A TEACHER STUDY GROUP
AS AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT: ANALYSIS OF INITIAL PROCEDURES IN
GROUP FORMATION, GROUP DYNAMICS, AND
TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF AND ATTITUDES TO THE TSG

A THESIS PRESENTED BY
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TO THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

BILKENT UNIVERSITY
JULY 2002
ABSTRACT

Title: A Teacher Study Group as an Alternative Method of Professional Development: Analysis of Initial Procedures in Group Formation, Group Dynamics, and Teacher Perceptions of and Attitudes to the TSG

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In this study, initial procedures for setting up a Teacher Study Group (TSG) as an alternative form of teacher training in the Foreign Languages Department at Osmangazi University and teachers’ perception about this process were investigated. This TSG was set up in order to meet teachers’ need to explore their teaching and to find solutions to the instructional problems occurring in the department. Due to time limitations, only the initial stages of group formation and teachers’ perceptions were covered in the study.

The study was conducted in the Foreign Languages Department (FLD) at Osmangazi University (OGU). Thirteen EFL teachers in this institution participated in this study.

Data were collected through a pre-questionnaire, meeting recordings, participant reflective journals, researcher’s field notes, and interviews. The pre-questionnaire was designed to provide information about participants’ expectations from the TSG. The rest of the instruments used in the study provided data about the
initial procedures of setting up a TSG at OGU, FLD and perceptions and attitudes of EFL instructors towards participating in the study group.

Qualitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze the data. The data collected by means of data collection instruments were reported through framework tables and charts and then analyzed.

The results of the data analysis revealed that the participants set up a productive TSG as a means of professional development, utilizing a tiered group structure. In the group, there were three tiers, which were determined by participants’ experience in teaching and present status in the FLD at OGU. Participants formed their group and organized the group to benefit from the opportunity to develop themselves professionally by designing their own professional development activity.

In general, participants felt that TSG contributed to their professional and personal development in varying degrees. In terms of professional development, TSG provided participants a platform from which to share experiences, to share ideas and knowledge, and improve collegiality. In terms of personal development, some participants stated that the TSG made them feel more responsible about their profession. The participants decided to maintain the TSG and open it to volunteer participants as a means of unit professional development.

The TSG proved to be an effective method for professional development in the study. Therefore, it may be a useful means of professional development when there are no other professional development opportunities available or when such opportunities are limited due to institutional and personal constraints.
MA THESIS EXAMINATION RESULT FORM

July 8, 2002

The examining committee appointed by the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences for the thesis examination of the MA TEFL student Nadire Arıkan has read the thesis of the student.

The committee has decided that the thesis of the student is satisfactory.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank and express my appreciation to my thesis advisor and director of MA-TEFL Program, Dr. Sarah J. Klinghammer, for her contributions, invaluable guidance, and patience throughout the preparation of my thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. William E. Snyder and Julie M. Aydinli for their assistance and understanding throughout the year.

I would like to express my gratitude to the administrators at Osmangazi University who made it possible for me to come and attend this program.

I am deeply grateful to my colleagues who participated in this study, Aytaç, Berna, Ebru, Füsun, Gözde, İbrahim, Janset, Mesut, Oğuzhan, Özcan, Seda, Ümit Ö., and Ümit, T. I could not have done this study without their help.

I am grateful to Dr. Fredrick Wooley, Nilüfer Eren, Dilek Altındaş, Filiz Karabulut, Anders Bro Rasmussen, Hatice and Hanife Gök, and Mine Akalın for their support and help during the study.

I am deeply grateful to my mother, Gülsüm and my sister, Münevver for their invaluable support during the year.
to HIM,

True beloved,

Always in my mind, in my heart...
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INTRODUCTION

For better or for worse, teachers determine the quality of education.
Christopher M. Clark, 1995

Introduction

This study aims to investigate the initial procedures in setting up a teacher study group at Osmangazi University, Foreign Languages Department and the participants’ expectations and perceptions of the contributions of the group in terms of personal and professional development.

Background of the Study

Language teaching is not a simple task that can become a simple classroom routine since changing times brings many innovations and new requirements into classroom practice. Language teachers must be aware of the developments in the language teaching field over time in order to be able to deal with the challenges they face in language classes. Therefore, teachers need to expand their knowledge and understanding of teaching and develop their teaching skills and techniques in their profession.

