increase the professional competence of teachers (Kennedy, 1995) and mostly they are prepared at the governmental level to help teachers apply educational innovations in their classes (Roberts, 1998). The tendency in INSET program is that they are usually one-shot and offered by an outside expert (Craft 1996). Teachers are passive in this knowledge-transmission process and their experiences, beliefs and knowledge are not considered when the programs are prepared. The INSET programs aiming to stimulate the development of some skills are training oriented and the trainers show various techniques and elaborate them with handouts (Atay, 2004).

In Turkey, the INSET activities are mostly top-down. Turkish Ministry of National Education organizes them for the public school teachers and announces the activity plan each year. Başaran (1993; as cited in Yigit, 2008) listed some problems with the INSET activities occurring in Turkey as they are not practice-oriented, the activities are very few, the number of participants attending the same activity at the same time is huge, the budget allocated to the activities is not enough, they are costly and the teachers are not supported financially, the teachers completing the activities are not awarded. According to Yigit (2008)'s

study, the teachers who attend INSET activities just because they are compulsory bear no other purposes than sitting still and listening so they get bored easily and lose attention. These INSET programs would not be effective in promoting teachers' development.

Wolter (2000) also argued that INSET programs could not meet the demands of the participants to a full extent, as they fail to consider participant feedback. Dadds (2001) also supported this view suggesting that in these INSET models teachers were not given the opportunity to share their understandings, experiences and their essential roles of being teachers. As teachers are not active learners in the INSET programs, they might not be able to apply the new technique in their own settings or the suggested technique may be totally useless in their context.

For many years INSET programs have been considered to be the only way to train and develop teachers. The idea of analyzing the PD processes of the teachers and creating contexts for teachers to develop themselves professionally is a rather new area and one should take into account that it is a long-term process of creating regular opportunities and planning systematical experiences (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Most of the times the teachers are passive listeners in the INSET programs whereas they have to engage actively in their PD processes. Teachers need to reflect on their experiences, and as Hammerness et al. (2005) stated that a PD program should contribute to their knowledge and the teachers should be able to build new pedagogical theories and develop expertise.

The context and the process are two important components of the PD programs. PD is a continuous process. The teachers may start with a little cue, but can take it further and reevaluate their whole teaching and start practicing new techniques. They think on this new practice, make changes and adaptations, so this is a never-ending process where they reflect, improve and develop incessantly (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991). They synthesize the prior experiences with the fresh knowledge they acquired (Ganser, 2000). In addition, the context is essential as each teacher might face different contextual teaching experiences. The PD should take place at a context where teachers can relate and reflect on their experiences (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995).

Due to the variety in processes and the contexts, there is no single best model of PD. Guskey and Huberman (1995) maintained that one thing which is successful at one place may not be useful in the other one. The problems are endless, so are the solutions; thus, while preparing a PD program the needs of the teachers, contextual differences, existing beliefs and practices should be analyzed (Guskey and Huberman, 1995). This way, the teachers can pick out something for themselves when they attend different PD programs and they can adopt the new practices to their own classroom settings. Each PD experience should be unique for the teachers and they each should find something useful according to their needs.

PD requires a collaborative work among teachers, administrators, practitioners, university academics and community members (Grace, 1999). As Villegas-Reimers (2003) emphasized that teachers and support people can make PD opportunities possible together, and they can focus on a new task interesting for the teacher or a task that the teacher is willing to change.

## **2.2. Need for Professional Development**

PD is necessary for teachers in many ways. In this part the need for PD will be discussed under six topics.

### **2.2.1. Keeping up-to-date**

Language teaching is exposed to change throughout different decades. The language researchers tried numerous methods like grammar translation method, desuggestopedia, total physical response etc. (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). As Karn (2007) remarked, the language teaching underwent significant changes while the teaching of other subjects such as Physics was the same. Also Richards and Rodgers (2001) stated the frequent change and innovation in the twentieth century language teaching. In order to learn about the methods and techniques that are subjected to rapid change, to look for better and more effective methods, language teachers should continue their PD.

### **2.2.2. Raising Student Achievement**

Teachers' PD has a positive effect on student achievement. In the report prepared by Yoon et al. (2007), it was stated that more than 1300 studies analyzed the effect of teacher PD on student achievement. In the report they suggest that

student achievement was affected through three steps in PDs – enhancing teacher’s knowledge and skills firstly, improving classroom teaching secondly and raising student achievement finally. Supovitz, Mayer, & Kahle (2000) also supported this idea expressing that attending PD activities contributes to teachers’ growth in attitudes, preparation and practice significantly, which will promote higher student achievement in the long run.

### **2.2.3. Promoting Reflective Teaching**

Reflection is helpful in helping teachers to combine knowledge and skills and assessing the outcomes of PD activities for themselves. (Field, 2011). As Edwards and Bruton (1993) suggested that teachers became active agents in the production of a new pedagogy through reflection instead of consuming the professional knowledge. Effective PD programs are supposed to promote reflection, as Oberg and Artz (1992) explained that the effects of PD activities would last more if the teachers had the chance to reflect on their experience. If not, very few teachers would be able to use what they learn from the PD sessions (Butler, 1992). Additionally, Dewey stated that ‘we do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience’ (1933, p.78). PD activities are important in fostering working together and sharing ideas (Knowles et al., 2008); and the teachers get a chance to reflect on their teaching habits, beliefs and pedagogies (Urzua and Vasques, 2008).

PD activities consisting of reflection are helpful in building up reflective practitioners (Sundli, 2007). Teachers gain reflective teaching skills through PD activities like mentoring, journal writing, peer coaching and action research (Chitpin, 2011; Boud, 2001; Sinkinson, 2011; West, 2011). Zeichner and Liston defined reflective teaching as: ‘recognition, examination, and rumination over the implications of one’s beliefs, experiences, attitudes, knowledge, and values as well as the opportunities and constraints provided by the social conditions in which the teacher works’ (1996, p. 6). Each PD activity will be a new step for the teachers to climb up through their journey of becoming a reflective teacher. The more PD activities they attend, the more they will reflect on their practices and move toward forming new understandings and appreciations (Stanley, 1998).

#### **2.2.4. Increasing Teacher Efficacy**

Engaging in PD activities is helpful in increasing teacher efficacy (Ortaçtepe, 2006). Teacher efficacy is defined as teachers being able to judge their capabilities in order to increase student engagement and provide learning of all students including the unmotivated and difficult ones (Bandura, 1977; Guskey, 1988). Teacher's sense of efficacy affects students' motivation and success (Soodak & Podell, 1996). Moreover, Sariçoban (2013) also emphasized the power of teacher's self-efficacy in decision making, using school resources, engaging parents and involving community members and creating positive school atmosphere. Through involving in the PD programs, teachers gain higher sense of teacher efficacy and the studies of Lewandowski (2005) and Yost (2002) also supported this idea and showed that there is a strong relationship between teacher efficacy and PD. According to Tschannen-Moran & Hoy (2001), increased teacher efficacy results in higher level of aspiration, more willingness to try new methods, more resilience in the face of setbacks, and greater enthusiasm for teaching and more commitment to teaching.

#### **2.2.5. Coping with Burnout**

Each year many teachers lose their job satisfaction and suffer from burnout. Some quit their jobs while some give-up struggling and just keep going without doing anything for change. According to Demirel et al. (2005), when compared with the teachers working in the western countries, Turkish teachers suffer more from burnout. Maslach and Jackson (1986) defined burnout as a three-dimensional syndrome consisting of emotional exhaustion, low personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (2004) issued a report on Teacher burnout and they suggested that Teachers suffering from burnout can cope with it through PD programs; moreover, by attending PD programs, teachers might reduce the sense of aloneness and they can acquire practical advice and information from other teachers in similar predicaments. Also PD activities meet teachers' need for collegiality (Hargreaves and Fullan, 1996) and again help them cope with burnout.

#### **2.2.6. Sharing and Caring**

PD programs are valuable as they provide teachers with the opportunity to share experiences and brainstorm on new ideas together. Teachers can reflect on their

practices and try implementing new strategies. Teachers face various challenges in their classrooms (Price, 2008). Sometimes it is hard to cope with the difficulties encountered. The solution can be found through PD activities. Especially the novice teachers come across more difficulties. They try out different techniques in their lessons continuously, which might be tiring and sometimes time-consuming. Instead by attending PD programs and meeting experienced colleagues they can learn from them and gain time.

### **2.2.7. Improving Organizations**

Teachers' PD is also important for the organizations and institutions that they work in. No institution would recruit a 10-year teacher who has not attended any PD programs since they graduated. Each administrator is aware of the fact that the time moves and the roles of the teachers and the students' change, so do the demands. In order for a teacher to meet these demands, they need to keep themselves up-to-date through different PD activities (Retallick, J. & Groundwater-Smith, 1999); furthermore, the schools need better-qualified teachers for a continuous development. Joyce (1991) believed that through PDs teachers could be motivated to collect and analyze data about their students and their context, which will result in the improvement of schools. Also he added that if the staff were supported to develop themselves professionally, the quality of the school would improve as well.

## **2.3. Models and Types of Professional Development**

There are various models, types and strategies of PD designed or implemented to promote teacher development (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Richards & Farrell, 2005). Most of the PD initiatives combine them simultaneously. For the purposes of this research study, university-school partnership model (Miller, 2001), case-based PD (Barnett, 1999), observations of excellent practice, skills development model (Joyce & Showers, 1988), reflective model (Clarke, 1995) and the workshop technique were combined and a unique PD program was implemented. These models and types of PDs are described in detail in this section.

### **2.3.1. University-School Partnership Model**

Academics and teachers should work closely to promote better education for the children of the future. Academics creating theories without being aware of what the

teachers are facing, or teachers following the old teaching techniques without knowing what is new in the field are both ignorant of each other and cannot be fruitful in the work they do. In this respect, the university- school partnerships are important. Miller (2001) resembled them to networks connecting “practitioners who share common interests and concerns about education” (p. 102). These university-school partnerships are usually established in the same or close geographical areas to make it more accessible. Miller (2001, p. 105) listed four main aims:

- to establish firm bases in two distinct cultures, school and university,
- to cross institutional boundaries in order to respond to needs in the field,
- to ensure inclusive decision-making, and
- to create new venues for educator development.

The university-school partnership is crucial in many ways. It can alleviate the isolation felt by the practitioners (Gifford, 1986) and it is also helpful in reducing the gap between the generation of knowledge and its implementation in schools (Hathaway, 1985). It is also sharing the knowledge and resources when there is little support or funding outside (Whyte, 1991). It fosters personal and organizational growth (Goodland in Gross, 1988).

Klein and Dunlap (1993) defined successful partnerships as those characterized by mutuality of concern, reciprocity of services, on-goingness, and a belief in partnership parity (p. 56). The partnership should benefit both partners mutually. The participant institutions should be made a part of the decision making at an equal level and trust should be established for collaboration (Thorkildsen & Stein, 1996). Time and participant commitment should be ensured (Smith and Auger, 1986).

Through partnerships, the universities can offer PD opportunities to schools and the schools can mentor the pre-service teachers. They both benefit from sharing their knowledge and experience. This way, learning is promoted and each participant body is involved and contributes to the partnership.

### **2.3.2. Skills Development Model**

Joyce and Showers (1988) suggested this model for staff development. The aim of this model is to develop new teaching techniques and skills necessary for teachers. The model is composed of developing knowledge, understanding the

concepts behind a skill, demonstrating or modeling a skill, practicing the skill and peer coaching (Joyce & Showers, 2002).

According to Joyce and Showers (2003, p. 2), there are potential outcomes of applying skills development model:

- knowledge or awareness of educational theories and practices,
- positive attitude changes,
- development of skills, and
- generating consistent and appropriate use of the new skills

This PD model might be useful in learning more about new strategies and skills and practicing them with the help of a coach.

### **2.3.3. Reflective Model**

This PD model involves teacher's reflecting on their everyday practices, which results in developing more complex beliefs and practices of teaching (Geddis et al., 1998). Teachers build on their daily practices as a means for PD. Clarke (1995) defined a reflective practitioner as curious about the setting she/he works and reframing their knowledge and experience to plan for a future action.

The discussions on what to reflect still continue, yet Potter and Badiali (2001) listed three forms of reflection:

- technical reflection: thinking about the curriculum and adjusting teaching accordingly,
- practical reflection: thinking about the purposes of particular actions and elaborating on them, and
- critical reflection: questioning the moral and ethical situations faced in teaching and trying to find solutions.

Glazer et al. (2004) defined reflective model as teachers' reflecting on their daily experiences in the classrooms, and adapting teaching. Reflection gives the teachers the opportunity to take the responsibility of their learning and evaluate their beliefs and teaching (Hamlin, 2004). The teachers should be trained about reflection by providing them with relevant readings and their thinking should be stimulated (Reed & Koliba, 1995). In this model the process the teachers go through is important. They improve their critical thinking skills by continuously



reflecting on their beliefs and practices, questioning and implementing new techniques. This is a never-ending process, which keeps the teachers knowledge and practices relevant and up-to-date.

#### **2.3.4. Observations of Excellent Practice**

In this model, the teachers learn from each other. They observe their colleagues who have been known for their excellence in teaching as part of their PD (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). This provides them with the opportunity to learn about and discuss the skills and attitudes that the excellent teachers implement in their classrooms.

Generally, private institutions offer this type of PD. They visit schools, share their expertise, and offer excellent practice as a model for further application. Similarly, at a school level the novice teachers can observe the master teachers and reflect on the lesson. This way they offer each other to improve their practice and develop themselves professionally. This model is also useful at a pre-service education level. The instructors can share excellent practices in their classes as a model with their students. At an international level different schools in different settings form fellowships and give their teachers to observe and share the excellent practices with each other aiming to promote teacher PD (Robottom & Walker, 1995).

#### **2.3.5. Workshops and Seminars**

Workshops and seminars are the most common types of PDs in practice. They are generally criticized for being one-shot and unrelated to the context or the needs of the individual teacher (Hopkins, 1989). However, when the workshops and seminars are offered as part of an ongoing PD program, they could be successful and relate to the participants' needs.

