

## Teachers' Perceptions about the Teaching Competencies of INSET Programs' Instructors

### Öğretmenlerin Hizmetiçi Eğitim Programlarında Görevli Öğretim Elemanlarının Öğretmen Yeterliklerine İlişkin Görüşleri

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#### Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine primary school teachers' perceptions on the teaching competencies of inservice training (INSET) programs' instructors in the context of improving the quality of INSET programs for primary school teachers. The subjects of this study were primary school teachers (n=130) in the city center of Bolu. The quantitative data were collected through a likert type scale during the fall semester of 2002 - 2003 academic year. The results of this study indicated that the following teaching competencies: answering the questions clearly when they are asked, using audio and visual course materials effectively during the INSET programs, relating the subjects to be taught or to be studied during the lessons to real life situations, informing teachers about the latest developments in their subject areas were mostly emphasized by the primary school teachers.

*Key Words:* Teaching competencies, inservice training (INSET) programs.

#### Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, ilköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin hizmetiçi eğitim programlarında kalitenin artırılması bağlamında, ilköğretim okulu öğretmenlerine yönelik hizmetiçi eğitim programlarında görevli öğretim elemanlarının, öğretmen yeterliklerine ilişkin görüşlerini incelemektir. Çalışmanın örneklemini, Bolu İli merkezinde görev yapmakta olan ilköğretim okulu öğretmenleri (n=130) oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada niceliksel veriler Likert tipi bir ölçek ile 2002 - 2003 öğretim yılı güz döneminde toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonucunda, ilköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin, sorulan sorulara açık bir şekilde cevap verme, hizmetiçi eğitim programları süresince görsel ve işitsel ders materyallerini etkili biçimde kullanma, dersler sırasında çalışılan veya öğrenilen konuları gerçek yaşamla ilişkilendirme ve kursiyer öğretmenleri alanları ile ilgili en son gelişmelerden haberdar etme gibi öğretmen yeterliklerini çoğunlukla vurguladıkları bulunmuştur.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* Öğretmen yeterlikleri, hizmetiçi eğitim programları.

#### Introduction

In today's world, various developments and changes have taken place rapidly in science, technology, economy, industry, etc. Knowledge and information technologies are considered the indicators and determinants of the information age in which we are living. The current age consequently differs from the past. As Cameron (1996) stated, the economy of today is

not the economy of the past, the industry of today is not the industry of the past. Therefore, it could be said that the world has transformed. Concerning the possible consequences and effects of these changes and transformations upon schools and education, Darling – Hammond (1996) state that these changes and transformations require greater learning on the part of students and for schools to reshape the mission of education, now being expected not only to offer education, but to ensure learning. In relation to this fact, teachers are now expected not only to “cover the curriculum” but to create a bridge between the needs of

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each learner and the attainment of challenging learning goals. Also, as Darling-Hammond pointed out in her interview with Goldberg (2001), teachers' skills and knowledge are considered the single most important determinant of success for a student and, according to her, this requires the serious training of teachers. In the light of these views, it could be said that teachers of the information age must possess certain qualifications. As Cameron (1996), Darling-Hammond (1996), Hendrickson and O'shea (1993) observe, teachers must know their subject areas deeply, must understand how their students think, must know how to create experiences that actually work to produce learning, must be aware of how to meet students diverse and challenging needs, and must develop themselves professionally and individually to fulfill various tasks, behaviours, responsibilities that their professions require.

At this point, inservice training (INSET) is considered as one of the necessary means to improve teachers' professional qualifications and to increase their effectiveness at schools. Shanker (1996), on the basis of the rapid changes and developments in the world, considered the INSET programs to be one of the activities that teachers and their organizations can involve in order to improve teacher quality and to enhance the teaching profession.

