Developing a Modular In-service Training Program to Improve Teaching Skills of Primary School Teachers of English in Turkey

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the needs of primary school teachers concerning their expectations from an in-service program to foster their English language teaching competencies and develop such an in-service program draft. Data were collected from 10 primary school teachers working in schools in Ankara where there are currently no appointed English language teachers and from 3 academics working in the field of English language teaching. For data collection, an in-depth interview was used to determine the needs of primary school teachers from an in service program; and a structured questionnaire was used to identify the opinions of the academics on the suitability of the proposed program. The results demonstrate that primary school teachers are in need of such an in-service training program and they specifically need training on teaching methods and techniques of English, basic pronunciation patterns, use of thematic instruction, use of software to teach English and alternative assessment methods. Considering these needs of the primary school teachers who teach English, an in-service training program was developed and finalized by the opinions of the academics. With the dissemination of this program, an important need of classroom teachers can be met in the short run.

1. Introduction

1.1. Professional development

Rapid changes in the world are altering students' needs and expectations. It can be argued that these rapid changes accelerated at the beginning of 1990s as the education systems have been influenced by globalization and rapid advances in technology. Thus, it is obvious that in-service trainings (INSET) for teachers become more significant to adapt to these changes considering the diverse educational needs of students (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2017).

Variety is necessary in teacher education systems. A previous OECD study stressed that slower recruitment of teachers in many countries made it imperative to strengthen

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INSET activities, quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to sustain the vitality of the profession (OECD, 1982).

As stated in the OECD report (1998), every OECD country expects its schools to do more for students– ambitious educational outcomes are sought for all students, not just for a narrow elite. Teachers link society's expectations to what students learn. Thus, teachers' continuing professional development opportunities influences their own practice and, indirectly, the achievement of their students.

As Buchberger (1998) state, in the near future experts argue that the prosperity of highly developed societies will depend very much on an optimal development of all its human resources. Thus, to achieve this, extensive investment into education will be a necessity and it will be imperative to invest better and more into INSET.

Cimer et al. (2010), on the other hand, state that there is no pre-service education or training program that can offer a codified body of knowledge or recipe to warrant success during the teaching career in different contexts. Therefore, to the writers, in order for teachers to accommodate changes and innovations and to keep informed about developments in education, they need to be educated during their career too.

Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) defines professional development as activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher. It can be made available through external expertise in the form of courses, workshops or formal qualification programs, through collaboration between schools or teachers across schools or within the schools in which teachers work. (OECD, 2009).

Professional development performs four major functions within a school. It serves to (Blandford, 2000) enhance individual performance; rectify ineffective practice; establish the groundwork for the implementation of policy; and facilitate change.

INSET is the primary means to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions related to their fields of study, in other words, to help them become lifelong learners (Gültekin & Çubukçu, 2008).

Education authorities worldwide recognize the importance of INSET to a dynamic and effective education system, one responsive to rapid changes in an increasingly globalized world. INSET is particularly important for primary school teachers of English at a time when Ministries of Education are placing greater emphasis on an early start to the teaching of English (Hayes, 2008). Thus, INSET is the primary means to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions related to their fields of study, in other words, to help them become lifelong learners (Gültekin & Çubukçu, 2008).

Hayes (2008) in a study that was conducted in Korea conclude that development does not occur in a vacuum and the potential as much as the constraints of the context need to be assessed. Thus, part of the potential of the context includes the wide availability of on-

line sources for professional development. Yan (2005)'s case study in China concludes, similarly that various views put their emphasis on the relevance and appropriateness of courses relative to teachers' various needs (e.g. prior beliefs and assumptions) and the local contexts. However, teachers' practical needs and expectations, as a focus of research have not received sufficient attention.

TALIS report (OECD, 2009) notes that, no matter how good pre-service training for teachers is, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. Education systems therefore seek to provide teachers with opportunities for in-service professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce.

1.2. Professional development of primary school teachers in Turkey

In Turkey, teachers need to attend INSET programs either at home or abroad by laws such as the Civil Servants' Law No. 657 (Devlet Memurlari Kanunu, 1965, a.214) and the National Education Principal Law No.1739 (Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu, 1973, a.48). According to these laws, the INSET Department of the Ministry of National Education is responsible for the INSET of teachers. On the other hand, the Higher Education Institutions' Organization Law No. 2809 (1983, a.5) assigns universities to offer INSET to teachers (Özer, 2004).

Ministry of National education INSET law (1995) reveals that objectives, principles, implementation, evaluation and management of any type of INSET activity have been designed at the ministry level. In this respect, INSETS have been provided in two means:

a) during probationary period as basic education, preparatory education, and internship,
b) after being fully appointed as advanced trainees for higher positions.

The findings of the first TALIS report (2008) revealed significant findings for INSET of teachers in Turkey (OECD, 2009):

a) Most of the teachers stated that they did not attend any INSET and according to teachers' participation rate into training programs, Turkey ranks last in the list of countries.
b) Turkey's score is under the average score of OECD countries in terms of teachers' participation period to INSETs.
c) Turkey's score is below the average of OECD countries in terms of teachers' disposition towards getting an INSET.
d) Turkey ranks at the bottom of the list in terms of the stated needs of teachers for an INSET.

e) Turkey's score is below the average of OECD countries in terms of the money spent individually by teachers for INSETs.

f) Teachers in Turkey stated the lack of appropriate INSET and their implementation during working hours as two primary reasons for their not participating.

In addition to the TALIS report, a few studies conducted on INSET of teachers in Turkey need to be highlighted. Ergin, Akseki, and Deniz (2012) noted that teachers feel the need for INSETs to adapt to scientific, technological, and social transformations as well as to improve themselves. In the study, teachers felt the need for in- service trainings for learning disorders, hyperactivity, educational technologies, and attention deficiency disorder. Karasolak, Tanrıseven and Konokman (2013) concluded that teachers have a negative attitude towards INSETs and this negativity does not change according to variables of gender, or major or year of study. In addition, Gülmez (2004) and Demirtaş (2008) inferred that INSETs are insufficient to meet the needs and expectations of teachers.

An important reform to affect the needs of primary school teachers in Turkey was the change of English lesson distribution among primary school grades. According to this reform, known as 4+4+4, the basic compulsory education was extended to 12 years starting from 2012-2013 school year. Later, in 2016, Ministry of National Education (MoNE) revised the 4+4+4 program along with the primary and lower secondary school English programs. With this change, English courses started to be offered at the second grade. However, in Turkey there are numerous schools without English language teachers. The current number of English language teachers to be recruited is 11.623. According to the latest statistics available, there is a shortage of 3630 primary school, 5719 lower secondary school, and 2113 high school English language teachers (MoNE statistics, 2018). In addition, current changes in the primary education system of Turkey will increase this shortage of English language teachers. Among these changes are transforming 5th grade secondary schools into preparatory English language year and making English lessons compulsory for the pre-school education. These two important political initiatives-if widely implemented- will have a tremendous effect on the need for more English language teachers. Table 1 shows the current need of English language teachers in Turkey.