Workshops and seminars are useful for teachers in creating network of colleagues (Cutler & Ruopp, 1999). This type of PD is vital for teachers to follow the new trends in the field and keep their knowledge current (Eror, 2001). Moreover, workshops and seminars are helpful in training teachers in a particular technique (Ball, 2000).

## **2.4. Planning and Implementing PD Opportunities**

While planning and implementing PD opportunities, there are various factors to take into consideration. In this section, they are discussed in detail. Planning effective PDs is a hard job. According to Ross (2011, p.8), an effective PD:

- is linked to students learning outcomes,
- is job embedded,
- is ongoing and sustained with follow-up,
- incorporates authentic active learning experiences,
- includes subject-matter content,
- encourages reflection on pedagogy, content, and beliefs,
- incorporates collaboration with colleagues and/or experts, and
- provides support for teachers and measures impact on student achievement.

It might include formal experiences (such as attending workshops, seminars, conferences, or coaching, etc.) and informal experiences (such as reading academic journals, watching videos relating to the field, etc.) (Ganser, 2000). It should be relevant to the need and focused on the instruction and should be reflective, collaborative and ongoing (Field, 2011). Before starting to plan, organizers should think over these and act accordingly.

Corcoran (1995) suggested experts and organizations designing and implementing PDs the following, it should:

- stimulate and support site-based initiatives,
- be grounded in knowledge about teaching,
- model constructivist teaching,
- offer intellectual, social and emotional engagement with ideas, materials and colleagues,
- demonstrate respect for teachers as professionals and as adult learners,
- provide sufficient time and follow-up, and
- be accessible and inclusive. (p. 7)

PDs are more successful if a school culture of support is established by creating opportunities and time for PD, allowing for teacher learning, and creating collaborations and coalitions (Lieberman, 1994). Also the leadership of the principals is important, as the teachers need support engaging in PD opportunities (Moore, 2000). Apart from the support of the schools and the principals, different bodies (ministry of education, district directorates, universities, professional organizations and associations) existing in a teacher's professional map should support the professional growth of the teachers (McLaughlin, 1994).

There is no one best form of PD. The context where the teachers work plays a huge role in planning a PD. Johnson et al. (2000) found out that the PD practices in western countries hardly fit in the context of the teachers in other countries and the physical, social and political context determines the PD needs of the teachers. Additionally, the year of experience and the qualifications of the teachers should be considered when planning and implementing PDs (Johnson et al., 2000).

The teachers need time to engage in continuous PD (Bush, 1999). The schools should allocate some time for teachers' PD. However, especially in developing countries teachers have a lot of course load and they can participate in PD activities only during the holiday breaks (Villegas-Reimers, 1998). The PD organizers should plan and implement their PDs according to the teachers' time allowance to increase participation and efficiency.

The financial resources should be used effectively. Most of the time PDs offered by private organizations are more expensive than the public schools can afford (NEA, 2000). The schools, universities and the governmental bodies should work closely to make more PD opportunities available for free.

The teachers' year of experience and the grade levels they are teaching are important criteria in planning and implementing PDs. Their needs and previous experiences differ (Huberman, 1989). A novice teacher's expectations of PD might vary from that of the expert teachers.

The technology is rapidly changing and the teachers' trial with technology continues. More and more schools gain access to Internet and are equipped with smart boards, computer laboratories etc. (Pamuk et al., 2013). Today's teachers need to integrate technology into their classrooms to meet the changing needs of

the learners. Any teacher development or PD program should involve something about the implementation of technology in the classroom.

To sum up, while planning and implementing PD opportunities, the context, timing, financial resources, teachers' grade and experience levels are all important.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the study design and the rationale for using qualitative methods and the researcher's role, including the analytic framework. Then the phases of data collection, research sites and the participants of this study are introduced. Finally, the issue of trustworthiness, ethical considerations and the limitations of the study are discussed.

#### 3.1. Qualitative Research Design

Morrow and Smith (2000) described the aim of qualitative research so as to understand and explain the meanings made by participants in an activity or context. Creswell (1998) also defined qualitative research as:

“an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting” (p.15).

Therefore, using qualitative research methodology allowed the researcher to explore the PD experiences and its implementation of the PD in EFL classrooms. This study helped the researcher to understand, interpret, make connections with, and to illuminate the voices of participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002; Silverman, 2000).

Qualitative research is valuable when the researcher seeks to understand, rather than explain; to assume a personal rather than an impersonal role, and to construct knowledge, rather than discover it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Stake, 1995). Qualitative methods are generally inductive rather than deductive, generative rather than verificative, constructive rather than enumerative, and subjective rather than objective when compared with quantitative methods (LeCompte & Preissle, 2003). The quantitative researchers were claimed to be destroying the valuable data by imposing a limited worldview on the subjects and by coding the social world according to preordained operational variables (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). They added that “policymakers and practitioners are sometimes unable to derive meaning and useful findings from experimental

research and that the research techniques themselves have affected the findings” (p. 91).

The qualitative researcher can collect data through a variety of formal and informal approaches such as observation, interviews, and participant writing. Patton (1990) said “qualitative methods permit [the researcher] to study selected issues in depth and detail and approach fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis that contribute to the depth, opened and detail of the qualitative inquiry” (p. 13). Qualitative methods provide a framework of thinking and conducting research.

Qualitative research bears various characteristics. A qualitative study is conducted in a natural setting where the researchers have face-to-face interaction within the allocated time (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Qualitative researchers themselves are the key instruments, as they collect data through observing or interviewing the participants instead of using questionnaires developed by others (Eisner, 1991). They use multiple sources of data, review all of them and organize them into categories and themes (Hatch, 2002). The meaning held by the participants about the problem or the issue is important (LeCompte & Schensul, 2003). The qualitative research process is emergent, which means the initial plan, the questions or sites and the individuals selected for the research may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data (Creswell, 2009; Hoş, 2012).

In this thesis, the PD needs and experiences of EFL teachers were explored, PD was provided and teachers’ post PD experiences were investigated. Strauss and Corbin (1990) claimed that qualitative research methods are ideally suited for research seeking to explore the nature of people’s experiences. They suggested that areas that lent themselves to qualitative inquiry were those exploring peoples’ experiences with phenomena.

### **3.2. Researcher’s Role**

In qualitative research it was seen essential to describe the role of the researcher in detail (Marshall and Rossman, 2011); thus, in this section the decisions made when selecting and approaching the participants of the study and the interpersonal skills the researcher brought to the study is discussed.

Patton (1990) argued that the quality of the data collected in a qualitative research study depends mostly on the methodological skills, sensitivity and the integrity of the researcher. The researcher participated in various workshops and attended classes on qualitative methods; moreover, she worked with qualitative researchers in data collection and analysis several times before she started out with this thesis work and gained the necessary skills to conduct this research. Throughout this study the researcher tried to empathize with the participants of the study and showed understanding toward their feelings and experiences.

The researcher was the participant observer in the research sites. The researcher informed the teachers about her research at the first site when they were asked to volunteer for the study. The researcher explained the rationale of study in detail and her desire to understand and improve the PD experiences of the teachers to collaborate with them. In order to build trust and establish rapport with the participants, the researcher spent some time in their classes before she observed and interviewed the participants purposefully. The researcher got the necessary permission from the university she was working at and the formal approvals from the local district of education where the study was conducted to employ her time, other resources and about negotiating access (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

The researcher of this study is good at maintaining relations; she is active and patient, and also a thoughtful listener. She gained these interpersonal characteristics throughout her education life and especially through her position as a research assistant. As a research assistant, she is deeply interested in developing herself professionally by attending different seminars, workshops, conferences and professional meetings and online communities. Her desire for PD motivated this study.

The researcher was aware of the reciprocity issues (Ispa-Landa, 2006). The participant teachers spared and gave their time for the purposes of the study. The researcher was sensitive to this. She tried to help the teachers in the teachers' lounge to get prepared before the lessons, she sometimes grabbed them coffee to refresh them. She offered her informal feedback and support during her presence at schools.

There were some disadvantages for the researcher as she was an outsider at schools. Even if she tried to establish rapport with the teachers, the administrators were not that much friendly. It took some time for her to explain the purposes of the study and convince them. The administrators were afraid of the researcher to criticize the negative sides of their school, but later the researcher made it clear that this was not the purpose of her research, instead she was there to improve and help.

### **3.3. Data Collection, Research Sites and Participants**

The data collection for this thesis study took place in six phases. The research sites for each phase are discussed accordingly in the following sections.

#### **3.3.1. Data Collection Phases**

##### **3.3.1.1. Phase 1: Information Session and Recruitment of Participants**

The first phase of data collection was completed during the first informational session at the end of the 2012-2013 Fall Semester. The researcher sent out invitation letters to EFL teachers working at public schools in the local educational district to invite them for a workshop session thanks to the Local District Directorate of Ministry of Education.

The first informational session was a workshop entitled as “Motivating Language Learners Through Drama” presented by a well-known professor in the field. Around 350 teachers attended the workshop session from both elementary and secondary levels. The aim of this workshop was to promote interest among teachers toward PD. At the end of the PD session, the researcher introduced herself to the teachers and provided information about her research and the thesis study. The researcher asked volunteer teachers for her research study after this workshop. She asked them to fill out the participation form (Appendix A). Twenty teachers volunteered for the study.

##### **3.3.1.2. Phase 2: Focus Group with EFL Teachers**

The second phase of the data collection was completed in February 2013. After collecting the questionnaires and determining the volunteer teachers, the researcher applied for approval letter from the local district directorate of Ministry of National Education to conduct the study (Appendix B). After getting the



necessary approvals, she phone-called and emailed the volunteering teachers for a focus group session.

The researcher was planning to have two different focus groups consisting of ten people, as twenty of the teachers agreed to participate in the study. However, only 6 of the teachers showed up to the focus group session. At this vein, Johnson and Christensen (2004) suggested that a focus group should consist of between six and twelve participants; thus, the researcher decided to went on her study with the six teachers attended. Morgan (1997) claimed that well-organized focus groups usually last between one and two hours. The researcher tried to limit the focus group to one and half hour. The researcher prepared a semi-structured focus group protocol (Appendix C). The researcher first informed the teachers about her research and handed out teacher information letters (Appendix D), then they held the focus group session. The focus group session was audio and video recorded in order for the researcher to transcribe and refer to the data later.

#### **3.3.1.3. Phase 3: Pre-observations**

The third phase of the data collection was completed in late February 2013. The researcher visited the three schools that the participant teachers were working to gain a general understanding of the context. She informed school administrators about the research. She set a date with the teachers to observe their in-class practice. When the researcher as a participant observer visited their classes, she took field notes, audio and video recorded each participant teacher for one class hour (Appendix E). These data were collected as a way of understanding the daily practices of the teachers and entering the research site and acclimating the researcher with the students and the schools. The researcher prepared a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix F). Afterwards, the researcher interviewed each teacher about the PD needs to give direction to the PD activity that she/he would like to be conducted in her/his class.

#### **3.3.1.4. Phase 4: Focus Group with Trainers**

The fourth phase of the study was completed at the end of February. The researcher recruited seven trainers for the purposes of this research. The researcher prepared a focus group protocol to follow (Appendix G). The researcher informed the trainers about the research. She informed them about the

problems of EFL teaching at public schools and she shared the needs that the participant teachers shared before.

During the focus group session, they brainstormed about what they could do to improve the EFL teaching at schools and meet the needs of the EFL teachers. They decided on the PD topics that they could offer depending on their strengths in teaching and training. The researcher matched the trainers with the teachers and let them have each other's contact information so that they could work collaboratively to plan for the best practice. This focus group was audio and video recorded to be transcribed later.

#### **3.3.1.5. Phase 5: Professional Development Training Sessions and Teacher Debriefing Sessions**

The fifth phase was conducted in March 2013. Researcher phone called and informed the teachers about the PD training sessions. She set a negotiated PD schedule (Appendix H) that was convenient for all parties – the trainers, the teachers and the researcher. The trainers met the teachers via phone calls and emails. The researcher collected sample books from the participant teachers and shared them with the trainers. After talking to the teachers and getting information about teachers' current practice (grade, level, current unit and topic of interest), the trainers prepared lesson plans, adapted the books and developed materials accordingly.

The trainers conducted their PD sessions at different schools on different topics. The teachers were asked to observe the trainers. After each training session, the researcher had a debriefing session about the PD offered. The researcher used a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix I) during the session. The teacher was interviewed about how this experience benefited him/her and asked further questions about the PD to improve their practice. Both the PD session and the interview were audio and video-recorded and the researcher took notes.

#### **3.3.1.6. Phase 6: Classroom Observations and Teacher Debriefing Sessions**

The sixth phase was conducted in April 2013. The researcher scheduled one-class-hour with each teacher to see the implementation of the different PD sessions offered on the request of each teacher. The researcher asked the teachers to prepare a lesson keeping in mind the things they gained or observed

in the PD sessions. The teachers were in contact with the trainers for further practice, so that they could call and email each other to improve themselves professionally further.

The researcher observed the teachers and took field notes. Each lesson was video and audio recorded. After the classroom observation, the researcher and each teacher had a debriefing session. The researcher used a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix J). They watched the video of the teacher's implementation and stopped the video on and off to discuss. This allowed the teachers to reflect upon their classroom practices, their beliefs and understandings. The researcher audio recorded each debriefing session to transcribe later.

### **3.3.2. Research Sites**

Gaziantep is an urban industrial city, which is located in Southeast Turkey. It is the sixth most populous city in Turkey. Gaziantep receives mass migration due to its industry. Gaziantep ranks very low in education (Bakış et al., 2009). The research study was conducted at three public Anatolian high schools. To protect their anonymity, their names would not be mentioned in this study. All three schools were equipped with smart boards and they had libraries. English was taught for six hours a week at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The students registered at the language department took English for ten hours a week. They were usually exposed to English only during the English classes. There were hardly ever books or English materials at the schools.

School A: This school was located in a suburban area of Gaziantep. The school was very old and the socio-economic level of the students was low. The students with low elementary school GPAs attended this school. The English language proficiency level of the students ranged from beginner to pre-intermediate. There were six ELT teachers working at 'School A' while only two of them volunteered for this study. In each class there were thirty students on average. The administrator was supportive of the teachers' PD as long as they could find the incentives themselves.

