

Participant Reception of the Project for Modernization Vocational and Technical Training Program

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Abstract: Within the frame of Modernization of Vocational and Technical Training Project, a series of “in-service training” (INSET) programs were realized. Academicians attended these programs. One of these programs was the “Competence Based Measurement and Evaluation Materials” (CBEM). The purpose of this work is to contribute to the development of planning, implementation and evaluation phases of similar training activities to be applied in the future based on findings obtained by gathering views, thoughts and proposals of participants about the training programs in the INSET programme with the topic CBEM. The research was carried out in a qualitative research model. 18 of the 21 participants joined the research as voluntary subjects. It was found that the participants shared the perception that the course reached its goal, its content was adequate, its contribution to the participants was moderate, the lecturer and the interpreter of the course were qualified enough and that the course organization level was moderately sufficient. The following proposals have emerged as the outcome; in similar INSET programs, planning must be better, training requirements of participants must be determined, appropriate training conditions must be provided, expenditure payments must be made on time and the participant certificates should be functional in promotions and job placements of participants.

Key words: In- service training • On-job training • personnel development • human resources

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advances in the development of technology make continual training or life-long training, important. One aspect of this understanding of training is met by means of “in-service training” (INSET). By contributing to the training of the personnel of the organization, INSET makes it easy for them to adapt to the innovations and the changing environment conditions. Also, new discoveries in science and technique cause an organizational change. The organizations also follow the developments and the changes closely. From the viewpoint of organizations, the development in technology means an increase in the demand for qualified human resources. Organizations tend to make good use of human resources effectively and efficiently. Thus, there rises occurs a need for developing human resources continuously.

Copenhagen Report [1] proposes “The system of Transparent Quality and Adequacy” for increasing the quality of human resources related to the vocational and technical training in the EU. In order to increase

the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the EU, expert groups were set to consider policy practices that aimed to improve the education and performance of teachers and trainers in the context of their changing role in the knowledge society [2]. For the restructuring of vocational and technical training in adaptation with EU, Turkey tends to make good use of these developments in higher education and vocational training for the purpose of teacher training. Project for Modernization of Vocational Education and Training in Turkey (MVET) has determined the adequacy profile of teacher training for vocational courses and has developed modular training programs taking these adequacies as references. These programmes have been put into practice in 14 vocational and technical education faculties. It is endeavoured to integrate the activities made by INSET programs. One of these programs, INSET programme on “Competence Based Measurement and Evaluation Materials” (CBEM) has been realized on the basis of the Project for Modernization of Vocational and Technical Training between the dates of 18th and 22nd April 2005 for 5 days, in Ankara. The aim

of this research is to evaluate the existing state related to how the participants perceive the course programme just mentioned.

In-Service Training: According to Taymaz [3], INSET is a training activity made for the purpose of making individuals who work for a certain salary or wage, acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes related to their duties. Pre-job training (PJT) and INSET concepts are different from each other. Kaya [4] defines PJT as the training individuals receive according to certain laws, in schools or in institutions with school like qualities, before they begin working. PJT is given to a certain age group and it includes all the activities given in training institutions before beginning working and all vocational and technical learning activities. On the other hand, INSET is a training given to an employee for the purpose of making him reach a performance level that the job requires, between the date when a legal relation is set up with the employee and the date he leaves the job [5,6]. In short, while PJT includes the training before the individual begins working, INSET includes the one during working.

According to Mullins [7], the main purpose of INSET is to provide development and improvement in the knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits of the individual. In general, the purposes of INSET are: to develop vocational adequacy of the staff, to provide unity in practice, to support the development of system, to increase the quality and quantity of the product and service, to provide adaptation with the improvements, to provide job security, to reinforce communication and coordination, to prevent intra-organizational confrontations, to provide professional satisfaction and motivation, to provide promotional opportunities and to enhance the respectability of personnel [8-10].