Table 1. English language teacher need (MoNE statistics, 2018)

Institution	Present	Need
Primary schools	11.057	3.630
Lower secondary schools	34.165	5.719
High schools	23.397	2.113
Others	444	161
Overall	69.063	11.623

An official document sent to Higher Education Council by the MoNE stated that at schools without English language teachers English courses will have to be delivered by primary school teachers. However, as Yıldıran and Tanrıseven (2015) earlier stated and warned, major problems arose because these teachers do not know how to teach English.

As cited in Aksoy, et al. (2018), Bayyurt (2012) adopts a critical approach to EL education at an early age in the 4+4+4 system. She points out the language teacher shortage, and reminds the law publicized in 2012, which states that EL lessons can be instructed by "primary school teachers who have received INSET certificate in language education" (Article 64 of the Regulation on the Amendment of Primary Education Institutions of Ministry of National Education). For this target group, the INSET courses and certificate programs deserve particular attention in terms of their approach to teaching English to young learners. Primary school teachers who will teach English to children should have the required EL proficiency, methodological competence and knowledge of age-appropriate assessment. However, it should be noted that well-functioning and useful INSET requires a thorough examination of the needs that the training is supposed to be an answer to. In that way, it becomes possible to establish the main goals that must then be kept in focus throughout the training (Huhtala & Vesalainen, 2017).

Foreign language teaching by primary school teachers is a common implementation around EU countries (Eurydice, 2017). According to the report of the EU commission, this case varies among countries. While some countries such as Estonia, Latvia and the Netherlands want primary school teachers to get foreign language teaching education, some others such as Germany, Italy, and Latvia ask these teachers to certify their foreign language teaching education (Eurydice, 2017). Butler's study (2004) reports language competencies of Korean, Taiwanese and Japan primary school teachers by their own perceptions. It was reported that to meet the English teacher deficit, primary school teachers were given the responsibility to teach English in these countries. In line with this, it was reported in Turkey that primary school teachers are more suitable (Şad, 2010) and even advantageous (Şevik, 2009) during the process of teaching English as they know better the developmental stages of primary school students and they spend more time with these groups of students.

In 2017, general competencies of teachers were updated (MoNE 2017) and within the general competencies there are salient ones related to the INSETs of teachers. Among the competency in content qualifications are " explains the curriculum of his/her content area, relates the curriculum of his/her content area with that of others, compares the teaching techniques used to teach his/her content area with other courses, compares assessment techniques used to assess his/her content area with other courses". Among the competency in establishing effective learning environments are "organizes the learning environment according to course objectives, sets up learning environments to foster students' higher order cognitive skills".

However, as there are no English language teaching courses at undergraduate level curriculum for primary school teachers (only 1 course was added in 2018), it is debatable to what extent thousands of primary school teachers who have to teach English in their schools will be able to meet such competencies.

In terms of INSET programs offered by MoNE in 2018 (MoNE, 2019) , programs such as Fatih Project applications, Network, Erasmus+, PISA, Occupational health and safety, Special education, Fashion design, Furniture, Industry 4.0 gained momentum while courses for English language teaching were limited to basic English learning courses at A1, A2, and B1 levels. It can be observed that ten thousand participants in Fatih Project Interactive Classroom Management, 2000 participants in Geogebra, 1000 participants in leadership, and 1000 participants in presentation techniques attended to such INSETs offered by MoNE. On the other hand, INSET program on contemporary teaching methods in English language teaching was cancelled because of budgetary limitations taken by the government.

1.3 A solution for primary school teachers: Thematic instruction

Recent changes in education in Turkey have led to a need for an in-service program on teaching English to young learners as well as materials and course books. Bayyurt (2012) offers a theme-based curriculum to meet this need for young learners. With such a program, English language will be related and aligned with other course contents so that learning will be more meaningful for the students. By being framed around the Thematic Instruction, updated English language curriculum of 2-3-4 th graders (MoNE 2018) were said to be prepared by relying on Bayyurt's suggestions. Thematic Instruction can be defined as an approach in which contents of the course are designed around a theme (Brinton 2001; Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003). Thematic Instruction design differs from traditional instruction designs in that language structures are determined as themes and the curriculum design is programmed accordingly. Various teaching activities are associated with the theme to foster different skills (Brinton, Snow & Wesche, 2003). The logic behind the Thematic Instruction lies in the assumption that a whole unified meaningful content will better serve the needs of the students rather than isolated bits and chunks of unrelated activities (Berry & Mindes, 1993). In other words, Thematic Instruction focuses on the teaching of various contents of different disciplines around a unified theme. Cameron (2001) asserts that Thematic Instruction is useful to better the vocabulary output of students. Thus, Thematic Instruction can be useful in optimizing students' motivation as well as learning a foreign language within a unified context around themes.

Thematic Instruction can also be a powerful tool to foster the English language teaching skills of primary school teachers who have not been trained on how to teach English in that primary school teachers already know how to teach various courses (such as Turkish, math's, life sciences) but not English. For this reason, in a previous study, the researcher focused on the needs of primary school teachers during English language teaching process (Aksoy & Bozdoğan, 2019). This study collected the opinions of 150 primary school teachers working in Ankara at schools with no English language teachers.

Research results posed evidence for the need of INSETs as well as quality materials for primary school teachers.

As Bayyurt (2012) suggests, in the long run, curriculum of primary school teaching departments at education faculties need to be updated to include English language teaching courses for young learners; however, in the short-run, primary school teachers need to be trained on how to teach English to young learners. When foreign language policies and practices around the world are analyzed, it is evident that this is not impossible.

Within this scope, this study aims to collect primary school teachers and academics' opinions on the INSET program to be developed and accordingly develop an INSET program to foster the English language teaching skills of primary school teachers. The program adopts the methodology of Tyler's (illustrated in Figure 1) curriculum development model (Tyler, 1949) and includes aims-content-learning experiences-evaluation dimensions. Tyler's model may be useful in structuring an INSET program as it seeks the answers to the following questions (Tyler, 1949):

- What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?
- What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
- How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
- How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

In terms of the present study, as Tyler (1949) offered, first needs were identified, then appropriate objectives were written based on these specific needs; relevant content and learning experiences were organized and finally evaluation dimension of the INSET was completed.
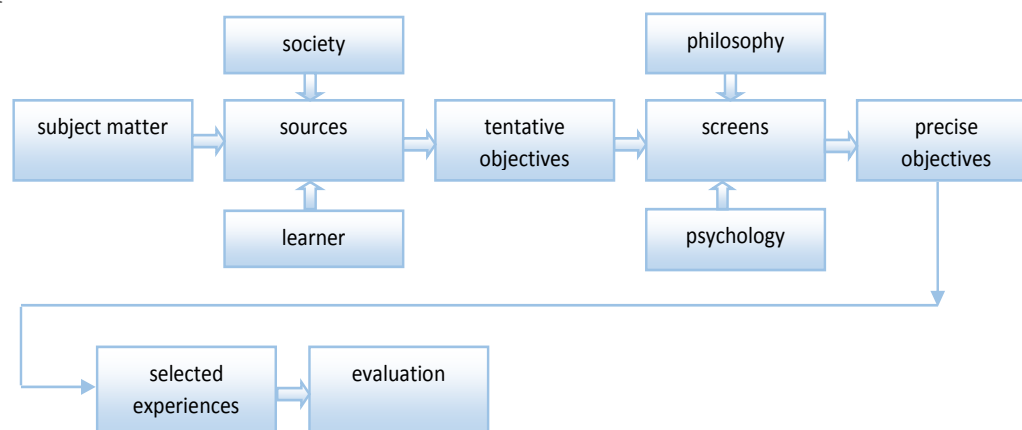

Figure 1. Tyler's program development model. (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018)

This study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What are the opinions of primary school teachers for the INSET program to be developed to foster their English language teaching skills?

