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MENTORING IN A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR NOVICE TEACHERS AT A STATE UNIVERSITY IN TURKEY: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY

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Abstract

In the last three decades, in teacher education, there has been a strong emphasis on the improvement of practice through reflective learning and teaching. This can be done either through individual study or with collaboration among teachers. In this context, the role of sociocultural learning in teacher education has also been explored (Johnson, 2009). For teachers to learn from one another, collaborative work is required. This study focused on the context of collaboration between novice teachers and experienced mentors as part of an In-service Training (INSET) program at a School of Foreign Languages in a state university located in Western Turkey. The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of beginning novice teachers and investigate whether these teachers experienced professional development in connection with the collaboration with the experienced instructors. In this study, we also sought to understand whether the experienced teachers who acted as mentors of the novice teachers benefited from their engagement in the INSET program as mentors. Four novice teachers and four experienced mentors participated in the study. All participants were interviewed to explore these teachers' views on their professional development during the INSET program. Results revealed that neither the novice teachers nor experienced mentors considered major shifts in their teaching styles after participation in the professional development program. We found that two groups of participants had commenced the program with divergent interests. While the novice teachers expected to learn from their experienced mentors about how theories they had learned in their undergraduate programs could be applied in practice, the mentors anticipated that they could learn some new techniques and classroom activities from the novice teachers.

Keywords: teacher education, INSET program, mentoring, novice teachers, experienced teachers

Introduction

In-service teacher training programs are commonly organized to encourage and complement ongoing professional development. In such programs, rather than inviting experts who are unfamiliar with the setting for lectures or seminars, many institutions opt for more sustainable program structures. Such programs rely on local resources and the induction provided by experienced teachers. In this study, we explore the perspectives of novice teachers and experienced mentors related to the INSET program they participated in. In particular, we focused on what expectations these participants had related to the mentoring process. In addition, we address the following: How do these describe the ways their teaching styles change? How do the participants relate the influence of "in-service teacher training program" experiences to their teaching? Are there any

reported shifts in the conceptions of program participants related to teacher education? What areas of emphasis (e.g. content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge) were prevalent when discussing program experiences?

1.1. Background: Novice teachers and INSET programs

Entering the teaching profession after having just completed studies at university campuses, beginning teachers encounter difficulties while teaching in new settings. During the first year of teaching, novice teachers tend to focus on classroom management and effective teaching (Farrell, 2009). As novice teachers do not have substantial experience within school settings, the primary source of knowledge they rely on is the theories that they have learned during the years of their undergraduate or graduate studies. Singh and Richards (2009) call this process the course room experience and they draw attention to its influence on teachers' identity formation. Course room has a crucial place in teacher education. Because student teachers have very limited teaching experience, they relate all they learn to the things they do at the course room during their initial experiences. They learn from their peers; they also learn from their instructors by observing them. Overall, novice teachers often primarily rely on their theoretical knowledge in their teaching practices.

It is also important to reflect on how experienced teachers frame their practices and development. While many assume that the number of years accumulated in the teaching profession would be associated with the development of expertise, this framing is simplistic. Clearly, as in many other professions, teachers do continue to grow professionally as a result of their experiences. However, content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge are areas that require purposeful study and cannot merely be left to emerge from everyday practice. Teachers need to target ongoing improvement and depth in these domains. It would be simplistic to frame 'expertise' as a state that merely emerges during the process of teaching (Tsui, 2009). In order to stay up-to-date in their fields and continue to grow professionally, teachers need to engage in reflective practice and critical thinking on various readings. Without such efforts, many teachers can end up becoming experienced 'non-experts'. Since expertise is not solely related to the years accumulated in the profession but rather more closely associated with the efforts towards ongoing professional development and improvement of practice. In this regard, there is a need for collaboration among teachers. INSET programs can provide such opportunities.

INSET programs can be organized in various ways. Some programs may mainly involve seminars given by experts and in such settings program participants do not have sufficient active participation. Researchers have drawn attention to the importance of organizing programs that situate participants as active interactants (Atay, 2008). Furthermore, INSET programs should also involve inquiry on relating theory to practice. The area that novice teachers need the most support in is the development of teaching. Experienced teachers can play a crucial role for such development by collaborating with novice teachers. Mentoring provided by experienced teachers can provide substantial potential for professional development. Malderez (2009) defines mentoring process as "being supportive of the transformation or development of the mentee and of their acceptance into a professional community" (p. 260). A mentor should ensure that a mentee does not experience feeling inferior. The collaborative work requires harmonious teamwork. Accepting that each professional can learn from each other would contribute to this process (Huling & Resta, 2001).

