In-Service Teacher Training in Japan and Turkey: a Comparative Analysis of Institutions and Practices

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to compare policies and practices relating to teacher in-service training in Japan and Turkey. On the basis of the findings of the study, suggestions are made about in-service training activities in Turkey. The research was carried using qualitative research methods. In-service training activities in the two education systems were investigated through visits to the educational institutions and semi-structured interviews. The study indicates that the most important problems facing in-service training activities in Turkey are a lack of professional staff, no collaborative partnerships between teachers, no provision for feedback and no systematic in-service training model.

Introduction

In-service training is accepted as an effective method of increasing the knowledge, skills and positive beliefs of teachers. It is a process used to continue the teachers' education once they have received their certification in teaching and are employed in a professional position (Locke, 1984). The Education Information Network in the European Union (EURYDICE) defines in-service training as 'a variety of activities and practices in which teachers become involved in order to broaden their knowledge, improve their skills and assess and develop their professional approach' (Perron, 1991).

In-service training is the term used to describe a set of activities and requirements generally falling under the heading of *professional development*. It is an organised effort to improve the performance of all personnel already holding assigned positions in a school setting or to implement a specified innovation or program (Sapp, 1996). It is a key factor in influencing the professional development of teachers and contributing to the improvement of their knowledge through an active role (Saiti & Saitis, 2006).

In considering the terms *teacher training* and *teacher development*, certain distinctions emerge. Training deals with building specific teaching skills: how to sequence a lesson or how to teach a dialogue, for instance. Development, on the other hand, focuses on the individual teacher – on the processes of reflection, examination, and change that can lead to doing a better job and achieving personal and professional growth (Freeman, 1982). Training addresses certain immediate needs; for example, helping a person to achieve some degree of confidence in what he is doing. Development, however, speaks to broader, long-term concerns; how a teacher can be encouraged to grow, to explore new avenues and ideas and thereby avoid professional atrophy or the feeling that one has done it all before (Freeman, 1982). According to Waters (1998) cited in Bezzina (2006, p.419) professional development deals with occupational role development, enhancing skills and knowledge, in order to enable the teacher to teach more effectively. However, the conventional view of professional

development for teachers needs to shift from technical training for specific skills to the provision of opportunities for intellectual professional growth (National Academies Press [NAP], 2008).

In most education systems, traditional in-service training activities are considered to be general rather than specific: they focus on listening rather than doing; they lack effective models; and they generally do not have any provision for feedback. Therefore, these activities are perceived as a fixed training program transferred to trainees by lecturers (Borg, Kallanback, Kelley & Langer, 1970; Ozdemir, 1997). Frequently, all teachers in a school are required to attend occasional, full-day in-service sessions on topics selected by administrators and presented by outside experts who rely primarily on direct instruction and draw upon their own experiences (Sandholtz, 2002). Although the motives are good, the traditional and still prevalent practice of hiring an 'expert' to speak to a captive audience results in satisfying almost no-one. Many teachers view in-service training activities as unimportant and therefore resist attending (Schmid & Scranton, 1972).

Teachers generally consider that in-service training activities are planned with insufficient relevance to particular classroom practices. In addition, follow-up communication and guidance is inadequate to foster the integration of the new ideas and methods into daily instruction (Sapp, 1996). Thus, many courses fall short of the expectations of course participants and there are significant gaps between expectations and outcomes (Yan, 2005). In this respect, Vukelich & Wrenn (1999) suggest that in-service training should (a) focus on a single subject; (b) concentrate on the teacher participants' needs; (c) be ongoing and sustained; (d) engage teachers in generating answers to actual, 'real-life' problems; (e) provide for participants' meaningful engagement; (f) help participants to develop collaborative relationships; and (g) encourage participants to reflect on their teaching.