2. What are the suggestions of academics on the suitability of the prepared INSET program?

2. Method

As this study aims to develop an INSET program to foster the English language teaching skills of primary school teachers based on their specific needs, it was designed as a phenomenological qualitative study. By assuming that there is some commonality to how classroom teachers perceive and interpret similar experiences and needs; the researcher sought to identify, understand, and describe these commonalities (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Based on the previous needs analysis study (Aksoy & Bozdoğan, 2019), the researcher first identified a specific group of teachers who stated that they needed INSET to teach English better and then conducted in-depth interviews to reveal their needs and expectations from such a training program by a further needs analysis study. Then, in accordance with the expectations of primary school teachers from the INSET program, a draft program was prepared consisting of five different but related modules. Finally, the prepared draft program was sent to three English language teaching academics to gather their opinions on the suitability of the program. In the end, the draft program was finalized based on the opinions of these experts. The design of the study is illustrated in figure 2.

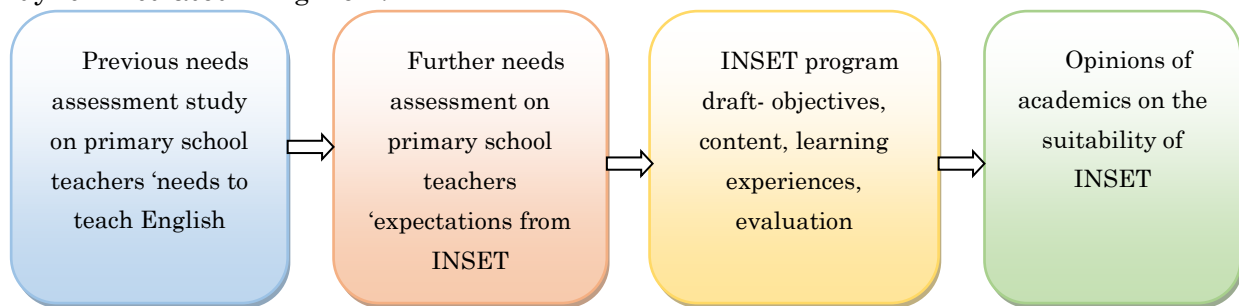| Previous needs assessment study on primary school teachers 'needs to teach English | Further needs assessment on primary school teachers 'expectations from INSET | INSET program draft- objectives, content, learning experiences, evaluation | Opinions of academics on the suitability of INSET |

Figure 2. Design of the study

2.1 Study group

The study group comprises of 10 primary school teachers working in various schools with no English language teachers in Ankara as well as 3 academics working in the field of English language teaching. These primary school teachers were selected utilizing purposive sampling method based on a previous needs analysis study (Aksoy & Bozdoğan, 2019). As the researcher did not simply study whoever was available but rather used his judgment to select a sample that he believed, based on prior information, would provide the data he needed, the previous information led the researcher to believe that the sample selected would be representative of the population (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012) and interviews were conducted with this group. In the previous needs

analysis study, there were around 150 participants from various schools in Ankara and some of them stated that they needed INSET to improve their English language teaching skills. Thus, in the present study purposive sampling was utilized focusing on 10 participants, some of whom were working at different schools and who already stated that they needed such an INSET program. The demographic qualities of primary school teachers are presented in table 2.

Table 2. Demographics of primary school teachers

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	5	50
	Female	5	50
Age	24-32	1	10
	33-40	4	40
	41 and above	5	50
Education	Undergraduate	7	70
	Graduate	2	20
	Two-year degree	1	10
Faculty	Faculty of education	5	50
	Other faculties	5	50
Working years	0-5	0	0
	6-10	1	10
	11-15	0	0
	16-20	5	50
	21-25	3	30
	26 and above	1	10
No of students in classrooms	0-15	5	50
	16-35	5	50
	36 and above	0	0
Participation into an English in-service program	Yes	0	0
	No	10	100

Demographics present some salient findings. First, the number of students in the classrooms of these teachers is between 0-15 (%50) and 16-35 (%50) which are both exceptionally moderate. On the other hand, none of these teachers (0) attended any INSET programs related to English language before.

2.2 Data collection and analysis

The first data-gathering tool is an interview form developed by the researcher to reveal the needs of the primary school teachers from an INSET program specifically designed to foster their English language teaching skills. The researcher first developed interview questions to be asked and sent the form to academics (one working at primary school teaching department, one working at measurement and evaluation department and one working at English language teaching department) to check the suitability of interview questions. The interview form was then finalized based on the opinions of academics. Another data collection tool in the study is a questionnaire sent to the academics working at English language teaching departments of 3 different universities. The aim of this structured questionnaire was to collect academics' opinions on the suitability of the

prepared INSET program. The questions asked to primary school teachers during the interviews are as follows:

1) What should be the aims of an INSET program to develop your English language teaching skills?
2) What should be the contents of such a program?
3) What kind of teaching methodologies and instructional tools should be used within this program?
4) How should this program be evaluated?
5) What should be taken into account during the implementation of this program?

The question asked through the questionnaire to academics is as follows:

1) Is the program developed to foster the English language teaching skills of primary school teachers appropriate in terms of:

a) Aims,
b) Content,
c) Learning experiences,
d) Evaluation?

Consent for research was obtained from the provincial directorate of national education. Primary school teachers were informed about the purpose, content and the voluntary participation process of research. Upon their agreement to cooperate and participate, the interviews were conducted between March 2018 and April 2018 and voice recorded for further analysis. Teachers' answers to questions were first transcribed and then analyzed with a qualitative data analysis program (NVIVO). In this process, since the questions asked in the interview constituted the themes, appropriate codes were ranked under the themes, so pattern-coding method was employed (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There are no ethical concerns or conflicts about the process as neither the questions are manipulative, nor do circumstances exist in which other teachers or students at schools can be negatively affected. Data collected from the questionnaire to academics were analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

2.3 Reliability and validity

To Miles and Huberman (1994), to provide internal and external validity, the findings need to be meaningful in the context of data collection, and that data need to be confirmed by using various data sources, data gathering methods and analysis strategies.

The following procedures were followed in the study. Expert opinion was gathered for the suitability of interview questions. Data collected through interviews were then transcribed and sent back to teachers for clarification. During data analysis, 20% of interview transcripts were randomly selected and analyzed first by the researcher and then together with another researcher who is experienced in qualitative research. During this analysis, the coding to be used, the issues put forward by the teachers and the process of reporting were investigated and discussed. Finally, data were analyzed by another expert on NVIVO and findings were discussed together. The coded data were

analyzed based on frequencies of each code under main themes. On the other hand, data collected from academics through the questionnaire were analyzed by using frequencies.