2. METHODS

In this qualitative case study, we explore participant perspectives on the influence of a mentoring in a novice teacher development program organized in the School of Foreign Languages at a state university located in Istanbul. Gall et al. (2003) defined case study research as “the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 545). The case study is consistent with qualitative research in general and it is the researcher’s interpretive acts that give importance, order, and form to the study (Peshkin, 2000). In order to introduce the setting and aid the reader in understanding the context, thick descriptions of the setting will be given. A thick description means depictions of the phenomenon and the context accompanied by the meanings and intentions which are part of that situation (Geertz, 1973). Within the research genres in teacher education, this study can be described as interpretive research the purpose of which is to perceive, describe, analyze and interpret the features of a specific situation (Borko et al., 2008). In this regard, it is important to note that “interpretative research aims for particularity, not generalizability” (Borko et al., 2008, p.1026). This researcher depended upon the narrative descriptions of the participants and they were recorded in a naturalistic setting. The opinions of the participants were highly valued and the first author was a participant observer in this setting. One of the purposes of this study is to improve the practices in this in-service teacher training program, present the complex portrait of the context and shape a theory development on the efficiency of the program.

The research was conducted in the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) at a state university located in Istanbul. In this SFL, each year, instructors are hired on a contract basis because of the insufficient numbers of instructors with tenure. The instructors hired on a contract basis tend to be recent graduates of undergraduate programs. These new instructors are asked to participate in an in-service teacher training program organized by a committee. As part of this program, new instructors observe experienced teachers and experienced teachers observe the new instructors. After each observation, the observer and the class teacher meet during a session for feedback. After all observations are completed, the committee holds meetings in which the progress of program participants are discussed.

2.1. Participants

Eight instructors participated in this study. Four participants were novice teachers and four were experienced teachers. Table 1 presents information on the novice teachers.

Table 1. Information on novice teachers

Pseudonym	Age	Hometown Region	University Degree Major	Interest Areas during Undergraduate Studies	Frequency of conference participation	The reason why s/he has become a teacher
N1	22	Northern Turkey	ELT	Methods, Approaches Young learners	Not frequently because of time and financial reasons	He wanted to be a teacher when he was at high school as he thought he was skilled in English language.
N2	26	Western Turkey	ELT	Literature, Linguistics, School experience, Material Adaptation,	Not frequently because of time and financial reasons	She wanted to be a teacher when she was at high school as she thought she was skilled in English language.

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N3	21	Western Turkey	ELT	Phonetics, Teaching English through literature, Task-based teaching, Class management, Approaches	Not frequently because of time and financial reasons	Because she loved her secondary school teacher. She was also influenced by her family members who were also teachers. She considers herself skilled in English language.
N4	22	Eastern Turkey	ELT	Technology in ELT, Classroom management, Practicum theory	She usually attends ELT conferences held in İstanbul	With the influence of her high school teacher.

All experienced teachers who participated in the study were women. and the arithmetic mean of their ages was 39.75. None of them were graduates of the ELT departments within Faculties of Education. They were all graduates of English language and linguistics departments. However, they all completed certification programs for teaching. Two of them held doctoral degrees. Table 2 presents background information on these participants.

Table 2. Information on experienced teachers

Codes	Age	Hometown Region	University Degree Major	Year of Experience	Frequency of conference participation	The reason why s/he has become a teacher
E1	39	Western Turkey	Eng Lang Lit (B.A.); Educational Planning and Leadership (MA without Thesis)	15 years	Not frequently because they do not offer something new and there is a mismatch between theory and practice	She wanted to be a teacher before she entered university because she loved the profession.
E2	38	Western Turkey	Eng Lan Lit (BA) (MA) Educational Sciences (PhD)	15 years	Not frequently because of time restrictions but now she is doing best to keep up.	She did not want to be a teacher at first. Later on, she made up her mind after graduation because she liked information sharing.
E3	41	Western Turkey	English Language and Literature (BA) Communication Sciences (MA), (Ph.D)	18 years	Not frequently	She did not want to be teacher at first and she started to work at a bank for a year. After, she wanted a profession having flexible working hours
E4	41	Western Turkey	English Language and Literature (BA)	19 years	Sometimes twice a year	Because of her high school teachers