School B: It was located in the old city center of Gaziantep, where the local small-scale business surrounded the school. Absenteeism was high at this school due to

the students working at nearby businesses. This school was one of the high schools where there was an English Language Department for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. There were eight EFL teachers. The students' proficiency levels ranged from elementary to upper-intermediate. There were thirty students at most in each class, however there were sixteen students in 11<sup>th</sup> grade language class while there were eleven students at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The school administration motivated teachers to write projects and attend life long learning programs.

School C: This school was relatively new compared with two previous schools. The students were mostly from the middle-income families. Their success level was higher than the School A and School B. There were five EFL teachers. The school administrator supported his teachers as much as he could. He allowed them some free time for PD. There were plenty of teacher resources and classroom materials. Internet was available for teacher use in classrooms. The number of students in each class varied from twenty-six to thirty-three.

### **3.3.3. Participants**

The participants of this study are categorized into two groups: EFL teachers and EFL teacher trainers. The participants are described according to their age, year of experience, teaching level, degree and their interest in PD.

#### **3.3.3.1. EFL Teachers**

Aylin worked at School A. She was 28 years old and taught English for five years. She had an undergraduate degree in ELT. It was her first year at a high school teaching EFL to 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. She was working on her master's thesis on curriculum and instruction at the time of study. She expressed her willingness to participate in this research many times due to the hardships she endured to find participants for her thesis and also to meet the challenges of teaching at a high school for the first time. She attended several INSET programs offered by the national ministry of education. She was ambitious and tried teaching EFL communicatively by any means. Her classrooms were covered with student work on the walls.

Vildan worked at School A as well. She was 30 years old and she taught English for six years. She had her undergraduate degree in English Language and Literature. Vildan did not attend many PDs. It was her second year at School A.

She was teaching 9<sup>th</sup> graders too. She felt herself lucky to be working with Aylin. They prepared their lesson plans and exams together. They developed teaching materials together. Vildan participated in this research thanks to Aylin.

Ruken worked at School B. Ruken was 32 years old and taught English for nine years. At the time of the study, she was teaching 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English language department students. She held a master's degree on ELT. She attended many different INSET programs before. PD was important for her. She lived in the USA for six weeks for a project. She was a dedicated EFL teacher.

Feride also worked at School B. Feride was 29 years old and taught English for six years. She was teaching 9<sup>th</sup> graders during the study. She was pursuing her master's degree in school administration and leadership in a nearby city. Due to her master's study, she was not able to engage in PD opportunities as much as she did earlier. She had been to the UK for two weeks thanks to a lifelong learning program. She was an energetic EFL teacher.

Murat worked at School C. He was 36 years old and he had thirteen years of EFL teaching experience at different school levels including primary and secondary. He taught 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students during the study. He was the coordinator of English at School C. He organized English drama and poetry nights at the school with the help of his colleagues. He held a master's degree in curriculum development and teaching. He had attended almost all the INSET programs offered by the National Ministry of Education. He had been to various countries thanks to the PD projects he was involved in. He was a very active teacher who was eager to learn anytime.

Adem worked with Murat at School C. Adem was 31 years old and taught English for seven years. He had her undergraduate degree in ELT. He taught EFL to 9<sup>th</sup> grade learners. He had attended INSET programs before, but not very often. He was good at technology and tried to develop himself by following online learning communities.

### **3.3.3.2. EFL Teacher Trainers**

All of the EFL Teacher trainers worked at a PD center at a university.

Ferit was 28 years old and he taught English for five years and he had been a teacher trainer for two years. He also worked as a tour guide and he was a

volunteer actor at a public theatre. He was very fluent in English and skillful in teaching speaking and listening. He presented at national and international conferences on teaching speaking.

Sabine was a native speaker of American English. She was 29 years old and had been teaching English in Turkey for four years. She held a TESOL (teaching of English to speakers of other languages) master's degree. She was selected as the best practicing foreign teacher at the institution where she worked at. It was her second year in teacher training. Her area of interest was introducing icebreakers and warm-ups and teaching speaking.

Gamze was 27 years old. She worked at public high schools for two years before. She had been a teacher trainer for the first time. She was skillful at teaching grammar inductively. She attended various seminars and workshops on teaching English.

Banu was 27 years old. It was her first year in teacher training. She was good at teaching reading. She trained teachers on using games to enhance reading classes.

Makbule was 28 years old. It was her second year at teacher training. She was selected the most creative and energetic teacher for two years. Her classes were colorful and covered with student work. She attended PDs organized by national and international associations. Her area of interest was material development and adaptation.

Nermin was 28 years old. It was her second year at teacher training too. She was good at teaching writing and she had been teaching writing to learners from various levels for the past five years. She was doing her master's on creative writing.

Toprak was 30 years old. She had been a teacher trainer for three years. She held teaching EFL certificates from numerous national and international institutions. She had been training teachers on how to integrate technology in EFL classes. She also taught EFL teaching strategies in Europe as a visiting instructor at different universities.

### **3.3.4. Data Sources**

The qualitative data sources for this study included focus group interviews, participant observations and field notes, interviews, audio and video recordings (Yin, 2003). Each procedure was described in detail in the following section.

#### **3.3.4.1. Focus Groups**

A focus group was described as a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected because they are purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being 'focused' on a given topic by Thomas et al. (1995). The focus groups are unique in generating data based on the synergy of the group interaction (Green and Thorogood, 2004). In order to achieve this synergy, participants should feel comfortable to be able to engage in the discussion (Kruger & Casey, 2000). The group dynamic makes the focus groups distinct as the data obtained are richer and deeper than those gathered from one-to-one interviews (Burrows & Kendall, 1997).

According to Rabiee (2004), 'focus groups could provide information about a range of ideas and feelings that individuals have about certain issues, as well as illuminating the differences in perspective between groups of individuals' (p. 659). Therefore, selecting the participants is one of the most important things in organizing the focus groups. The participants should share the similar socio-characteristics, age-range and have something to say about the topic (Richardson & Rabiee, 2001). Involving the participants in the discussion necessitates a skillful moderator, who can manage the existing relationship and create an environment for where participants who are not acquainted can feel relaxed and encouraged to share ideas (Kitzinger, 1995).

The ideal or optimum number of the participants might vary. Kruger and Casey (2000) supported that it should be between six and eight participants claiming that smaller groups show greater potential. The size of the group is typically around 6-10. Groups of over 12 were stated to be too big while fewer than four showed not enough total experiences (Morgan, 1988). One problem with focus groups is non-attenders, thus the researcher should over-recruit by 10-25% to maximize participation (Rabiee, 2004). Furthermore, to have people attend, Marczak &

Sewell (n.d.) suggested establishing meeting times suitable for everyone, contacting participants via phone calls and sending personalized invitations.

The number of the focus group sessions may change from one to ten depending on the complexity of the subject investigated and it usually lasts from sixty to 120 minutes (Powell and Single, 1996).

#### **3.3.4.2. Participant Observation and Field Notes**

In this research study, the researcher involved in direct observations and participant observations (Heath & Street, 2008) and she constructed field notes during observations (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). Observation bears great significance in qualitative research, as it carries “a firsthand account of the situation under study” (Merriam, 1998, p.111). Observations provide the research with a rich description of the participants’ experiences.

While conducting direct observation as a data collection tool, the researcher does not have to be a participant in the classroom, as the direct observation aims to look for specific incidences of a certain behavior instead of looking at the whole behavior. On the other hand, participant observation necessitates the researcher to be an active participant within the natural environment of the research site (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002). The participant observer should establish rapport with the members of the community so as the members to act naturally. Also, the participant observation should be conducted in a nonjudgmental attitude (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002).

The researcher took field notes as a participant observer. According to Emerson et al. (1995), “Writing field note descriptions is not so much a matter of passively copying down the facts about what happened. Rather, such writing involves active process of interpretation and sense-making.” (p. 8). With respect to this, the researcher can jot down field notes in a descriptive, reflective and analytical manner (Boghdan & Biklen, 2003).

#### **3.3.4.3. Interviews**

Interviews are conducted to gain an understanding about the way people feel and think. Qualitative researchers collect data by interviewing so that they can form insights about people’s lives, experiences, opinions, attitudes and aspirations. Interviewing is also a way for getting the story behind the participants’



experiences. Fontana and Frey (2005) also suggested that interviewing was not only asking questions, but also exchanging information collaboratively. Kvale (1996) described the interviewer's aim as eliciting the interviewees' descriptions of the meanings of their worlds.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews for the purposes of this study. Semi-structured interviewing has a predetermined order but it is flexible in the way the issues are addressed, as the questions are open-ended (Dunn, 2005). Researchers collecting data through interviews develop a written interview guide that might be specific with carefully worded open-ended questions or a list of topics to be discussed (Ayres, 2008). The researcher does not have to follow the order. She/he can move back and forth according to the interviewee's responses.

#### **3.3.4.4. Audio and video recordings**

Using audio and video recordings to collect data in qualitative research is very common. They are especially valuable for focus groups and interviews as they offer an accurate summary of what was said (Morgan & Guevara, 2008). Audio recording necessitates the use of a digital recording equipment to store the conversations and interviews and it could elaborate on the elements of tonality and emphasis (Morgan & Guevara, 2008). After transcribing the audio recordings, the researcher will have a great source for direct quotations to present data.

Moving further from the audio recording, video recording is helpful especially in providing the researcher with the details of nonverbal communication (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Lemke (2007) supported video recording suggesting that it could be useful in capturing details missed in field notes or observations. Moreover, the use of video recordings provides a lasting record of participants' natural setting and the researcher can watch the recordings repeatedly in the analysis process. (Miller and Zhou, 2007).

#### **3.4. Data Organization And Preparation**

In this section the organization and preparation of the data will be discussed including how the data were managed, stored and transcribed.

Qualitative research is messy unless it is organized well because it generates a huge amount of data. Hall (2000) suggested indexing video recordings and creating a log of the date and time, names of participants, and the activities taking

place. The researcher indexed the recordings to transcribe and compare them with the field notes (Engle et al., 2007). The focus groups and interviews were audio and video recorded and they were entered into a log with the notes taken down during the process. The field notes were also logged and stored in a Microsoft Word file in the researcher's personal computer. All the data were backed up on an external hard drive.

The data should be selected and reduced for transcription before they were analyzed. All of the focus group and the interview audio and video recordings were transcribed verbatim. On the other hand, the decision about which video recordings of the observations to transcribe was made according to the key events and the themes that took place in the classroom and noted in the field notes. Riessman (1993) claimed that the process of transcribing allowed the researcher to become familiar with the data and start thinking about themes that may emerge. The transcriptions for the focus groups, interviews and observations were recorded on Microsoft Word format files according to date, participants and place.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

There are various ways of analyzing qualitative data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this section the grounded theory method used to analyze the data collected for this research study would be discussed.

#### **3.5.1. Grounded Theory**

Charmaz (2006) defined grounded theory as “methods consisting of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded in the data themselves’” (p. 2). Glaser and Strauss (1967) also described it as “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (p. 2). Furthermore, Creswell (2009) explained it as “a qualitative strategy of inquiry in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study” (p.13). This process necessitates the use of multiple stages of data collection, the refinement and interrelating of the categories of information (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Researchers using grounded theory methods collect data by theoretical sampling which means selecting subjects who will be helpful in maximizing the potential to discover as many dimensions and conditions relevant to the

phenomenon. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Additionally, the data is collected through interviews, focus groups, observations, or any other individual or group activity which produces data (Holton, 2009).

The current study on the issue of PD of EFL teachers is wide and the grounded theory is valuable in supporting various data collection methods and allowing for themes and meanings to emerge. Moreover, grounded theory fits in the educational settings as it helps in the explanation of the everyday world of teachers, students, and administrators. According to Hutchinson (1988):

“with a focus on lived experience, patterns of experience and judging and appraising the experience, grounded theory offers a systematic way to study the richness and the diversity of human experience” (p.127).

While using grounded theory, the researcher should analyze the data as they are collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The researcher started to analyze data during Phase 1, after the PD workshop, and in Phase 2 of data collection so that the emerging analyses could help in the decision making about further data collection. Creativity is an important element in the grounded theory. Creativity helps the researcher to move from assumptions to create a new order out of the previous ones (Charmaz, 2006). It is useful in naming the categories and making associations that can generate stimulating questions for discovery.

In coding the data using grounded theory, the researchers follow a three-stage process: (a) open coding, (b) axial coding and (c) selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding means comparing and sorting out the data collected from the various sources such as observations and interviews according to the themes. It necessitates the categorization of the data and moving to the second stage, which is axial coding. The researcher looks for relationships among categories at the axial coding stage. The aim at this stage is to make connections among conditions, contexts and interactions by studying the various influences that might affect the phenomenon being studied. It is named axial coding as the analysis “revolves around the ‘axis’ of one category at a time” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 32).

Generally after axial coding, the researcher conducts additional interviews and observations focusing on the emerging themes. At the axial coding stage, constant

comparison is used to identify the relationships among categories and to create a story line that describes the phenomenon. At this stage, the data are collected to answer the newly emerging questions. After completing the first two stages of data collection, the researcher starts selective coding, the third stage. At this stage the researcher looks for recurring patterns and themes in the categories. Finally, the story line is created and validated by looking at the relationships among concepts at the selective coding stage.

Researchers do not form hypothesis in the grounded theory method, instead they sensitize emerging concepts to make sense of the data (Blaike, 2000). Sensitizing concepts involves using the literature review created for the research conducted. Creating the concepts, the researcher can refer to the literature.

The researcher conducted initial coding, which involved coding the transcribed data word-by-word, line-by-line, and event-by-event (Charmaz, 2006). During the initial coding process, codes related to a theme were organized into “concepts” that were similar codes grouped together. Then concepts were grouped according to similar themes to form “categories”. The researcher reviewed the concepts and categories emerging from the initial analysis to each data set to see if the categories applied to all, which is defined as “constant comparison” in the literature (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

### **3.5.2. Memoing, Coding, Drafting and Writing**

After the completion of each data source, they were transcribed immediately and the data analyses followed. Analytic memos were written after each round of data collection. Memo writing is critical for qualitative researchers because they are helpful in creating codes in the research process and also in reminding the key ideas at the later stages (Heath and Street, 2008). Additionally, memos serve a basis for drafting.

