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LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS' PERCEPTIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Research Article

Başak Ercan 

Akdeniz University

basakercan@akdeniz.edu.tr

Ilze Ivanova 

University of Latvia

ilze.ivanova@lu.lv

Başak Ercan works as an instructor at the school of Foreign Languages, Akdeniz University in Turkey. Her major is on ELT and then completed her M.A on Education Administration, Supervision, Planning and Economics.

Ilze Ivanova is a professor in Education and works at the University of Latvia. She works for Ph.D., Master, Bachelor and Professional Programs in the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Art. She reads lectures and guides seminars for University staff in Latvia.

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Başak Ercan

basakercan@akdeniz.edu.tr

Ilze Ivanova

ilze.ivanova@lu.lv

Abstract

Professional development can be defined as all the practices and activities for teachers' growth. In the area of English language teaching, teachers need to follow the pedagogical and practical developments in their field, thereby developing themselves professionally. This study aims at figuring out and comparing the perceptions and applications of language instructors in higher education institutions in Latvia and Turkey on continuous professional development. The authors carried out a small scale research in order to answer the question "What are the most effective forms of professional development for English language instructors?" A semi-structured interview was implemented to gather the data. The comparative research was carried out in the frame of COST Action CA15221 – *Advancing effective institutional models towards cohesive teaching, learning, research and writing development* – that addresses the field of professional conversations and research. The main finding of the study is that English language instructors thought that the responsibility of continuous professional development primarily belonged to themselves and then their institutions and the other professional institutions. Majority of them claimed that their professional development was triggered by their curiosity and passion. Attending research-oriented events such as seminars, conferences, and workshops was mentioned as very effective for their continuous professional development.

Keywords: continuous professional development, English language teachers

1. Introduction

Constant development and rapid changes in economy and society and in socio economic affairs have made it inevitable for anyone to develop to adjust themselves to these changes, which are the core of lifelong learning. Academic staff in universities and in any higher education institution recognizes that changes are constant features of life and they require professional development (PD) also known as continuing professional development (CPD). At the same time for academic staff, professional development has not traditionally been prioritized for teaching, due to the dominant focus on research as important part of work of universities. However, steps to teaching are gaining pace and in some countries like UK, Australia, Netherlands PD is becoming as a highly recognized activity for university educators to ensure and monitor the quality of education to reach the learning outcomes of the offered programmes and to guide the students in the field of research. It is necessary to stress that the training activities have to cause a change (Daloğlu, 2004), to be ongoing and high quality (Vrasidas & Glass, 2007). Innovative forms of teaching are needed to develop 21st century student competencies, such as well understanding of challenging content, critical thinking,

complex-problem solving, effective communication and collaboration, and self-direction (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner & Espinoza, 2017). The focus of this present paper is to specify English language instructors' perceptions and applications of continuous professional development at tertiary level. The participants of the research were academic staff from two state universities in Latvia and in Turkey.

1.1. Theoretical Background

It is worth mentioning that already in 1998 Shulman states that all professions have the following attributions:

- the responsibility of serving others
- professional knowledge and its relation with the theory
- required skills for a specific field and putting them into practice
- judgment under uncertainty
- the necessity for learning from someone's own practice
- professional communities to monitor quality and accumulate knowledge

It allows making the conclusion that already in previous century learning and gaining experience was of great importance and the concept of ongoing development or learning has become an indispensable part of working life.

Professional development embodies a wide range of activities designed to make a contribution to the development of teachers, who have got their initial training (Craft, 2000). Professional development has undergone major changes in its form and content regarding the developments in science and technology, it becomes continuous in its nature. Professional development programs are organized methods and actions to lead change in the classroom practices of teachers, in their attitudes and beliefs, and thus in the learning outcomes of students. (Guskey, 2002). The core of PD is to focus on areas where teachers need to improve; therefore, a needs analysis should precede the planning and execution of a PD training program (Lunenburg & Orstein, 2004) and it must include the needs of both teachers as individuals and the institution as a whole (Richards & Farrell, 2009). Not everybody has the same learning pattern and academic staff needs to take this reality into consideration and thus learn and enhance their teaching and research skills concerning these varied learning types.