2.2. Data collection

Data were collected through interviews conducted with all eight participants. The first researcher also conducted some observations during the in-service teacher training program and attended the regular meetings of the committee of teacher trainers. Interviewees were not selected randomly. Those recruited for the novice teacher category were chosen based on the criterion of having just completed undergraduate studies. The other four participants were purposefully selected based on the criterion of having at least 15 years of experience and acting as members of the INSET committee. With participants' consent, all interviews were audio recorded and

transcribed.

2.3. Data analysis

For the analysis of the interviews, an impressionistic reading of the transcriptions was done first in order to find the different categories that can be analyzed under different titles. Gall et al. (2003) defined a category as “a construct that refers to a certain type of phenomenon mentioned in the database” (p. 454). After categorizing the qualitative data, these categories were shared with another teacher for the purpose of member-checking, which was done to verify the categories derived from the qualitative data. These categories were also examined in order to find the subcategories under each category. The categories created by the researchers were also checked by the teacher so as to increase the inter-rater reliability of the data. Afterwards, the researchers did interpretational analysis defined by Gall et al. (2003) as “a process of examining case study data closely in order to find constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon being studied” (p. 453). During these processes, the researchers did manual coding after reading the data several times by identifying themes under the categories that were generated. In reporting the results, direct quotes were used to ascertain that manual coding was done properly. In addition, these direct quotes would also clarify the questions of the reader with anecdotes and personal stories of the participants. Gall et al. (2003) also confirmed this by stating that “direct quotes of the remarks by the case study participants are particularly effective because they clarify the emic perspective, that is, the meaning of the phenomenon from the point of view of the participants” (p. 469). These vignettes will also provide the reader with the perspectives of the instructors working in this institution.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Teaching philosophy

Both the experienced teacher participants and the novice ones were asked about the teaching philosophy they had and they also discussed whether their conceptions changed after the INSET program.

All of the novice teachers supported that they held “Social Learning” philosophy in their classes because of the new trends in the field. They said that they were introduced to these trends in their undergraduate studies and their lecturers in the university did their best to make them believe in the benefit of the social learning styles (e. g. group work). It was also stated by all of the novice teachers that it was inevitable to apply this philosophy in the lessons because the course books they were using were also written in accordance with such a learning framework. They all said that they were applying these activities in their classes. In particular, N2 complained about the lack of role-play activities in the books

Another important point here is that all of the novice teachers articulated that their undergraduate studies affected the way they thought about the teaching philosophies. However, they said that the student profile did not seem to be ready for the applications of these new techniques in the class. They added that students were not aware of the new techniques and approaches used in the language teaching process as they were taught English in a traditional way before coming to this School of Foreign Languages. N1 also brought up another important point about how his university years affected the way he taught about being a teacher:

In my high school years, we just saw the teacher coming to the class, lecturing in a traditional way by

giving the grammatical formulas of the language. However, in my university years I understood that being a teacher meant more than that. Being a teacher required certain planning before coming to the class, which I noticed with the help of lesson plans that we filled up in our undergraduate studies. What is more, being a teacher is not equal to the dominance of the teacher but to encourage the participation of the students as well.

While the novice teachers accepted that their undergraduate studies affected the way they perceived language teaching, they also confirmed that they were taught English in a traditional way with the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in their high school years. Thus, they were asked whether the way they learned the language affected their philosophy of teaching. All of them said “yes”. However, they added that they were trying to use communicative method even though they were affected by the years when they were taught English with the GTM and they applied the GTM in their classes from time to time.

Considering the teaching philosophies of novice teachers, they stated that they were the supporters of social learning and they were doing their best to apply it in their teaching but they also accepted that their undergraduate studies affected the way they thought about teaching. Nonetheless, they were still under the influence of their experiences as language learners when they were in high school or primary school because they pointed out that they were teaching grammar in terms of the GTM principles and they were aware that this was because of their previous learning experiences.

