



Identifying Professional Development Practices and Needs of The English Language Teachers Teaching at Anatolian High Schools in The County of Antakya, Turkey

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Teacher professional development is to be continuous to ensure its sustainability, indicating the need for unceasing scaffolding provided to the teacher for their professional learning starting with the pre-service teacher education program and going on till their retirement. In-service teacher professional development programs/activities could lead to anticipated outcomes, improved teaching and learning performance, providing they are structured around the real professional development needs of the teacher rather than the ones determined by professional development units of ministries of education or school administration. That is to say, bottom-up professional development activities are more likely to generate desired impacts than top-down ones. In light of this premise, this explanatory sequential mixed methods study aims to identify the professional development needs of in-service English teachers teaching at Anatolian High Schools in the county of Antakya, Turkey. In addition, this study reports on the English teachers' professional development practices. With these purposes in mind, a web survey was distributed to the teachers and the data it yielded were analysed using descriptive statistics. To gain deeper insights into the teachers' professional development practices and needs, a semi-structured telephone interview was conducted and the data provided by it was subjected to inductive content analysis. The findings demonstrated that the teachers had been taking a number of steps for their professional development and were mostly in need of taking part in professional development activities that aimed at improving their skills of teaching

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and assessing speaking. Additionally, the findings pointed to the high value the teachers attached to bottom-up professional development activities.

Introduction

Teaching could be defined as a profession requiring perpetual refinement in instructional practices to keep up with the latest changes in teaching methods and techniques and to adjust teaching practices to students with distinct features irrespective of the subject the teacher teaches. Given the requirement for progressive improvement in teachers' teaching skills, teacher professional development appears to occupy a prominent place in the teaching profession. Teachers could undertake self-directed initiatives for their professional development such as following the recent publications on the areas they would like to improve their teaching skills and engaging in joint learning through collaborating and cooperating with their colleagues. In addition, to enhance teacher professional development, professional development activities (PDAs), in the planning and evaluation of which the teacher performs a leading role, can be carried out, which will be referred to as bottom-up PDAs throughout this research. PDAs may also be arranged locally or nation-wide by the provincial directorate and/or ministry of national education to cater for practicing teachers' professional development needs, which will be referred to as top-down PDAs in this study.

Regardless of the provider/s of PDAs, they are to be planned in light of teachers' real professional development needs so that they can be a medium for achieving set goals. Teachers' real professional development needs could be figured out via observing their classroom practices, taking account of their statements on their own professional development needs and global paradigm changes in how teaching is delivered just like the case of the paramount shift in delivery modes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000b), human beings tend to become self-directed providing their needs for competence, connection and autonomy are met. For this reason, taking into consideration the point that no other source can be as realistic as teachers themselves in determining their professional development needs, this study set out to consult practicing English teachers at Anatolian High Schools in the county of Antakya, Turkey, which will underlie the PDAs to be planned and conducted for them. Furthermore, lack of research on investigating professional development practices of practicing high school English teachers both in the context of the present research and in other contexts was another motive the researchers were inspired by to carry out this study. The findings that will be presented in this research could prompt providers of PDAs to base them upon teachers' real professional development needs.

Literature review

Teacher professional development

Teacher professional development entails teacher learning, which, according to Adler (2000, p. 37), "is usefully understood as a process of increasing participation in the practice of teaching, and through this participation, a process of becoming knowledgeable in and about teaching". Teacher professional development is alleged to be a precursor of increased student learning, (Margolis, Durbin & Doring, 2017) school improvement and teacher quality (Opfer & Pedder, 2011d). Therefore, assiduous attention is devoted to enhancing the effectiveness of PDAs. Effective teacher professional development is stipulated by Darling-Hammond (1997) as a construct that is continuous, concerned with the problems relating to teaching practice,



serves as a medium for supplying resources and pertains to student learning. Similarly, Richards and Farrell (2005) maintain that teacher education is “a process that takes place over time rather than an event that starts and ends with formal training or graduate education” (p. 3). Seeing the views of Darling-Hammond (1997) and Richards and Farrell (2005), it can be argued that teacher professional development does not take place naturally (Antoniou, Kyriakides & Creemers, 2015); conversely, it necessitates concerted attempts to foster it. In line with that, numerous techniques have been implemented to cultivate teacher professional development such as inter-organizational collaboration (Dreyer, 2015; Frost, Akmal & Kingrey, 2010; Harper & Nicolson, 2013).

Practitioner research supported by a university research team was found to be effective at teacher professional development, which positively impacted pupil performance (Cheng & Li, 2020). Beginning and experienced teachers were paired in Coenders and Verhoef's (2019) study to explore the influence of going through a lesson study cycle on their professional learning. In the study, beginning and experienced teachers negotiated in pairs over new pedagogies to apply them in the classroom by producing a lesson plan, teaching a lesson in light of the plan and reflecting on it considering student performance. The results indicated that engaging in a lesson study cycle was efficacious at developing both beginning and experienced teachers' pedagogical content knowledge. Communities of practice are viewed by Crafton and Kaiser (2011) to be an instrument stimulating teacher learning. Teachers can collaborate on an issue to enhance each other's professional development rather than attending to PDAs conducted by a trainer transmitting knowledge (e.g., Stanley, 2011; Svendsen, 2016). More responsibility needs to be allocated to teachers for making them take steps towards their own professional development seeing the possibility of fostering their professional development more by doing so. For example, Huang (2016) pointed to the shift in teacher professional development in Taiwan from state-organized and -run professional development programs to the programs in which teachers, schools and local authorities shouldered more responsibility.