Wolcott (2009) recommended starting drafting as early as possible in the research process to get a sense of what needed to be included in the research paper. Also Charmaz (2006) suggested the drafting of the research findings to go hand in hand with various phases of data collection.

### 3.6. Trustworthiness

For research to be trusted, it should be sound and quality (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The idea of measuring validity and reliability was replaced by the idea of trustworthiness in qualitative research (Johnson, 1997). In order to meet the criteria of trustworthiness, three different processes were followed in this research study: (a) triangulation, (b) peer checking and (c) member checking.

Triangulation increases the credibility of a qualitative study. Triangulation necessitates the comparison of data collected from various data sources to examine a phenomenon (Denzin, 2005). Stake (1995) described the aspects of triangulation as *data triangulation* – conducted by using different data sources, *methodological triangulation* – managed by comparing different methods of data sources in the study, *investigator triangulation* – done by including multiple investigators and participants' perspectives. Different data sources should be triangulated to eliminate the potential threats against credibility (Gay et al., 2006).

The researcher combined data from different sources through triangulation to check the accuracy of findings in this thesis. Consistent themes were identified across data from interviews, focus groups and observations, which helped in increasing the credibility of this study. Data and methodological triangulations were involved in the study design. Peer checking (investigator triangulation) was addressed thanks to one of the colleagues of the researcher. She was very skillful at conducting qualitative research. And also the thesis advisor provided feedback on summaries of data analyses and the final results of the study. The researcher and the colleagues individually created themes and categories and then met again to discuss the differences. Peer checking was carried out to see if the data were perceived in a similar way by the researcher and experts (Cresswell, 2009). Member checking was used to verify the findings of the study. The participants were given the transcripts of the focus groups, interviews, and observations. They were asked to review the transcripts and the coding to ensure the correct interpretation of the data.

The researcher presented both negative and positive perspectives as the data emerged, to decrease the researcher's bias (Cresswell, 2009). Also the clarification of researcher bias was explained in the researcher's role section.

Moreover, the researcher cross-referenced and compared the views of different teachers and teacher trainers. The researcher situated the thesis study in the literature and used grounded theory approach to data analysis to make “sure that the findings reflect the participants and the inquiry itself rather than a fabrication from the researcher’s biases or prejudices” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 201). To ensure the neutrality of the focus group and interview questions, the researcher also got peer feedback from her colleagues to review the questions.

### **3.7. Ethical Considerations**

In this section, the ethical issues considered for this research would be discussed. Basically, research is collecting data from people, about people (Punch, 2005). Therefore, the participants should be protected, and the researcher should promote trust and integrity (Israel & Hay, 2006). The researcher got the necessary approvals and obtained permission to reach the research sites and work with the EFL teachers working at public schools. The research was totally voluntary and the participants were also offered the opportunity of withdrawal from the study at any time without affecting their career or their relationships with the Ministry of Education. The participant teachers were informed about the research and they were all given a copy of the information letter explaining the research in detail.

Throughout all the stages of data collection, the researcher tried to include the participants’ voice by sharing how she interpreted their comments. She tried to be sensitive to their feelings and tried to decrease the stress if any. The participants were ensured about the confidentiality. To protect the privacy of the participants, the researcher saved all the audio and visual data on her personal computer and protected them with passwords and also the data were backed up on her external hard drive. The data were transcribed using pseudonyms for the participants and the locations. The video recordings would not be presented at any conferences and would be discarded after five years.

The researcher tried her best not to disrupt the physical settings and she gave her time to assist the teachers in a suitable way during the participant classroom observations to reciprocate their given time and sharing experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

### **3. 8. Limitations of the Study**

The study will provide an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the EFL Teachers that can be applied to different contexts in a similar setting that may add to further understanding. The PD will be limited to seven different topics in four weeks; however, it might have been more conducive to learning and implementation if the PD sessions were provided throughout a longer period of time. Finally, the last possible limitation is that each teacher will be observed for only once after each PD, therefore his or her best practices may not take place during that specific time.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter addresses the research questions. The findings relating to each research question was coded through categories and themes. Four categories emerged from the analysis of the data through grounded theory: EFL teachers' previous experiences with PD, challenges preventing EFL teachers to engage in PD opportunities, areas in need of improvement, progress toward becoming a better EFL teacher. From these categories different themes emerged, which will be discussed in detail in this section. The research questions were:

1. What are EFL teachers' previous experiences with PD activities?
2. What are the PD needs of EFL teachers working at public schools in Gaziantep?
3. How do the PD sessions inform EFL teachers' instructional practices?

### 4.1. EFL Teachers' Previous Experiences with Professional Development

The EFL teacher participants of this study attended PD programs on and off before the PD program offered during this study. They shared their experiences during the focus group session and the interviews. Under this category, four themes emerging from the coding of the data through grounded theory will be explained.

#### 4.1.1. Discrepancies between Theory and Practice

"In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is."

–Yogi Berra

While investigating the teachers' previous experiences with PD, the teachers mentioned the differences between theory presented to them and the practice they have had. Aylin explained it with a beautiful metaphor: "Theory is usually like a shiny brilliant sky while practice is rainy and foggy. Not everything goes as smoothly" (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). Ruken further questioned the issue:

I have attended many INSETs both in Turkey and abroad. I have lots of experience, but now I try to think a little bit. How much of what I learnt did I put into practice? Almost none. The theory taught us both in pre-service years and in in-service trainings do not apply to our classes. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)



The teachers had different experiences in their teaching than what they studied in theory. The discrepancy might have arisen from the differences in context, learner needs, available resources.

Another problem the EFL teachers faced in the PD programs were mentioned as the differences between the ideal environments presented in theory and the real classrooms they practice in. Adem remarked:

The methodologies are usually developed in ideal classes with twelve students. Are we in an ideal environment? Show me a public school class with only twelve students. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

In the schools observed in this study, there were 30 students in each class on average, which supports the fact he claimed.

Finally, when the teachers were asked about their previous experiences with PD, they maintained that often the trainers teaching them do not necessarily have sufficient experience in the field. They advocated the view that the trainers or professors teaching them should have site experience by attending, observing and teaching in real classes. Murat suggested it by saying “The university professors should come to the schools and see the environment” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). Vildan also noted:

A professor who does not have a classroom teaching experience at a high school would not know what happens in a real classroom. Right? In theory they would know, but in practice? Until you go into the classroom, you would not know. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

The EFL teachers explained the discrepancies they saw in theory and practice. As a solution to this problem, Feride suggested:

Please let those professors go into the school X (she named a school which is located in the suburbs of the city where the school violence is high and the success rate is low) and practice what they tell us there. They should come to the field and apply them. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

It was apparent that the teacher participants were aware of the different issues that had to do with the PDs offered or not offered to them. The solutions they offered were also reasonable and legitimate. So relying on this, it can be argued

that the practitioners, policy makers and teachers uniting in the classrooms will produce the best for the teachers' professional growth.

Other than the discrepancy between theory and practice, the teachers also mentioned the short-term effects of the PDs offered to them that will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.1.2. Short-Term Effects**

While describing their earlier experiences with PD, the teachers pointed out the short-term effects of the PDs they attended. They complained that they could not apply the knowledge presented into new experiences. Adem mentioned this as "in seminars we attend they teach us five or six sample activities. They are just for one hour. How about the rest of the year" (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)? Feride additionally explained the short-term effects of the PDs in motivating her:

I have attended many INSETs. They motivate me for a week perfectly. When I go out of the conference hall, I always tell myself this time everything will be great and I will be a perfect teacher. However, when I go to the class and apply them, the activities I learnt last for one week. I cannot adapt them further. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Due to the hardships the teachers face in their classrooms, they stopped trying new techniques, which resulted in low motivation.

The teachers also criticized the fashion the PDs are offered by the ministry. Aylin commented on her discontent as:

What I don't like about seminars or workshops offered by the national ministry of education is that they are very few and they are usually offered at the end of the semester as time-fillers. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

The teachers did not find the workshops offered for once useful. Their effects did not last much long. Ruken complained about it:

Any seminar or workshop offered is useful in a way or so, but they are very superficial when they are offered for once. They give you the fish in the short seminars. They don't teach you how to fish. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

The teachers did not support the one-shot PDs as they failed to meet their needs and they did not have a huge impact on their pedagogy.

The former PD experiences were described as being one-shot, not generable, being offered inconsistently and not having a long-lasting effect. In the next section the teachers' experiences about the PD programs failing to meet their needs will be discussed.

#### **4.1.3. Meeting the Teachers' Needs**

The teachers often attend PDs to improve themselves. They look for PD opportunities empowering them. When their previous experiences were enquired, they reported PDs failing to meet their needs. Sometimes the PDs do not match their level of teaching or the language proficiency level of the students. Sometimes the age group presented is above the age group of the teachers attending.

The language level of the activities presented in PD programs is important in meeting the needs of the teachers. The activity might be very useful and creative, yet it might not be applicable to all proficiency levels. Aylin explained her failure in adapting the activities she learnt in the previous PD opportunities:

Generally the trainers share various activities with us, but when I look at the language levels, they are either pre-intermediate or intermediate. My students are beginners most of the time, so I cannot use any of the activities. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

While preparing a PD program, it is crucial to know the language levels of the learners that the teachers work.

The EFL teachers from different grade levels were trained together in the INSET programs offered by the government. However, one teacher teaching at primary level might expect a different outcome from a teacher teaching at high school level. Adem exemplified this in his quote very well:

Another thing is during the INSETs organized by the ministry of education, teachers from different grade levels and schools join together. However, teaching English to adolescents is different than teaching English to young learners. Also one school may have different facilities than the other one. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

The EFL teacher trainers whom are often university professors might not be well acquainted with the real classroom environment, thus the teachers made some suggestions for them to better meet their needs in their workshops and seminars. Feride recommended “If the scholars want to be helpful, they should join us during the classes, maybe teach our students for one hour” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). Ruken added, “The trainers coming to teach us something should first see our books. Visit our school and see the conditions. Then they can do something fruitful” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013).

The teachers stated that their previous PD experiences fail to meet their needs due to the differences in the age groups, language proficiency levels, grades of teaching and the context. They asked for trainers to observe their context and offer PDs accordingly to meet their needs better.

After sharing their experiences with the previous PDs failing to meet their needs, the teachers shared their frustration about the programs lacking follow-ups or reflection, which will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.1.4. No Reflections or Follow-Ups**

PD opportunities are unequalled in contributing to teachers’ professional growth. Teachers need to adapt what they learn in PDs and improve their teaching. In this respect, reflection is important. By reflecting, teachers question their teaching beliefs. They could evaluate and modify their practices according to the needs of their students.

The EFL teachers participating in this study were not fortunate enough to reflect on the experiences they had in PDs. Vildan mentioned this by saying “We are not offered the chance of discussing how we can apply the activities in our classes” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). Maybe it was because of the number of the participants or time restrictions, but Aylin also supported this by relating to her experiences, “We attend seminars in groups of large size like three or four hundred teachers together. We cannot find the opportunity to talk to the trainers in person or discuss anything” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013).

Another problem with the earlier PD opportunities was that there were not any follow-ups offered to the teachers. Ruken pointed out this:

During the seminars, we sit through one or two hours and then we leave. Nobody asks about whether we will apply what we learnt or not. Or we cannot find somebody to discuss when we face a problem in application. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Adem also agreed with her “Same here. While adapting an activity, you sometimes need an expert opinion. You would like to refer to the trainer again but you cannot reach them” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). As the teachers met the trainers in crowds for once, they usually could not reach them after the PD sessions. They did not have the chance to reflect upon the PD and discuss further applications.

Under this category the themes occurring about the teachers’ previous experiences with PD opportunities has been discussed. Following section will focus on the challenges hindering EFL teachers from involving in PDs will be discussed.

#### **4.2. Challenges Preventing EFL Teachers to Engage in Professional Development Opportunities**

The teachers attended PDs, but there were times they missed the PD opportunities. The teachers explained the challenges hindering them from engaging in PD opportunities or applying what they gained in PDs into their classrooms. Under this category, six themes emerged from the data analysis.

##### **4.2.1. National Professional Development Policies**

The ministry of national education is the main source of PD opportunities for teachers in general. The national education policies determine the frequency and the topics of PDs to be offered. This might become a challenge for teachers under some circumstances.

If the PDs are not offered on a regular basis, teachers might be deprived of the opportunities. Adem pointed this out in his comment:

I have been working in this city for almost four years, but I didn’t have the chance to participate in in-service education. They don’t conduct anything for English Teachers here. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

The teachers also mentioned their uneasiness about the way the PDs are offered. Ruken illustrated this by saying, “I love attending PDs, but when I hear the word ‘compulsory’, I lose my interest in the program” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). She was disturbed when others made her professional growth compulsory for her. She was more willing to attend when it was optional.

The government might offer PDs to train teachers about the amendments they make in the educational acts and the reforms they enacted. When there are too many amendments and changes, the teachers might fall behind and it might become hard to catch up. Vildan explained this issue:

The curriculum, books and the exams change continuously. This year they ask us to use communicative approach, next year constructivist approach. Without preparing us or without developing sufficient materials, they want us to implement something totally new. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Feride further exemplified it:

The most current one is FATİH Project (<http://fatihprojesi.meb.gov.tr/tr/english.php>). The government equipped each high school with smart boards. We don't know how to use the smart board. They offered some in-service training, but they selected the teachers to attend. Not all of us could attend it. (Video transcript, 13/02/13)

The teachers endured hardships in applying what had been suggested in the educational reforms and amendments in the existing acts due to the lack of PDs. The PDs being offered irregularly on an obligatory fashion and in insufficient numbers might be seen as challenges for EFL teachers. Changing educational policies necessitates more PDs for teachers to adapt their teaching. Excluding one teacher from a PD program and selecting only some of the teachers might be harmful for the other teachers' professional growth.

In addition to the challenge created due to the national PD policies, the teachers were also challenged by the bureaucracy, which will be examined in the following section.