All of the experienced teachers were graduates of English language and literature departments. They did not have much familiarity with teaching philosophies in the education literature. However, as E2 received her M.A. from the department of Teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language and her Ph.D. from Educational Sciences, she had familiarity with educational philosophies. She explained that she was not using a certain kind of philosophy but she was using a mixture of them. She said she found herself quite traditional, which means behaviorist in grammar teaching but she tried to be constructivist while she was teaching “reading and writing”. She mentioned that one single philosophy would never conform to the needs of the students. Apart from E2, the rest of the participants stated that they did not know about teaching philosophies at all because of their departmental choices. However, when they were asked how they formed their teaching philosophies, all of them including E2 said that they observed their lecturers in the university. They stated that they tried to take the good lecturers as their models in their profession. E2 and E3 told that the most important feature a teacher needed to be a good teacher is communication with the students. E2 said that she observed her lecturers in the university and she thought that the most adorable ones were the lecturers who had a good interaction with the students.

As the experienced teachers did not rely on the teaching philosophies, they were also asked whether their English learning experiences influenced the way they taught. All of them said that it had some influence but they also noted that the methods through which they learned the language were not applied as much any more and they were trying to apply new methods in their lessons. E3 said that she made great efforts to learn the language when she was a university student by having self-study on her own. Thus, she pointed out that she was also advising the same thing for her students to study on their own outside the class by giving them some strategies that they could use.

3.2. The influence of the INSET program on the instructors

Whereas the participant novice teachers said that they relied on the theories they learned during their undergraduate studies while they were teaching, the experienced teachers said they counted on their experiences. Novice teachers were asked about their expectations from the INSET program and the observations they would make as part of the program. All of the novice teachers said that they went to the classes where they would make observation hoping that they would witness the application of the theories they had been taught in their undergraduate studies. What is more, apart from N3, all of the novice teachers stated that they would like to see and learn some techniques about classroom management skills from their experienced colleagues during this observation process. With the exception of N4, they also stated that they saw the application of the theories that they had learned during their undergraduate studies in the classes, which made them so glad. N1, N2, N3 said that they witnessed social learning in the classes where they made observations because group work, pair work were all available and they were used by the experienced teachers but N4 said that she observed a teacher using a behaviorist approach.

They were also asked how they found the process and whether it was beneficial. All of the novice teachers said that they had found the process quite fruitful for their career because they were criticized through the eyes of another teacher who had more experience than themselves. N2 stated that she was quite positive towards this process when she heard about it and she highly benefited from the process because the experienced teacher who observed her class told her weaknesses directly, which she accepted in an open-hearted way. N4 said that it was a very beneficial process and that they were neither teachers nor students in the class observed so they could see the things from a different perspective. N1 confirmed the benefits of this process by saying:

Even though I have got a really good education in my undergraduate studies, it is really logical and beneficial for me to be evaluated by someone else about my teaching in which I do not have much experience. What is more, it is always the most accurate way to be watched by someone else, who can evaluate my teaching objectively because I do not think that I can evaluate myself in an impartial way. Thus, a person having a different point of view might do this better.

All of the novice teachers confirmed that they benefited from this process. Novice teachers were also asked whether their views on teacher education changed after the observations in the INSET program. All of them said “no”. They said they did not have any dramatic changes in their perspectives towards teacher education after the observations. N4 said that she did not enter the observations to learn something new but to see what she had learned in the department throughout the observation process.

The novice teachers were also asked what they focused on during their observations: the experienced teachers’ linguistic competence or pedagogical knowledge and all of them said that they paid more attention to pedagogical knowledge. N4 explained why she said so:

English is not our native tongue so I did not expect to hear a native-like language when I entered the class to observe. Furthermore, you can improve your language by making some efforts. What is more, if you do not trust your linguistic skills, you can get some support by using some materials or having your students listen to audio (recordings) or watch videos but if you do not know how to teach, you can do nothing for your

students because you are all alone in the class, nobody is around to help you teach.