Teacher professional development is attested by Borko (2004) to consist of three phases. In phase 1, researchers and professional developers from different disciplines adapt an available professional development program to a new subject area. Phase 2 is where materials and resources are adjusted to the local needs of the teachers taking part in PDAs. Phase 3 is the stage in which changes in teachers' subject matter knowledge and instructional practices occur. Exploring the effect of external and internal accountability goals on the focus and form of teacher professional development in their research, Fairman, Smith, Pullen and Lebel (2020) reported the need for well-planned teacher PDAs serving for the particular needs of participating teachers. Teacher attendance to PDAs may be limited. According to Besser, Leiss and Blum (2020), teachers may not join PDAs as they might think:

- The content of the PDA is not required for quality teaching,
- The teacher may not find the content of PDA interesting, and
- The teacher may be already knowledgeable about the content of PDA.

In addition to the studies into the professional development programs delivered face-to-face, the related literature is rich in the ones conducted in online settings. For instance, highlighting the need for teacher professional development at higher education and limitations on teacher active participation in traditional face-to-face teacher PDAs, Cho and Rathbun (2013) pointed out teacher-centered online teacher professional development programs supported university teachers in actively participating in the programs and transferring the knowledge they gained in the program to their own contexts. Online collaborative learning that took place on an online

platform called Integrated Learning Design Environment enabled the participating teachers to support each other via sharing knowledge and expertise in Marín, Asensio-Pérez, Villagrá-Sobrino, Hernández-Leo and García-Sastre's (2018) research. Engaging in 'content-free demand-driven model of online professional development' was found in Prestridge's (2017) study to be an experience that prompted teachers to act in accord with their needs and workplace contexts. Online learning communities were also demonstrated by Sari (2012) to enable collaborative and reflective professional learning freeing the participants of the restrictions of time and space. The changes in the instructional practices of teachers of language minority and immigrant learners stemming from running a hybrid professional development program were scrutinized in Yeol Choi and Morrison's (2014) study. The classroom and online discussions revealed the improvement in teachers' practices of addressing the needs of language minority and immigrant students. In addition, the study by Hauge and Norenes (2009) reported the positive impact of the use of videopaper on teacher professional development.

Schools also play a crucial role in teacher professional development. To illustrate, Opfer and Pedder (2011b) reported the impact of high- and low-performing schools on teacher professional development in England. They noted that the teachers in high-performing schools took part in longer PDAs, requiring more collaboration and being active, than the teachers in low-performing schools. Moreover, schools have a vital part in the sustainability of teacher professional development (Mak & Pun, 2015). Sustainable teacher professional development could be made possible so long as the factors peculiar to each context are taken into account (Zehetmeier, Andreitz, Erlacher & Rauch, 2015). Sustainability in teacher professional development cannot be considered to be disconnected from evaluations of PDAs. Putting forward the significance of the focus on accurate evaluations of teacher professional development initiatives, King (2014) highlighted the requirement for evaluating their effectiveness through putting teacher practices and indicators of the improvement in student learning and school under scrutiny.

Language teacher professional development

PDAs can help language teachers improve their instructional practices. According to Tran (2014), language teachers attending to PDAs could feel more efficacious than the teachers not attending to them. The English teachers participating in Babinski, Amendum, Knotek, Sa'nchez and Malone's (2017) research improved their abilities to apply high-impact instructional strategies, bringing about development in young English learners' literacy and language skills. Investigating the influence of curriculum approach EFL teachers adopt on their professional development, Shawer (2010) reported that the teachers pursuing the classroom-level curriculum development approach, which is the creation of a curriculum at the classroom level, developed themselves professionally while the professional development of the teachers adopting curriculum transmission approach was minimal.

Teacher professional development might lead to changes in language teachers' attitudes to constructs related to language teaching. To illustrate, the research done by Prabjandee (2020) and aiming to explore the effect of taking part in global Englishes teacher professional development on teachers' attitudes towards Global Englishes language teaching. The findings revealed that the participating teachers held positive perceptions regarding the PDAs that led to minor changes in their perceptions of global Englishes language teaching. The research conducted by Uztoşun (2018) to investigate the perceptions of in-service Turkish teachers of English in regard to professional development programs yielded that while the teachers deemed the professional development programs effective at promoting their professional development,



they raised six issues in relation to them: “the limited number of programs on offer, the lack of qualified trainers, insufficient practical focus, poor lecturing, inconvenient time and place, and the perfunctory nature of the in-service teacher education programs” (p. 557). Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2006) is another researcher investigating the perceptions of Turkish teachers of English with regard to the PDAs they had participated in. The participants stated that not grounding the PDAs on their needs by conducting needs analysis and offering the same PDAs to teachers teaching at different types of high schools were amidst the factors decreasing their effectiveness. In addition, Uysal (2012) examined Turkish primary school language teachers’ viewpoints on the PDAs they had taken part. Participants’ statements pointed to the necessity of establishing a link between purposes of PDAs and their fundamental needs as teachers. They also expressed their desire for joining PDAs which could aid them in enhancing their repertoire of the materials they could use in the classroom.