3. Results

Answers of the primary school teachers to the interview questions were analyzed by content analysis method and presented under aims, content, learning experiences, and evaluation sections. Values given in parentheses represent the frequencies of opinions. Similarly, the thickness of arrows represents the relative density of opinions.

3.1 Opinions of primary school teachers on the INSET program to be prepared

In terms of the research questions, first, opinions of primary school teachers for the planned INSET were gathered. These opinions were presented under aims, content, learning experiences, and evaluation sections by referring to each sub question within the general aims.

3.1.1 Answers to the question "what should be the aims of an INSET program to develop your English language teaching skills?"

The opinions of teachers regarding the aims of such a program show that teachers stressed five fundamental aims. These are presented in Figure 3.
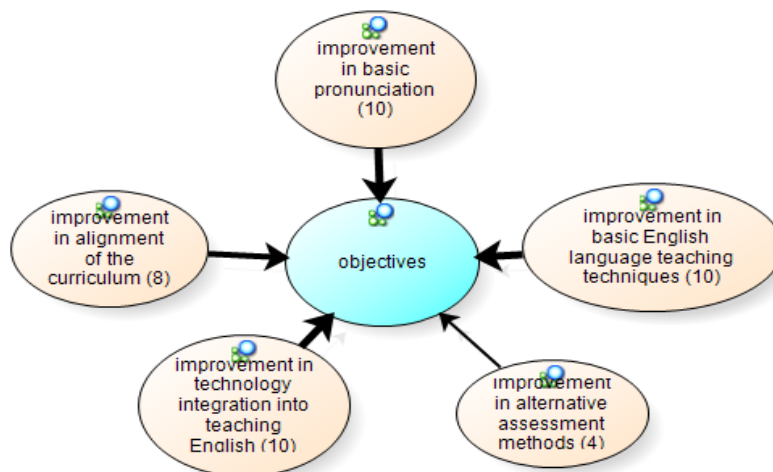

Figure 3. Expected aims of the INSET program

Teachers' opinions on the objectives of the INSET highlight the insufficiency at pronunciation and the need for its improvement. In addition, all the teachers agree that they need training on technology use as well as English language teaching methods and techniques. While majority of the teachers stressed the need to relate and align course contents with English, four teachers stated the need for alternative assessment techniques to be used in English classes. Considering the intensity of each category, salient expressions and opinions of various teachers are presented as follows:

Improvement in basic pronunciation:

> *"I have difficulty even at pronouncing the easiest words. I know what they mean in Turkish but I do not know how to pronounce them."*

> *"Such a program needs to aim at improving basic pronunciation skills. Not every word, but basic rules need to be taught."*

Improvement in technology integration:

> *"Our technological infrastructure was strengthened with Fatih project and Eba platforms. But how can other technologies be used to teach English? This question needs to be answered through this INSET."*

> *"INSET needs to improve the participants' use of high-tech software to teach English."*

Improvement in basic English language teaching techniques:

> *"Each course has its own methods of teaching. We are familiar with how to teach Turkish as the mother tongue but we do not know how to teach another language. I hope the INSET will help us to meet this necessary need."*

Improvement of alignment of the curriculum:

> *"I can personally relate life sciences with math and Turkish but how can it be done with English? I think it will be very beneficial if we learn how to make this connection as is offered in the new curriculum."*

Improvement in alternative assessment methods:

> *"Methods except multiple choice tests, such as peer evaluation, or self-assessment need to be addressed."*

3.1.2. Answers to the question "what should be the contents of an INSET program to develop your English language teaching skills?"

The opinions of teachers regarding the contents of such a program show that teachers stressed five fundamental aims. These are presented in Figure 4.

Teachers' opinions on the contents of the INSET reveal their insufficiency at pronunciation and the need for improvement especially for some problematic sounds for Turkish learners. In addition, all teachers agree that they need to improve their use of technology as well as English language teaching methods and techniques. While majority of the teachers stressed the need to relate and align course contents with English, four teachers stated the need for alternative assessment techniques to be used in English classes. Considering the intensity of each category, salient expressions and opinions of various teachers are presented as follows:
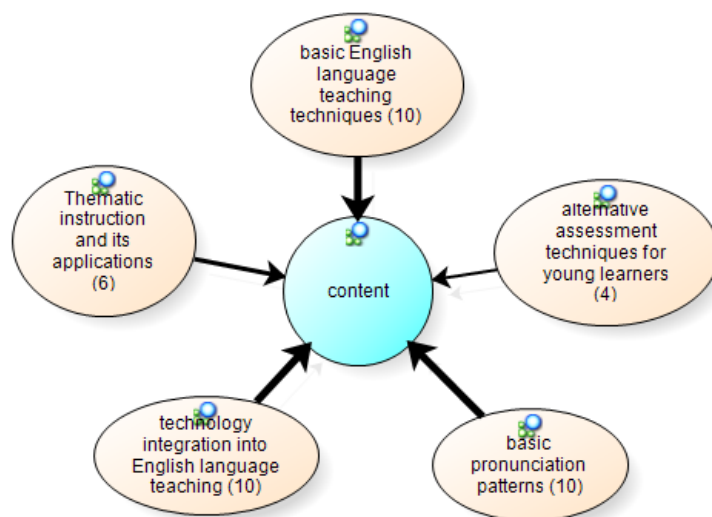
Figure 4. Expected contents of the INSET program

Basic pronunciation patters:

> *"There are words in the curriculum that I need to teach. Some words are easy to pronounce such as Yoghurt because we also have them in Turkish. But some other words like knee, chicken, spider are difficult to pronounce."*

> *"Especially words with-th sound, -ch sound and –w create problems. I always need to look up for the right pronunciation of such sounds and it takes a lot of time."*

Basic English language teaching techniques:

> *"Some of my friends-English language teachers tell me not to teach grammar but to focus on communication and I still don't know what they mean. How can children learn without teaching them grammar or vocabulary?"*

> *"I have serious problems with the instructions. Most of the time, I do not understand instructions because the level of English is too advanced for me."*

> Technology integration into English language teaching:

> *"We had the Dyned system before and it was useful for us but then they did not allow us to use it. Most of the time, we have limited access to internet. But students need to listen to songs, and watch cartoons. We should be doing these at this technology era."*

> *"I wish we had a system to use both for in-class activities and for the continuation of the INSET program. I really would like to learn that."*

Thematic instruction and its applications:

> *"The new curriculum writes about the Thematic Instruction. But I only know the name of it. If what is meant is the relation among courses, then we need to see real examples of it ."*

Alternative assessment techniques:

> *"The new curriculum asks us not to use exams, paper-pencil tests etc. But how I am going check students' learning without them?"*

3.1.3 Answers to the question "what kind of teaching methodologies and instructional tools should be used within this program?"