The Organization For Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (1998) defines professional development for teachers as “any activity that develops an individual’s skills, knowledge, expertise, and other characteristics of the teacher” (p. 18). When teachers have the opportunity for professional development, they can keep themselves up-to-date in their profession, gain self-awareness in teaching, and improve themselves professionally. The types of professional development referred to are teacher training programs and teacher development.
Teacher-training programs are frequently not as productive as intended. They may have inefficiencies in their content, process, and source of information, thereby failing to meet trainees’ needs, which Fullan (1982) indicated as one of the reasons for failure in INSET programs. In her thesis, Türkay (2000) stated that in Turkey, “‘the expectations of the trainees’ were not completely met in the current programs” (p. 69). Coşkuner’s (2001) research results also indicated that when teachers were asked about teacher training programs, it was found that their opinions “correlate with their commitment at the lowest level” (p. 64). She rationalized that trainees’ expectations may be high or they might have doubts about the ability of their program’s administration to satisfy their expectations.

Clair (1998) also pointed to teacher training program inefficiencies in terms of classroom practice and teacher collaboration and mentioned “a growing consensus that traditional forms of professional development are inadequate for addressing the vision of classroom practice” (p. 465). She added that “one-shot” workshops and ‘prepackaged’ seminars which are non-continuous and predetermined in nature often do not help teachers to work collaboratively and improve, even though these programs may create awareness in teachers and help develop their discrete skills. Clair emphasized that the failure of teacher development to integrate colleagues ignores developing general concepts and understanding of professional development which are listed as,

It [professional development] is authentic-embedded in the reality of school life and participatory-and is designed and directed with teachers’ input. It reflects principles of adult learning and shared decision making. It is focused on individual and organizational learning; coherent and long range: rigorous, sustained, and adequate to facilitate growth, critical reflection, and change; site based; and integrated with an articulated vision for students (p. 466-467).
Clair states that these are the features of effective professional development that were found in a number of models. Further, she claims that the nature of in-service programs is to continue short term skill-based approaches, which is why teachers fail to be integrated with their colleagues.

Pointing to another inefficiency, Clair states that the idea behind ‘prepackaged’ programs is that these programs may not include the trainees’ knowledge and experience and, therefore, may not address the specific problems that these teachers face, since there is no teacher input. Supporting this point, based on a project of developmental training program, Breen, Candlin, Dam, and Gabrielsen (1989) state that a training program should cover trainees’ experiences, problems, and articulation of their perception of classroom process and add that a training program may be most useful when it “grows directly out of the experience, assumptions and perceived problems of trainees” (p. 134). Further, they suggest that that these programs should make use of regular classroom activities and even learners, that is, what teachers do in the classroom. In a survey done to investigate the EFL instructors’ interests in Turkey regarding INSET content, Şentuna (2002) found that both experienced and inexperienced teachers are interested in “having further training on practical areas that they can utilize in their own teaching” (p. 83) and adds,

It is suggested that the INSET courses should provide theoretical basis of the issues as well as the opportunities to incorporate these theories into classroom applications and these theories should have direct relevance to the participants’ teaching situations (Hayes, 1995; Richards, 1990; Wolter, 2000). The findings confirm that the instructors participated in this study are more interested in the issues that are directly relevant to and have implication for their teaching. (p. 83)
Based on her findings, Şentuna (2002) suggests that exploratory and reflective models can be used in designing INSET programs, which may result in successful results because it is necessary to include teachers’ existing knowledge and their own teaching contexts in such programs. She further suggests that a reflective model combining theory and practice “seems to be more applicable for instructors working in state universities” (p. 84) since the findings in her study indicate that “the instructors are interested in having further training on both theoretical and practical issues” (p. 84).

Furthermore, some studies show that teachers face other problems related to time, access, and money when they want to attend teacher-training programs, such as seminars, COTE, and DOTE in Turkey. In Tevs' thesis (1996) which presented the status of the pre- and in-service teacher training programs (TTPs) in 26 English Preparatory Schools in Turkey, it was found that 25% of teachers found “the times teacher training programs [TTPs ] were held were inconvenient; this figure went up to 60% when teachers stated lack of time as the reason for why they were reluctant to participate in TTPs”(p. 106). According to Tevs’s research results, teacher training activities such as workshops, seminars and conferences are more accessible to teachers as forms of professional development.