Professional development opportunities in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) can range from a single discussion, workshop to a semester-long academic course, consultations, coaching, mentoring, study visits abroad, attending conferences and seminars, to services offered by different professional development providers. Continuous professional development includes institution-based professional support, self-monitoring, keeping a journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analysing critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching, action research, online learning (Ingvarson, Meiers & Beavis, 2005; Richards & Farrell, 2009; Darling Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009). It is also worth mentioning that CPD requires self-direction and careful planning to be in harmony with the content. Collaboration takes part in the heart of professional development. Keeping that in mind there is a great need for supporting interactions between academics within the whole HEI, contributing to the sustainable growth of the university while enhancing synergy among the academic community and focusing on promoting the aspect of multi-disciplinarily. Administrators need to help all personnel to fulfill their potential by learning new skills and developing their abilities. The three basic steps or phases in any PD program are assessment, training and evaluation. (Lunenburg & Orstein, 2004). It helps specify training objectives, the criteria for training activities, and the criteria against which the programs will be evaluated. The needs or priorities of the institution as a whole will reflect the

role of the institution in providing a wide range of learning experiences for a large number of people. Meanwhile, the needs of the individual professional will reflect not only the professional role they have within the organization, but also their professional learning, working style, and career aspirations (Craft, 2000).

Learning environments better promote professional development of the academics when support and encouragement exist for teacher development, supplying learning materials and providing them with relevant learning opportunities and models to enhance their profession (Show, 2010 cited in Aliakbari & Malmir, 2017). Several studies (Atay, 2008; Çelik, Macianskiene & Aytın, 2013; Daloğlu, 2004; Gaikhorst, Jos, Bonne & Monique, 2017; Giraldo, 2014) showed that CPD trainings have positive effects on teaching practice and thus on learner outcomes.

1.2. Continuous Professional Development of HEI Staff in Latvia

The University of Latvia pays great attention to the development of University staff. The academic staff have alternatives to choose among them. The academicians are required to attend some training programmes in six years' time after their election to their academic post. The opportunities for these in-service training programs are as follows (Eurydice, 2018a):

- transformations in higher education system,
- didactics of higher education,
- administration of educational work

According to the Regulations on the Necessary Academic and Professional Qualifications of Pedagogues and Professional Competence Development Procedures for Pedagogues (2014), issued by the Cabinet of Ministers, the amount of the program has to be 160 academic hours (of them at least 60 contact hours). The organizers and providers are typically within the institution (Eurydice, 2018a). These programmes are also offered to the staff in other HEI. Due to that there is a possibility to collaborate with other colleagues in different institutions, different departments, and different programmes. After successful graduation of the course the participants obtain the certificate.

The staff actively participates in international cooperation and different projects to promote international identification, exchanges and to strengthen professional development. The internationalization processes promoting professional development take place in the following areas:

- bilateral cooperation agreements;
- membership in the international university organizations and networks;
- participation in international educational and research programmes and projects;
- exchanges of students and staff
- international cooperation on the faculty, institute, department and individual levels.

By participating in international university organizations and active membership in networks such as The European University Association (EUA), Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA), Baltic Sea Region Universities Network (BSRUN), UTRECHT Network, Campus European/EUF, the University of Latvia strives to intensify different types of exchanges and to widen possibilities for internationalization of studies and research and professional development of the staff.

Active participation within bilateral partnership agreements and European programmes has promoted wide cooperation activities within ERASMUS+ programme. The number of agreements with European partner universities has grown tremendously within last 5 years anticipating more intensive exchanges of students and staff. At present the University of Latvia

has signed 1020 agreements with 447 institutions in 33 European programmes and 38 Inter-institutional agreements with 17 partner countries (University of Latvia, 2018).