The opinions of teachers regarding the methodologies and instructional tools of such a program show that teachers stressed four fundamental points (Figure 5).
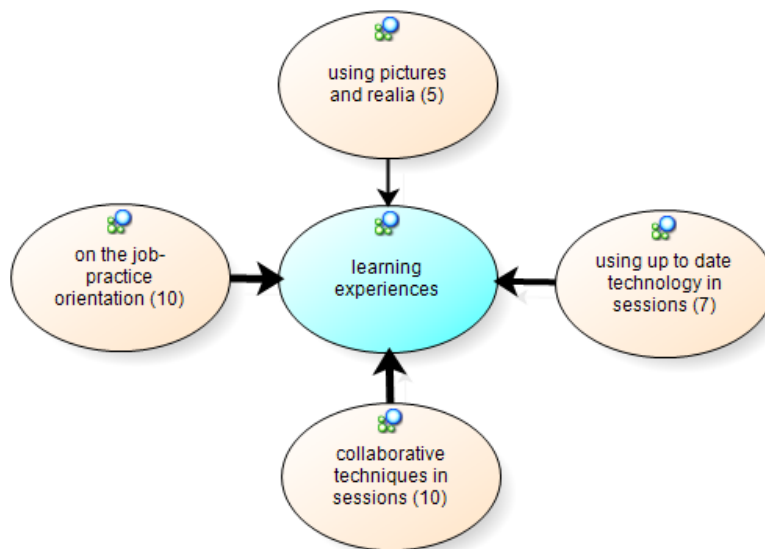

Figure 5. Expected teaching methodologies and instructional tools

All primary school teachers suggest the use of collaborative teaching methods (n=10), as well as the use of on the job practice techniques (n=10). While the majority of teachers stated that they prefer the use of up to date technological software (n=7), five teachers stated that striking audio-visuals need to be used during INSETs. Considering the intensity of each category, salient expressions and opinions of various teachers are presented as follows:

On the job practice:

> *"Sessions need to utilize on the job training techniques, no more memorization please! Real life examples should be used."*
>
> *" We need to see real class examples that we can utilize directly in our classrooms. We do not need detailed theoretical information."*

Collaborative techniques:

> *"Peer and group work should be used instead of individual study. We should learn together. Sometimes teachers' language and students' language varies and we will be students here."*

> *" Especially English language teaching techniques with which we can make students play games, work in groups, design posters etc. should be focused."*

Up-to date technology:

> *"As is expected from us in our classes, professionals who will present need to use up-dated technology. Especially technological software that we are unaware of needs to be presented and used."*

> *" Sessions should be delivered by using technological tools such as the ones we use by Fatih project. We have smart boards but it will be better if we get to know how to use them effectively to teach English".*

Using pictures and realia:

> *"Up-to date and interesting audio-visuals need to be incorporated."*

3.1.4 Answers to the question "how should this program be evaluated?"

The opinions of teachers regarding the evaluation of such a program show that teachers stressed three fundamental points. These are presented in Figure 6.
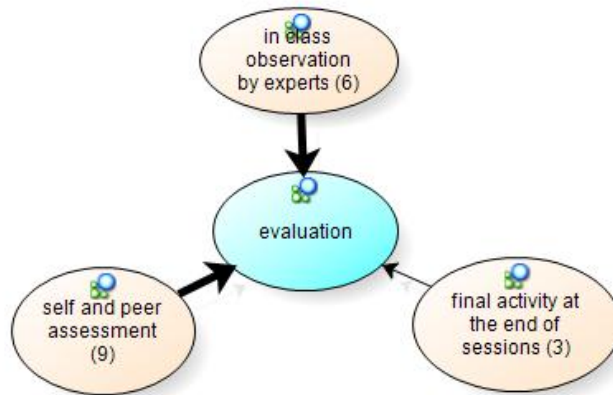

Figure 6. Expected evaluation methods

Nearly all the teachers (n=9) stated that such an INSET program needs to be evaluated by self and peer assessment method. While the majority of teachers offered the use of in-class observations by experts (n=6), others (n=3) offered the use of a final activity to check comprehension. Considering the intensity of each category, salient expressions and opinions of various teachers are presented as follows:

Self and peer assessment:

> *"Usually we get a multiple choice test at the end of INSETs but personally I did not benefit from these tests. If it is important to show what I learned, then I can do it best by writing what I learned, not in the form of a test."*

> *"Peer assessment can be used. Another participant can evaluate what I learned and I can evaluate his/her learning."*

In class observation by experts:

> *"In my opinion, experts who provide INSETs need to observe our classes at different times of the year. I mean evaluation should not be one shot, it should be continuous."*

> *"I would rather call the term improvement rather than evaluation. For improvement purposes, academics may follow our lessons and we should also observe their lesson-the ones about teaching English to young learners".*

Final activity at the end of sessions:

> *"A final activity can check whatever we learned. Not a paper-pencil test, but on the job evaluation will be better."*

3.1.5 Answers to the question "what should be taken into account during the implementation of this program?"

The opinions of teachers regarding the implementation phase of the INSET program show that teachers stressed seven fundamental suggestions (Figure 7).
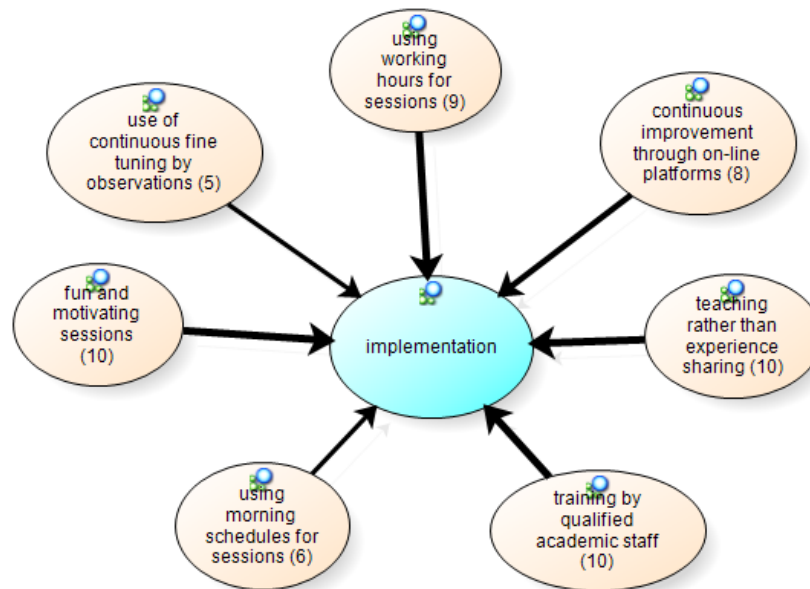

Figure 7. Points to consider during implementation phase of the program

All of the primary school teachers (n=10) offered that academics or people who are professionalized in their fields of study need to be providers of such as program, to the point teaching needs to be utilized rather than experience sharing sessions as well as the

sessions should be fun and motivating for the participants. In addition to many teachers (n=9) who offered to implement training sessions during working hours, some teachers (n=6) offered to conduct them in the morning hours. While many teachers (n=5) stressed that INSETs should not be provided as one shot treatments and offered that the continuation of this program needs to be provided via fine tuning by observations, others (n=8) suggested to improve themselves via on-line platforms. In this sense, teachers are stressing "improvement" rather than "evaluation".