Forming a Teacher Study Group (TSG) has emerged as an alternative form of teacher development that could be helpful in bringing solutions to the problems teachers face in terms of professional development. Freeman (2001) mentioned that in a TSG, “...the content can be generated through reflection and discussion, or journal writing, or it may be triggered by a reading or other external input” (p. 76).
Various studies show many benefits that a TSG provides in terms of professional development for teachers. Prodromou (1994) indicates that “Forming local teachers groups and holding regular meetings to discuss regular problems” (p. 23) is a way of expanding ELT knowledge and enhancing teacher’s confidence. Reiman and Sprinthall (1998) see teacher study groups as a way of finding solutions to problems occurring in the teaching learning process and to personal concerns. Besides, they add that for teachers, whether experienced or novice, group interaction is helpful as long as it leads teachers to collegiality, learning, and growth.

To conclude, since most teachers in the EFL faculties in Turkey do not have many opportunities to develop themselves professionally by attending teacher training programs, seminars, or workshops due to reasons such as time and access, this study aims to examine the TSG as an alternative method of professional development for teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Teacher Study Groups have emerged as an alternative within teacher training/development programs for professional development. When an institution lacks any kind of teacher development, problems may arise in terms of teaching practice. In discussing reasons for forming teacher study groups, Clair (1998) listed three significant goals for them: (1) “TSGs support independent thinking and alter teachers’ relationship to knowledge ... (and) teachers... acquire meaningful language together”, (2) “... teachers can shape their own professional development experience, take responsibility for their learning and ensure that what they do has a direct impact on their day-to-day teaching situation”, and (3) a TSG can be useful in serving as a “catalyst to ignite the collective power of teachers...” (p. 469). A Teacher Study
Group can make teachers aware of their potential and allow them to take responsibility for their learning, so they can make sense out of what they are doing in the classrooms. Therefore, a TSG can be a challenging and beneficial method of professional development.

At Osmangazi University (OGU), Foreign Languages Department (FLD), there are not any pre-service or in-service teacher training programs. Teachers can attend only seminars or workshops, which are limited in number and held in other universities. Therefore, setting up some kind of teacher development program in the department is necessary in order to meet teachers’ needs to explore their teaching and find solutions to instructional problems which occur in the FLD.

In the FLD at OGU, the instructors are divided into two groups as experienced and inexperienced, which may sometimes cause problems for new teachers in the department. Experienced teachers may be defined as the instructors teaching at the preparatory school, intensive English program, with more than 3 years experience. Inexperienced teachers, new teachers, are hired as research assistants and they are only allowed to teach a maximum of 12 hours a week for at least one year in the regular program, which is different from the preparatory school program. Because their workload is less than the instructors working in the preparatory school, they have extra duties such as being substitute teachers for specific level groups, working in the offices such as testing, video and materials development, or dealing with the office work. Further, since they are not allowed to teach in the preparatory program, they do not attend the level group meetings, which are held weekly to talk about the level specific issues such as the number of questions in the quizzes or the activities to be added or deleted in the course book for
that week. All these factors cause inexperienced teachers to feel themselves a kind of “second grade teachers” (from one of the participant interviews) and feeling that their ideas are not appreciated as much as they deserve. Another aim of this study was to change this perception and build an effective community and platform where teachers, whether experienced or inexperienced, share ideas, knowledge, and experience.

Working with volunteer teachers from FLD, the researcher attempted to form a teacher study group. Since there was no set format available but only guidelines to organize such a group, participants made the decisions about everything related to the group organization, except for the content of the group. They decided how to organize, where and when to meet, what to focus on, and the length of the meetings.

This study examined what procedures members of the TSG followed while forming and maintaining the group along with the participants’ expectations from, perceptions of, and attitudes towards participating in a study group.

Significance of the Problem

The data gained through documenting initial procedures followed in forming a TSG as a means of professional development, whether positive or negative or both, may contribute to the field of professional development in terms of collaborative work. It was also expected that setting up such a study group would enhance the collegiality and spirit of group work among the instructors in the FLD at Osmangazi University.

Since there have not been any studies done on the TSG as a professional development tool in the EFL preparatory school contexts, the results of this study could also contribute to the field and add new information concerning teachers’
perceptions of and attitudes towards participating in the TSG. It could also reveal DOs and DON’Ts for further attempts to form study groups.