The University of Latvia is also active in initiating and participating in ERASMUS+ projects (such as Capacity Building, Strategic Partnership, Knowledge Alliances, Jean Monnet). The University of Latvia strategy is to introduce innovative methods in education, to pay more attention to the development of staff competences. The ERASMUS+ projects help much the UL to achieve these strategic goals. One of the latest examples is the ERASMUS+ KA 203 project "**Best+**" (Best+, 2018) with the aim to create a new form of professional development for university staff using blended mobility.

The University of Latvia is the only Latvian institution with active participation in Erasmus Mundus programme. Successful participation in ten Erasmus Mundus Action 2 projects: Join EU-SEE I, II, III; Triple I I, II; Aurora I, II; Centauri; Lot 3b; Mover; AESOP; LEADER has remarkably increased the number of international exchange and degree students from Western Balkan countries, Russia, Central and Southeast Asia and South Africa. The University of Latvia participated also in MISOCO Joint master's degree programme International Migration and Social Cohesion.

As the whole system of education in Latvia undergoes great changes passing to competence-based approach a great variety of courses (Development of leadership skills, the use of Information and Communication Technologies in teaching and learning, the English language course, the process of the development of speaking skills, assessment and evaluation in higher education etc.) are offered to HEI staff working in the faculties connected with teacher education. The academic staffs working with initial teacher training programmes are involved in the schools in teaching process, in developing new learning materials, etc. All these professional activities are financed by European Social Funds. Participation and organization of conferences are also essential part of the work of the staff of HEI to develop professional competences for improving of the quality of studies for future specialists.

1.3. Continuous Professional Development of HEI Staff in Turkey

Turkey has a highly centralized higher education system under the roof of The Council of Higher Education, which was founded in 1981 as a result of the political, social and economic problems, with its 129 state universities, 72 private universities and 5 private vocational schools. Two dominant major events, the post-Soviet era and the country's integration into European Union have shaped the present Turkish higher education system (Mızıkacı, 2006). Since 2006, the Council of Higher Education has been working on National Qualifications Framework. Between 2010-2015 the Council completed the inclusion of European Qualifications Framework into National Qualifications Framework (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, 2018).

Yet, there is no particular regulation for the continuous professional development of the academic staff (Eurydice, 2018b), concerning appointment like the case in Latvia. Some universities are applying or working on their own continuous professional development criteria to be appointed again; yet, these are only piloting studies. Academic staff is responsible for their own professional development concerning school of foreign languages under the roof the university.

Apart from these, there has been an increase in the quality and quantity of the academic publications indexed in respected databases for the application of the associate professorship examination (Eurydice, 2009). There is also increase in the number of scholarly conferences, seminars, and panels and alike, especially in the last two decades. Another important development is that digital libraries and databases, including monographs, dissertations, and

theses, have been provided for Turkish scholars, mostly by the cooperation of Council of Higher Education, an institute responsible for higher education in Turkey, and universities. Over the last few years, TUBITAK Cahit Arf Science Center provides a professional development opportunity for the Turkish scholars by providing a national scholarly database of journals and recognition of journals as well as disseminating them across the universities. Yet, another increasing activity and opportunity of the Turkish faculty staff is the Farabi and Mevlana mobility programs, which enable researchers to visit local or international universities and/or research institutions for educational or research purposes (Eurydice, 2009). Apart from these, many universities have continuous development centers under different names; yet, only few universities have their own research and development units under the roof of English preparatory schools, responsible for giving intensive English lessons for students who need to satisfy the needs of the programs of their departments. In Turkey, most professional development activities are still based on one-shot workshops aiming at fostering mastery of prescribed skills and knowledge (Daloğlu, 2004); yet these activities fail to create long-lasting changes in teaching practice (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1980).

2. Research Methodology

This current study was carried out with English language instructors from two countries. With the aim of placing the instructors at the center of the study and analyzing their views on continuous professional development, a qualitative study design was selected. A qualitative case study approach was selected because it allows researchers to examine the perspectives and experiences of the human subjects in-depth (Yin, 2013).