Since in-service training is an essential channel for communicating national education policies, the education ministries generally define its conceptual framework. The government-based in-service training concept tends to focus on what teachers need to know and how they can be trained, rather than on what they actually know and how that knowledge might be expanded. This approach to teacher professional development is not effective, because it does not take into consideration teachers' pre-existing beliefs and personal needs, which is a necessary prerequisite of successful professional development (Hargreaves, 1992; Fullan, 2001). Speck & Knipe (2001) argue that teachers are tired of professional development that is imposed on them from the top.

Teachers' practical needs and expectations as a focus of research have not received sufficient attention (Yan, 2005). Systematic research should therefore be conducted to explore these needs and inform practice (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2007). Needs assessment leads to the development of in-service teaching programs that are feasible and relate to teachers' classroom realities. On the other hand, when teachers are denied input in their professional development, they tend to be cynical and become detached from school improvement efforts (American Federation of Teachers, 1995). Coolahan (2002) cited in Fraser, Kennedy, Reid & McKinney (2007, p.154), in a working paper commissioned by the OECD, identifies certain desirable characteristics associated with successful in-service provision:

∞ it should incorporate both on and off-site school dimensions;
∞ teachers should have a greater role in setting the agenda and being *actively engaged* in an experiential process;
∞ in some countries, through training of trainers courses, teachers have been assisted to work with their peers as facilitators and team leaders. This gives rise to a sense of empowerment and confidence building; and

∞ collaborative, interactive techniques are very much in favour, rather than lectures to large groups.

The concept of professional development is moving away from the practice of attending courses and training days to the concept of lifelong learning and continuing learning today. (Fraser et al., 2007). In modern education systems, in-service training is no longer seen as a remedy for deficiencies in initial training, but is already beginning to be considered as a long-term process and a part of continuing education. In many countries it is considered as a part of lifelong learning as well. As a result of rapid social and technological changes, it is important that teachers maintain or improve the competence they have acquired through a process of lifelong learning (Theunissen & Veenman, 1998).

Problem Statement

Although there are various in-service training activities in the Turkish National Education System at both the national and local levels, these activities are far from providing an effective system of professional development and do not contribute to teachers' lifelong learning. Teachers and administrators generally are not motivated to participate in in-service training activities because of the ineffective nature of these activities (Saban, 2000).

On the other hand, some of the features of in-service training in Japan, such as the existence of systematic training activities and the use of Web-based communication systems and satellite systems for these activities, provide good examples for Turkey. The problem statement for this study is: What actions should be taken to provide better in-service training activities for teachers in Turkey? The following research questions are addressed for both countries:

∞ What is the general framework for in-service training activities organized?
∞ Is there a systematic system of in-service training for teachers?
∞ What are the roles of official institutions for in-service training?
∞ What types of in-service training activities are provided to teachers?

Method
Data Collection

The research was carried out using qualitative research methods. Face-to-face interviews and site visits were used to collect data. In addition, related official and legal documents were investigated and examined.

As prefectural educational authorities and institutes have a very important role in the professional development of Japanese teachers, prefectural boards of education, in-service training institutes and schools were of special interest. There are many prefectures in Japan and it is impossible to visit all of them. Hokkaido Prefecture was taken as sample to examine prefectural and school level in-service training activities. Hokkaido has both rural and urbanized parts in the prefecture and it is thought that this part of Japan – rather than mostly urbanized cities or regions – would be better to compare with Turkey which has both rural and urbanized part as well.

Semi-structured interviews were organized to examine the system and to investigate common issues relating to teachers' professional development. Interviewees included administrators, experts and teachers from Hokkaido Board of Education, Hokkaido Education

Research Institute, Hokkaido Education Center, Information Processing Education Center, Educational Software Library Center and different kinds of schools.

Data about in-service training activities and the professional development of teachers in Turkey were also obtained through semi-structured interviews. However, as there isn't professional staff at the national and local departments of in-service training in Turkey, administrators and officials working in these departments were interviewed, as well as some school administrators and teachers. Visits to the in-service training institutes were not organized because they are not actively involved in planning and policy-making for in-service training activities. They provide only lodging facilities for those activities and do not have professional staff for them.