#### **4.2.2. Bureaucracy**

The teachers need time for PD and also need some flexibility to apply what they gain from PDs. The extra paper work and the bureaucracy the teachers should follow might challenge them in attending PDs. Ruken complained about it, “As a teacher we have many unnecessary paperwork other than teaching. The ministry of education asks for it, but nobody is really reading them” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). Feride agreed with her, “Yes. But when they ask we have to give them and show them what we did. This really decreases my motivation” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013).

Engaging in PDs motivates teachers to create difference in the community they belong to; however, the bureaucracy might challenge them when they want to do something unusual for their students. Adem remarked about it:

Getting excited about teaching after attending PDs, I would like to try something new each time. I would like to take my students out for trips where they can experience something new. However, it is very difficult to organize trips. You have to take permissions from everybody. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Also Aylin advocated this view, “There are many procedures to complete and when you see them you quit organizing things for your students” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). The bureaucracy decreased the interest of the teachers in conducting various activities. It was also challenging for them to attend further PDs. The amount of time and energy they spent on the paperwork decreased their motivation toward the profession, which may lead to teacher burnout in future.

The challenge created by the bureaucracy issues was followed by the lack of support of administrators. It will be explained under the next theme.

#### **4.2.3. Lack of Support of Administrators**

The administrator support is critical in raising the interest of teachers in PDs. Teachers gain a lot from PDs. They have the chance to evaluate their teaching practices. They might rethink and adjust the techniques they use. While trying something innovative, one needs support. If they are not able to find the necessary support, they might give up trying further and developing themselves

professionally. Vildan's anecdote was a good example for the importance of the support and the views of the administrators about teaching English:

Sometimes I make my students play games. You know how game times are: noisy and chaotic. Then suddenly I hear a knock on the door and the principal comes in saying 'Sorry miss, I thought there was no teacher inside'. (Laughter). (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Aylin also said "Principals should be trained first. English is not something you sit through and learn" (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). Feride's school was not different:

Our school principal demands all the rules and the orders to be followed strictly. For example when we want to organize an event he makes things difficult. Even when he can use his initiative, he rejects. He doesn't want to take any responsibility. (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013)

The teachers were disappointed by the way their administrators treated them.

The teachers at School C were luckier as they had strong support of the administrator. Murat was happy about the way their administrator offered support:

We are flexible at our school. Our administrator supports us to a great extent. We can copy and distribute worksheets and our students are willing to buy extra materials. So we are lucky in this. (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013)

The teachers at School C shared the pleasure they had over the support of their administrator.

When engaging in PDs and acting out innovative teaching methods and techniques, the administrator's attitude might either become a challenge or a further motivation. If the teachers feel the lack of the support of their administrators, they will stop somewhere eventually.

Other than the unsupportive administrators, the teachers were also challenged by the time constraints. This issue will be discussed in the following section.



#### 4.2.4. Time Constraints

The teachers working at public schools should follow the curriculum created by the national ministry of education. The government sends schools supervisors to assess the teaching. The teachers might receive penalties when they do not comply with the curriculum. This is a bounding factor for teacher change. Except for Ruken, all the teachers discussed the time issue.

Vildan: “There is a yearlong curriculum developed by the ministry of education and I have to follow it. I need to cover all the units. Why? Because when the supervisors from the ministry came into my class, they inquire me. They ask me ‘why do not you follow the daily plan, why do not you use the book?’ I love my job and I don’t want to face these questions. I cannot do anything.” (Interview transcript, 20/02/2013)

Adem: “Time is limited and we cannot make the classroom more enjoyable.” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Aylin: “Time is limited of course. Just six hours a week. Speaking, writing, reading, listening... What can we do? Should we teach the skills or the grammar content or should we follow the book? Which one? We cannot do anything perfectly.” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Feride: “According to the curriculum, I should spend two weeks for a unit. There are four reading passages in a unit. The students need to learn many new words. On each page you can see different grammar rules. I need to make them practice the grammatical items as well. So most of the time I use translations to catch up with the curriculum. I cannot do other extra activities.” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Murat: “We have a time problem. There are so many things to teach, but we have very little time.” (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013)

The curriculum was intense. On one hand, the teachers had to prepare for their classes and they had to teach whatever was expected in the unit plan for long hours. They had extracurricular work and meetings. On the other hand, the time was very restricted and it hindered the teachers from engaging in PDs. Even though they were able to attend in PDs, they could not apply everything in their classes due to the time limitations.

In addition to time constraints, the teachers were challenged by the washback effect of the testing system, which will be explained under the next theme.

#### **4.2.5. Washback Effect of the Testing System**

The testing system has a huge washback effect on the education system. The form and content of a test affects the way a course is taught. Also the interest of the students in the course might get affected. In Turkey, the university entrance exam is very important for students' future careers. As a result they might lose their motivation in the subjects that are not included on the university entrance exam.

The EFL teachers participating in this study shared their worries about the washback effect of the testing system on their classes.

Murat: "The students are not focusing on learning English. They are focusing on passing the university entrance exam. And in the exam, there are no English questions." (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Vildan: "My students are not interested in English classes. I think the university entrance exam should include at least five questions." (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Ruken: "In seminars they suggest us to encourage our students for communication. They tell us to accept even mimics as answers. But in the exams they ask for full grammatically correct sentences. So should I prepare my students for the exams or not?" (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Feride: "English is an obligatory class, but the students are not responsible for it in the university entrance exam. They keep asking me 'Why do we learn this, do we really need it?' Their motivation is very low" (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013)

As is clear from the above quotes, the teachers were challenged by the testing system. They were obliged to choose either teaching for the exams or teaching for a real purpose. Making the choice is a very hard one. If they choose the first one, they will live the dilemma of engaging in PDs or not, as the PD programs do not always aim to teach exam strategies.

The challenge presented by the washback effect of the testing system is followed by the mismatch between students' and teachers' expectations, which will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.2.6. Mismatch between Students' Expectations and Teachers'**

The mismatch between students and teachers' expectations might arise from various reasons. It might be students' lack of motivation, teachers' low interest, students' socio-economical backgrounds etc. Whatever the reason, a mismatch causes a gap between the teaching styles and the learning styles.

The teachers' instruction type might affect the level of interest the students bear for English. If the teachers themselves are willing to teach, they will not spend extra time on creating course materials. Ruken criticized these teachers:

I think the problem with English teachers is that they do not think anything before the class. Most of them teach for twenty hours. They do not prepare any materials. They go into the class and follow the course book. It is very boring for the students. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Another mismatch between the expectations might result from the students' basic needs. When they are not met satisfactorily, they are not ready for the school. Their socio economic background might affect their learning. For example, Feride describes her students at School B:

We should not forget that our poor students are working. Almost all of the boys in one my classes are working. And when they come to school in the morning, they are sleeping. How can I force him to study? Should I punish him or shout at him? No, I cannot. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Finally, the mismatch might stem from students' lack of interest in English classes. The teachers had to use external motivators to raise their students' interest in the subject.

Aylin: "As teachers we need to motivate our students for learning English. They don't take it serious." (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Murat: "You cannot find intrinsically motivated students in Turkey. Most students are motivated extrinsically. We should always force them, push

them, or threaten them with marks or failing the class.” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Vildan: “There are times I tell my students to open their books five times.” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Consequently, the mismatch between the teachers’ expectations and the students’ needs and learning styles might deteriorate teaching. It is a challenge for teachers to meet in following their professional growth.

Under this section the challenges the teachers face in engaging PDs have been discussed. In the next section the various areas of PD needs determined will be discussed.

### **4.3. Areas in Need of Improvement**

In this section, the areas the teachers reported and observed in the classroom to be improved will be discussed. Six themes emerged under this category.

#### **4.3.1. Schools’ Infrastructure**

All of the classes observed were designed traditionally: teacher in the front, students sitting in pairs in rows except for the language class at School B. The desks were ordered into a U-shape where the students could see each other. The small classrooms were overcrowded with around 30 students. “The school B is a little bit old. The desks of the students are scratched all over, there are broken chairs and the classroom is very small for 32 students” (Field notes, 19/02/2013).

The surrounding neighborhood of the schools also affected the quality of the education. Aylin described their school setting “The physical environment of the school is also a problem. Our school is in the middle of the industrial workplaces and my students have other urgent needs than learning English” (Interview transcript, 20/02/2013). Vildan also shared “There are lots of problems about the classrooms. We have smart boards, but we do not have internet connection” (Interview transcript, 20/02/2013).

The schools’ resources and the infrastructure are important in creating better language classrooms. Except for School C, there were not many resources available for the use of teachers. Feride mentioned lack of resources:

We have one computer and a printer at the teacher's lounge. However, when we want to make copies the school doesn't allow us. We have to collect money from the students for paper and printer ink. I want to develop extra worksheets as assignments, but I cannot copy. Most of the students are poor and their families do not send money. (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013)

At School B and C, "there are no visuals on the walls except for the Ataturk's portrait and the national anthem" (Field notes, 19/02/2013). School A was a little bit different; "Aylin shared students' work on the walls" (Field notes, 20/02/2013). Even though the facilities available under the hands of the teachers differed, it was the teacher who made the real difference. The teachers needed support in creating the difference and improving the context.

The need for the improvement in the schools' infrastructure was followed by the need for the improvement in teachers' classroom management skills and strategies. This need will be explained under the following theme.

#### **4.3.2. Classroom Management**

Classroom management is maintaining learning and teaching at a positive supportive environment (Cangelosi, 2000). It includes seating arrangements and grouping, teacher's voice and body language, establishing classroom routines, using whiteboard, creating a positive atmosphere, dealing with discipline problems and engaging students, giving feedback and error correction, differentiating instruction and so on. In this study, the teachers were observed and reported classroom management problems at different stages.

In all of the classes except for Ruken's language class, the students were sitting in orderly rows where the teacher stood in front of the board. Ruken's language class was arranged into a U-shape (horseshoe). The number of the students might have caused this seating arrangement, as the classrooms were not big enough for moving thirty desks around. None of the teachers used separate group tables or solowork tables (Field notes, 19/02/2013-20/02/2013).

The teachers' tended to work with their students as a whole class most of the time. While they were doing an activity or answering the questions, they were organized as a whole class. Students did not conduct group work in any of the classes

observed except for Vildan's class. When the reason was inquired, Murat replied "my class is very crowded and if I group my students the good ones dominate, and they speak Turkish a lot" (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013). This was a very common answer for not using group work in the class among the participating teachers. Grouping the students is a routine to be established. "Vildan has tried making the students do the task in groups, however, as the students are not used to this routine. They lost focus and suddenly the class went chaotic" (Field notes, 20/02/2013). The students need to know what to do before doing a task. The instructions and the time limit should be set clearly. All of the teachers used pair work at least once.

Creating a positive atmosphere in the class is necessary for attaining the learning goals. Knowing the students and establishing good rapport could increase student success. However, the teachers might not know all of their students by name. Adem explained the reason for this, "I teach many 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. I could not learn all of their names" (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013). Also a positive and supportive classroom should value the student work and the class should be covered with their work, language posters and pictures. When the pre-observations at School B were conducted, it was quite obvious that the walls were empty. When the reason was inquired, Fidan said "our school principal strictly forbids it, as we might harm the walls and the school doesn't have enough money to paint the school every year" (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013). Although in theory the teachers were aware of the things they needed to do to create a better classroom atmosphere, the structural and administrative restrictions made this impossible.

The teachers found it hard to engage students especially during the game times. So they reported that they need more games to motivate their students. Aylin mentioned:

My students got bored easily and they want to play games during the lessons. I always have to keep their interest alive through games, so I need much fun English sort of ideas. (Video transcript, 13/02/13)

Establishing routines and procedures in the class is important in letting the students know what is expected of them. This will allow for smooth transitions and

prevent discipline problems. The teachers had a routine for beginning the lesson yet they did not have a routine for ending the lesson. “Feride is teaching the countable/uncountable nouns. The bell has rung. The topic has not been finished. She has not given any assignments. She has just said goodbye and left the classroom” (Field notes, 19/02/2013). Keeping track of the lesson time and arranging the lesson accordingly is something that these teachers may need to work on as routines have not been established accordingly.

While the teacher is distributing or collecting papers, they need to establish a routine as well and they need to give clear instructions and time limits for the activity. Otherwise, the activity might not be as fruitful as expected. “Adem prepared worksheets and he has started to distribute them one by one. The students are chitchatting and the ones taking the paper have started to work on it immediately. Some finished earlier and some could not. Then they checked the answers” (Field notes, 19/02/2013).

During the in-class activity time, the teachers tend to check the students answers in a similar manner. In School A, Ruken was checking the answers for a reading passage:

The teacher has asked ‘who would like to answer the first question,’ then she has chosen a student among the ones raising their hands and moved to the next question. The same students are raising their hands throughout the lesson. (Field notes, 19/02/2013)

The teachers need to be more careful in order not to let certain students dominate. During the interview when asked about it, Ruken explained it: “We need to catch up with the other classes. This group is slower. To gain some time and finish the activity quickly, I accepted answers from the willing students” (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013).

As the teachers had been teaching at least for five years, they used their voice and the board well. They did not use their body language as effectively though. “Vildan was trying to teach the word skipping. She just gave the translation of the word. Instead she could mime as if she was jumping over a rope” (Field notes, 20/02/2013).

The teachers need to know some of the basics of the classroom management and they should be encouraged to introduce variety in their classes. Each of them has strengths and weaknesses in classroom management. Another issue was with the teachers' use of classroom language. It will be discussed in the following section.

### **4.3.3. Classroom Language**

Using English as a medium of the class and giving instructions and setting classroom rules in English is very useful for the learners. Also using a classroom language, which encourages and praises students to follow the lesson more attentively, is also important. However, the teachers were inclined to use the mother tongue a lot and they did not use a variety of praising or encouraging words. Positive reinforcement should be regularly used in the classroom (Mendler, 2000).

The teachers believed that their students would not understand what they teach if they spoke English all the time. Ruken mentioned this:

My biggest problem is unfortunately I cannot speak English during the lesson all the time. Little by little, but this is not what I want. I want to speak English all the time. During the classes... But my students do not understand, so they try to force me to speak Turkish. (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

Feride also believed in the use of mother tongue in the classroom; "My students' level of English is very low. They do not understand me if I speak only English" (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). She showed her students' English proficiency levels as a reason.