2.1. Research Questions

To examine the language instructors' perceptions and applications of continuous professional development, the researchers asked seven questions:

1. What should an English teacher do to develop himself / herself professionally?
2. Who is responsible for your professional development?
3. What are your short-term goals as a teacher?
4. What are your long-term goals as a teacher?
5. What did you do for your professional development in the last five years?
6. What do you think are the barriers for your professional development?
7. What makes a learning environment more effective concerning CPD?

2.2. Data Collection

The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with twenty volunteer instructors in total working at two state universities; one in Latvia and the other in Turkey. The interviews were carried out by face-to-face communication. Each interview lasted approximately 20-25 minutes.

2.3. Data Analysis

To find out the language instructors' perceptions and applications of continuous professional development in higher education institutions, the data obtained were analysed using qualitative research methods. The qualitative data were coded and then categorized and finally frequencies and percentages were calculated and then all these findings were visualized in tables. After the tables were interpreted, some example responses were given below.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Actions to take for professional development*

Actions	Latvian		Turkish		Total	
	f*	%	f*	%	f*	%
Attending seminars / conferences	5	50	8	80	13	65
Attending webinars	1	10	1	10	2	10
Attending TT programs / workshops	2	20	4	40	6	30
Attending in-service programs	1	10	1	10	2	10
Familiar with the latest technology to use in class	1	10	1	10	2	10
Collaborating with colleagues	1	10	2	20	3	15
Doing post-graduate studies	1	10	2	20	2	10
Doing research	1	10	2	20	3	15
Following (online) teaching communities / forums / blogs /Youtubers	4	40	7	70	11	55
Following the literature (new approaches, techniques, methods, etc.)	6	60	4	40	10	50
Joining exchange programs	2	20	-	-	2	10
Joining (online) courses	3	30	2	20	5	25
Membership in vocational organizations	3	30	1	10	4	20
Participation in projects / research associations	3	30	-	-	3	15
Peer observation / evaluation	2	20	0	10	2	15
Reading more about psychology	2	20	1	10	3	15

*Grand total is more than the total number of the participants because they stated more than one option

Table 1 shows the actions a language teacher should take to renew himself / herself according to the opinions of Latvian and Turkish lecturers concerning their professional development. The respondents have different ideas to improve professionally. Content analysis shows that attending seminars / conferences was seen as the most common source of professional development by both parties. Following teaching communities / forums / blogs / Youtubers and following the literature are the other important sources of CPD for the lecturers. It is clear from this result that the instructors prefer both individual and supportive PD activities for their continuous improvement. Yet, it is interesting that Turkish lecturers do not prefer joining exchange programs or participation in projects / research associations as part of their CPD. Another surprising fact is that Turkish instructors did not prefer peer observation / evaluation for professional development although peer observation is thought not only to help the observee but also to help the observer reflect on his or her own teaching practice (Akyazı & Geylanioglu, 2015), which is an essential part of the development process (Davidson et al., 2012).

Some responses concerning the question ‘What should an English teacher do to develop himself / herself professionally?’ include:

“I think it would be more convenient to join online courses. One can get a lot of practical ideas to use in class. Following the forums where you can exchange ideas with colleagues from all around the world would be useful, too.”

“Following the literature about English Language Teaching is always the best way to improve professionally.”

“There are a lot of teaching communities on the Net. It is possible to get useful ideas related to new approaches, especially about Computer Assisted Language Learning) from there.”