The novice teachers also commented on the forms they filled in during observations. The form was about the phases of the lesson observed and the observer was expected to write what was done in each phase of the lesson. The novice teachers said that they filled in the form during the observation without questioning in their minds why the teacher taught in that way but they just took down the notes. They said they analyzed the phases of the lesson observed after the lesson was over. The researcher also asked whether they asked the teacher that was being observed why s/he taught in the way they observed. All of them excluding N4 said that they did not ask any questions about the experienced teachers' way of teaching.

Experienced teachers also observed novice teachers under the INSET program. They were asked about their expectations about the classes of the novice teachers that they would observe. All of them said that they did not have great expectations as these teachers were new in the profession. E1 and E2 accepted that they expected to see some problems in classroom management and time management in the classes they would observe. However, all of them said that they also hoped that they would see some new techniques and activities because they had just graduated from the department and their knowledge on ELT was fresh. Thus, these novice teachers were expected to apply those new techniques with new and creative activities.

The experienced teachers were also asked whether there was any relevance between what they saw in the lesson of novice teacher and what they did in their own classes. All of them stated that the lessons they observed had certain connections with their own classes but they also added that there were some kinds of slight differences, which was the result of the different teachers adopting different teaching styles. E1 stated that there could not be a huge difference between what they did and what they observed as they were all using the same materials which required teachers to do the lesson in an interactive way in that institution. E4 confirmed what her friend said by saying that there was a commonsense in language teaching. Thus, there would certainly be some similarities but it was also natural for us to see some new activity types that our novice teachers used because they had just graduated from the department with their knowledge fresh in their minds.

The experienced teachers were also asked whether their opinions on teaching changed after the observations of the INSET program. All of them except E1 said that their opinions did not change after the INSET program. E3 told that the observations did not change her views but justified the ones she had already had. E4 stated that she did not change her views just after the observations because she explained that teaching was a skill that could be developed and seeing teachers who graduated from the same departments but who had different teaching styles was the proof according to her.

The experienced teachers said that they did not change their views on teaching dramatically after the INSET program but they confessed that they had some slight changes in their perspectives. At this point, the researcher asked about these slight changes. E2 said that she realized the importance of transitions between the activities during the observations and the use of the board. E3 articulated that she noticed the significance of technology use in class, especially the videos with transcripts available on the screen. E4 pointed out that she learned a vocabulary game that she would use in her classes during the observations because she found it both beneficial and entertaining for the students.

The experienced teachers were also asked about the content of their feedback to their novice counterparts and whether they were beneficial for the growth of the novice teachers. All of them except from the E2 said that they provided the novice teachers with some feedback on their pedagogy. E2 said that she corrected the mistakes that she thought serious such as the ones in pronunciation and grammar teaching. E3 said she warned the novice teacher to use less L1 in the class. E4 gave some feedback about the way the novice teacher taught reading and the vocabulary within the “Reading” Course. Therefore, when the experienced teachers were asked on which they focused their attention during the observation, except from E4, they all said that they focused on pedagogy rather than the linguistic competence of the teachers.

All of the experienced teachers apart from E4 said that they gave more importance to pedagogy because of the several reasons that are similar to the ones mentioned in the quote. The experienced teachers were also asked whether they found the process of filling in the form of observation beneficial. They all said that they filled in the form and then they asked the novice teacher why they followed that certain pattern in that lesson. Additionally, they stated that they found some responses of the novice teachers unsatisfactory. E3 said that she did not ponder on the flow of the lesson while she was filling in the form but she later checked her notes and she evaluated the process later on.

3.3. The instructors’ perspectives on teaching profession after the INSET program

The novice teachers also discussed which processes had affected them most as part of their professional development. N1 and N2 said it was their teaching experiences as a novice teacher first and their undergraduate studies are the second. N2 and N3 said that it was their studies in the department and their experiences as novice teachers. None of the participants referred to their experiences as language learners.

The novice teachers were also asked about which processes they considered particularly contributing to the development of their teaching skills. In particular, they were invited to reflect on the linguistics courses they took in the department and teaching practice observations. Participants had varying opinions on this issue. N1 and N4 said they benefited a lot from the observations. N4 explained this by saying:

The observations are the perfect model for my teaching profession. However, I cannot use the knowledge that I acquired from the linguistics courses in the department because they are quite complicated for my students but the things that I have learned from the observations are ready to use all the time in my working context now.