The implementation of collaborative action research was found to promote the professional development of the EFL teachers teaching at a secondary school in Argentina in the research undertaken by Banegas, Pavese, Velázquez and Vélez, (2013). The findings also demonstrated that the increase in the level of the teacher motivation and autonomy positively impinged upon the level of student motivation and development in their language skills. Experiential approach to professional development, comprised of demonstration, observation, collaboration, fieldwork and reflection, was reported in Burke’s (2013) research to cultivate Spanish teachers’ teaching skills as it encouraged the construction of a collaborative community. Interaction among the participants in professional development programs could encourage them to surface their tacit knowledge (Liu, 2019). Professional development of two English teachers in Syria and Pakistan was explored in Dayoub and Bashiruddin’s (2012) study, the results of which showed that the teachers were self-regulated and benefitted from numerous teaching experiences in the field, in-school opportunities and the support they got from home. The investigation carried out by Eun and Boynton (2007) with an eye to exploring the impact of professional development programs on English-as-a-second-language teachers’ classroom practices showed that teacher efficacy and organizational support were the factors affecting the impact of PDAs. The driving forces behind language teachers’ choices about their professional development were scrutinized by Hiver (2013) who reported that overcoming the perceived deficiencies of the self and developing it were the two stimuli for choices the teacher made as to their professional development.

Professional development needs of English teachers in Malaysia were examined in Kabilan and Veratharaju’s (2013) study. The findings demonstrated the teachers expected to receive training planned in accordance with student needs and their own professional development needs. The researchers also recommended the teachers to take more responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating PDAs. Language teachers’ active involvement in their own professional learning could optimize the benefit they could drive from professional development programs (e.g., Kondo, 2020).

Literature review indicates the need for scrutinizing professional development needs of in-service English language teachers, which will inform and determine the content of PDAs. This research could prompt policy makers and school administrators to design PDAs seeing in-service English teachers’ opinions as to their professional development needs and what they think about top-down and bottom-up PDAs. Taking these into consideration, this research sets out to look for answers to the following research questions:

- (1) What PDAs do the in-service Anatolian high school English teachers in the county of Antakya engage in for their professional development?
- (2) What do the in-service Anatolian high school English teachers in the county of Antakya think about the influence of PDAs they took part?
- (3) In what areas do the in-service Anatolian high school English teachers in the county of Antakya want to receive training?
- (4) What do the in-service Anatolian high school teachers in the county of Antakya think about the effect of top-down and bottom-up PDAs on their professional development?

Methodology

This study was designed as an explanatory sequential mixed methods study with an eye to exploring in-service Anatolian high school English teachers' professional development practices and what PDAs they wanted to engage in to strengthen their teaching skills by first collecting the quantitative data and then the qualitative data. The research design was determined in light of what is stated by Creswell (2012) in relation to explanatory sequential mixed methods design. According to him, explanatory sequential mixed methods research starts with gathering quantitative data and builds on it through gathering qualitative data. The researchers contemplated that grounding interview questions, yielding the qualitative data, upon the findings obtained from the quantitative data could enable obtaining a clearer picture of the participants' viewpoints on their professional development needs and on the influences of the PDAs they had engaged till the start of the present study on their professional development.

The context and the participants

The study participants were 28 in-service English teachers teaching at Anatolian high schools in the county of Antakya in Turkey. In view of the different professional development needs teachers may have, residing in the changes in contextual factors, the same PDAs may not be proper to teachers of primary, secondary and upper secondary schools. Not overlooking the significance of identifying professional development needs of primary and secondary school English teachers, the researchers aimed at designating professional development needs of teachers of English teaching at state-run Anatolian High schools in the county of Antakya. In Turkey, there are three compulsory levels of education prior to higher education: primary, secondary and upper secondary education, each of which lasts for four years. Anatolian high schools are one of a range of high schools including science high schools, social sciences high schools and Anatolian high schools preparing students for higher education according to their interests, abilities and the areas in which they are successful (Ministry of National Education, 2020). Since the number of English teachers teaching at Anatolian high schools is higher than that in other types of high schools in the context of the present study, this research set out to unearth professional development needs of the teachers teaching at Anatolian high schools. The quantitative data collection instrument, the web survey, was sent to a total of 74 English teachers, selected using purposive sampling. To cater for the research objectives, only the Anatolian high school English teachers teaching in the county of Antakya were invited to respond to the web survey. 28 participants responded to it, showing that the response rate was 37.83%. Table 1 below displays demographic information about the participants.