Bostingl (1996) lists The Fourteen Points developed by Dr. W. Edwards Deming; creating constancy of purpose for improvement of products and services, adopting a new philosophy, ceasing dependence on mass inspection, ending the practice of doing business on price tag alone, improving constantly and forever the system of production and service, instituting programs of training, instituting leadership, driving out fear, breaking down barriers between staff areas, eliminating slogans, exhortations, and targets for the work force, eliminating numerical quotas, removing barriers to pride and joy in workmanship, instituting a vigorous for education and retraining, taking action to accomplish the transformation. When the implications of Deming's principles, as stated by Bostingl (1996), are included in education, it is observed that in-service experiences or training programs are considered one of the essential tools for achieving quality in education and to increase teachers' effectiveness. Kaufman and Zahn (1993) also

recommend inservice training directed towards topics and areas that will enhance the competence, empowerment, growth and self development of teachers. Bostingl (1996), in his interpretation of The Fourteen Points developed by Dr. W. Edwards Deming, pointed out that training programs must be instituted by school leaders for new employees unfamiliar with the specific culture and expectations of the school. These would show new teachers how to set goals, how to teach effectively, and how to assess the quality of their work with their students. In this respect, the training of teachers through high-quality INSET programs should be taken into consideration in order to increase their effectiveness, to improve their qualifications and to enhance teaching as a profession. In this framework, the quality of INSET programs should be questioned. In other words, INSET programs should be examined from the view point of whether they meet the needs of the participants or not.

Şişman and Turan (2001) define quality as appropriateness to customers' expectations, and meeting the needs and the satisfaction of customers. Holt (1993), by referring to Deming's 14 points for the transformation of management, stated that quality is defined by the customer and quality comes from understanding and improving the process. Holt (1993) also points out that to Deming, quality is not an entity but a way of doing things, a way in which desired states are translated into concrete processes. According to Kaufman and Zahn (1993) customer satisfaction is regarded as one of the vision targets for quality management. Kaufman and Zahn (1993) also stated that quality management emphasizes the fitting together of all elements from turning raw materials, though competent and caring processes, into products to satisfy the clients.

On the basis of these, if quality is satisfying the needs and expectations of customers and if quality is defined by customers, the quality of INSET programs could be defined as identifying the expectations and needs of participants before these programs start, meeting their identified expectations and needs during these programs and providing various opportunities to their involvement to the various levels of these programs. Moreover; during INSET programs, the application levels (i.e. the

process) should be observed and should be questioned from the view point of whether experiential opportunities are provided for the participants or not. At this point, the instructional, professional and individual skills, competencies, behaviours and knowledge that the instructors of INSET programs have to consider are as critical as the programs since these skills, competencies, behaviours and knowledge could have considerable effects upon the quality and the effectiveness of INSET programs.

Küçükahmet (1992) divided the personnel related to INSET programs into four (4) groups and one of them was the personnel who are responsible for instructional activities and who will do the actual teaching in the classrooms during the INSET programs. These are referred to as the instructors. According to Küçükahmet (1992), instructors of INSET programs should be subject specialists and should be competent in the subject area. Other than this, Küçükahmet (1992) has indicated some standards to consider while assigning the instructors to INSET programs as; knowing the theory and practice of the subjects to be taught and studied during the class hours, being familiar and competent with teaching techniques and being experienced in teaching adults.

Bedük (1997) believes that the personnel assigned to INSET programs should be selected from the ones who have taught at various grade levels and who are familiar with problems related to teaching. According to Balta (1997), such programs require the fulfillment of certain conditions. Balta (1997) believes that INSET programs must be planned and must be applied by professionals who are experienced in teaching adults and in the behavioral sciences.

Öztürk (1997) asserts that the staff of INSET programs should be subject specialists, be familiar with the institution and work fulltime at the institution. According to him, when these conditions are fulfilled, INSET programs are more effective. Tekişik (1983) stressed the importance of personnel assigned to INSET programs being selected among the primary school principals, primary school inspectors, teachers who have taught vocational courses, the principals of teacher training institutions and academicians who have been trained in the topic areas of the INSET programs.

According to Kuteş (1997), subject specialists should be assigned to INSET programs, and during these programs the recommendations and criticisms of subject specialists should be taken into consideration.