To make INSET effective and efficient, the priority is to develop the knowledge and capabilities needed by the related staff [11,12]. The demand for INSET emerges when the difference between the qualities required by a job and the qualities that the staff has, is determined [3]. Compensation of the difference determined is an investment in human resources. Training personnel should be seen not as an aim but as a means to find solutions for problems [13]. The demand for INSET can be determined by using such methods as interviews, tests, consultations and job-analyses. After the requirement for INSET of staff is determined, the planning of INSET is made.

The planning provides effective and efficient use of human resource, materials, money and training facilities [14]. Because plans are made for the future, they must be suitable for changes and must be flexible. The INSET plan includes determining of the need for training, planning of INSET, preparation of the training programme, its practical implementation and evaluation of the INSET [8,15,3]. While the training plan is made, the name, aim, period, kind, method of training, the choice of participants, the tools and equipment to be used and the cost are determined [16,10]. After the plan of INSET has been made, the phase of preparation of the programmes can be started.

The programme of INSET should include the dimensions of aim, content, methods, techniques and evaluation [17]. The organization's achievement of its goals is closely related to keeping the right quality and quantity of personnel available in the requested time and place for applications [9]. For this reason, the management of personnel carries out such kind of functions. After the programme of INSET has been completed, this programme can be put into practice. Before beginning this training, the administrators and the personnel that the INSET will affect within the organization should be prepared [18]. According to Balci [19], preparation of the employees for the business life develops in them the feeling of being considered important and causes them to take responsibilities. By means of programmes prepared, communication aptitudes such as listening, speaking, writing and reading, can be improved [20-23]. The planned training programme can be given "within the institution" or "out of the institution" as the application of INSET.

Goal of the research: Within the frame of Project for Modernization of Vocational and Technical Training in Turkey, the INSET program with the title of "Competence Based Measurement and Evaluation Materials" (CBEM) was realized between the dates 18-22 April of 2005 lasting for 5 days. The aim of this research is to contribute to the development of planning, application and evaluation phases of similar training works in the future, based on the findings obtained by considering the views, thoughts and proposals of the participants on the applied training program in this INSET programme.

Research problem: What are the perceptions of the participants of the training program regarding the in service training program they have received?

Sub-problems: What are the perceptions of the participants regarding

- the level of achievement of the goal
- the content
- the contribution
- the proficiency of lecturer
- the interpreter
- and the organization of the program?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research was realized within the qualitative research model. A total of 30 persons were invited for the course, 27 of them were academicians in Technical Education Faculties and one Vocational College of 10 different universities and three of them were teachers affiliated with the National Education Ministry (N.E.M.). Attendance was 70%, with 21 participants. 18 of the 21 participants, that is 86% of the participants joined the research as voluntary subjects. The lecturer in charge of the course and the interpreter has also participated as voluntary subjects.

Development of the interview questionnaire form: Five academicians from four different universities assisted and contributed directly to the development the interview questionnaire form. It consisted of semi-structured and open-ended questions in six dimensions.

Validity and reliability: The interview technique used to gather data was realized in an informal ambience. As Balci [23] points out, the interview technique contributes to the creation of a friendly and safe ambience. After completion of the course, the data gathered by the interview technique were read to the subjects and they were asked if they held their own views and they were requested to confirm their views. Hence verification of the data was secured. Confirmation of the data by the subjects can be used as a strategy to enhance

reliability in qualitative researches [24]. In the research data was gathered also using the technique of observation through participation. According to Yıldırım [24] the participation of the researcher, evaluation of the research conditions in a way independent of the social conditions, formation of the conceptual frame by the data and detailed analysis of the data are accepted as measures to enhance reliability in qualitative researches

Data Gathering and Data Analysis: The data obtained by the interview technique, the answers given by the subjects to the open-ended questions and the adequacy level evaluations were investigated. All the data were separated into groups and classified in integrity. Hence, the documents and data obtained were systematized to suit the goal of research. All the answers were accepted as data and they were evaluated. The researcher himself also gathered data for course by means of observation. The findings were analysed on Excel program on computer. Qualitative data can be turned into numerical calculation by means of simple percentages [24,25]. Together with the views obtained qualitatively, perceptions of the subjects regarding the six dimensions were classified as “adequate”, “moderately adequate” and “inadequate” and their frequencies and percentages were calculated (Appendices-Table 1). The view of each subject was shown by a dash mark (-) and when there were similar or common views, they were expressed by adding the number of participants in front of the letter “S” such as 2S, 3S etc.