Table 1 Demographic Information on the Participants

Option	f	%
Age		
20-30	4	14.29
31-40	18	64.29
41-50	6	21.43
Gender		
Female	21	75.00
Male	7	25.00
Teaching Experience		
0-5 years	4	14.29
6-10 years	7	25.00
11-15 years	11	39.29
16-20 years	6	21.43
Experience in School		
0-10 years	24	85.71
10-20 years	3	10.71
20-30 years	1	3.57
Education Degree		
BA	27	96.43
MA	1	3.57
Weekly Teaching Workload		
10-15 hours	1	3.57
15-20 hours	1	3.57
20-25 hours	14	50.00
25-30 hours	8	28.57
30-35 hours	2	7.14
35-40 hours	1	3.57
40+ hours	1	3.57
Enrolled at a Degree		
No	26	92.86
Yes	2	7.14

As seen in Table 1, a total of 28 English teachers (female $n = 21$; male $n = 7$) participated in the study. Most of the participants were in the age-range 31-40 ($n = 18$; 64.29%) while the ages of six participants were in the age range 41-50 ($n = 6$; 21.43%) and those of the remaining four participants were in the age range 20-30 ($n = 4$; 14.29%). Eleven participants' teaching experience was in the range 11-15 years, that of seven participants was in the range 6-10 years, the teaching experience of six participants was in the range 16-20 years and that of the four participants was 0-5 years. The majority of the participants, 24 teachers, had been teaching at the same Anatolian high school for 0-10 years when this study was undertaken. Except one participant holding an MA degree, the other 27 participants held a BA degree when this research was conducted, and two participants were enrolled at a Master's degree program. Table 1 also demonstrates that half of the participants taught 20-25 lessons per week.

Data collection tools and analysis

Web Survey

The survey developed by Opfer and Pedder (2010) was used to collect the quantitative data. The survey consists of four parts. The first part (added by the researchers) serves for collecting demographic information about the participants. The second part, serving for providing information on the participants' prior experiences of PDAs, includes three subsections, the first of which is on educational types of activities teachers have participated in the last 12 months (e.g., mentoring) and the second of which is on learning activities they have taken part in the last 12 months (e.g., listened to a lecture or presentation). In the first two sub-

sections, teachers should opt for either “yes” or “no” in each item. The last sub-section, three-point Likert scale (1= disagree, 2 = neutral and 3 = agree), provided data on the participants’ perceptions of the impact of the PDAs they have joined in the last 12 months (e.g., improved pupil performance/outcomes). The third section in the survey presented data on the participants’ needs for improving their teaching skills (e.g., teaching and assessing speaking), added to the survey by the researchers. The fourth part in the survey enabled finding out teachers’ professional development practices. The data yielded by the survey, conducted in English, were analysed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies and percentages will be presented for the items in the survey.

Semi-structured telephone interviews

Following the survey administration, to gain deeper insights into teachers’ views about the effect of the PDAs they had taken part in the last 12 months and their perceptions with respect to their professional development needs, and top-down and bottom-up PDAs, a semi-structured telephone interview was conducted with randomly selected six English teachers who accepted to attend to the interview. The interview questions were prepared in light of the research questions and the participants’ responses to the items in the survey. The interview questions are as follows:

- (1) Tell me what you think about the effect of the PDAs you have attended in the last 12 months on your teaching practices.
- (2) Tell me your ideas about the effect of the PDAs you have compulsorily taken part on meeting your professional development needs.
- (3) Do you need to improve your skill of teaching speaking? What would you say about the teachers’ common need for developing their skills of teaching speaking?
- (4) PDAs planned according to the professional development needs the in-service English teachers have verbalized will be conducted. Tell me what you think about the impact of attending to such PDAs on your professional development.

The interviews, each lasting for 20-25 minutes, was conducted in English and the date and time of the interviews were determined in accord with the availability of the interviewees. An interview protocol (Creswell, 2012) was kept for each interviewee to take notes of their responses. The collected interview data were analyzed performing inductive content analysis by the two researchers, one of whom was also the interviewer. The analysis was performed following the steps proposed by Creswell (2012). The content analysis commenced by the coders’ individual reading of one randomly selected interview protocol and negotiating over the codes existing in the interviewee’s responses. Following that, coding started. After the completion of coding, the coders iteratively read the interviewees’ responses with a view to detecting all the codes in the data. Then, the codes were read for a number of times to merge overlapping ones, which enabled avoiding redundancy. Afterwards, the themes were produced from the codes, marking the end of the coding process. Member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was used to make sure the findings based on the interview data were in line with what the interviewees had in their minds about the interview questions. The findings were emailed to the interviewees and the responses received from them showed that the findings aligned what they had in minds about the interview questions.

Findings

The in-service teachers' professional development practices

The data obtained from the fourth section in the survey yielded the results with regard to what practices the in-service English teachers engaged in for their professional development. Table 2 below demonstrates the in-service English teachers' professional development practices.