Yıldız (2001) and the results of Özer's study (2004) can be given as examples to confirm the critical importance of the selection of INSET instructors. Yıldız (2001), having participated in an INSET program, suggests that subject specialists should be assigned to future INSET programs as the instructors of these programs. Yıldız's comments (2001) suggest that during the planning and during the application of the INSET programs, the selection of the instructors is not emphasized by program organizers. The teachers in Özer's study (2004) state that generally the trainers or the instructors assigned to INSET programs are not subject specialists and felt this disadvantageous. In order to increase the effectiveness of adult education programs Sabaz (2004) identifies the following critical issues: the identification of participant's INSET needs, the implementation of appropriate programs to meet these needs, the training of INSET instructors and trainers, the selection of appropriate teaching techniques during these programs and the rational use of the resources.. In other words, the teaching competencies and teaching skills of adult education programs' instructors have a critical effect on the effectiveness and on the success of these INSET programs.

In their Final Report on Strengthening Inservice Training Activities in Türkiye, Paykoç and Schorn (1993) examine the teaching skills of instructors under the following headings: establishing a learning set (motivation), logical organization, pacing, elaboration, demonstrating effective methods, reinforcing and encouraging learner involvement in instruction, demonstrating an understanding of the content, organizing time, space, materials and equipment, demonstrating enthusiasm for teaching, helping learners develop positive self-concept and managing classroom interactions.

According to Armutçuoğlu (1992), instructors of INSET programs should be experienced, should be stable in character, should be easy to access, should be open to criticisms and should demonstrate understanding others, should be well-organized for their lessons, should know the uses of various techniques and methods together

with various equipment, should like teaching and should know techniques for effective teaching, should be cooperative with program organizers during the various stages of programs and should be selected through a set of criteria.

The results of Özen's study (1999) showed that instructors of possible future INSET programs for primary schools' English language teachers mostly need to have the following professional skills and qualifications: creating an appropriate learning environment for instructional activities, maintaining the relationship between topics during these programs, giving instructions clearly, giving feedback to the teachers, using various approaches, methods and techniques during these programs, informing teachers on the latest developments in their subject areas, using audio and visual aids effectively, demonstrating awareness to teachers' professional needs and being accessible in order to solve teachers' professional problems.

Özen (2001), examined academicians' perceptions in relation to teaching skills of instructors of INSET programs for 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade class English language teachers. The results of his study revealed that academicians mostly emphasized the following teaching skills: conducting lessons using a variety of teaching methods, arousing interest when introducing an activity, creating an appropriate learning environment, maintaining a clear relationship between the content and the objectives of the INSET program while conducting the lessons, implementing activities in a logical sequence, creating participation opportunities for teachers, using the most appropriate teaching approaches, methods, techniques, and maintaining them, using audio and visual course materials effectively.

Academicians in Özen's study (2002), expressed the view that instructors of INSET programs should mostly have the following teaching skills and qualifications in order to improve the quality of INSET programs for primary school teachers: having good command of the subject to be taught or to be studied, being a subject specialist, having enough experience in teaching on INSET programs, knowledge of teaching approaches, techniques and methods and being skillful in implementing and using teaching approaches, techniques and methods during the lessons.

The INSET participants in Özen's study (2004) believed that the instructors of INSET programs should be subject specialists, should arouse interest when introducing an instructional activity, should create an appropriate learning environment for the instructional activities, should demonstrate sensitivity to the teachers' feelings and needs, should demonstrate warmth and friendliness to teachers, should consider the teachers as their colleagues, should demonstrate patience and understanding to teachers in the classrooms and in the learning situations. They also pointed out that the INSET instructors should maintain a clear relationship between the content and the objectives of the INSET program, should give directions and explanations clearly, should provide feedback as the lessons go on, should take appropriate actions when teachers appear to be bored, making the necessary changes. In addition to these, INSET participants said that the INSET instructors should relate the subject matter to be learned or to be taught to real life situations and should use the audio and visual course materials effectively.

Bozkurt (1999) confirms the importance of the issue. Having participated in an INSET program, Bozkurt (1999) pointed out that the instructors of the INSET program were not well-prepared and they were not subject specialists. In other words, Bozkurt (1999) observed that the instructors of the INSET program she participated in did not have the necessary teaching competencies.

Within this framework, the aim of this study is to examine primary school teachers' perceptions in relation to the teaching competencies of INSET program instructors in the context of improving the quality of INSET programs for primary school teachers.