Triangulation is an important concern in studies that use different types of data collection methods. The main purpose of triangulation of data sources is to provide validation of the information obtained from one source by gathering information from another (Martella, Nelson & Marchand-Martella, 1999). As Patton (1990) recommends, triangulation of data sources in this study has been undertaken by (a) comparing observational and theoretical data with interview data; and (b) comparing the perspectives of people from with different points of views (staff, management, etc.).

The identities of the people who were interviewed and their opinions are not disclosed in this paper – all data from the site visits, interviews and documents have been unified and analyzed by the researcher and presented systematically.

The essential role of administrators and other educational staff is considered to be support for teachers in both countries. So professional development and in-service training activities for them, as well as for teachers, have been examined.

Data Analysis

The process of analysis should be adapted to the nature of the study. The earlier descriptions of the qualitative process assume the researcher is engaged in an emergent study begun without a pre-structured goal. However, not all qualitative studies are of this nature (Krathwohl, 1998). Potter (1996) indicated that there are three ways in which expectations guide research – deductive, inductive and a mixed approach. With the mixed approach, which was adopted in this study, researchers formulate a topic such as a research question. Most, if not all, researchers have some initial formulation before an investigation. Potter (1996) indicates that it is impossible for researchers to have little or no formulation, as in an inductive process. Once the investigation begins, researchers make conclusions and then test these conclusions on an ongoing basis (Martella, Nelson & Marchand-Martella, 1999). In this study, research questions helped to formulate an initial framework for the analysis.

The first stage of the data analysis process included transcribing all of the qualitative data from the interviews, site visits, and communications. These transcripts and various official documents about in-service training in both countries were then coded. In contrast to emergent studies, from the preplanned topic one can infer the codes and their interrelationships one would expect to find. This is true as well for studies that start with a clear focus, even though the design may develop as work proceeds (Krathwohl, 1998). Miles & Huberman (1994) provide an excellent description of this more structured process. They suggest beginning with a provisional 'start list' of codes devised prior to fieldwork. The list comes 'from the conceptual framework, list of research questions, hypotheses, problem areas, and/or key variables that the researcher brings to the study' (p.58). In this study, these initial codes were designed according to the research questions and were revised and supplemented

for a better fit as data were gathered. Efforts were made to ensure that the coding system contained all of the important information.

After all of the data were coded and grouped under certain categories, the findings of the study were reported descriptively in a systematic manner.

Findings

Findings of the study are presented in four main categories in this part: general frameworks for in-service training – central and local bodies; the existence of systematic in-service training; roles of institutions; and different types of training activities.

Japan

The Law for Special Regulations Concerning Educational Public Service Personnel in Japan requires teachers to pursue consistent in-service training. Various systematic in-service training activities are conducted at the national, prefectural, municipal and school levels (Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture [MESSC], 1999).

At the national level, the MESSC holds 'central workshops' for the in-service training of principals and vice-principals and for coordinating and advising teachers who play a leading role at the prefectural level on subject matters. The Ministry also sends about 5,000 teachers abroad every year in order to broaden their international perspectives and to obtain an increased awareness of their chosen profession (MESSC, 1999).

There is a system of in-service training at the prefectural level. Prefectural boards of education are responsible for planning and carrying out in-service training courses for teachers and other educational staff. There are many prefectural education centers throughout Japan. These centers provide lodging facilities and organize classes and equipment for in-service training and professional staff. In the course of this study, Hokkaido was taken as sample and data were collected by visiting the institutions and interviewing educational authorities at all level in the prefecture. Teachers' training in Hokkaido can be examined in terms of (a) Basic Training and (b) Specialized Training.

Teachers' **basic training** is planned according to their years of experience and all educational staff have to participate in these in-service courses. Table 1 presents the in-service training courses which are conducted through basic training and the participants of these courses.