Table 2 Teachers' Professional Development Practices

Item		M	SD
1. I modify my practice in the light of evidence from self-evaluations of my classroom practice.	3.92	.66	
2. I experiment with my practice as a conscious strategy for improving classroom teaching and learning.	4.07	.71	
3. I consult pupils about how they learn most effectively.	3.89	.14	
4. I reflect on my practice as a way of identifying professional learning needs	3.82	.15	
5. I use the web as one source of useful ideas for improving my practice.	4.21	.73	
6. I draw on good practice from other schools as a means to further my own professional development.	3.25	.16	
7. I modify my practice in the light of feedback about classroom practice from managers or other colleagues	3.35	.78	
8. I read research reports as one source of useful ideas for improving my practice.	3.39	.99	
9. I relate what works in my own practice to research findings	3.42	1.10	
10. I modify my practice in light of published research evidence	3.00	1.01	
11. I carry out joint research/ evaluation with one or more colleagues as a way of improving my practice.	3.07	1.05	
12. I engage in reflective discussions of working practices with one or more colleagues	3.46	.99	
13. I engage in collaborative teaching and planning as a way of improving practice.	3.42	.87	

Table 3 illustrates that the in-service English teachers almost often tailored their teaching by self-evaluating their teaching practices ($M = 3.92$; $SD = .66$). The mean value of the second item ($M = 4.07$; $SD = .71$) indicates that the participants often experimented with their teaching practices consciously to develop their classroom practices. The in-service English teachers almost often consulted students to learn about how they learn effectively ($M = .389$; $SD = .14$). The participants almost often reflected on their teaching practices to identify their professional development needs ($M = 3.82$; $SD = .15$). The participants often resorted to the web to search for worthwhile ideas in an attempt to develop their classroom practices ($M = 4.21$; $SD = .73$). The mean value in that item shows that using web was the most frequently adopted professional development practice amidst the participants. The in-service English teachers sometimes drew on good practices from other schools to enhance their professional development ($M = 3.25$; $SD = .16$). Furthermore, the participants sometimes fine-tuned their instructional practices in view of the feedback provided by principals and other colleagues ($M = 3.35$; $SD = .78$).

Table 3 also demonstrates that the in-service English teachers sometimes read research reports to develop their teaching practices ($M = 3.39$; $SD = .99$). The participants sometimes related what worked in their practice to research findings ($M = 3.42$; $SD = 1.10$). The teachers also sometimes changed their teaching practices in view of published research evidence ($M = 3.00$; $SD = 1.01$). The mean value of item 11 ($M = 3.07$; $SD = 1.05$) indicates that the participants conducted joint research with one or more colleagues to improve their teaching practices. The teachers sometimes reflected on working practices with one or more colleagues ($M = 3.46$; $SD = .99$). Additionally, the participants sometimes engaged in collaborative teaching and learning in an effort to improve practice ($M = 3.42$; $SD = .87$).

The PDAs the participants have taken part in the last 12 months

In the survey, the first and second sub-sections in the second section yielded data on the PDAs the participants have taken part in the last 12 months. Table 3 shows the findings in relation to the educational types of activities the participants have taken part in the last 12 months.

Table 3 Types of Educational Activities the Teachers Have Taken Part in the Previous 12 Months

Type of educational activity	No		Yes	
	f	%	f	%
In-school workshop or seminar	12	42.86	16	57.14
Non-university accredited courses	27	96.43	1	3.57
University courses	28	100.00		
Out-of-school workshops or seminars	23	82.14	5	17.86
Teacher networks or collaboration	20	71.43	8	28.57
Conferences	21	75.00	7	25.00
Mentoring	26	92.86	2	7.14
Coaching	26	92.86	2	7.14
Lead teaching or observing peers	26	92.86	2	7.14
Committees or task forces	27	96.43	1	3.57
Teacher study groups	20	71.43	8	28.57
Independent study	13	46.43	15	53.57

Table 4 shows that the frequencies and percentages indicating the teachers not having attended to the educational activities are higher than those for the teachers having attended to them. There was no teacher participating in university courses. While only one of the participants took part in non-university accredited courses and committees and task force, two participants took part in mentoring, coaching and leading teaching and observing peers. Table 4 also shows that five participants participated in out-of-school workshops or seminars while seven participants attended to conferences. Eight participants took part in teacher networks and collaboratives and teacher study groups. As seen in Table 4, the majority of the participants ($f = 16; 57.14\%$) attended to an in-school workshop or seminar.

As well as the first sub-section in the second section of the survey, the second sub-section presented the learning activities the participants have taken part in the last 12 months. Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics results of the learning activities they have taken part in the last 12 months.

Table 4 The Learning Activities the Participants Have Taken Part in the Previous 12 Months

Activity	No		Yes	
	f	%	f	%
Listened to a lecture or presentation	13	46.43	15	53.57
Took part in a small group discussion	18	64.29	10	35.71
Collaborated as a colleague with other teachers	19	67.86	9	32.14
Took part in a whole-group discussion	23	82.14	5	17.86
Assessed pupil work	17	60.71	11	39.29
Developed or reviewed materials	20	71.43	8	28.57
Used technology (computers, calculators, whiteboards, etc.)	12	42.86	16	57.14
Reviewed pupil work	19	67.86	9	32.14
Observed a demonstration of a lesson or unit	17	60.71	11	39.29
Practised using pupil materials	24	85.71	4	14.29
Produced a paper, report or plan	19	67.86	9	32.14
Formal post-activity evaluation of the learning	27	96.43	1	3.57
Led a small group discussion	23	82.14	5	17.86
Engaged in extended problem-solving	26	92.86	2	7.14