3. 2. The development of the INSET program

The INSET program draft is presented in appendix A.1. In line with the needs of primary school teachers, the INSET program draft was first categorized under five modules. These modules are contemporary English language teaching methods/techniques, basic English pronunciation, alternative in class assessment techniques, technology integrated English language teaching, and thematic instruction/teaching. Within each module, objectives requiring higher order thinking skills were written to meet the needs of specific group of teachers and appropriate content was determined based on the objectives. Learning experiences were carefully aligned with the objectives as well as contents of each module and collaborative teaching techniques such as Jigsaw, Round Robin, Think-Pair-Share were offered for each module. Evaluation of the modules were based on the needs of primary school teachers and comprised such methods as K-W-L (know-want to know-learned), peer assessment, and digital poster presentation. The aim of evaluation in the modules is not to make a conclusive high-stakes evaluation but to foster further learning and motivation of the participants. All modules comprising the INSET were then sent to academics to collect their opinions on the suitability of each module as well as the overall structure of the program and the INSET was finalized based on the opinions and suggestions of these academics. The structure of the INSET and relation among each module is represented in figure 8.

In Figure 8, it can be seen that technology integration into English language teaching is at the center because primary school teachers believe that the continuation of INSETS can successfully be delivered via online platforms and that experience sharing as well as continuous fine-tuning can be made possible by online technological platforms. In addition, teachers also stated that they need training on how to use collaborative online platforms as well as learning management systems.

In accordance with the main research questions, the second data-gathering tool was a structured questionnaire (Appendix A.3) to collect academics' opinions on the suitability of the prepared INSET program. Since it was a structured questionnaire containing numerous specific items about the objectives-content-learning experiences and evaluation sections of the INSET, a structured questionnaire rather than an interview was adopted so that academics would comment on the suitability of each item in the program as well

as state the weaknesses of each item. The academics in the study comprised two full professors of ELT working at government universities in Ankara and one assistant professor of ELT working at a private university in Ankara. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed by frequencies.
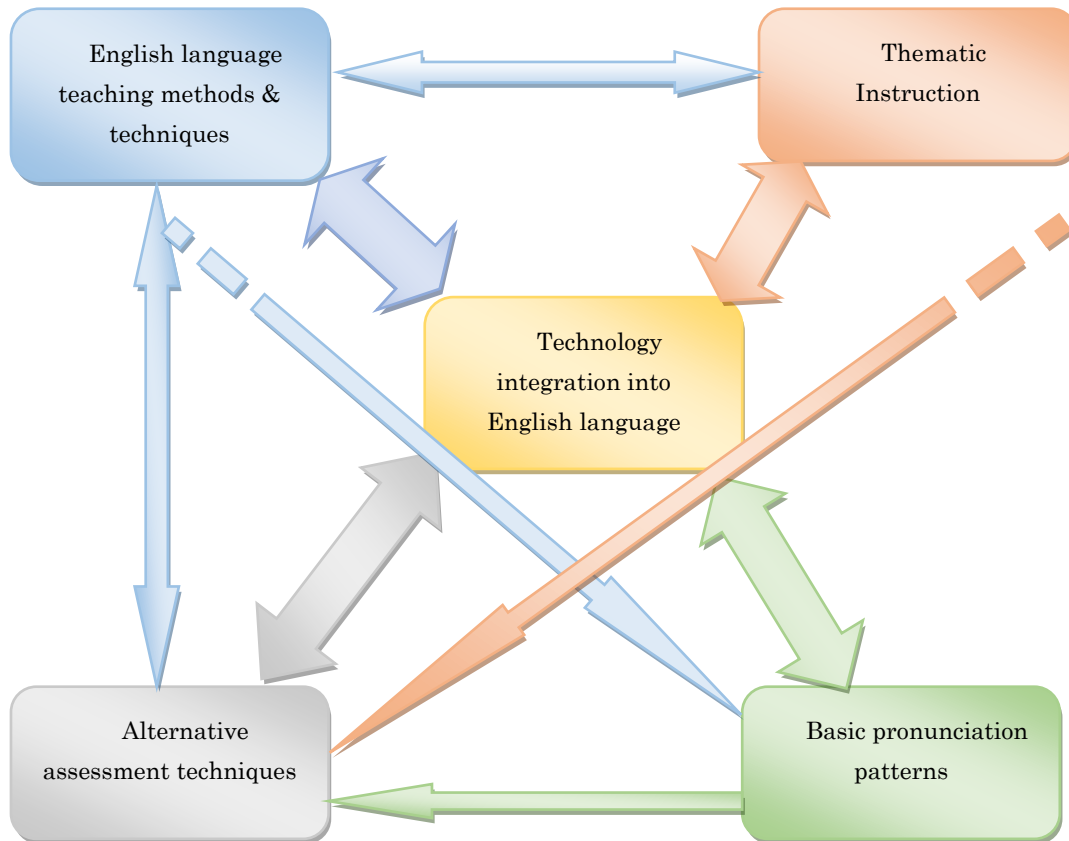

Figure 8. The structure of the INSET and relation among each module

3.3 Opinions of the academics on the suitability of the prepared INSET program

Opinions of academics regarding the program were presented under aims, content, learning experiences, and evaluation sections.

3.3.1 Opinions of the academics on the aims of the prepared program

All three academics (f=3) agreed that objectives of the program are meaningful for the participants; objectives were described in simple and clear terms; objectives and content are related; and relevant and objectives are achievable for the participants. On the other hand, while one academic (f=1) agreed that objectives could be helpful to equip participants with the applications of the thematic instruction, two (f=2) disagreed on this stating that allocated time for the activities will not be enough to achieve such an objective. According to this suggestion by two academics, the duration of the INSET for

each module was shortened to 5 hours. In the earlier draft version, each module took about 6 to 7 hours.

3.3.2 Opinions of the academics on the content of the prepared program

All three academics (f=3) agreed that content of the modules are related and aligned with the program objectives; they are appealing for the participants; they are compatible within each module; and they are suitable for the use of various teaching methods. On the other hand, while all academics agreed that contents within each module are designed according to the principles of content organization (from easy to difficult or from known to the unknown) one academic (f=1) suggested that the relationship between the modules needs to be further demonstrated by a diagram.

By focusing on the opinion of one academic about the relation among the modules, the researcher prepared a detailed figure showing the relation among and between each module in the INSET (figure 8).

3.3.3 Opinions of the academics on the learning experiences of the prepared program

All three academics (f=3) agreed that suggested teaching methods and techniques are compatible with objectives and content; they are suitable for the use of primary school teachers; the suggested instructional tools and materials are appropriate; the duration of the total program is reasonable; activities require the active participation of the participants; and activities with each module follow a similar style. On the other hand, two of the academics (f=2) suggested that the program needs to offer alternative activities to the participants.

In terms of the suggestions by two of the academics, more number of alternative activities (types of activities that can be conducted) were offered in the INSET modules. However, the activities themselves were not prepared because they would be prepared by the experts by taking into account this draft program.

3.3.4 Opinions of the academics on the evaluation of the prepared program

All three academics (f=3) agreed that evaluation is consistent with the objectives, content, and learning experiences of the program; evaluation has the quality of reflecting participants' learning; and the evaluation tools are effective enough to show that participants reached the required objectives. On the other hand, two academics (f=2) offered that an in-class observation form needs to be provided to academics for further in-class observations. For this, the researcher prepared an in-class observation rubric to be used by academics for further studies (presented in appendix A.2).