#### Method

This study seeks to answer the question: "what are the perceptions of primary school teachers in relation to the teaching competencies of INSET program instructors in the context of improving the quality of INSET programs for primary school teachers?"

The subjects of this study were primary school teachers (n=130) who were teaching at ten different primary schools, selected randomly for this study

located in the city center of Bolu in Turkey. When the subjects were analyzed in terms of their gender, 55.4% (n=72) were female. When the years of experience in teaching is concerned, 27.7% (n=36) were teaching between 0-5 years and/or 20 years and/or more. When the faculty they graduated from is examined, 57.7% (n=75) were the graduates of education faculties. 63.1% (n=82) of them were classroom teachers, and 54.6 % (n=71) were teaching at the first grade levels (i.e. covering the first five years of primary schools).

There were 54 primary schools in the city center of Bolu. The total number of teachers at these schools varied between 1 to 75 and 1,100 teachers were teaching during the fall semester of the academic year 2002-2003. The total number of teachers at 18 of the 54 primary schools were less than 5 each. There were difficulties in reaching teachers who formed the population of the research as they were working at different schools. For these reasons, cluster sampling was used to represent the population at the beginning of the study.

At this stage of the study, primary schools were selected as the sampling unit. As the number of teachers changed from one primary school to another, the schools were brought together in order to equate the number of population units and in order to form new sampling units, each of which consisted of approximately 35 teachers. During this procedure, the locations of the schools were taken into account. A similar procedure was followed at different schools that had more than 50 teachers by dividing them into twos and threes. By means of this procedure, units of different size had an equal chance of being selected for the sample. A total of 31 sampling units were thereby obtained.

During the second stage it was decided to represent a minimum of 30% of the whole population in the sample.. Following on from this, 10 schools were randomly chosen

All teachers working at 10 schools were selected for this study. For various reasons (eg. being on leave, being on sick leave, etc.), 23 teachers who were not at these schools during the study were not included. The instrument was administered by the researcher individually with 8 teachers not agreeing to answer the scale.

As the population of this study was limited to the public schools located in the city center of Bolu, it is

believed that the findings obtained from the sample could be generalized to the population of this study.

During the study, the quantitative data were collected through a 5-point Likert type scale, (ranging from completely disagree (1) to completely agree (5)), developed by the researcher. During the development of the scale, the literature in relation to the subject area was reviewed, Paykoç and Schorn (1993), Küçükahmet (1992), Armutçuoğlu (1992), and the feedback received from subject specialists was taken into account. While the items of the scale were being written, the literature in relation to the subject area was taken as a base.

The internal consistency of the scale (Cronbach alpha) was 95. The content validity of the scale was examined through the feedback received from subject specialists and by the revision of the literature in relation to the subject area.

For this purpose, the scale was given to 7 subject specialists for their comments

To analyse the data, the percentages, the frequencies, the means, the standard deviation scores of each item in the scale were calculated. In addition to these statistical analysis, a t-test and one-way ANOVA were used in order to examine the effects of variables on the perceptions of primary school teachers.

## Results and Discussion

Results showed that the following teaching competencies of INSET program instructors in the context of improving the quality of INSET programs were highly valued: 73.1% (n=95) of teachers stated that instructors should answer questions clearly when they were asked. 71.5% (n=91) of teachers said that instructors should be prepared and well-organized for lessons during these programs. 68.5% (n=89) of teachers said that instructors should use audio and visual course materials effectively during these programs, and should relate the subjects to be taught or to be studied during the lessons to real life situations. 66.2% (n=86) of teachers thought that instructors should inform primary school teachers about the latest developments in their subject areas. 65.4% (n=85) of teachers felt that instructors should arouse interest when introducing lessons. Moreover; 63.8% (n=83) of teachers believed

that instructors should make the directions and explanations clear when they were misunderstood, and create appropriate learning environments for instructional activities. It was stated by 62.3% (n=81) of teachers that instructors of INSET programs should be academicians and should have academic degrees. 53.1% (n=69) of teachers, also, pointed out that instructors had to take appropriate action when teachers appeared to be bored. It was stated by 50% (n=65) of teachers that instructors of INSET programs should demonstrate sensitivity to teachers' feelings and needs, demonstrate patience and understanding in the classroom and in learning situations. In addition to this, 44.6% (n=58) of teachers said that INSET program instructors should demonstrate warmth and friendliness to teachers.