Findings

Findings related with 1st sub-problem: The participants were asked about their views on the level of achievement of the course goal, the answers were analysed and the resulting conclusions drawn are given in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1 of the participants 3 (15%) evaluated the achievement of the course goal as inadequate, 5 (25%) as moderately adequate and 12 (60%) as adequate.

Table 1: Participant Receptions Related to Dimensions of In-Service Training Program

Thoughts	Level of reaching its aim (1)		The contribution the course provides (3)		The efficiency of the trainer (4)		The interpreter (5)		Organization (6)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Insufficient	N	3	8	5	3	-	-	-	7	
	%	15	40	25	16	-	-	-	35	
Moderately Sufficient	N	5	7	12	4	-	-	-	6	
	%	25	35	60	21	-	-	-	30	
Sufficient	N	12	5	3	12	19	19	19	7	
	%	60	25	15	63	100	100	100	35	
Total	N	20	20	20	19	19	19	19	20	

Participants perceiving the level of achievement of the goal as inadequate:

- The aim of course is not totally clear. The participants could not comprehend the aim. Continuity towards the aim was inexistent. The beginning and end of the seminar were inconsistent. (3S).
- Criteria of the course weren't determined. The course was realized without preparation and planning, without emphasis on which scientific gap it would fill. The course was not oriented for academicians but rather oriented for high school teachers.

Participants perceiving the level of achievement of the goal as moderately adequate:

- Student centred modular training system is rather certificate oriented. It can be said that it is relatively beneficial from the view point of the integrity of the training-education activities of Technical Education Faculties.
- The activities that suited the goal were carried out. However, it wasn't original when major fields of the participants were considered. The lecturer responsible for the course need not have been a foreigner. The course could have been given by national experts.
- The presented material was not new. Only reviews were made, the goal was relatively achieved through group activities applied.
- The aim of course wasn't emphasized clearly. I could understand that it is only related to students (2S).

Participants perceiving the level of achievement of the goal as adequate:

- In the course, the shortcomings of training system in Turkey were emphasized and from this aspect, the seminar was suitable to the aim of the project (5S).
- The course was quite beneficial from the point of view of preparation of evaluation tools (2S).
- That the course is evaluation oriented, was quite beneficial from the point of view of evaluation of skills and formation of criteria. It was especially more beneficial for technical education faculty members of engineering origin and in this respect it prepared the participants for developments.
- Such an activity was very appropriate in a period in which Turkey is on the way of becoming a member of the EU.

- Evaluations of applications in Turkey and the lack of standards in vocational technical training institutions in Turkey made the course more important.
- It is natural that there are problems in the relations between trainers and the trainees. Therefore there can be certain deviations in the goals. This must be considered ordinary. Despite such problems, it can be said that the course reached its goal.
- The course was realised in a positive atmosphere and in accordance with its goal.

Findings related with 2nd sub-problem: The means of the points received by male and female subjects in the measurement were calculated and compared by t-test in order to determine whether the need for organizational change accordin.

Participants were asked about the content of the course. After the answers were analysed, the conclusions reached were presented in the Table 1.

As seen in the Table 1, 8 of the participants (40%) evaluated the content of it as inadequate, 7 of them (35%) as moderate and 5 of them (25%) as adequate.

Participants perceiving the content as inadequate:

- The content level of the course was much lower than the level of participants. The course doesn't cover the unapplied and the unknown developments. It was prepared without taking the departments and levels of participants into consideration (3S).
- The content of course didn't include the technical subjects. It was not satisfactory. Because it did not provide the participants with necessary information, it caused a waste of time. The activities which could be realised in four hours were extended to two days. This caused a loss of motivation. The examples were at such a low level that they caused the course to be less important and worthy (3S).
- The subject and the content of course are not in harmony.
- The priority ought to be given to information that might help us learn our own education system. The attempt to apply the same system as in EU is incorrect if we don't have any information about our own education system.