The teachers used English to start and end their lessons. This was a common routine, but they did not keep it throughout the course. "Adem entered the class and greeted the students in English. Then he reviewed what they studied previous week in Turkish" (Field notes, 19/02/2013).

The students' interest and motivation toward English also affected the classroom language. Murat also used Turkish a lot in his classes. When the researcher asked him about it during the interview he replied



Each term I vow to myself to speak English only. Sometimes I repeat a sentence ten times, but then I give up. The students are used to translation from their primary education years and they ask for it all the time. (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013)

The teachers did not use praising or encouraging words. While getting the answers from the students during an activity, the teachers used only “thank you, yes, next, ok, sit down” (field notes, 19/02/13). Aylin and Vildan were a little bit more successful in this. They used a richer vocabulary of praising and encouraging words like “good job, well done, keep trying, not exactly etc.” (Field notes, 20/02/2013).

The teachers supported the use of Turkish, mother tongue, in English language classes. Even though they tried using English, they frequently resort Turkish translations themselves or they asked students to translate. The teachers needed a richer vocabulary for praising and encouraging students.

The teachers need to improve themselves in using English more in the class and offering positive reinforcement with their words. Another area of need was developing classroom materials and adapting the book. It will be discussed under the next theme.

#### **4.3.4. Developing Classroom Materials and Adapting the Book**

The teachers are supposed to adapt their course books to cater for different student needs and develop extra materials as supplementary learning tools. Only course book on its own will not be enough for all learners. The topics may not be relevant to the students' context. The course book may not reach out to all the students with different learning styles and different language levels. Under any of these circumstances, the teachers need to adapt the course book and develop extra materials.

In the study, the participant teachers usually used the course books without thinking critically over them. Even though they were able to assess the books according to the needs of their learners, they were not able to create as many materials as they needed. Aylin explained the need she felt at her class:

The government provides the students with only course books and they are provided usually in the middle of the term. We have no other classroom

materials. I need to develop everything myself for my students to learn better. (Interview transcript, 20/02/2013)

As she mentioned above the government of Turkey provides the books for each student studying at a public school, but the books might arrive to schools late. Thus, the teachers themselves have to create class materials to fill the gap.

Turkish professionals create the course books. Sometimes they might include activities that might sound weird to a native speaker or they might not give the students an authentic experience. Adem stated that “The course books we use contain non-contextual activities and they are not communicative. We should make them more memorable and authentic” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013). The teachers needed to adapt the books and create tasks and materials to have more communicative lessons.

Sometimes the teachers may have to adapt the books provided by the government when the topic is not culturally appropriate. Murat gave a very specific example of it:

The ministry of Education publishes the books. A few years ago I remember a text including the word ‘Kwanzaa’. Even I did not know the meaning, and I learnt that it was an African-American holiday in the U.S. How can I adapt this text for the activity? (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

As it is mentioned in the above example, culturally irrelevant materials that are included in the books also make teachers’ jobs difficult in appropriating them for the students.

The teachers need to differentiate their instruction to cater for students with different socio-economical status. During one of the lessons related to hobbies, the teacher was showing pictures of skiing, bungee jumping, etc... It was obvious that the students were not familiar with these activities. “The students were working on a matching activity. Some of the students may not have done some of them” (Field notes, 19/02/2013). Choosing pictures that are more relevant to the students’ backgrounds and cultures would cater better for the students with various socio-economical backgrounds. The teachers need to help students internalize the words by relating it to their background. Also Ruken pointed out another reason for teachers to create materials for their classes:

Socio-economic status of the students is important in choosing the materials. For example my students can go to cinema twice a year only. The only social activity that they do is eating seeds in the park. I should prepare materials for them to broaden their horizons. (Video transcript, 13/02/13)

As observed in the classes and reported by the teachers, there is huge need for course book assessment and adaption in addition to material development. Additionally, the teachers need to improve themselves in teaching different language skills, which will be explained in the next section.

#### **4.3.5. Teaching Foreign Language Skills**

The teachers reported difficulty in teaching productive skills and introducing vocabulary. When the language classes were observed during this study, the students were more successful at using receptive skills. It might stem from the dominance of reading passages in the books with very few listening activities spread throughout, yet no opportunity for them to practice their speaking and writing skills.

First productive skill is speaking. The students were observed speaking on very rare occasions like answering a question or talking about a picture in the book. Ruken was also worried about the way she taught speaking:

“I am teaching 11<sup>th</sup> grade foreign language education students for the first time. Next year they will enter the university exam. And they cannot speak English. So they want me to speak English for one or two hours a week. But I have no speaking activities for them. We just organize group discussions on the topics that they choose, but I think I am not good at conducting a speaking class.” (Video transcript, 13/02/2013)

This teacher needed to be supported in teaching speaking. She needed original ideas for creating a whole lesson based upon developing students' speaking skill.

Second productive skill is writing. Even if it is very important for students' language proficiency, writing is not included in the curriculum much. Students were supposed to write short sentences or sometimes paragraphs, but there was still a

huge need for improving this skill. At School A, the teachers touched upon this issue.

Vildan: “My students’ level is very low. When we are working on fill-in-the-blanks type of activity, they can do it, yet when I give them a short writing assignment, they don’t want to write.” (Interview transcript, 20/02/2013)

Aylin: “I make my students write short sentences using the grammar topics they learnt. However, I want to make them produce more. I need different ideas for making them write.” (Interview transcript, 20/02/2013)

Due to the students’ language proficiency levels and the teachers’ lack of ability to integrate writing into the class, the students were deprived of the opportunity to write more.

As the books prepared by the ministry of education were quite intensive with vocabulary, it might create hard time for both learners and teachers. Murat reported the challenge he faced in introducing vocabulary:

“There are three or four different reading texts in each unit. I need to teach a lot of vocabulary. I had to use translation most of the time. I feel sorry about it, but how can I teach this much vocabulary in another way?” (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013)

The similar cases were observed during different classes. “Instead of using different strategies for teaching vocabulary, the teachers resorted to using translation and giving the meaning immediately” (Field notes, 19/02/2013).

The teachers need to focus more on the teaching and integrating productive skills and they should reevaluate the ways they teach vocabulary and use other techniques. Otherwise, the children will not be able to speak no matter how advanced they are in grammar or reading and they will memorize the words to pass the exams.

Finally the teachers needed to improve themselves in using instructional technologies, which will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.3.6. Using Instructional Technologies**

The rapid changes in the information and communication technology and the increasing number of students accessing the technological tools and the Internet necessitate teachers to develop their skills on using instructional technologies.

The teachers were not very successful at integrating technology into their classes or assisting learning with technology. Adem explained the need he felt in improving himself about using technology to teach:

There is a smart board in almost all of the classrooms at Anatolian High Schools thanks to the FATIH Project. I do not believe that we... or just me as a teacher is using it effectively. I am looking for smart ways of using it. (Interview transcript, 19/02/2013)

The teachers felt themselves unqualified in using the technology available in their classrooms. They needed PD in especially using the interactive white boards effectively.

It is true that all of the teachers had a smart board in their classes, yet the use of them was very restricted in variety. Feride exemplified how she used it; "Sometimes I bring short videos to my students to show at the end of the lessons. They like it. Yet I want to learn more about integrating them into grammar classes" (Interview transcript, 19/02/13).

Even if the teachers all had an interactive white board in their classes, they tended to use them for power point presentations or just showing a page from the students' books while doing the activities. (Field notes, 19/02/2013 -20/02/2013).

Aylin also missed a good chance of using technology to save time.

Even though there is an interactive white board in the class, the teacher wrote the answers to the activity on the old-fashioned board one by one. It took her much time. (Field notes, 20/02/13)

As it is clear from the observations and what teachers had reported, even though they had access to technology, the teachers were resistant to using it in their classrooms. The use of the interactive boards were only limited to showing videos or PPT presentations. This may have been due to their lack of knowledge in using

the technology available. Therefore, they may need extra training in using more effectively.

The participant teachers of this study are lucky as they had access to basic technology, yet they were not able to make the best out of it. It is important for them to develop themselves in integrating technology to provide learners with unique experiences and introducing some authentic language materials. If an interactive white board is not used effectively, it will not make any difference with a chalkboard. Investing in technology will become meaningful when they are really made use of.

After the needs for PD in different areas were determined, the teachers engaged in various PDs in accordance with their own needs. They showed progress toward becoming better EFL teachers, which will be discussed in the next section.

#### **4.4. Progress Toward Becoming a Better EFL Teacher**

The six EFL teacher participants of this study were first invited to a focus group study to gain a general understanding of their teaching beliefs and previous experiences with PD. Later they were observed in their classrooms to better understand their needs. They were interviewed after the observations to determine a specific area of need. Different teacher trainers were assigned to their classes and they offered PDs at the public schools. The teachers evaluated the trainers and they thought about the ways they could differentiate the instruction and what they observed to be different from their teaching. Finally, they were asked to conduct another lesson where they would be able to conduct at least one thing they learnt from the trainers. After this last session, the teachers were interviewed about how the PDs informed their further teaching. The teachers expressed their progress toward becoming better EFL teachers. Under this category, three themes emerged, which will be discussed in the following section.

##### **4.4.1. Gaining Awareness and Learning to Be Reflective**

The teachers expressed their appreciation of the PD opportunity they were engaged in and they at least gained some awareness about their teaching practices and their students' potentials. They also became more reflective about their pedagogy.

The teachers gained awareness about the importance of collaborating for their own professional growth. Murat explained how he benefited from the experience:

These activities are very important for my PD, because I meet my colleagues and I share some problems. We share some activities. We learn from each other. This is very important for me. (Interview transcript, 04/04/2013)

Vildan also stated, “We share our experiences. It is very useful for me to assess my teaching” (Interview transcript, 08/04/13). The teachers pointed out to the awareness they gained about the importance of collaboration for their professional growth.

Learning to be reflective increased teachers’ confidence in sharing and discussing their practices with other teachers. Feride said, “I used to be anxious and defensive when I talked about my teaching with others, but now I believe that it is a good way to improve myself” (Interview transcript, 05/04/2013). Ruken commented, “Watching myself for the first time on the video was a great experience for me. I had the chance of evaluating my teaching and myself. I should do it more often” (Interview transcript, 05/04/2013). The teachers shared their pleasure over reflecting on their teaching and they gained more confidence thanks to the opportunity provided them to share their experiences.

The teachers also gained awareness about their students. Adem pointed out, “Even though my students’ level of English was low, they could understand when the learning was supported with extra material, visuals and body language” (Interview transcript, 04/04/2013). Aylin also professed, “Actually the students are interested in English, but they need more fun. When they are having fun, they are motivated automatically” (Interview transcript, 08/04/2013). The PDs helped teachers to observe their students from an outsider perspective, thus they were able to analyze their learner profile more objectively.

The teachers engaging in this PD opportunity gained a level of awareness about their students, they gained more confidence in sharing their pedagogy and they had the chance of reflecting upon their practices and teaching beliefs. In the next section, how the teachers became more critical of their teaching will be discussed.

#### **4.4.2. Being Critical of One's Own Teaching**

The teachers found the opportunity to assess their teaching by observing teachers trainers, engaging in discussions, pre and post- meetings, and watching themselves. Mostly after the PD sessions, they criticized their teaching and tried to find an area where they could develop themselves more and empower their learners.

Murat criticized himself for using his body language rarely:

Banu used her body language and gestures well. Even if the students don't know the meaning they understand the message. I think I should try to use my body language more. (Video transcript, 05/03/2013)

Adem found out the importance of using praising and encouraging words that he used to include seldom in his teaching:

Gamze uses constant praises like it's a good guess but..., thank you, yes, great job, so my students enjoyed participating in the activities. Even student X tried answering a question, he never speaks in my class. I think there is something miraculous about praising the students; I have to do more of that. (Video transcript, 05/03/2013)

He also reported how the knowledge attained during undergraduate years may fade:

Filling in the blanks in the song and learning new vocabulary was a simple strategy taught to us at university, but sometimes you may forget what you learnt. It was useful for me to dust-off my old knowledge. (Video transcript, 05/03/2013)

Ruken criticized herself for not making her students work kinesthetically:

Ferit gave the students different topics. They were holding flyers and moving around the class. Everybody was engaged. They were having fun and enjoying the class. I should not make them sit all the time during speaking classes. (Video transcript, 06/03/2013)

She also admitted how she could integrate technology into her classes by simple ways:



While I was observing Sabine, I noticed that she used a timer on the smart board, which the students liked and they completed the activity in time. I might use it as well. (Video transcript, 06/03/2013)

Aylin noticed how some students might not want to participate in a whole group, but they might engage actively in small group works. Additionally, she criticized herself for sharing few sample writings with her students:

I made observations about especially grouping. Brainstorming about a topic in your groups before starting to write was a good idea. Also cutting the text into strips and making the students to put them into the right order helped them understand the structure of writing descriptive paragraphs. I should give my students more examples before making them write. (Video transcript, 07/03/201)

Vildan thought over initiating the right mood for writing:

My students enjoyed the writing prompts and working on the sample writing with their peers and then they started writing immediately. Maybe I could not create the appropriate context for them to write. (Video transcript, 07/03/2013)

Feride refer to the authentic language use:

Giving instruction and making the students watch a movie clip made the activity meaningful. Now I believe that as long as you have the instructions clear, the language materials may create authentic experiences. (Video transcript, 08/03/2013)

She also accepted that she was being biased toward her students and criticized herself about it; “Another thing is she never spoke a work of Turkish, but my students seemed to understand her. I might be unfair to my students about it” (Video transcript, 08/03/2013). The teachers had the chance to observe their students and classroom as an outsider. This helped them to think over their pedagogy, beliefs and practices. The PDs held in their classes were to the point and this way they had been more meaningful to the teachers’ professional growth.

All of the teachers benefited the PD in a way and they criticized their pedagogy and beliefs and they found out their own needs that they could improve on their

own. In addition to the teachers' being critical of their own pedagogy, the PD helped creating collaborative practice between the schools and the faculty. The collaboration will be discussed under the next theme.