4. Discussion

Research results reveal that English language teaching needs of primary school teachers were not investigated and accordingly no INSET program was offered by the

MoNE. Primary school teachers stated that many INSET programs about various contents were offered by principals or vice principals of schools and that experience sharing rather than teaching dominated most of these programs. It is thus imperative that MoNE should have close collaboration with universities and offer INSET programs under the supervision of education faculties. In addition, such an obvious need by thousands of primary school teachers to teach English requires further investigation. As Bayyurt (2012) suggests, for this target group, the INSET courses and certificate programs deserve particular attention in terms of their approach to teaching English to young learners. Primary school teachers who will teach English to children should have the required EL proficiency, methodological competence and knowledge of age-appropriate assessment.

The findings of this study provide support to the previous needs analysis study of the researcher (Aksoy & Bozdoğan, 2019) on primary school teachers. In the previous needs analysis study, primary school teachers stated that they had difficulty in pronunciation, understanding the English instructions in the curriculum and course books, using technological tools in classes, and in using English language teaching methods and techniques. The same concerns were also raised in this study. It may be reasonable for primary school teachers not to know about English language teaching methodology considering that they did not get any undergraduate courses or were not offered any INSETs. On the other hand, so many primary school teachers do not know English at all as they all asked for the Turkish explanations of the instructions in the curriculum or in course books. This may be partly because these teachers either did not feel the need to learn English or the system did not encourage them to do so. It is also interesting to see that although many of the INSET programs offered by the MoNE in 2018 were on technology use in education, primary school teachers mostly highlighted the need to be trained on how to use technology to teach. On the other hand, research results indicate that primary school teachers are aware of the English curriculum and they carefully analyzed the program as they stated that they know how to align the contents of various courses but not English. In addition, they also put forward the need to use alternative assessment methods while teaching English. All this data show that teachers are capable of understanding the philosophy of the curriculum; however, they need INSET to bridge the methodological gap.

Furthermore, as many teachers stated, INSET programs need to be prepared and implemented not as "one shot-done and finalized" experiences but as continuous improvement opportunities to foster life-long learning experiences of participants. As Tutgun and Aksoyalp (2010) state, teachers need to consider INSET programs as continuous and life-long learning experiences to strengthen their teaching. In line with this, teachers in the study stated that they need to be trained by academics and that on-going development needs to be further recorded by classroom observations or online platforms. Thus, it can be stated that when such INSETs are well structured and

delivered by professionals, and when the ultimate goal of these programs is not to test but to further improve skills, knowledge, and dispositions of teachers, the participation rate as well as the motivations of these teachers may increase which in turn will positively contribute to the education system of the whole country.

The findings of this study provide support to the study conducted by Huhtala and Vesalainen (2017). Based on two projects, consisting of seven one-month courses for teachers of Swedish in Finland, researchers reflected on the challenges they encountered during the three-year process and they offered valuable suggestions for the further INSET studies. First, they suggested observing educators and colleagues' use of new methods, using them in their own teaching and primary school teachers in the present study similarly offered the INSET to pursue the same methodology. Next, they offered to use small groups with clear division of work and in the present study teachers asked for the use of collaborative teaching methods during INSET. In terms of the use of ICT, researchers offered to use discussions about best practices using blended learning. In the present study; however, primary school teachers expected to experience advanced technological tools such as the use of learning management systems and on-line collaborative platforms for further INSET. Just as researchers offered to use development plans used as a tool for identifying development needs and for long-time planning of INSET, primary school teachers in the present study offered to continue this INSET by using online platforms.

As offered by TALIS (OCED, 2009) in seeking to meet teachers' professional development requirements, policy makers and practitioners need to consider both ways of support and encouragement for participation and ways to ensure opportunities that match teachers' perceived needs. In addition, it should be noted that INSET should be planned and implemented systematically, according to development plans made for every practicing teacher and based also on the needs of the school community. Without a proper plan, INSET can be experienced as being fragmentary, non-systematic and even unnecessary (Huhtala & Vesalainen, 2017).

Simply investing more resources into INSET courses will not guarantee improved outcomes for students. Investment must be accompanied by coherent, comprehensive and consistent policies, for if teacher development is to be realized in its fullest sense, it will entail more than just INSET education and training. Teachers need to be convinced of its importance (OECD, 1998). It is evident that not even the most systematic planning phase can guarantee a totally carefree process. Thus, the importance of research based planning and implementation of INSET, as well as a genuine connection between INSET, teachers' everyday work and school reality needs to be taken into account (Huhtala & Vesalainen, 2017).

In this study, to meet the needs of these specific group of teachers, an INSET program draft was prepared and approved by academics for its suitability. There are, however,

some issues that need to be taken into account during the implementation phase. First, the program needs to be implemented by academics, not by someone who is unqualified in these fields. These academics could comprise one in the field of curriculum and instruction, one in the field of instructional technologies, and one or two in the field of English language teaching. As stated in the learning experiences of the program, activities need to be designed to foster collaborative learning of the participants and utilize on the job training methodology. Evaluation of the program needs to be carried out not by paper-pencil tests but through end of the activity sessions or more preferably by in-class observations after the program is over.

A further step can be the piloting of this draft program. After the pilot study, MoNE can disseminate the use of this program throughout the country, thus, help thousands of primary school teachers in need of teaching English to young learners. Another study can concentrate on the creation of alternative materials to be used by these primary school teachers. Such materials can focus on the Thematic Instruction and may be specifically used by primary school teachers to teach English.

5. Limitations

As this study is a phenomenological study based on a further needs analysis, study group is limited to ten primary school teachers and three academics working in the field of English language teaching. The modular in-service training program draft was finalized based on the needs of these teachers and the opinions of experts; thus, the program was not piloted or implemented. However, the previous needs analysis study conducted by the researcher makes the study stronger because the study group was selected based on the previous needs analysis study. As a further study, the program should first be piloted and then could be disseminated by MoNE.

6. Conclusions

In a nutshell, it does not seem possible in the sort run to meet the shortage of English language teachers in Turkey especially at the primary school level. Thus, as Bayyurt (2012) suggests, in the long run, curriculum of primary school teaching departments at education faculties need to be updated to include English language teaching courses for young learners; however, in the short-term, primary school teachers need to be trained on how to teach English to young learners at basic levels. In order for primary school teachers to teach English effectively, first, they need to have basic proficiency levels of English and then they need to be trained on how to teach basic English for A1 level learners. To better the case, the MoNE needs to work cooperatively with education faculties of universities and they need to set up initiatives to foster the intrinsic motivation of teachers to participate into such programs.

The INSET program developed to meet such a need needs to be initially piloted with a suitable number of primary school teachers, and then it can be disseminated by the MoNE. Other countries in which primary school teachers teach English lessons can also benefit from this INSET program by adapting it to their specific needs.

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Appendix A.