Table 2. Stakeholders for continuous professional development

Stakeholders	Latvian		Turkish		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Myself	4	40	3	30	7	35
Both the teacher and the institution	5	50	7	70	12	60
Myself, the institution and other professional organizations	1	10	-	-	1	5

Table 2 displays most of the Turkish and Latvian instructors hold themselves and their institutions responsible for their CPD. Also, a great majority see themselves responsible for their own professional development, which coincides with the result of a recent study by Yeşilçınar and Çakır (2018), pointing out that teachers were the main actors of their continuous professional development. It will not be wrong to say that the main goal of CPD is not only to improve teachers' quality but also mainly to improve students' learning (Kasprabowo, Sofwan & Bharati, 2018); therefore, teachers cannot be solely held responsible for their professional development; the institutions also need to trigger continuous professional development of teachers and take action about it. As Bredeson and Johansson (2000) point out school principals' leadership in the area of teacher professional development is critical to the creation and success of a learning community. Only one teacher from Latvia indicated that it is also the responsibility of other professional organizations.

Some of the answers the participants gave to the question ‘Who is responsible for your professional development?’ are as follows:

“Teachers themselves are responsible because a teacher need to feel that urge.”

“I am always in favour of independent studies, so me myself is responsible for my own professional development.”

“Both the teacher and the institution are in charge of teachers' professional development because, I think, teachers and the institution are embedded to each other concerning learning outcomes.”

Table 3. *Short-term goals of the teachers*

Short-term Goals	Latvian		Turkish		Total	
	f*	%	f*	%	f*	%
To develop / learn more effective ways of assessing students	5	50	4	40	9	45
To learn how to plan and evaluate a language course	1	10	2	20	3	15
To learn new strategies and techniques for the new generation of young adults	4	40	6	60	10	50
To learn more about classroom management	1	10	2	20	3	15
To learn/how to keep motivated	1	10	1	10	2	10
To integrate more ICT into my lessons	1	10	1	10	2	10
To learn more about virtual environments	1	10	-	-	1	5

*Grand total is more than the total number of the participants because they stated more than one option

Table 3 shows the short-term goals of the instructors. One of the areas both Turkish and Latvian teachers indicated as their short-term goals was to develop / learn more effective ways of assessing students. Assessment is an inseparable part of teaching/learning process and with the integration of new methods and techniques concerning communicative competence, new ways of assessing students are required.

To learn new strategies and techniques for the new generation of young adults is another concern for teachers in both countries. Integration of technology into learning environments and changing needs of students make this inevitable for teachers.

For the question 'What are your short-term goals as a teacher?', some excerpts are as follows:

"Students' needs are changing, so somehow we should adapt ourselves to these needs by applying new approaches, techniques to keep them motivated in class. Classroom management is also important in that sense."

"I would like to learn more about assessment of the students, especially when evaluating speaking and writing portfolios because I do not think the criteria are obvious enough to make a fair decision." 13

Table 4. *Long-term goals of the teachers*

Long-term Goals	Latvian		Turkish		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
To work on collaborative materials	3	30	3	20	6	25
To develop projects with colleagues	3	30	3	30	6	30
To start / complete my PhD degree	1	10	2	20	3	15
To participate in exchange programs	3	20	-	-	3	10
No goals	-	-	2	10	2	5

*Grand total is more than the total number of the participants because they stated more than one option

Table 4 reveals the long-term goals of the instructors. To work on collaborative materials and to develop projects with colleagues were the most common answers to the question of their long-term goals. This result shows the importance of collaborative work among teachers. Teachers should discuss teaching and learning more with their colleagues and work collaboratively to resolve problematic issues. They should also look for research that can guide them in designing programs that are more likely to lead to significant and sustained improvement in students 'opportunities to learn (Ingvarson et al., 2005).

Some responses concerning the question! What are your long-term goals as a teacher?' are as follows:

"It would be great if I could work on some projects with my colleagues; yet, I do not have enough time for that because of my workload."

"I would like to complete my PhD studies because in my institute there is not much chance of improving. It is just like a vicious-circle. You go nowhere. Once I complete my studies, I can find new opportunities and thus develop myself better."