Completed paper-and-pencil problems or exercises	21	75.00	7	25.00
Gave a lecture or presentation	24	85.71	4	14.29
Led a whole-group discussion	26	92.86	2	7.14
Conducted a demonstration lesson, unit or skill	22	78.57	6	21.43
Assessed fellow participants' knowledge or skills	27	96.43	1	3.57

As demonstrated in Table 5, the number of the in-service English teachers having participated in the learning activities in the last 12 years is lower than that of the teachers having participated in them. Assessing fellow participants' knowledge or skills and formal post activity evaluation of the learning were the learning activities only one participant has taken part in the last 12 months. The learning activity the participants had taken part most is "used technology" (computers, calculators, whiteboards, etc.) ($f = 16$; 57.14%). Following that item, the second most frequently attended learning activity is listening to a lecture or presentation ($f = 15$; 53.57%). Table 5 also depicts that assessing pupil work and observing a demonstration of a lesson or a unit were the two learning activities participated in by almost 40% of the participants ($f = 11$; 39.29%). While ten participants took part in a small group discussion, reviewing pupil work and producing a paper, report or a plan and collaborating as a colleague with other teachers were the three learning activities attended to by 32.14% ($f = 9$) of the participants. Additionally, Table 5 displays that developing and reviewing materials ($f = 8$; 28.57%), completing paper-and-pencil problems or exercises ($f = 7$; 25.00%), conducting a demonstration lesson, unit or skill ($f = 6$; 21.43%), taking part in a whole-group discussion ($f = 5$, 17.86%), leading a small group discussion ($f = 5$, 17.86%), practicing using pupil materials ($f = 4$; 14.29%), giving a lecture or presentation ($f = 4$; 14.29%), engaging in extended problem-solving ($f = 2$; 7.14%) and leading a whole-group discussion ($f = 2$; 7.14%) were the learning activities participated in by fewer participants.

The in-service English Teachers' perceptions with regard to the effect of the PDAs They have taken part in the last 12 months

The third sub-section in section two in the survey was the source of the data on the participants' viewpoints on the impact of the PDAs they have participated in the last 12 months, depicted in Table 5.

Table 5 Teachers' Views about the Impact of PDAs They Have Taken Part in the Previous 12 Months

Impact	Disagree <i>f</i>	Neutral <i>f</i>	Agree <i>f</i>	M	SD
Improved pupil performance/outcomes		8	28.57	20	71.43
Changed pupil learning practices		11	39.29	17	60.71
Changed the climate in my classroom		10	35.71	18	64.29
Changed pupil behaviour	1	3.57	9	32.14	2.60
Improved my knowledge and skills		9	32.14	19	67.86
Prompted me to use new curriculum materials		11	39.29	17	60.71
Made me more aware of teaching and learning issues	1	3.57	12	42.86	2.50
Changed the way I think about teaching and learning	1	3.57	13	46.43	53.57
Changed my beliefs about teaching	5	17.86	13	46.43	10
Caused me to seek further information or training	1	3.57	11	39.29	14
Changed my beliefs about pupil learning	2	7.14	12	42.86	10
Improved school-level practices		15	53.57	13	46.43
Led to a change in school-level organisation or structures	1	3.57	17	60.71	2.32
Led to changes in school policy	5	17.86	17	60.71	6
				21.43	.63

The mean values show that the participants were neutral about all the effects presented in Table 6. However, the teachers were close to agree with the item that the PDAs they participated in

improved pupil performance/outcomes ($M = 2.71; SD = .46$). The mean value of the item “improved my knowledge and skills” ($M = 2.67; SD = .47$) indicates that the teachers agreed that the PDAs they took part enhanced their teaching knowledge and skills. The mean values of the items “changed the climate in the classroom” ($M = 2.64; SD = .48$), “changed pupil behaviour” ($M = 2.60; SD = .56$), “changed pupil learning practices” ($M = 2.60; SD = .49$) mean that most of the in-service teachers agreed that the PDAs they have participated in the last 12 months contributed to student learning. Furthermore, either half or more than half of the participants ($f = 16; M = 2.53; SD = .57$) contended that attending to the PDAs led them to seek more PDAs and information and raised their awareness of teaching and learning issues ($f = 15; M = 2.50; SD = .57$). Table 6 illustrated that half of the participants agreed that the PDAs they participated in changed the ways they thought about teaching and learning ($f = 14; M = 2.46; SD = .10$) and changed their beliefs about pupil learning ($f = 14; M = 2.42; SD = .63$). The number of participants who were neutral about the items “changed my beliefs about teaching” ($f = 13; M = 2.17; SD = .72$), improved school-level practice ($f = 15; M = 2.46; SD = .50$) is higher than that agreeing with them.

The first interview question was posed with a view to gaining much deeper insights into the teachers’ opinions as to the impact of the PDAs they have taken part in the last 12 months on their teaching practices. The responses of the participants led to the development of the theme of *improved teaching practices*. The codes from which the theme was produced are using the Internet to learn about teaching speaking and effective negotiations with colleagues. Four interviewees stated that they used internet to find out techniques they could employ to develop their practices of teaching language skills.