A.1. INSET program draft

Module 1. Contemporary English language teaching methods/techniques

Objectives At the end of the module, participants will be able to:	Content	Learning experiences	Evaluation	Materials	Time
compare and contrast communicative approach, and content based instruction.	*Basic features of communicative approach *Content based instruction	*Presentation *Questioning strategies *Concept mapping *Corners *Jigsaw *Timelines and sequence charts	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Round Robin *Mentimeter *Self/Peer assessment	*Prezi presentation (computer) *Colorful pens and papers * Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	1 hour
practice using fundamental English teaching activities for young learners.	* TPR activities * Find someone who … *Playing pretend games (drama) with masks etc. * Tongue-twisters * Flashcards * Guess the words * Odd one out *Rods/silent way techniques *Information –gap activities *Chants/rhyme for vocabulary	*Presentation * Questioning strategies *Concept mapping * Corners * Jigsaw *Timelines and sequence charts	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) * Round Robin * Mentimeter *Self/Peer assessment	*Prezi presentation (computer) *Colorful pens and papers * Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	2 hours
design a communicative or content based activity in groups or pairs using fundamental English teaching activities for young learners.	English teaching activities	*Pair or group work study	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Peer assessment *Poster presentation	*Colorful pens and papers *Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	2 hours

Module 2. Basic English pronunciation techniques

Objectives At the end of the module, participants will be able to:	Content	Learning experiences	Evaluation	Materials	Time
identify the use of –th, -ed, ,-ch and –w, s/es/ies sounds	*th-/-th sound at the beginning and end of words *Silent letters *-ed grammatical endings */w/ and /v/ minimal pairs * /i/ -/ɪ/-s grammatical endings	*Presentation *Questioning strategies *Concept mapping	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Round Robin *Mentimeter *Self/Peer assessment	*Prezi presentation (computer) *Colorful pens and papers* *Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	1 hour

				*Quizlet practice *Online learning practice	
practice using fundamental intonation patterns of basic words	* rising intonation * falling intonation * final intonation / non-final intonation * intonation marks	*Presentation *Questioning strategies *Numbered heads together	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Round Robin *Mentimeter *Self/Peer assessment	*Prezi presentation (computer) *Colorful pens and papers *Projector	2 hours
prepare an activity by using some of the sounds that were studied paying attention to intonation patterns	Listening-speaking activities	*Pair or group work study	*K-W-L (know-want to know learned) *Peer assessment *Poster presentation *Voice Thread	*Colorful pens and papers * Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	2 hours

Module 3. Alternative in-class assessment techniques

Objectives At the end of the module, participants will be able to:	Content	Learning experiences	Evaluation	Materials	Time
compare and contrast traditional assessment techniques with alternative in class assessment techniques	*Basic features of traditional assessment *Basic features of alternative assessment *Concept of Measurement *Concept of Evaluation	*Presentation * Questioning strategies *Concept mapping *Timelines and sequence charts	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Round Robin *Mentimeter *Self/Peer assessment	*Prezi presentation (computer) *Colorful pens and papers* *Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	1 hour
distinguish the use of different types of alternative assessment techniques	*Performance task/project * Portfolio * Structured grids * Diagnostic tree * Poster * Concept map	*Presentation * Questioning strategies *Concept mapping *Webbing *Jigsaw *Numbered heads together	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Round Robin *Mentimeter *Self/Peer assessment	*Prezi presentation (computer) *Colorful pens and papers *Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	2 hours
design a communicative or content based activity in groups or pairs using alternative assessment techniques for young learners.	English teaching activities	*Pair or group work study	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Peer assessment *Poster presentation	*Colorful pens and papers * Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	2 hours

Module 4. Technology integrated English language teaching

Objectives At the end of the module, participants will be able to:	Content	Learning experiences	Evaluation	Materials	Time
	*Basic features of MOODLE * Hot potatoes	*Presentation *Questioning strategies	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned)	*MOODLE presentation (computer)	

interpret the use of an LMS system to teach English	*Various types of assessment tools in MOODLE	*Concept mapping	*Round Robin	* Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	1 hour
practice using interactive tools	*Big Blue Button	*Presentation *Think-pair-share *Questioning strategies	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Self/Peer assessment	*Big Blue Button presentation (computer) * Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	2 hours
design an activity in groups or pairs using MOODLE and Big Blue Button.	*English teaching activities	*Pair or group work study	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Peer assessment *Digital poster presentation	* Projector *Mobile phones or tablets *PC or Lap Top	2 hours

Module 5. Thematic instruction/teaching

Objectives At the end of the module, participants will be able to:	Content	Learning experiences	Evaluation	Materials	Time
identify the use of Thematic instruction to align different courses	*Basic features of Thematic Instruction *Interdisciplinary curriculum design	*Presentation * Questioning strategies *Concept mapping	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Round Robin	*Prezi presentation (computer) * Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	1 hour
analyze the use of sample Thematic Units in the national ELE curriculum	*ELE national curriculum	* Scamper * Jigsaw * Questioning strategies *Round Robin	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Poster presentation	*Prezi presentation (computer) * Projector *Mobile phones or tablets	2 hours
design an activity in groups or pairs using Thematic Instruction.	*English teaching activities	*Pair or group work study	*K-W-L (know-want to know-learned) *Peer assessment *Digital poster presentation	* Projector *Mobile phones or tablets *PC or Lap Top	2 hours

A.2. In-class observation form

Teacher's name/surname:

School:	Date:	Class:

Theme/Unit:

Effectiveness of using activity types for young learners: (such as TPR activities・Listen and do, listen and repeat, listen and draw a route…etc.・Read and draw・Problem solving・Sort it out・Pair work/Group work) Notes:

Effectiveness of using technology in classroom (MOODLE/ Cahoot/etc.) Notes:

Effectiveness of using teaching techniques (such as role-play, drama, simulation, gaming etc.) Notes:

Effectiveness of using pronunciation/intonation/rhythm patterns: Notes:

<u>Relating the course with other courses/subjects</u> Relation with Turkish Notes: Relation with Life sciences Notes: Relation with math's Notes

Effectiveness of using alternative measurement-evaluation techniques:

Additional notes:

A. 3 Structured questionnaire

Aims of the program				
	Yes	Partly	No	Comment
objectives of the program are meaningful for the participants				
objectives were described in simple and clear terms				
objectives and content are related				
objectives are achievable for the participants				
objectives could be helpful to equip participants with the applications of the thematic instruction				
Content of the program				
	Yes	Partly	No	Comment
content of the modules are related and aligned with the program objectives				
Content is appealing for the participants				
Content is compatible within each module				
and they are suitable for the use of various teaching methods				
contents within each module are designed according to the principles of content organization				
Learning experiences of the program				
	Yes	Partly	No	Comment
suggested teaching methods and techniques are compatible with objectives and content				
suggested teaching methods and techniques are suitable for the use of primary school teachers				
the suggested instructional				

tools and materials are appropriate				
the duration of the total program is reasonable				
activities require the active participation of the participants				
activities with each module follow a similar style				
Evaluation of the program				
	Yes	Partly	No	Comment
evaluation is consistent with the objectives, content, and learning experiences of the program				
evaluation has the quality of reflecting participants' learning				
evaluation tools are effective enough to show that participants reached the required objectives				

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