N2 and N3 said that they benefited from the linguistics courses they took in the department and they utilized the knowledge that they acquired from those courses in their teaching. N3 said that he was showing IPA (International Phonetics Alphabet) which he learned in the Phonetics course in his undergraduate studies to his students and he was teaching them phonetics.

The novice teachers also commented on whether it was difficult for teachers who learned English via the GTM to teach English in a communicative way. All of them except N3 said that it was difficult. N1 elaborated on the issue by saying that it was also difficult for their students who were taught the language with the GTM in their primary and high school years to get accustomed to the Communicative Method which required them to be active in the class by making them speak with their friends. Thus, it was also difficult for

the teacher. N4 explained it by saying:

It is not a realistic thing to expect those teachers to stop teaching the language via the GTM and turn to the Communicative Method overnight. We were also taught the language via the GTM but we were convinced of the importance and the benefits of the Communicative Method in our undergraduate studies. However, such teachers with a great deal of experience learned English via the GTM and they taught it with the GTM for years. Thus, they must feel themselves safe while teaching through the GTM. That is the difference and the reason why they will find it difficult to turn to the Communicative Method in their teaching styles.

According to the novice teacher participants, it is difficult for those teachers who learned and taught the language with the GTM to turn to the Communicative Method in their teaching pedagogy. The novice teachers were also asked to share their ideas about these observations within the INSET program and to evaluate this process as a whole. All of them stated that they benefited from it as they learned some new techniques and activities and this raised their awareness towards some issues. N3 said that they discovered their weaknesses and strengths on teaching. N1 told that theory was not enough all alone so they should have made more observations because they learned a lot about time management and classroom management. N4 brought another perspective by saying:

This process was beneficial but in order to increase the efficiency of the process, teachers with 5-6 years of experience should be chosen as a teacher trainers because the ones having more than 20 years might sometimes have forgotten all about the theories that we were shown in the department. Thus, we cannot discuss the new theories and their implementations in the class with them. As for my case, I entered my observation class biased towards the instructor because I thought that I would never be able to speak and discuss with her the theories behind her implementations because she was over 55 years old having more than 20 years of experience. Consequently, we could not, perhaps because her answers to my questions did not satisfy me. I wanted to observe a teacher who had a 5-6 years of experience because s/he would not only be experienced enough to show me the way but s/he would also be aware of the latest trends in the field, which would make the discussions more fruitful.

These remarks point to the criticality of potential bias among program participants based on age. It would be important to seek ways of addressing such bias while organizing programs. The criteria for matching trainees with mentors should be clearly elaborated on.

Experienced teachers were also asked which processes in their previous experiences mostly affected their teaching. In particular, they were invited to consider their experiences as language learners, their experiences as university students, their experiences in teaching or their observation experiences in this INSET program. They all stated that their experiences in teaching largely affected their teaching because all of them said that they were graduates of English language and literature departments and even though they attended teaching certificate programs, they were taught the pedagogy on how to teach at a superficial level there. E2 and E3 stated that the lessons in the teaching certificate program they attended were not very beneficial for them at all. They just attended them to get the certificate. They also stated that they did not have a whole practicum year just like the one that the graduates of Education Faculties had. E1 and E4 also confirmed what their colleagues said by adding that they improved their English proficiency after they started teaching the

language. The experienced teachers highly relied on their experiences so as to create their own teaching philosophies. They were also asked whether they witnessed the use of the GTM method by the novice teachers and whether it was difficult for the teachers who learned the language with the GTM to teach the language via the Communicative Method. None of them said that they saw the implementation of the GTM in the classes but all of them said “yes” to the latter question. However, they added that these people were not to blame for this because that was the way they learned the language.

The experienced teachers were also asked to evaluate the observations made within the INSET program. All of them stated that it was a mandatory process that every teacher should improve his/her teaching style. Furthermore, experienced teachers also mentioned that these observations should be extended to other teachers as well. Not only the novice teachers should be observed and they were made to observe others but also the other teachers working in the institution should be made to take part in this program. Thus, this program should not be limited to novice teachers and the teachers appointed as teacher trainers by the committee because they all thought that everyone should be observed in this process. E1 and E2 wished that they had been observed when they were novice teachers. They both stated that they struggled to find the accurate way with their own efforts but if they had been observed in the first years of their teaching by the experienced teachers, their improvement would have been much faster. For example E2 stated:

Everybody should be included in this observation process because we have lots of things to learn from one another. I wish I had had such a chance in my early years in the profession. However, both the observer and the teacher being observed should be trained for this process. They should fully figure out the objectives and main goals of this observation process, which is not to judge or evaluate people but to share experiences.