In the last 12 months, I have started to follow two websites on which there are sample lesson plans prepared to teach speaking. Frankly speaking, I need to improve my teaching skills, particularly in teaching speaking. Following the website helped me use communicative language teaching method better. I believe I can teach speaking lessons better now. (Interviewee 2)

I need to improve my skills in giving feedback on my students’ written productions. Website X has improved my skills in giving feedback. Now, I use codes to give feedback on my students’ written productions. They really like the codes and say that they are more aware of their mistakes thanks to codes. (Interviewee 1)

The other code contributing to the development of theme *improved teaching practices* is effective negotiations with colleagues. The expressions of interviewee 3 on how negotiations with colleagues improved their teaching practices epitomize the views of the other interviewees.

I have been negotiating with two English teachers teaching at a different high school over more than two years. We have been sharing which methods we can use to teach vocabulary and language skills. I have learned ways useful for teaching vocabulary. Learning about what my colleagues are doing in the classroom to teach vocabulary has improved my skills in teaching vocabulary.

The second interview question served for obtaining data on the participants’ viewpoints on the effect of the PDAs they compulsorily took part on their professional learning. The content analysis of the data obtained from this interview question will provide insights into the teachers’ views about top-down PDAs. The theme that developed in the content analysis is *perfunctory*.



PDAs. The codes leading to the production of the theme are waste of time, ineffective activities and have-to-join activities.

They are really useless. We are just informed that there will be a training on this or that day and we have no choice but attend it. What will be trained is determined by some authorities and we are supposed to act like students obeying the rules of the teacher. They are nothing more than waste of time. (Interviewee 1)

The in-service English teachers' professional development needs

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics results of the professional development needs of the participants, yielded by the third section in the survey.

Table 6 The Participants' Professional Development Needs

	No need		Low		Moderate		High		Very high		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%		
Teaching and assessing reading	3	10.71	3	10.71	7	25.00	13	46.43	2	7.14	3.28	1.11
Teaching and assessing writing	3	10.71	1	3.57	11	39.29	9	32.14	4	14.29	3.35	1.12
Teaching and assessing listening	3	10.71	2	7.14	9	32.14	10	35.71	4	14.29	3.35	1.16
Teaching and assessing speaking	4	14.29	1	3.57	6	21.43	6	21.43	11	39.29	3.67	1.41
Teaching and assessing grammar	6	21.43	6	21.43	7	25.00	9	32.14			2.67	1.15
Teaching and assessing vocabulary	3	10.71	5	17.86	8	28.57	7	25.00	5	17.86	3.21	1.25
Teaching and assessing pronunciation	4	14.29	6	21.43	5	17.86	5	17.86	8	28.57	3.25	1.45
Project design, implementation and management	2	7.14	1	3.57	11	39.29	9	32.14	5	17.86	3.50	1.07

As shown in Table 7, 11 participants opted for very high for receiving training in teaching and assessing speaking ($f = 11$; $M = 3.67$; $SD = 1.41$) and six participants selected high to indicate their need for developing their skills of teaching and assessing speaking. That means most of the participants were in need of support for improving their skills of teaching and assessing speaking. Eight participants believed that they highly needed to attend to training in teaching and assessing pronunciation ($M = 3.25$; $SD = 1.45$). Table 7 demonstrates that six participants were in need of no help and six participants needed low level of help to develop their skills of teaching and assessing grammar ($M = 2.67$; $SD = 1.15$), meaning that the area in which the participants needed the least help was teaching and assessing grammar.

In light of the finding regarding the teachers' self-reported need for developing their skills of teaching and assessing speaking, it was asked in the interview if the interviewees were among the participants who were in need of support to improve their skills of teaching and assessing speaking. The interviewees stated that they had a desire to attend to PDAs that could help them improve their teaching skills in that area. The interviewees' responses to the question of what they thought about the teachers' common need for receiving training in teaching and assessing speaking produced the theme of *a common need of English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers*. The codes producing the theme are poor pre-service teacher education and poor in-service teacher education.

It is not surprising that the teachers need to join PDAs to develop their skills of teaching and assessing speaking because this need, I guess, is valid for all EFL teachers. I think the major problem is with the pre-service teacher education program. We were not trained in teaching and assessing speaking. We were mainly taught how to teach reading, grammar and vocabulary. (Interviewee 6)

The PDAs I have attended so far are the ones conducted just for the sake of conducting them. Although everyone knows that in EFL teaching, speaking skill is the hardest skill to develop and assess for English teachers, no training has been offered in it. Also, English teachers' speaking skills must be developed as well as those of students. (Interviewee 3).

The last interview question was added to the interview to find out what the participants thought about the probable effects of participating in PDAs planned and conducted according the professional development needs teachers themselves have voiced, that is, bottom-up PDAs. The analysis of the gathered data produced the theme of "*They will be more effective*". The codes from which the theme was drawn were more effective, appealing to real needs and opens the door to effective teaching and learning.