Table 5. Actions taken for professional development in the last five years

Participation in	Latvian		Turkish		Total	
	f*	%	f*	%	f*	%
Seminars / workshops	6	60	7	60	12	60
In-service programs	-	-	1	10	1	5
Online courses	1	10	-	-	1	5
Conferences / Congresses	5	50	1	10	6	60
Webinars	1	10	1	10	2	10
Research projects	4	40	-	-	4	20
None	-	-	2	20	2	10

*Grand total is more than the total number of the participants because they stated more than one option

Table 5 reveals that the instructors attended seminars and workshops in the last five years of their profession. While research projects are important for Latvian academicians, Turkish instructors did not attend any research projects at all. It must have been caused by the different appointment policies in the countries. Borg (2014) holds that teacher research is a feasible and valuable professional development strategy that English language teachers can engage in and which can contribute to improvements in the quality of the educational experience they provide for their learners.

Some responses concerning the question 'What did you do for your professional development in the last five years?' include:

"I do not have enough time to participate in conferences, seminars, etc., so it is more practical for me to attend online courses about ELT."

"I mostly attended in seminars and one-shot workshops, most of them did not meet my expectations though. Some of them were organized by publishing houses, so the content of them was rather on the introduction of their new books."

"It is the best when I do research about a topic of my interest. I like presenting at conferences; they are also helpful for enlarging my network."

Tables 6. *Barriers that hinder professional development*

Barriers	Latvian		Turkish		Total	
	f	%	f*	%	f*	%
Colleagues	-	-	4	40	4	20
Curriculum	-	-	6	60	6	30
Educational policies	-	-	6	60	6	30
Familial reasons	1	10	1	10	2	10
My institution	4	40	7	70	11	55
Working conditions	3	30	5	50	8	40
Monetary issues	2	10	2	20	4	15

*Grand total is more than the total number of the participants because they stated more than one option

Table 6 shows that working conditions are a challenge for both Turkish and Latvian academicians. Workload seems to cause academicians to refrain from doing extra self-training activities for their professional development. Both parties hold their institutions as a barrier standing in front of their PD. Educational policies and curriculum are seen as a barrier by Turkish instructors; however, none of the Latvian instructors think that they are a barrier for their PD. Turkish instructors emphasized that the education policies do not give them much chance for professional development. They also stated curriculum as a barrier because the pace of the curriculum they had to follow did not leave enough time for implementing new strategies and / or techniques in the classroom.

Concerning the question ‘What do you think are the barriers for your professional development?’, some of the instructors’ views are below:

“My institution is indifferent concerning our professional development. They neither support people who would like to do something; for example attend a conference nor put a barrier in front of them. I believe things were different if they had a supportive manner.”

“Concerning the educational policies, as instructors we do not need to do anything for our professional development. That’s why I do not feel any necessity to develop myself. I think I have enough skills.”

Table 7. Factors providing a more effective learning environment for CPD

Factors	Latvian		Turkish		Total	
	f*	%	f*	%	f*	%
More in-service training programs	-	-	1	10	1	5
Seminars	-	-	1	10	1	5
More supportive administration	-	-	3	30	3	15
Less work load	-	-	2	20	2	10
More collaboration among teachers	4	10	2	20	3	15
A more technologically-equipped environment	5	50	1	10	6	30
A CPD unit in the borders of the institution	-	-	2	20	2	10
Being more of a decision-maker	-	-	4	20	4	10
A more flexible / slow-paced curriculum	-	-	4	40	4	20
A free access to professional literature	2	20	-	-	2	10
A student-friendly mobile teaching / learning environment	1	-	-	-	1	5
A combination of real + virtual learning environment	2	20	-	-	2	10

*Grand total is more than the total number of the participants because they stated more than one option

Table 7 reveals that teachers need to work collaboratively. Collaboration among teachers is the most common factor of an effective learning environment for the instructors of both countries. Turkish instructors would like to participate more in decision-making processes and they were longing for a more-flexible environment and a slow-paced curriculum. This result proves the importance of a new design for professional development opportunities for teachers where they can engage themselves in decision making as they reflect about the connections between theory and practice and the value of continually testing, revising, and reevaluating curriculum and instructional issues (Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007). Latvian instructors stated they need a more technologically-equipped learning environment.