Years of Experience	Name of Training	Participants
1. Year	Beginning teachers' training	- Teachers of Elementary, Junior High / High School, Special Class and Kindergarten. - Health-Care Teachers, Nutritionist Staff.
5. Year	Experienced teachers' training/ Mid-career teachers' training	- Teachers of Elementary, Junior High / High School, Special Class and Kindergarten. - Health-Care Teachers, Nutritionist Staff.
10. Year	Experienced teachers' training/ Mid-career teachers' training	- Teachers of Elementary, Junior High / High School, Special Class and Kindergarten. - Health-Care Teachers.
15. Year	Experienced teachers' training/ Mid-career teachers' training	- Teachers of Elementary, Junior High / High School, Special Class and Kindergarten. - Nutritionist Staff.
20. Year	*School Administration Training* Mid-career teachers' training	- Heads of the Instruction Department - Nutritionist Staff

	Promoted Vice Principals' Training	- Promoted Vice Principals
25. Year	New Principals' Training	- New Principals

Table 1: Teachers' Basic Training

As shown in Table 1, teachers take 'beginning teachers' training' in the first year of their career. The boards of education provide induction training for beginning teachers. This training takes place at education centres and within schools (internship training programs) under the guidance of experienced teachers selected by the school heads (San, 1999).

In the fifth, tenth and fifteenth years of their professional experience, they also take 'experienced teachers training' and 'mid-career teachers training'. 'School administration training' is given only to heads of instruction departments in schools who are in the twentieth year of their experience. Besides them, only nutritionist staff take 'mid-career teachers training' in the twentieth year of experience. Among the heads of the instruction departments at schools who take 'school administration training', some are promoted to become vice principals. This promotion generally occurs between twentieth and twenty-fifth years of their experience and those who are promoted to be vice principals take 'promoted vice principals training'. Finally, 'new principals training' is given to new principals who are near their twenty-fifth year in the profession, because it is generally difficult to become a principal before that in Japan. In addition to this planned basic training, teachers can attend different in-service training activities according to their interests under the heading of specialized training.

Specialized training comprises various in-service training courses directed toward specific subjects or subject areas in which teachers wish to become experts. These courses are planned and organized by prefectural education centers for specific aims and teachers are free to participate in these courses according to their interests and needs. These training activities include:

∞ specialized training for each subject;
∞ training related to education curriculum;
∞ training courses for student counselling, career guidance, teaching skills, industrial education, etc.; and
∞ training programs for the acquisition of licences and qualifications (including training for librarians in schools).

Almost all of the in-service training activities in Hokkaido are planned by Hokkaido Education Board and Hokkaido Education Research Institute and carried out by different education centres, such as the Hokkaido Education Center, Hokkaido Special Education Center, Hokkaido Curriculum Center, etc.

The director of Hokkaido Education Research Institute stated that the institute has four kinds of activities intended to assist teachers' professional development: internship programs, consultation activities, research, and information and communication encouragement projects.

The Institute plans and facilitates various courses and seminars throughout the year. The director further mentioned about the distribution of the in-service training courses to teachers that:

> "participants of the courses and seminars leave their school during the course and come to the institute. We have lodging facilities which are organized by our Department of General Affairs. Teachers can stay in the institute during the activities. In addition, for the teachers of schools who work in the country-side far from the institute, we have distance education opportunities via satellite communication and internet technologies".

Satellite communication and Internet access is provided by Hokkaido School Net, which is designed and executed by the Information Processing Education Center of the Education Research Institute. All schools, as well as various educational institutions such as the Hokkaido Library, Hokkaido Science Education Center and Hokkaido Special Education

Center are connected to Hokkaido School Net with optical fiber. The School Net is frequently used for in-service training activities.

The functions of *Hokkaido School Net* are as follows (T.Nitoh, personal communication, 28August, 2006):

E-mail
- Issue mail accounts for students and teachers.
- Check for and eliminate computer viruses.

Educational contents
- Multimedia teaching materials and educational information.
- Text sharing function.
- On-line class function.

Communication
- Chat function.
- E-conference function.