I believe that they will be more effective. For example, attending to training that can help me improve my skills of teaching speaking will be of great benefit to me because I really need such training. If I can teach speaking better, my students' speaking skills will develop as a result of it. (Interviewee 6)

Similar to interviewee 6, interviewee 3 expressed: "I think that they can be really useful because they will meet my real needs."

Discussion

One of the objectives of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study is investigating the in-service English teachers' professional development practices. The findings revealed that using web as a useful source for improving teaching practices, experimenting with classroom practices to develop classroom teaching and learning and fine-tuning classroom practices in light of self-evaluations of classroom practices are the most commonly adopted practices by the participants. The practices the teachers either often or almost often conducted indicated the teachers' predisposition to improve their teaching practices by bringing to the forefront their own classroom practices to detect what they needed to do to promote them. These findings are consistent with the ones in the studies carried out by Uysal (2012) and Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2006) as they also reported the participating teachers' expectations of receiving training that could meet their professional development needs. Such a tendency among the study participants might be regarded to be an indicator of the teachers' willingness to take responsibility for enhancing their own professional learning. The findings also showed that the participants resorted less frequently to published research evidence and to conducting joint research and/or evaluation to improve their teaching practices, which could be interpreted as the teachers' disposition to engage in individual professional learning practices rather than collaborative ones.

The findings as to the types of educational activities the participants have taken part in the last 12 months, offered by the quantitative data, confirm those obtained from the participants' professional development practices in that independent study was the second educational activity the participants selected most. In line with the results yielded by the sub-section on the

types of educational activities the participants attended to, it was demonstrated in the findings that using technology, listening to a lecture or presentation and observing a demonstration of a lesson or a unit are the learning activities the participants have taken part most in the last 12 months, which also shows the prevalence of the individual initiatives of the participants for improving their teaching practices. These findings indicate the encouragement the study participants are in need of to work collaboratively by virtue of which they do not only enhance their own professional learning but also stimulate that of other teachers. Therefore, the PDAs that will be designed for them can promote collaborative work to help them experience how beneficial it can be for their professional learning. The participants' responses to the items on the impact of the PDAs they took part showed that the majority believed that participating in PDAs improved students' learning performance, consistent with the studies undertaken by Margolis, Durbin and Doring (2017), Cheng and Li (2020), Babinski et al. (2017) and Banegas et al. (2013). They also contended that the PDAs improved their teaching knowledge and skills, which parallels the results in the research carried out by Burke (2013).

The findings obtained from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data on the participants' professional development needs pointed to their need for developing their skills of teaching and assessment speaking, which could make a better sense in EFL settings as was stated in the interviews. The participants in the interview emphasized the insufficiency of the pre- and in-service English teacher education program to prepare English teachers for the teaching and assessment of speaking skill. Particular emphasis can be laid upon the teaching and assessment of speaking skill in pre- and in-service teacher education. Additionally, the participants' views about the pre-and in-service teacher education program indicate the requirement for reshaping the pre-service English teacher education program and determining the content of in-service PDAs according to English teachers' real needs.

The participants' viewpoints on top-down PDAs, which they voiced in the interview, revealed that they found such PDAs useless and attended to them as they had to join them. They reckoned bottom-up PDAs would be more effective in developing their teaching practices as they would be in agreement with their professional development needs. The study participants' preference for bottom-up PDAs are in line with the results presented in Kabilan and Veratharaju's (2013) study. The participants' perceptions in regard to top-down and bottom-up PDAs imply that top-down PDAs need to be replaced by bottom-up PDAs. It is unsurprising that bottom-up PDAs could meet in-service teachers' professional development needs in that they are grounded on teacher-reported needs. Considering the basic premise of the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000b), it could be attested that teachers could become self-directed in developing themselves professionally provided that they have autonomy in doing that. In the same vein, they can benefit from PDAs as long as they have a say in planning, conducting and evaluating them. In addition, PDAs planned in view of teachers' specific needs could produce better results as to teacher professional learning (Uztosun, 2018). The participants' points of view about bottom-up PDAs indicate the need for a shift in PDAs, which is handing over responsibility to teachers for their professional development, similar to the case of Taiwan (Huang, 2016).

Conclusion

This explanatory sequential mixed methods research is the first one in its context to explore in-service Anatolian high school English teachers' professional development practices and needs, and one of the scarce number of studies carried out with the same purposes in different contexts, marking its significance. The findings demonstrated that the teachers of

English teaching at Anatolian high schools tended to engage more in PDAs conducted individually and needed to be trained more in teaching and assessing speaking skill. Furthermore, the participants valued bottom-up PDAs rather than top-down ones, indicating their readiness and willingness to take steps actively to contribute to their own professional development.

The major limitation of this study is that the findings, since it is a case study, cannot be generalized to other contexts, which brings along the need for further research to be carried out to examine English teachers' professional development needs. Even if future research sample consists of teachers teaching at upper-secondary schools, there could be profound differences in their professional development needs, stemming from a set of factors such as workplace conditions (Fairman et al., 2020; Opfer & Pedder, 2011b), student profile etc. It can be attested that PDAs planned, conducted and evaluated through active teacher participation are highly likely to lead to meeting teachers' professional development needs.

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