Some of the responses given to the question ‘What makes a learning environment more effective concerning CPD?’ include:

“I wish we did not have to follow the course book so strictly, I feel like teaching the book instead of a well-designed curriculum. We have such an intense curriculum that, actually this is the content of the course book, I –and most of my colleagues as well, I think- cannot find or create enough time to do things in a more enjoyable way since we always need to rush.”

“I think we need more of a technologically-equipped learning environment. I also believe that virtual environments attract students’ attention.”

4. Conclusion

In general, CPD can be described as all the learning activities professionals are involved in to better promote their professional skills and implementations. Through professional development learners get the opportunity to become *conscious* and *proactive*, rather than *passive* and *reactive*. The utmost important aspect for teaching staff is to prepare younger generations for the requirements of the world we live in, which is part of educational environment which necessitates professionally developed teachers for sure. Wider use of

modern technologies, social changes, changes in teaching and learning, and education reforms make it essential for language teachers to develop professionally as well.

The main goal of this research was to get an understanding of Latvian and Turkish language instructors' perceptions and applications of continuous professional development and to compare and contrast their beliefs and practices where possible. One conclusion which can be deduced from this present study is noteworthy: In Latvia there is an education program for staff development at tertiary level. It is closely linked with the elections on the certain posts. Yet, in Turkey, there is not a general implication for the academic staff in intensive language programs. It is enough for the instructors to prove their English level every three years to be appointed to the same post again. All these are due to different background and traditions of the countries and practices of teacher education and staff development. Therefore, at some points instructors' view of continuous professional development differs regarding these cultural, traditional and their extension of political and managerial issues.

Some other conclusions are as follows:

Attending seminars, conferences and workshops was seen as the most preferred way of professional development by two nationalities. Yet, Turkish instructors were not in favor of participating in projects or research associations to develop professionally. Another similar result was seen about their short-term goals. While some Latvian instructors thought that it was good way to enlarge their network and enhance their teaching, Turkish instructors did not mention it at all.

Concerning the stakeholders of continuous professional development both Latvian and Turkish instructors thought that themselves and their institutions were in charge of their development, which supports the literature claiming that the policy makers and administrators have to lead and encourage all staff to participate in professional development programs.

As to their short-term and long-term goals, instructors had more or less the same opinions. To learn new strategies and techniques for the new generation of young adults is the issue both Latvian and Turkish instructors would like to deal with in the short run, which is not a surprising fact concerning the changing needs of 21st century students. On the other hand, to develop projects with colleagues is a long-term goal for both Latvian and Turkish instructors. To participate in exchange programs was mentioned as a way of professional development by Latvian instructors while Turkish instructors did not mention it.

Another result is that most of the Latvian and Turkish instructors stated that they attended seminars and workshops in the last five years, which shows that these one-shot training programs are contributing teachers' professional development.

Another conclusion that can be driven from this study is that familial reasons, their institutions, working conditions and monetary issues were the factors making the instructors refrain themselves from professional development. Yet, only Turkish instructors stated that their colleagues, the curriculum and the educational policies had a negative effect on their professional development. This result has to be taken into consideration; it is essential the policy makers do something about that. First of all, the content of intensive English language programs needs to be revised and necessary requirements have to be done. It is also of great importance to establish continuous professional development or research and development units to raise the awareness about continuous professional development and take the required actions about it. These units may conduct annual needs analysis to specify the areas where teachers are in further need of developing their teaching practice and classroom management skills.

Finally, more collaboration among colleagues was thought to be one of the parts of an effective learning environment in terms of continuous professional development. Teacher collaboration and student success are well fed by learning communities are being recognized as effective in improving teacher collaboration and student achievement (Hallam, Smith, Hite, Hite & Wilcox, 2015).

As a last word, enhancing the effectiveness of continuous professional development programs is a crucial issue and education systems cannot deny it. Teachers need to develop themselves professionally as active learners and it is only possible to talk about high-quality education when teachers, administrators and policy makers feel this responsibility.

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