Participants perceiving the content as moderately adequate:

- The content was generally good, so was useful. It could even have been developed more. However, it

should have been handled together with probable deficiencies which might arise in practice (2S).

- There may be trainees who need this content but it is not suitable for the levels of existing participants.
- The content of the program was suitable but its duration was too long. One day would have been adequate instead of five days (3S).
- The content could have been more suitable if it had been supported with related materials and methods.

Participants perceiving the content as adequate:

- The information given and its content made a positive contribution to the participants. Standardization related to performance measurement and use of common criteria in evaluation are important subjects (2S).
- We are familiar with the content as it is within our specialization. However, the subject of evaluation suitable for modular programming was useful. The purpose and content of the course coincided (2S).
- Practical application of certain methods related to evaluation was beneficial.

g to the perceptions by teachers and administrators in general high schools shows a significant difference depending on their sexes. The results of t-test analysis applied in relation to the perceptions by teachers and administrators of the need for organizational change according to their sexes are shown in Table 2.

As seen in Table 2, when the means of the points the female and male subjects got in relation to the levels of their perception of the need for organizational change are examined, we see that females perceive the need for organizational change at 'moderate' level, while male teachers perceive it at 'little' level. However, as a result of the t-test which was applied, the difference $p < 0.05$ between them was not found to be significant as p value was 0.31.

Finding related with 3rd sub-problem:

- We asked the participants for their opinions about the contribution provided by the course. Their answers were analysed and conclusions drawn are shown in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1 & 5 of the participants (25%) think that the course didn't make any contribution. 12 of them (60%) think its contribution was moderate and 3 of them (15%) consider it was sufficient.

Participants perceiving the contribution as inadequate:

- It made no contribution. It focused on only the topics already known (2 S).
- The course made it possible to get to know academicians from different universities and to exchange ideas. It helped me to get to know a wider academic community. In this way it helped enhance inter-faculty dialogue. Otherwise it had no contribution and it didn't meet our expectations (3S).

Participants perceiving the contribution as moderately adequate:

- It contributed in the general sense. The importance of evaluation standards was understood. However, the topics analysed in the course were all already known by the participants. We already have problems arising from excessive number of students, incapacity of physical area and equipment. These are the issues which should have been dwelled upon (3S).
- What we grasped in this course was the fact that we should take necessary measures in terms of measuring criteria preparation, correct measurement of the findings and measurement of the students in every aspect to compensate their deficiencies. The methods and techniques used in the course were product development oriented so they were useful. The lecturer played an important role in this (3S).
- During the evaluation of modular program developed, a contribution was provided in terms of preparation of sample standard forms. The diversity of the presented examples was beneficial. Along with his exchange of ideas with the participants, the fact that the lecturer was a good model, contributed. Thus we learnt about new views and approaches (4S).
- The main contribution was to meet academicians from various universities and to exchange ideas with them and be informed about their activities.
- We discovered the importance of the issues which are forgotten, overlooked or not practiced.

Participants perceiving contribution as adequate:

- The participant should have been selected in advance, but the content and materials were in accordance with the goal which made a contribution to education. Knowledge and experiences related to the system in the EU, especially in England were shared. Therefore, it contributed in terms of

adaptation with the EU and of the process of joining it.

- This course was useful and entertaining. The engineers have restricted knowledge about measurement and evaluation, so they benefited from the course. Although the course was theory-based, it was useful in terms of evaluation of skills (2S).

Findings related with 4th sub-problem: The participants were asked questions about the proficiency of the academician who was responsible for the course and who put it into practice. Their answers were analysed and the conclusions drawn are shown in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, 3 of the participants (15%) found him in proficiency, 4 of them (20%) found his proficiency moderate and 12 of them (60%) thought he was proficient.

Participants perceiving the proficiency of the lecturer as inadequate:

- The academician was totally non-proficient. Therefore, the course wasted the participants' time.
- He had great difficulty in working with participants coming from different fields. Therefore he had to use general expressions. He had difficulty in communicating because his field and those of the participants did not coincide. He didn't take the seminar quite seriously.
- Since he had no command of the topics and the problems, he only talked about what he already knew. The examples he gave were limited and insufficient.