#### **4.4.3. Creating Collaborative Practice**

As a result of this study and the collaborative work of the participating teachers, teacher-trainers, administrators and the faculty members, an enhanced partnership was established between the schools and the university. The teachers enjoyed the experience and were appreciative of the support they had in their own schools. They expressed their overall satisfaction with their inclusion in the decision-making.

Murat: "For the first time, someone from the university listened to us" (interview transcript, 04/04/2013).

Ruken: "You are among us supporting" (Interview transcript, 05/04/2013).

Aylin: "It has been an honor to have university faculty to value our opinions and support us in our every day practices" (Interview transcript, 08/04/2013).

Vildan: "It empowers us to see the support of university. Thank you for the time and energy you spent at our school" (Interview transcript, 08/04/2013).

In addition to the teachers' satisfaction of participating in PDs, the district governor also expressed his pleasure at the onset of the study: "We used to beg for partnerships with universities in the past, now we appreciate your eagerness to collaborate for better future for our students" (Audio recording, 07/01/2013).

After the PD sessions were over, a movie day was organized on April 20, 2013 and the students of the participant teachers were invited to the university to meet with the ELT pre-service teachers and ask them about language learning and the profession of teaching and enjoy their time together. Emerging long-term collaborative partnerships were established during this study. The ELT department established a partnership with the three schools on February 18, 2013. The pre-service ELT teachers were send to schools for their school practicum under the mentorship of the participant teachers of this study. A special gathering cocktail was organized to offer our appreciation to the participant teachers on May 24,

2013. Both parties, the university and the schools, expressed their willingness for continuing relationships for future projects.

## **5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

In this final chapter the findings of the thesis are summarized and discussed. Also the implications of the study are presented and recommendations are provided for further research.

### **5.1. Discussion of the Results**

This thesis aimed to find out the past and present experiences of EFL Teachers with regard to PD. Also EFL teachers' needs were determined through observations and interviews. Various PD sessions were provided for them and how these PDs informed their classroom practices were examined. This section will highlight the research findings of the thesis and the results will be discussed as it relates to previous literature.

#### **5.1.1. Discussion of EFL Teachers' Previous Experiences**

EFL Teachers attend INSETs offered by the ministry of national education and they engage in PD opportunities offered by other educational bodies. The PDs are important for teachers' professional growth, yet sometimes the experience might not be as fruitful as expected (Hos & Topal, 2013). In this thesis the previous experiences of EFL teachers were explored through the focus groups and interviews in order to draw a better path in developing further PD sessions (Guskey and Huberman, 1995). The participant EFL teachers reported their former experiences, which were categorized under the themes of discrepancies between theory and practice, short-term effects, meeting the teachers' needs and the lack of reflections or follow-ups.

The EFL teachers participating in this study frequently mentioned the discrepancy available between the theory offered in the INSET or PD programs and the things they practice in the real classroom environment. Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2006) also analyzed the views of the ELT teachers participating in the INSET programs offered from 2003 to 2005 to check whether INSET programs developed them professionally or not. She found that the INSETs were usually offered as lectures and they were theory oriented rather than being practice-based. Moreover, Arıkan (2004) examined the perceived quality of the instructors and the quality of the PD programs. He reported the worries of the participants about the fake experience

they had in the PD programs teaching them what to teach and the gap between theory and practice.

The short-term effects of the one-shot PDs were mentioned regularly in this study. The teachers complained about the peripheral effect of the earlier INSETs. Büyükyavuz and İnal (2008) also drew attention to the teachers' opinions about the ineffectiveness of the earlier PD programs. Craft (1996) pointed out this fact as teachers being passive in the one-shot PDs offered by experts. Kirazlar (2007) remarked the failure of the former INSETs in causing persistent change in the attitudes of most of the teachers.

When the teachers were inquired about the extent to which the earlier PDs met their needs, they reported that most of them failed as no needs analysis were offered before the sessions (Richardson, 2003). Sürmeli (2004) pointed out a similar finding when she analyzed her preliminary data. She underlined that most of the INSETs fell short of meeting the needs and interests of EFL teachers; especially the experienced ones. Ünal (2010) also reported that more than half of the 150 teachers participating in her research mentioned the lack of needs analysis tests in the INSETs they attended, thus the content did not meet their needs most of the time.

The most common thing mentioned as a disadvantage of the former INSETs and PDs was having no opportunity to reflect on the session or program offered and the follow-ups missing. Wolter (2000) and Dadds (2001) also stated that many PD trainers did not consider the participant feedback, so they fail to be effective. Alan (2003) reiterated that the teachers participating in his research were unsatisfied due to the very little teacher participation in the INSETs. If we want more successful and enhanced teacher learning, we need to give teachers a chance to share and reflect so that they can relate the knowledge learnt to some other contexts (Lee, 2011).

The EFL Teachers' reported similar experiences with PDs consistent with the literature. The short-term effect, the failure to meet the needs of the teachers, discrepancies and the missing follow-ups are quite common in the extant literature.

### **5.1.2. Discussion of Challenges EFL Teachers Face toward Professional Development Participation**

The PD programs are arranged to increase teachers' professional growth; however, sometimes teachers miss this opportunity as it bears some challenges. In this study, the challenges faced by the EFL teachers were categorized under six themes: national PD policies, time constraints, bureaucracy, lack of support of administrators, washback effect of the testing system, mismatch between students' expectations and teachers'. They will be discussed in line with the current literature.

The EFL teachers mentioned that there were systematic challenges in the national PD policies. They reported that they were usually obligatory to attend and they were not arranged on a regular basis. Turhan and Arikan (2009) also found in their research that the PDs were obligatory, but the instructors would be more willing if it were optional. Ünal (2010) while analyzing the teachers' earlier experiences of INSET attendance emphasized that teachers attend INSETs less when they were mandatory.

The EFL teachers also mentioned their worries about the inconvenient dates and location. They stated that sometimes even if they were interested in the PD program, they could not attend due to the location and the time constraints they had. Ekşi (2010) investigated the reasons hindering teachers to engage in PDs. She also found out that inconvenient time and location constrained the teachers from participating in the PDs. Kabadayı (2013) listed the inconvenient time and location among the most common problems preventing teachers to attend PD activities.

The next two challenges the teachers faced in engaging PDs were listed as the bureaucracy they have to follow and the lack of the administrator support. Gebhard (1998) mentioned the bulky bureaucracy in education as a hindrance to professional development. Karaaslan (2003), while working on the impediments to professional growth, stated that lack of institutional support was among most common reasons.

Finally, the washback effect of the testing system and the mismatch between students' expectations and teachers were mentioned as the challenges teachers face in engaging with PD opportunities. These two challenges, unlike the first four,

were not mentioned in the current literature. However, the participants of this study addressed these two issues a lot. The EFL teachers stated that there were many exams the students needed to take. They attended conferences and seminars and learnt many innovative and creative ideas, yet these were not sufficient for them to meet the demands of the learners. Instead of communicative classes, the students asked for grammar translation and memorization, which they thought would be more helpful in the exams. The teachers, who could not apply what they learnt in the professional development series, were disappointed about this fact and they lost their interest in engaging in further PD opportunities. Another reason they referred as a mismatch between the teachers' and the students' expectations was that English is compulsory at all levels and there are too many students unwilling to attend the classes. This also affects the teachers' motivation toward their professional growth.

The above-mentioned challenges hinder teachers from participating in PDs. Their workload, responsibilities and their marital statuses, years of experience are mentioned as some other challenges in the literature (Sabuncuoğlu, 2006; İyidoğan 2011), which were not reported by the participants of this study.

### **5.1.3. Discussion of the EFL Teachers' Needs**

Before offering the teachers PD sessions, their needs were explored to help the teachers make the most for their professional growth (Koç, 1992). Evans (1988) also suggested that while planning a teacher-training program, first step should be analyzing the needs of the trainees. When the PD activities are based on teachers' needs, they contribute to increasing participants' satisfaction (Shawer, 2010). The observed and reported needs of the teachers were categorized under six themes: Schools' infrastructure, classroom management, classroom language, developing classroom materials and adapting the book, teaching foreign language skills, and using instructional technologies.

The first area in need of improvement was schools' infrastructure. It was categorized under the needs, because it affected the quality of teaching and the interest levels of the teachers in PDs. The teachers reported having problems with classes being overcrowded for a small room, the surrounding neighborhood of the school, the limited resources available to them, the buildings being old and not

suitable for making arrangements as factors decreasing their motivation and deteriorating teaching (Cuyvers et al., 2011). Morrissey (2000) also argued that school contextual factors affected the education and caused staff to bear low expectations for their professional growth. Additionally, Freeman (1999) pointed out the importance of school facilities, as the teachers working in different contexts had different needs.

The second area in need of improvement was classroom management skills, which is useful in creating the best learning and teaching environment (Sarıçoban, 2005). The teachers had classroom management problems in engaging the students, grouping, seating arrangements, transitions, establishing routines and establishing rapport. In their studies Özen (1997) and Alan (2003) also mentioned that classroom management was among the areas where teachers wanted to improve themselves most. On the other hand, Gültekin (2007) found that teachers, especially when they were experienced, seemed to have fewer classroom management problems. So they were less interested in PD topics covering classroom management issues.

The third area in need of improvement was classroom language. The teachers tended to use mother tongue frequently. Ünal (2010) also found out that the teachers wanted to improve their speaking. The class was the only place where most of the students heard English, so the teachers should not miss this opportunity to provide language input for their students as language input contributes a lot to the language growth (Huttenlocher, 1998). Also the teachers used praising and encouraging words rarely. Praising and encouraging children is a way of giving feedback on how a student succeeded or showed effort (Dörnyei 1994). It is also important in motivating the language learners (Guilloteaux and Dörnyei, 2008).

The fourth area in need of improvement was about developing classroom materials and adapting the book. The teachers reported the hardship they had in adapting the books published by the national ministry of education. They also reported the need for creating supplementary classroom materials. Özen (1997) analyzed the perceived needs and expectations of English Language Teachers working at a private institution, and found out that they wanted to improve themselves in material preparation and assessment. Daloğlu (2004) designed an



INSET program on establishing materials bank considering the needs of the teachers. She found it to be useful and the teachers developed a positive attitude toward PD.

The fifth area in need of improvement was teaching foreign language skills. The teachers had difficulty in teaching productive skills and introducing new vocabulary. Duzan (2006) found that inexperienced teachers needed training on improving teaching skills. Kabadayı (2013) also conducted needs assessment and she explored that productive skills like speaking and writing were mentioned as problematic both to assess and teach many times. Teaching vocabulary revealed as a need area in Şahin (2006)'s study. Turhan and Arıkan (2008) stated the teachers were interested in having further training on teaching vocabulary. Other than teaching productive skills and vocabulary, teaching receptive skills and grammar were also reported among the professional development needs of the teachers (Özçalılı, 2007; Mısırlı 2011).

The sixth area in need of improvement was using instructional technologies. Technology-enhanced classroom environment was available to all the teachers. They had interactive white boards and some had Internet connections, yet they were not integrating technology effectively to their classes. Demirezen (1990) suggested that language teachers should use instructional technologies especially videos in their classes to increase the retention of the language segment learnt, as the videos enhanced learning by introducing emotional, cognitive, social and communicative dimensions. Some of the participating teachers reported the need they felt in using technology better for teaching. Ekşi (2010) found out that using technology in ELT was an area of need for teachers. Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2006) also claimed a huge need for learning more about using instructional technologies in the classrooms and she suggested that future PDs should cover it.

Other than the areas in need of improvement teachers reported or observed to have in this study, shared their various needs in the literature such as testing and assessment (Büyükyavuz and İnal, 2008), using drama (Ünal, 2010), new teaching methods (Ekşi, 2010), raising students' language awareness (Şentuna, 2002), increasing content knowledge (Sabuncuoğlu, 2006). The PDs will be more useful and interest will be higher when the needs of the teachers are taken into consideration.

#### **5.1.4. Discussion of the Progress of EFL Teachers toward Becoming a Better Teacher**

After the observations and interviews, the teachers' areas of needs were determined and PD sessions were offered accordingly. Post-PD debriefing sessions were held to discuss how the experience benefited the teachers and they asked further questions about the PD to improve their practice. Later they designed and conducted another class to practice what they observed to be useful. The PDs allowed teachers to gain awareness, become more reflective about their teaching, be critical of their own teaching, and the creation of collaborative practice between the university and the schools.

The PD program helped teachers to gain awareness about their teaching practices and their learners. They also became more reflective about their pedagogy. The teachers shared the importance of collaboration for professional growth. The teachers also enjoyed watching themselves and reflecting on their teaching. The teachers gained more confidence about discussing their practices to improve their teaching. The teachers in the previous research were also reported to having benefited from the PD opportunities as they improved their teaching competencies, collegiality, confidence and awareness; moreover, the teachers gained much from reflection (Arikan, 2002; Daloğlu, 2004; Sürmeli, 2004; Atay, 2006; Ortaçtepe, 2006; Özçalılı, 2007, Atay, 2008).

The PD helped teachers to be critical about their teaching. They assessed their pedagogy, they shared their beliefs, and they discussed their pedagogy with their colleagues. Thorough interviews, observations, pre and post meetings, and watching videos, the teachers had the chance to reflect upon their teaching. Kirazlar (2007) tried another method by asking the teachers to keep a diary of their teaching and they had meetings occasionally. This helped teachers to question their teaching and try new techniques. Hammerness et al. (2005) reported how teachers benefited from questioning. The questioning was useful in building new pedagogies and synthesizing old knowledge with the new. Furthermore, Atay (2004) stated that thanks to the PD, the teachers questioned their teaching and incorporated theory into practice and they renewed their enthusiasm.