The interview data revealed that all experienced teachers believed in the benefits of the observations organized within the INSET program. They also had evaluative remarks indicating their thoughtful suggestions for the betterment of the program.

4. CONCLUSION

One of the noteworthy results of the analysis was that the novice teachers highly depended on the knowledge they acquired during their undergraduate studies. Without any questioning, these participants situated this knowledge base as their primary source for effective teaching. Beginning teachers should be encouraged to question their beliefs about their knowledge about teacher education. Richardson and Placier (2001) drew attention to the necessity teacher change and inquired into change processes. In this regard, teachers should be open to change and they should employ critical lenses while reflecting on the implementation of theory in school settings. In this study, the novice teachers did not approach observations as learning opportunities. None of the novice teachers entered the classes that would be observed to learn something new but they all stated that all they wanted to go through was to relate the theories which they had already acquired in their undergraduate studies in their university years to the applications of the experienced teachers. In a sense, they disregarded the need for reflecting on this particular teaching context.

While the novice teachers were highly dependent on the theories they had learnt during their prior education, the experienced teachers relied on their experiences in the teaching profession while teaching. When they were asked about the most influential process in relation to their teaching style, they all stated that their

experiences in the teaching profession had considerable effect on the way they taught. This might stem from their educational backgrounds. These teachers were the graduates of English language and literature departments and had completed a limited set of courses as part of teacher certification programs. However, they all noted that they did not learn much about teaching during the certificate programs and they considered instruction in these courses in these programs superficial. Such concerns about teaching certificate programs were also voiced in other studies (e.g. Çelik & Arıkan, 2012). In order to support such teachers, INSET programs can incorporate sessions in which foundational theories related to instruction can be discussed among teachers.

In this study, the participants also discussed problems that they might come across during observations of teaching. Both the experienced and the novice teachers mentioned “classroom management” issue during the interviews. Experienced teachers expected some problems in classroom management during their observations of novice teachers. What is more, novice teachers said that they would improve their classroom management skills after they observed the experienced teachers in their natural class environment and they would develop some skills on class management. Similarly, in a study conducted by Alan (2003), the novice teachers who participated pointed out that they participated the INSET program to learn more about how to handle the class so as not to face classroom management problems in their classes.

When both the experienced and the novice teachers were asked about the influence of the INSET program on their view on teacher education, they said that it did not change it dramatically. This might be because of the limited numbers of the observations that were made in a restricted time. Thus, more observations could be integrated in the program. Novice teachers could visit the classes of more than one teacher. Furthermore, experienced teachers should be encouraged to visit a class of another experienced teacher. Thus, a greater number of teachers can be involved in the program. However, the INSET program organized in this setting was confined to a particular group of teachers including only the novice teachers who were recently hired and the experienced teachers assigned as teacher trainers by the committee. More observations need to be organized to increase the possibility of reframing teachers’ perspectives. Day (1997) also warned that the participation in the INSET programs should be life-long in a teacher’s profession and teachers need life-long support for it. There might be some different methods that could be used in the INSET program. For instance, along with the observations, both novice teachers and the experienced teachers may be invited to record their own lessons and these recordings could be discussed by the person who recorded himself/herself with a colleague (either experienced or novice). In a study conducted by Hasanbaşıoğlu (2007), both the experienced and novice teacher participants were asked to record their lessons and each teacher provided feedback on his/her lesson during interviews and think-aloud-protocols. This process increased self-reflection on teaching and both the experienced and the novice teachers benefited from the process.

It is also important to note that both the experienced teachers and the novice teachers should have been trained on the purposes and steps of completing observation forms for teaching. Overall, both the experienced and the novice teacher participants of this study stated that they benefited from participation in the program by learning some new techniques from each another. Especially the experienced teachers learned some new activities from the novice teachers while the novice teachers identified some of their weaknesses that stemmed from their inexperience.

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