Participants perceiving the proficiency of the lecturer as moderately adequate:

- The lecturer academician was proficient in general (4S).
- His knowledge about the fields of the participants and their levels was not sufficient. Therefore, the information and especially the examples he gave were not comprehended completely by participants from different fields. A lecturer academician who knew the fields of the participants better could have been appointed (2S).

Participants perceiving the proficiency of the lecturer as adequate:

- The lecturer academician knows his field well. He made a good presentation. He came to his classes well prepared he obeyed the communication rules. He

was successful to a great extent. He had planned and programmed the course. He presented the topics which seemed difficult to understand easily using suitable method and techniques. He was proficient in every aspect. We got pleasure from the course and were satisfied with it (6S).

- His only fault was the fact that he didn't know the participants' level.
- He used overhead projector by which he displayed small characters. He could have used power-point instead (2S).

Findings related with 5th sub-problem: The interpreter who translated the speakers' speeches into Turkish from English works for a translation firm. She stated that she could have been more successful if she had been given the written texts a week before the course started. The participants were asked questions about the proficiency of the interpreter. Their answers were analysed and the conclusions drawn are shown in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, the interpreter who translated the speeches of the academician responsible for the presentation of the course into Turkish was considered proficient by all of the participants. However, she made insignificant mistakes in the translation of technical terms, which didn't influence the comprehension of the topics generally. Any interpreter who translates technical terms in the CBEM field and who is unfamiliar with the field may make such mistakes. These should be considered natural.

Findings related with 6th sub-problem: As the 6th step of the research, we asked the participants for their opinions about the organization of the course. We, then, analysed their answers and showed the conclusions drawn in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, in this matter, 7 of the participants (35%) found the organization inadequate, 6 of them (30%) found it moderately adequate and 7 of them (35%) thought it was adequate.

Participants perceiving the organization as inadequate:

- The place where the seminar activities were held and accommodation services were insufficient. Those who came from cities other than Ankara had financial loss. The hotel was average quality and its service was also bad. Its place was also far from the training centre (2S).
- Timing management during the organization was also inadequate. During the accommodation it was

difficult to find hot water, drinkable water and hygienic conditions. Problems with air conditioning (heating, ventilation) of the training room influenced the motivation negatively. In the place where the course activities took place and in the hotel, trainee staff worked, which decreased the quality of service. Technical facilities especially internet was not provided (2S).

- An unsuitable place had been chosen for the course. The places of previous courses were more suitable. The organizers did not care enough for the needs of the participants. The participants were not given badges at the beginning or certificates at the end of the seminar (2S).

Participants perceiving the organization as moderately adequate:

- The organization can be accepted as relatively sufficient. The meeting room was not ventilated and a more convenient location could be chosen (2S).
- There were shortcomings in meeting the needs of the participants. A more equipped location with better service could be chosen (3S).
- The programs have long periods. Similar programs will follow. Hence such programs ought to be realized with a more serious organization.

Participants perceiving the organization as adequate:

- The organization was quite successful. Everything that is required for such an organization was fulfilled during the course. The participants made use of all the facilities (7S).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

85% of those who participated in the INSET stated that the level at which the course reached its goal is moderately adequate or adequate. Therefore, it can be claimed that the course has reached its goal. Those who think so, stated that the seminar surfaced the inadequate parts of education system in Turkey especially in terms of its evaluation dimension. However, those who think the course failed to reach its goal, stated that the course was realized without a strict plan and program, that its goal was not clear, that there was no continuity towards its goal and lastly, they stated that which scientific gap the course was going to fill was not defined. According to the findings of Aydogan [26], INSET activities do not meet the expectations of the participants. According to the

findings of Hamdan [28] also, the participants are not asked for their opinions about their training needs.