Video
- Inter-school communication function.
- Video chat function.
- Videoconference function.

The Educational Software Library Center, which is a sub-division of the Information Processing Education Center, is another important facility for teachers' individual use. The purpose of the Center is to collect and display educational software so that teachers can search, try and choose the software necessary for teaching effectively. The library contains basic software (word processor, calculator, etc.), educational software (each subject from elementary to high school) and education planning software (teaching materials making, planning, etc.).

Other Training Activities in Japan

Mini Doken: As "Mobile Research Course on Hokkaido" since 1984, and as "Lecture Tour on Local Education Revitalization" since 1997, this kind of courses have provided the latest educational issues as themes and they are carried out in association with the local research institutes. Renamed as "Mini Doken" in 2001, it has been improved to incorporate more practical contents (Hokkaido Education Research Institute [HERI], 2005). These mobile, practical and compact training courses are generally about the needs of schools, local characteristics and issues useful in daily practice. These two or three days, subject-specific, mini courses can be organized according to the needs of teachers and schools, and they can be given at the education centers and at schools. Schools and teachers in the countryside which are far from the cities can also take these compact courses via satellite communication and video-conference.

Special Lecture "Urgent Educational Issues (bullying, truancy, etc.): HERI and education centers used to handle the bullying and truancy issues in the training courses for student guidance and educational consultation. Taking into consideration the fact that the problems in student guidance are now more visible and diversified, since 2002, specialists from education-related organizations have been invited to lecture on not only bullying and truancy but also child abuse and drug abuse (HERI, 2005).

Consultation and Voluntary Research: When teachers need advice about children's problems, relationship with them or any other subject, they can receive educational consultation in different forms. *Telephone consultations* are available between 10.00 and 21.00 every day from a toll-free number. For *visitor consultations*, teachers need to make a reservation and

visit the Institute between 10.00 and 16.00 on Mondays and Fridays, except holidays. E-mail support is also provided.

HERI supports teachers' voluntary research for daily education in practice and problem solving, offering facilities, library, educational references and staff during the summer and winter vacations. Research consultation is available when teachers need advice about reference collection, document research or research promotion.

Prefectural boards of education also send teachers to universities, research institutes, private firms and other institutions for long-term training in order to improve their professional competence and their social character. In addition, various lectures and workshops are delivered by municipalities and other educational organizations.

Turkey

According to the Civil Servants' Law and the National Education Principal Law, Turkish teachers should attend in-service training programs in order to continue their professional development (Devlet Memurları Kanunu, 1965; Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu, 1973).

In-service training activities are planned and carried out by the Department of In-Service Training in the Ministry of National Education. Law 3797, which refers to the organization and functions of the Ministry, defines the duties of the Department of In-service Training as carrying out 'all services about the professional development of the staff of the Ministry via in-service training and other methods in the country and abroad'.

In-service training activities used to be conducted solely at the national level until 1993. But these courses were very inadequate in terms of quality and quantity. The Ministry decided to share its authority with local educational directorates in order to enhance the in-service training programs and professional development of teachers. An expert from the Department of In-Service Training notes that:

> "Before 1993, in-service training activities were only at the national level. The Department of In-Service Training were planning and organizing the activities. Even with the help of universities, the number of the courses and the participants were extremely limited compared with overall number of the Ministry's staff. Moreover, financing teachers to come and stay in the central places to take in-service training was very expensive."

Addressing the problems of centrally driven in-service training activities, the Department of In-Service Training gave local National Education Directorates authority and responsibility to plan and conduct in-service training according to their own needs (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 1993, 1994). Since 1994, National Education Directorates in all provinces of Turkey have prepared their own annual in-service training plans and after these have been approved by the provinces' governors, they can conduct activities using their own resources.

Since the change, there has been a significant increase in the number of the participants in in-service training courses. On the other hand, an improvement in the quality of the activities and an enhancement of general professional development of teachers have not occurred.