Finally, the PD program helped the creation of collaborative practice between the university and the schools. The teachers shared their appreciation of the support

they had and the satisfaction they felt over being included in the decision-making process. Atay (2006) also reported teacher appreciation for collaboration in her study. Additionally, England (1998) supported the idea of involving trainees in the decision-making about the content, implementation and the evaluation of the program, which would increase the interest and participation of the trainees. Due to the successful PD collaboration and teacher appreciation, the schools and the faculty established a partnership. The faculty will offer PD to the staff of the schools. The enthusiastic teachers in this study and their colleagues will continue mentor the pre-service EFL teachers during their school practicum. Little (1993) suggested that long term partnerships will benefit both intuitions, the teachers will have access to continuous professional development whereas the faculty will be in the field researching. The partnerships among teachers, administrators and university professors will contribute to improving teaching and learning; moreover, theory and practice will be combined (Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

To sum up, the PD opportunity benefited the teachers in many respects and a partnership was established for further collaboration and research. The teachers gained awareness and through being critical about their thinking and reflecting, they evaluated and adapted their pedagogy.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

English is a global language spoken by many people in the world. It is offered as a foreign language in almost every school in Turkey. There have been education reforms and amendments to the language teaching policies, yet the EFL teaching should still be improved. The changing needs of learners', availability of technology and access to Internet all necessitate a transition from old teaching habits to establishing new ones. The teachers should update their knowledge everyday to meet the challenges of new learners. Their knowledge acquired during the university years will not suffice them forever. They can only keep pace with the new trends through engaging in PD. The PD opportunities help teachers to keep up-to-date, raise student achievement, promote reflective teaching, increase teacher efficacy, releases burnout and improves organizations. However, the PD opportunities available to Turkish EFL teachers are very few. This study was significant in meeting the need, filling the gap in the literature about PD and

sharing further implications for practitioners, policy makers, teachers and university faculty.

The goal of this study was to find out the past and present experiences of EFL Teachers with regard to PD. Additionally, EFL teachers' areas of needs were determined and their daily practices were observed. In line with research goals of this study, several PD sessions were offered. Finally, the study examined how the PD activities informed the teachers' classroom practices.

Qualitative research methodology was used as the study design. It helped the researcher to explore and understand the issues under discussion in a more detailed way. The researcher was a participant observer at the research sites. The data for the study was collected in six phases. An information session was organized to raise interest in PD activities and volunteer teachers were determined for the thesis. Focus group interview was held to explore the teachers' previous experiences with PD and their needs and preferences for future PDs. Pre-observations were done at each research site to understand the context and the practices of the teachers. The teachers need areas were decided and the teacher trainers were invited for a focus group to meet the needs of the teachers best. The PD training sessions were conducted and afterwards debriefing sessions were held to discuss how the teachers might benefit from the experience. Finally, the teachers taught again and a final interview was held to allow the teachers to reflect upon their classroom practices, their beliefs and understandings.

The participants were six EFL teachers from three different public high schools, and also there were seven EFL teachers working at a foundation university who offered the PD sessions. Data was collected through focus groups, participant observation and field notes, interviews, audio and video recordings. The qualitative data was analyzed by using grounded theory method. Open coding, axial coding and selective coding processes were conducted to analyze the data. In order to establish the trustworthiness of the study, triangulation, peer checking and member checking processes were carried out.

The findings from the analysis of the data were organized under four categories: EFL teachers' previous experiences with PD, challenges preventing EFL teachers to engage in PD opportunities, areas in need of improvement, progress toward

becoming a better EFL teacher. Various themes emerged under each category. The findings were discussed with regards to the literature available on PD and implications for EFL professionals and the limitations of the study were shared.

### **5.3. Implications for Foreign Language Teachers' Professional Development**

This thesis aimed to find out the past and present experiences of EFL Teachers about PD. First, their needs were determined. Later, numerous PD sessions were offered and how these PDs informed their classroom practices were evaluated. In this section the implications of this study for EFL Teachers, practitioners, policy-makers and researchers will be provided.

The schools should establish partnerships with the universities and other educational and governmental bodies in the locale of their education district. The administrators should act as leaders in supporting their teachers engaging in PD opportunities. A positive, friendly and collaborative school climate should be established where teachers increase their professional growth continuously as a group and as individuals and use school resources effectively. Also the schools should allocate time for teachers' PD.

One PD model does not fit in the shoes of all teachers. The context and the grade level, teachers' year of experience, educational background and previous experiences are all determinants of their needs. Teachers' input and opinions should be taken into serious consideration before developing PDs.

The government should provide teachers with incentives for PD attendance and PDs should be offered on a regular basis. Instead of making the attendance obligatory, a wide range of PD programs should be offered for teachers to select according to their needs.

The teachers should be given the opportunity to evaluate and reflect upon the PD activities. This is important for them to internalize what they learnt. The PD topics should cover practical topics, useful for teachers' daily classroom practices. The teachers would like to see practitioners who have field experience. The trainers should be acquainted with the context that they are presenting their PDs about.

In this thesis seven different PD topics were offered in four weeks. PDs offered for longer periods of time might be more effective in increasing teachers' efficacy.

Also the teachers were observed for once due to the time limitation. The research aiming to see their progress might involve observing the teachers for longer periods. There is still very limited research looking at the effects of different PD types. Additional research should be conducted to close this gap.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A. Participation Form

Dear Colleague,

I am working on a thesis that involves designing and tracking professional development (PD) of ELT teachers. This form is prepared to recruit volunteers for the current study. All information provided will be kept confidential. In case of publication all names will be assigned pseudonyms to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. I appreciate your time. Thank you for your participation.

Hatice YAĞCI

haticetpl@gmail.com

### A. Demographic Info

**Gender:** .... Male .... Female

**Age:** .... **Years of Teaching:** .....

**Degree:** ....BA ....MA ....PhD

**Major:** ...ELT .... Linguistics ....Literature Other.....

**Current Teaching Position:**

....Public Primary School

....Public Secondary School

Other.....

**How many hours do you teach in a week?** .....

### B. Becoming a Volunteer

I am working on a thesis study that involves professional development of ELT teachers. If you would like to take part in the professional development sessions, please kindly provide me with your contact information.

**Name:** .....

**E-mail:** .....

**Phone Number:** .....

**Days you may be available:**

....Wednesday 09.00-12.00 ....Wednesday 13.00-16.00

....Friday 09.00-12.00 ....Friday 13.00-16.00

....Saturday 09.00-12.00 ....Saturday 13.00-16.00

Any other time: .....

Additional comments: .....





## APPENDIX C. Teachers Focus Group Protocol

Date\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher ID\_\_\_\_\_ Pseudonym\_\_\_\_\_

### Introduction

- Introduce yourself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide structure of the focus group (audio/video recording, taking notes, and use of pseudonym)
- Ask if teachers have any questions
- Test audio/video recording equipment
- SMILE-make the participants feel comfortable

### Questions:

1. Tell us your name, your teaching experience, educational background, and teaching level & type of school.
2. Please talk about the current situation of teaching English in Turkey.
  - a. What are the obstacles?
  - b. What should be done to overcome these obstacles?
3. Please tell us about a day in your classroom. If we were to come to your class, what would we observe from start to end?
4. Please define what professional development means to you?
5. Please describe your experiences with professional development.
6. What are some ways that you have done to keep up with the field?
  - a. Do you attend PDs regularly?
  - b. Can you talk about the topics of PDs that you have attended previously?
  - c. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the PDs?
7. What do you think that the most needed topics are for professional learning of the ELT teachers?
  - a. Which skill do you think your students need at most?
8. How supportive is your school when it comes to professional learning opportunities?



## **APPENDIX D. Teacher Information Letter**

**Study Title:** Tracking Changes and Progress in EFL Teachers' Classroom Practices Through Professional Development: The Case of Gaziantep

**Principal Investigator:** Hatice Yağcı

**Introduction:** This letter describes a research study and what you may expect if you decide to participate. Please read this letter carefully and ask any further questions that you may have before making your decision whether or not to participate. Hatice Yağcı, a master's student at Hacettepe University, is conducting this study under the supervision of her advisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Arif Sarıçoban. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently teaching English as a Foreign Language in state schools in Gaziantep.

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this research study is to explore the past and present experiences of EFL teachers in regards to in-service training and professional development. Additionally the EFL teachers will be offered Professional Development (PD) sessions determined according to their needs. Finally, the proposed study will examine teachers' implementation of the PD topics in their own classrooms.

**Description of Study Procedures:** The duration of this study is from February 2013 through April 2013. In this study, you will be asked to participate in a focus group in which I will ask you questions about your experiences with PDs in general. This focus group interview will last between one and half hour long and will be conducted at a time that is mutually agreeable at a public location. This interview will be recorded with a digital audio recorder and a video recorder so that the data for this study can be listened to and watched and transcribed. Later the researcher will visit your schools to gain a general understanding of your daily practices. PDs will be arranged accordingly. After the PD sessions, you will be asked to conduct a lesson to show your understanding of the PD and how you benefited and improved yourselves. You will be asked to reflect upon it in an interview session. All steps of this research will be audio and video recorded. Field notes will be taken and analyzed later.

**Participants:** You are being asked to participate in this research because you are one of the EFL teachers who teach at Gaziantep state schools.

**Risks of Participation:** This research presents minimal risk to participants. You may be concerned about privacy and that your words will be made public. In order to ensure confidentiality, I will remove any references to your name from all classroom documents, field notes, and transcripts from video and audio recordings. I will also process the video recordings to remove the possibility of recognizing the subjects. Furthermore, I will use pseudonyms for places and people in all presentations and publications. You may also be uncomfortable being observed, recorded, or interviewed. Cameras, digital voice recorders, or microphones may also distract you. These types of discomfort and distraction usually pass quickly, and I will minimize any disruptions. There are no other expected risks to participation in this study.

**Benefits of Participation:** You may benefit from the attended PD sessions given by expert trainers, which may strengthen your instructional practices. You may share and reflect upon your practices.

**Confidentiality of Data:** While every effort to maintain confidentiality will be made, it cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Any references to your name from all documents, field notes, and transcripts from video and audio recordings will be removed and a pseudonym will be used instead. The video images will not be presented at meetings. The results of this research study may be presented at meetings or in publications. However, your name will be kept private.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation in this study is voluntary. You are free not to participate or to withdraw at any time, for whatever reason without penalty or loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Contact Person:** For more information about this research please contact: Hatice Yağcı through [haticetpl@gmail.com](mailto:haticetpl@gmail.com)

**APPENDIX E. Observation Form**

<b>OBSERVATION FORM</b>		
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Date:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Research Site:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Participant:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Topic:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Grade Level:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Language Proficiency Level:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Number of Students:</b> .....</p>		
<b>TIME</b>	<b>OBSERVED BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>REFLECTIVE COMMENTS</b>

## APPENDIX F. Teacher Interview Protocol 1

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher ID \_\_\_\_\_

Pseudonym \_\_\_\_\_

### Introduction

- Introduce yourself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide structure of the focus group (audio/video recording, taking notes, and use of pseudonym)
- Ask if teacher has any questions
- Test audio/video recording equipment
- SMILE-make the participants feel comfortable

### Questions:

1. Tell me about the make-up of your classes.
2. What are the strengths and challenges that you are faced with?
3. How do you think the today's lesson was in general?
4. What went well, what did not go well during this hour of teaching?
5. If you were to do this lesson again, how would you revise it?
6. Would you like to add anything else?

## **APPENDIX G. Teacher Trainers Focus Group Protocol**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Teacher ID** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pseudonym** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Introduction**

- Introduce yourself
- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide structure of the focus group (audio/video recording, taking notes, and use of pseudonym)
- Ask if teacher has any questions
- Test audio/video recording equipment
- SMILE-make the participants feel comfortable

### **Questions:**

(The researcher starts the focus group by discussing the needs of the EFL teachers.)

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. How long have you been a teacher trainer?
3. How can you use your experience as a teacher and a teacher trainer to benefit the EFL teachers?
4. How would you like to conduct you session?
5. Would you like to add anything else?

(The researcher informs the trainers about the current units the teachers are working on and gives them the course book samples.)

## APPENDIX H. PD Schedule

School	Teacher (Pseudonym)	Current Unit	Grade/ Proficiency Level	Topic of Interest	Trainer (Pseudonym)
School A	Aylin and Vildan	Talking about yourself	9 <sup>th</sup> grade Elementary	Designing elementary grammar and writing activities	Makbule and Nermin
School B	Ruken	Free speaking / listening	11 <sup>th</sup> grade Intermediate	Designing a speaking / listening class	Sabine and Ferit
	Feride	Personality and like/dislike	9 <sup>th</sup> grade Elementary	Using Video in Grammar classes	Toprak
School C	Murat and Adem	Ability / Can / Can't	9 <sup>th</sup> grade Elementary	Vocabulary teaching and adapting reading texts	Gamze and Banu

## **APPENDIX I. Teacher Interview Protocol 2**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Teacher ID** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pseudonym** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Introduction**

- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide structure of the interview (audio/video recording, taking notes, and use of pseudonym)
- Ask if teacher has any questions
- Test audio/video recording equipment
- SMILE-make the participants feel comfortable

### **Questions:**

1. How do you think the lesson went?
2. What were the positives?
3. What were the things that need improvement?
4. What would you have done differently if this were your lesson?
5. What do you think is the most essential component of a good lesson?
6. How would you like to apply what you have observed today into your own teaching practice?

## **APPENDIX J. Teacher Interview Protocol 3**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_ **Teacher ID** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pseudonym** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Introduction**

- Discuss the purpose of the study
- Provide structure of the interview (audio/video recording, taking notes, and use of pseudonym)
- Ask if teacher has any questions
- Test audio/video recording equipment
- SMILE-make the participants feel comfortable

### **Questions:**

1. How do you think the lesson went?
2. What were the positives?
3. What were the things that need improvement?
4. What would you have done differently if you had the chance to teach this lesson again?
6. What are your overall reflections on today's lesson?
7. When you think of your own participation in this PD program, how would you describe your overall experience?



## CURRICULUM VITAE

<b>Name Surname</b>	Hatice Yağcı
<b>Birth Place</b>	Eskişehir
<b>Birth Year</b>	1988
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married

### Education

<b>High School</b>	Eskişehir Fatih Anatolian High School	2006
<b>Undergraduate</b>	Anadolu University (English Language Teaching)	2010
<b>Foreign Language</b>	English (Proficient), German (Basic), French (Basic)	
<b>Work Experience</b>	Zirve University, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education, English Language Teaching (Research Assistant)	2010 –