Research Questions

In the present study, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the members’ expectations from the TSG at Osmangazi University in terms of personal and professional development?
2. What are the procedures participants follow in forming the TSG at Osmangazi University?
3. What are the central features of group organization of the TSG at Osmangazi University?
4. How do participants feel this experience has contributed to their personal and professional development?

The first research question revealed the teachers’ expectations from the TSG. "Personal development" is the term used in this study to refer to expressing oneself in front of a group of people, self-awareness within the teaching profession, and self-confidence. "Professional development" is the term used to refer to expanding of teacher knowledge and understanding of teaching and development of their teaching skills and techniques. Whether or not participants can form a productive working group was explored in the second and third questions. Group formation and organization include setting up the group, group structure, interaction and involvement, which are explained in detail in chapter 2. The last question was aimed at investigating participants’ perceptions and attitudes about the TSG experience and towards the use of such groups as a means of professional development.
In this chapter, a brief summary of the issues related to professional development and the TSG was given. The statement of the problem, the significance of the problem, and research questions were covered as well. The second chapter is a review of related literature on the TSG and group dynamics. In the third chapter, participants, materials, procedures followed to collect and analyze data are presented. In the fourth chapter, the procedures for data analysis and the findings are presented. In the fifth chapter, the summary of the results with respect to research questions is given and implications and recommendations, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research are stated.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study aimed to explore the initial procedures of setting up a teacher study group (TSG), its group organization, and participant instructors’ expectations from the TSG. The participants’ perceptions of the TSG’s contributions to their personal and professional development and their attitudes towards the TSG participation were also examined.

Professional Development

Teachers enter their profession with skills and knowledge that will expand with experiences gained from inside and outside the classroom during their professional lives. The experience and knowledge teachers gain before and throughout their careers contribute to their professional development, especially when shared with colleagues.

Professional development is the term used to refer to “the sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one’s career from pre-service teacher education to retirement” (Fullan, 1982, p. 326). Teachers may develop themselves, expand their knowledge, and improve their skills by means of professional development activities, which cover both teacher training and teacher development.

Freeman (2001) differentiates between teacher training and teacher development, defining the first as the formal activities for learning how to teach language and the latter as the activities which are “undertaken by experienced teachers, primarily on a voluntary individual basis” (p. 72). Lange (1994) defines
teacher development as a “process of continual intellectual, experiential, and attitudinal growth of teachers” (p. 250) and believes that teachers “evolve in the use, adaptation, and application of their art and craft” (p. 250). These two distinct forms of education, training and development, are different in terms of content, process, and sources of information.

Freeman (2001) states that the content of teacher training programs is determined by people outside an institution, and trainees receive this information by means of different sets of actions. He further explains that postgraduate teacher education and short term teacher training courses are similar in terms of content and presentation of that content. The source of information in teacher training programs does not generally emerge from teachers’ real classroom practices but from outside sources, presented in the form of lectures, readings, and presentations. Wallace (1991) agrees that activities in teacher training programs are determined or presented by trainers. Examples of such teacher training programs are workshops, seminars, and pre- and in-service teacher training activities. According to Freeman, training programs may also include development activities.

Freeman (2001) also discusses the content, process, and sources of information in teacher development. In teacher development activities, teachers generally use their own experiences as a basis for the content, which enables them to gain insights into and understanding of their teaching practice. In terms of sources of information, teacher development includes the information which is “often externalized from the teacher-learners’ experiences through collaborative work,
reflective processes” (p. 76). Freeman further states that since teacher development emphasizes the teachers’ experiences, it is seen as “in-service strategy which can take advantage of the background and practical knowledge of experienced teachers” (p. 76). Development activities are such things as teacher study groups, practitioner research, and self-development activities. The contexts of teacher development are generally “peer-led staff development, peer mentoring, or coaching, and other self-organized activities” (p. 76). Other teacher development activities are self-observation, peer observation, unseen observation, exploratory teaching, classroom research, and team teaching. All these activities utilize teachers’ experience, beliefs, and ideas in individual or group formats.

After discussing the ways training and development differ, Freeman (2001) refutes the general belief that they are “dichotomous and mutually exclusive” or “sequential” (p. 76). He suggests, rather, that these two strategies are complementary and integrated but different in terms of emphasis and balance and should be blended for effective language teacher education programs.