Officials of a local education directorate summarized the reasons:

> "Departments of In-service Training at the national and local levels do not have professional staff for planning or giving in-service training. Activity plans are made by officials who are not university graduates or teachers. So, teachers' views and ideas about their own professional development cannot be taken into consideration when planning the activities. As we do not have professional staff to give in-service training, the National Education Directorates do not offer many kinds of training courses for teachers. They can only offer basic courses such as computer usage courses, foreign language courses, etc. Besides, there

are not universities in all provinces of Turkey. So cooperation with the education faculties of universities is not provided well in all provinces."

There is virtually no systematic in-service training program for teachers according to their years of experience. The only such program is internship training. In the first year of the profession, all teachers are considered intern teachers and they take three different training programs: basic training, preparatory training and practical training. These training programs are conducted by the local National Education Directorates. After these programs there aren't any systematic training activities that teachers must participate in.

So, at present, in-service training courses are offered by both national and local authorities as indicated above. The Department of In-service Training at the national level makes annual plans concerning general educational issues for the whole country for approval by the Minister.

There are seven in-service training institutes throughout the country that are officially connected to the Department of In-service Training. These institutes are in different cities and regions (Yalova, Mersin, Ankara, Aksaray, Erzurum, Rize and Van) and they have useful facilities for accommodation and training. The activities and courses that are conducted centrally by the national Department of In-Service Training are generally executed in these institutes, which provide accommodation for participants.

Interviews with both national and local authorities indicated clearly that the main concern for in-service training activities in Turkey is the lack of professional staff for planning and carrying out activities for teachers' professional development. Although the in-service training institutes have reasonable facilities for accommodation and training, neither of these institutes nor the national and local departments of in-service training have professional staff. Accordingly, no research is conducted to identify the real training needs of teachers in terms of their professional development.

Training projects comprising the whole staff of a school or other educational institution are not covered in the system. Teachers or other staff in the Ministry of Education have to participate in the training activities individually. If a school or a group of educators wants to take training about a particular subject, it does not receive any help and is encouraged to accomplish it by itself. Because of the central structure of the in-service training system, practical and functional courses and workshops cannot be organized.

In addition to internship training, there are various training courses for promoted educational administrators and other staff. But they are held ad hoc, not systematically. For example, if a group of teachers pass the exam and deserve to be principals or supervisors, they are obliged to take the relevant training courses for that subject area.

The general concept of in-service training at both the national and local level appears to involve determining an expert or experts for the activities and making them give the training. No matter what the course's subject is, the organizing authority generally invites an academician from a university or an experienced teacher and asks them to speak for the training activity. Collaborative and communicative activities in which the teachers share their knowledge and experiences are not generally used. The experts, academicians and trainers who take part in the training cannot usually use information and communication technologies and interactive multimedia tools in the training activities because of the lack of facilities. They only use a computer and a projection machine to make their presentation. The training activities depend on listening rather than doing.

After the activities, no feedback is given in terms of evaluating and measuring the positive or negative outcomes. Trainees and trainers do not come together again at any time after the course. Nothing towards the evaluation and results of the activities are done.

Discussion and Suggestions

Lack of professional staff for planning and conducting in-service training activities in Turkish National Education System seems to be the main problem for teachers' professional development. As there isn't any professional staff in the national and local level departments of in-service training, various problems occur at all phases beginning from the planning phase. Research also indicates that scientific research instruments and methods are not used in defining the in-service training needs of teachers in Turkey (Sahin, 1996; Beduk, 1997; Taymaz et al, 1997; cited in Ozer, 2004, p. 97).

Professional staff who are experienced in teaching and general educational issues should be employed in in-service training departments at the national and local levels in order to plan and organize activities better. Employing professional staff will also be useful in identifying the real needs of teachers. Scientific research instruments should be used in assessing the needs of teachers. Cooperation with universities will be helpful in the determination of teachers' in-service training needs.