Also a significant difference was found between male and female teachers' perceptions in relation to the teaching competencies of INSET program instructors in favour of female teachers (  $t(128) = -1.99, p > 0.04$  ) (see Table 1); however, no significant difference was found between perceptions of classroom teachers and subject-matter teachers in relation to the teaching competencies of INSET program instructors (  $t(128) = -6.02, p > .05$  ) (see Table 2).

Table 1.  
*T-test Results Between Teachers' Perceptions and Gender of Teachers*

|        | N  | $\bar{x}$ | Sd   | df  | T     | P     |
|--------|----|-----------|------|-----|-------|-------|
| Female | 72 | 4.59      | 0.40 | 128 | -1,99 | 0,04* |
| Male   | 58 | 4.31      | 0.90 |     |       |       |

$p < .05$

Table 2.  
*T-test Results Between Teachers' Perceptions and Professional Status of Teachers*

|                         | N  | $\bar{x}$ | Sd   | Df  | T     | P    |
|-------------------------|----|-----------|------|-----|-------|------|
| Classroom Teachers      | 82 | 4.46      | 0.40 | 128 | -.602 | 0.54 |
| Subject-matter Teachers | 48 | 4.53      | 0.80 |     |       |      |

$p > .05$

The one-way ANOVA results revealed no significant differences between teachers' perceptions in relation to the teaching competencies of INSET program instructors and years of experience in teaching (  $F = (4,125) = 1.549, p > .192$  ) (see Table 3). The results also revealed no significant differences between teachers' perceptions in relation to the teaching competencies of INSET program instructors and the faculty from which they graduated (  $F = (2,127) = .681, p > .508$  ) (see Table 4), and no significant differences were found between teachers' perceptions in relation to the teaching competencies of INSET program instructors and the grade level taught (  $F = (2,127) = 1.902, p > .154$  ) (see Table 5).

On the basis of the analysis of the data collected, it can be said that the instructors of INSET programs for primary school teachers should have certain teaching competencies. In other words, when the instructors of these INSET programs have some teaching competencies, as Özen (2004), Özen (2002), Özen (2001), Özen (1999),

Table 3.  
*One-Way ANOVA Results Between Teachers' Perceptions and Years of Experience of Teachers in Teaching*

| Dimension                                       |                | Sum of squares | df  | Mean square | F     | P    |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Instructional Competencies of INSET Instructors | Between Groups | 2.84           | 4   | .712        | 1.549 | .192 |
|   | Within Groups  | 57.48          | 125 | .460        |       |      |
|   | Total          | 60.33          | 129 |             |       |      |

$p > .05$

Table 4.  
*One-Way ANOVA Results Between Teachers' Perceptions and Faculty From Which Teachers Graduated*

| Dimension                                       |                | Sum of squares | df  | Mean square | F    | P    |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|------|------|
| Instructional Competencies of INSET Instructors | Between Groups | .640           | 2   | .320        | .681 | .508 |
|   | Within Groups  | 59.69          | 127 | 4.70        |      |      |
|   | Total          | 60.33          | 129 |             |      |      |

$p > .05$

Table 5.  
*One-way ANOVA Results Between Teacher's Perceptions and Grade Level That Teachers Taught*

| Dimension                                       |                | Sum of squares | df  | Mean square | F     | P    |
|---|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Instructional Competencies of INSET Instructors | Between Groups | 1.75           | 2   | .877        | 1.902 | 1.54 |
|   | Within Groups  | 58.57          | 127 | .461        |       |      |
|   | Total          | 60.33          | 129 |             |       |      |

$p > .05$

Bozkurt (1999), Balta (1997), Paykoç and Schorn (1993) and Küçükahmet (1992) pointed out, they were able to meet the INSET needs of the participants during these programs and the INSET programs could be more effective and thus be more successful. The reason for this is that in meeting these needs as Sabaz (2004) implied, the instructors of INSET programs were able to select the appropriate teaching approaches, methods, and techniques and implement these approaches, methods, and techniques during the INSET programs in appropriate learning environments.