We can say that the participants tend to consider the content of the course as inadequate. They stated that the course was held before the needs of the participants were determined and there were no materials related with the content. They also said the content didn't meet the expectations and it was problematic to put the education models in the EU into practice in Turkey. Madden, gathered similar results in his research. However, those who consider the content of the course as sufficient think that common criteria should be used in the evaluation approach in the education program and importance of this fact should be noticed. There were also participants who thought that the goal and content of the course coincide. According to the findings we can say that the content of the seminar program is not in accordance with the expectations of the participant. This situation may have resulted from the fact that the INSET needs of the participants had not been determined.

We can say that a general agreement occurred on the fact that the contribution of the course to the participants was at "moderately adequate level". It was emphasized that the topics which are overlooked or aren't put into practice in education are in fact important. It was stated that evaluation criteria should be determined and necessary measures should be taken to compensate the deficiencies of the students after a thorough evaluation and measurement. The content was found useful in this respect. It was expressed that meeting academicians from various universities and exchanging ideas with them was a very different contribution than the course content. There were also those who considered the content of the course to be below expectations and that it did not make enough contribution and that in this respect the course content is inadequate. Madden [29], concluded that a partly acquired contribution was not used in real professional life. However, Targen's findings show the opposite. Teachers put what they learn in INSET into practice in their professional life. As for Aydogan [27], he found out that there is no standard in the application of the materials they use. According to Gravani and John [30], the participants are eager to participate in the planning and designing process of INSET. In a research conducted regarding teachers in Turkey, it was found by Özer [31], that although most of the teachers stated they needed Professional development, only a small number of teachers attended INSET programs willingly. As a result of the findings and observations in this study, the course didn't provide the required contribution to the participants due to the fact that a suitable place wasn't

found to hold the course in and there weren't enough materials.

Participants generally think that the lecturer academician who is responsible for the course was proficient. Those who consider him proficient stated the following;

- He knows his field well,
- He made a good presentation,
- He made preparation before the class,
- He was organised,
- He used suitable learning and teaching techniques,
- He had good communication skills.

On the other hand, some participants stated that;

- He had difficulty in working with participants from different fields,
- His and the participants' fields did not coincide.
- He couldn't give sufficient and enough number of examples,
He didn't know about the levels of the participants,
- He preferred over-head projector to power-point during presentations.

The fact that the participants are from different faculties, departments and titles may have made it difficult to find a common terminology. According to the findings of Hamdan [28], more than half of the participants found the trainers proficient in their fields.

All the participants stated that they considered the interpreter who translated the lecturer's speeches into Turkish, adequate. However, there were some missing points in the translation of certain technical terms, but these didn't prevent comprehension. The interpreter stated that he could have been more successful if she had been given the texts a week earlier.

We can say that participants found the organization of the course moderately sufficient. Some of them mentioned about problems in accommodation, such as hot water, hygiene, heating and air-conditioning. They said they weren't given badges and certificates. However some other participants think that facilities were made available to the participants and everything necessary for a course organization was done, so the course was successful. The participants from Ankara weren't aware of the problems in the hotel, which was a vocational high school of tourism. Therefore the staff was trainee students who were not real professionals. The residence was not a real hotel which would be more suitable for the participants.

Proposals: In the frame of the findings we gathered related with this research, we can make the following proposals;

1. The INSET should be planned well, before it is put into practice. The purpose, the name, the kind, the duration, the method, the participant numbers of the course, the accommodation and presentation places should be determined carefully in advance. Printed materials and CD related to the course should be given to the participants and interpreter before the course starts.
2. The professional backgrounds or level of the participants, their INSET needs should be determined in advance, the lecturers and the interpreters should be informed about the personal and professional attributes of the participants.
3. The training centre where the course will be held should be equipped with the necessary materials in accordance with the views of the lecturers, organizers and the participants. In the building where accommodation is provided, there should be facilities to meet all the needs of the participants. Especially, there should be an internet service.
4. The organizers of the course should be together with the lecturers and the participants all the time during the course. They should solve the problems arising during the course. The funds for travel and incidental expenses reserved for the participants should be given them at the end of the course.
5. An evaluation should be made at the end of the course and participants should be awarded with certification which will provide them opportunities of promotion, wage increase and higher status. Opportunities should be provided for the participants to disseminate what they have learnt in the course.

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