Meanwhile, it is very important to take teachers' opinions on their own professional development into consideration. A study by Karakaya (2004) has suggested that Turkish teachers tend to identify themselves as bureaucrats and focus on adhering to the rules and regulations stipulated by central governments, rather than seeing themselves as autonomous professionals and focusing on professional development (Saito et al., 2008). Giving teachers the opportunities to guide their own professional development in a flexible system will enhance their professional approach and willingness to participate in in-service training activities.

Most policymakers think that teacher training significantly influences teacher effectiveness, but there is often a lack of systematic professional development for them (Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1999). A planned program of in-service training provides a system for regular enhancement of teachers' academic knowledge and professional performance, thus keeping them updated on current educational developments and practices (Joyce & Showers, 1988).

The Japanese basic training model, which is based on the years of experience, may be a useful example for Turkey. Such a systematic program should be offered to teachers. Devoting a certain proportion of this program to training activities which teachers can decide to take in a flexible way will help them to direct their learning.

Teachers generally lack a professional tradition of sharing expertise and are often reluctant to articulate professional knowledge (Clandinin, 1986; Sagor, 1997). Collaborative and interactive training activities are generally neglected in Turkey. On the other hand, communication among teachers is a major vehicle for fostering teacher professional development and teachers learn more from each other than from an authorized person such as a content expert or an education specialist (Park et al., 2007).

Therefore, strategies that facilitate professional communication among teachers need to be integrated into teacher professional development. Instead of providing lectures to teachers and expecting them to develop better practice, in-service training activities should employ collaborative approaches in which outsiders work together with teachers in examining and analyzing teaching incidents. This process seems to enable teachers to understand teaching situations, evaluate the effectiveness of their actions and recommend alternative approaches to improve practice (Park et al., 2007; Angelides, 2002).

At the school level, rather than outside in-service sessions, teachers appreciate more content-specific opportunities where they learn from and share with each other. A number of case studies in Japan reveal the importance of enhancing collegiality within schools for the purpose of professional development (Boyle, Lamprianou & Boyle, 2005; Sato & Sato, 2003;

Sato, 2006; cited in Saito, Tsukui & Tanaka, 2008). For example, peer coaching is a technique used by a pair or a small group of colleagues to help one another use newly-learned strategies to improve their effectiveness as teachers through a regular process of observation and feedback (Munro & Elliott, 1987). The Japanese peer-based model encourages professional development through peer collaboration, planning and management; professional development is embedded in a social context in which peer teachers are committed to creating and regenerating knowledge (Shimahara, 1998).

Findings indicated that in-service training activities in Turkey generally do not have any provision for feedback and after training feedback is neglected as well. Duke (1986) argued that when a training activity or a presentation is followed by opportunities for practice and feedback, it will result in the best involvement by the teacher.

Meanwhile, information technology could be an extremely useful tool for feedback if it is used in a systematic and effective way. The Japanese technology infrastructure seems to provide a good example of using information and communication technologies for feedback while and after in-service training activities are performed. Some of the functions of Hokkaido School Net, such as on-line classes, e-conferences, videoconferences and inter-school communication via the Internet and satellite systems, are being used for feedback after training activities and provide opportunities for teachers to share ideas about their classroom practices or new knowledge that they have learned through in-service training activities.

Morrison, Carlton, Henk & Thornburg (2007) also argue that using distance learning technologies provides useful opportunities such as quick provision of feedback, participation in online discussions and mentoring support. Therefore, the Ministry of National Education in Turkey and local educational authorities should plan and provide a more effective technology infrastructure to be used for in-service training activities and feedback after these activities.

In conclusion, the key points about the in-service training of teachers appears as providing professional staff, collaborative partnerships between teachers, provision for feedback and a systematic in-service training model. While the focus of the present study was on the provision of in-service training for Turkish teachers, these points should be addressed by in-service training providers at the international level. Research towards different aspects of using web-based information and communication technologies for feedback in in-service training activities and employing professional staff for planning in-service training activities would also be useful for in-service training providers in different countries.

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