It can, also, be said that during the planning of INSET programs, special attention should be given to the selection of INSET instructors. In other words, as implied by Yıldız (2001) and emphasized by Bozkurt (1999), Küçükahmet (1992), and Armutçuoğlu (1992), the instructors of INSET programs should be selected on the basis of certain criteria because the instructors of these programs are expected to be different from teachers who are teaching at various grade levels of the educational system in terms of their teaching competencies, teaching skills, teaching behaviours, knowledge of the subject area, qualifications and other aspects.

If the definition of quality (appropriateness to customers' expectations and meeting the needs and the satisfaction of customers, in the context of improving the quality of INSET programs) made by Şişman and Turan (2001) is accepted, then teachers, as the participants of INSET programs, are considered the customers of these programs. In order to meet teachers'

professional and individual needs, the instructors of these programs should have certain teaching skills, competencies, behaviours and knowledge. The selection of INSET instructors can be considered one of the most important key stones in increasing the effectiveness of INSET programs. During the selection of instructors, as Bozkurt (1999), Armutçuoğlu (1992) and Küçükahmet (1992) emphasized, certain criteria or certain standards should be considered. On the basis of these, the instructors of INSET programs for primary school teachers should not only be subject specialists, professionals and academicians, as stated by Özer (2004), Özen (2002), Yıldız (2001), Bozkurt (1999), Balta (1997), Kuteş (1997), Öztürk (1997), Küçükahmet (1992), Tekişik (1983), but also have certain teaching competencies as pointed out by Özen (2004), Özen (2002), Özen (2001), Özen (1999), Bozkurt (1999), Paykoç and Schorn (1993), Küçükahmet (1992), and Armutçuoğlu (1992). T-test and one-way ANOVA results also confirm the literature and the perceptions of the teachers. This suggests that teachers believe that the instructors of INSET programs should be equipped with teaching competencies mentioned in the questionnaire. Also, the results of t-test imply that female teachers are more concerned about the competencies mentioned in the items of the questionnaire than male teachers. This could mean that the awareness levels of female teachers related to the teaching competencies of INSET instructors for primary school teachers is higher than the male teachers. That is to say, female teachers believe that, as Sabaz (2004) stated, the teaching competencies of INSET instructors are one of the most critical issues in the effectiveness and on the success of INSET programs because these have direct influences on the effectiveness and on the success of INSET programs.

### Suggestions

As a result of the analysis of the findings of this study, it appears that primary school teachers emphasize that instructors of INSET programs should not only be subject specialists, and be academicians, as Özer (2004), Özen (2002), Yıldız (2001) Bozkurt (1999), Öztürk

(1997), Balta (1997), Kuteş (1997), Küçükahmet (1992), and Tekişik (1983) point out, but also have certain teaching competencies, teaching skills and qualifications, as emphasized by Özen (2004), Özen (2002), Özen (2001), Bozkurt (1999), Özen (1999), Paykoç and Schorn (1993), Küçükahmet (1992), and Armutçuoğlu (1992). This suggests that certain criteria or certain standards, as found by Yıldız (2001) and Bozkurt (1999) and Küçükahmet (1992), should be considered during the selection of INSET instructors. In addition to this, when qualified instructors are assigned to these programs, the INSET programs will be more effective, will be more successful, the professional and individual needs of teachers will be met during these programs and teachers will be more effective at their schools to meet the diverse needs of their students.

In the light of the data collected, it can be said that instructors of INSET programs need to be selected from those who have the specific teaching competencies that are mentioned by Özen (2004), Özen (2002), Özen (2001), Bozkurt (1999), Özen (1999), Paykoç and Schorn (1993), Küçükahmet (1992) and Armutçuoğlu (1992). Consequently the instructors of INSET programs need to answer the questions clearly when they are asked, need to be well-prepared and well-organized for classes during these programs, need to use audio and visual course materials effectively during the lessons and during the programs, need to relate the subjects to be studied to real-life situations, need to inform participants about the latest developments in their subject areas, need to arise interest when introducing the lessons, need to make directions and explanations clear when they are misunderstood, and need to create appropriate learning environments for the instructional activities.

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