Integrating teacher training and development activities may result in more effective professional development activities. Şentuna (2002) states that “the differences in local contexts should be taken into account and programs that will be designed should be appropriate for the local demands of the instructors. Not only INSET courses but also the other ways of professional development should be offered” (p. 85), which suggests teacher training and development programs should be combined to avoid failures in such programs. Breen, Candlin, Dam, and
Gabrielsen (1989), in one phase of their study, reported that they were stuck and could not continue their teacher-training program. However, the local trainers formed “small working groups of teachers” where teachers “met to share their own progress and problems in trying to develop the practical application of the ideas and their own materials” (p. 119). This work helped teachers to solve the problems they faced, and Breen and his colleagues were called back to continue the developmental training project. As this example indicates, outside help alone could not meet the needs of the teachers. Local solutions were needed and for an effective professional development activity, exemplifying the need to integrate teacher training and development activities as Freeman (2001) and Şentuna (2002) suggest above.

Breen et al. (1989) present development of an in-service teacher training program which has three phases. This particular program evolves from “a focus on materials through a focus on learning to a focus on classroom-derived information, and from there to aspects of classroom management involving learners” (p. 135). Based on this project, Breen et al. present recommendations for training. These recommendations are that a training program should cover trainees’ experiences, problems, and articulation of their perception of classroom process. The training program may be most useful when it “grows directly out of the experience, assumptions and perceived problems of trainees.” (p.134). As a source of information, they suggest that these programs should use daily classroom activities and even learners from the classroom. Further they suggest that training should be seen as investigative process where trainers and trainees explore the teaching
learning process. Such programs should also include an evaluation of outcomes and effects with teachers. They also emphasize that the innovations should be introduced by using what teachers already know and what they do in the classrooms. This suggestion emphasizes the importance of the teachers’ experience and existing knowledge and of actual classroom activity for the success of a professional development program. It also agrees with Wallace’s (1982) reflective model giving equal importance to both theory and practice, in which experience and theoretical information are combined and trainees are no longer passive receivers of information.

Bowman, Boyle, Greenstone, Herndon, and Valente (2000) state that "in a profession that is often as isolating as it is public, turning to colleagues to share teaching challenges and rewards provides fertile ground for professional development and support" (p. 18). So sharing experiences and knowledge that teachers have gained in their profession with colleagues contributes to their professional development. In an online resource, it is stated that teachers sharing their experiences and knowledge with colleagues provides “helpful insight into specific learning situations and settings” (http://commtechlab.msu.edu/sites/letsnet/noframes/bigideas/b9/b9u4.html). Oprandy (1999) agrees that sharing experiences enables teachers to explore their teaching and learning experiences through communication with other teachers. In addition to this, Prodromou (1994) suggests that teachers’ coming together and discussing problems is a way of expanding ELT knowledge and enhancing teachers’ confidence.
Teachers can follow the developments and innovations in their profession and learn about new teaching practices “through being informed about improvements and recent developments… and being exposed to constant negotiation with their colleagues” (Coşkuner, 2001, p. 22). Negotiation with colleagues then becomes a significant aspect in the process of professional development. In her literature review, Coşkuner states that, by means of negotiation with colleagues, teachers not only become aware of their strengths and weaknesses in the teaching process but also they can learn from their colleagues’ experiences and ideas. Roe (1992) also emphasizes sharing experience and knowledge with colleagues:

Teachers become skilled and effective members of their profession most efficiently while learning on the job, especially provided systematically with relevant new ideas based on the experience of others, and the opportunity to reflect productively on their own experience and benefit from peer advice (p. 1).

Clark (1995) suggests that even novice teachers can “teach veterans about teaching” (p. 139) by asking questions related to teaching, and, in a sense, encouraging veteran teachers to articulate their beliefs and principles in teaching. Therefore, according to Clark, all teachers whether novice or veteran, need to participate in professional development activities, share their ideas, and cooperate with their colleagues to come up with more effective ways of teaching. Through teacher collaboration, teachers can learn from each other and contribute to their own professional development.
Tevs’s 1996 study presents the status of pre- and in-service teacher training programs (TTPs) in 26 English Preparatory Schools in Turkey. The results of her study are interesting in terms of showing how many training programs there were at the time, as well as the general attitudes of administrators, teacher trainers, and, teachers towards those programs. One of her most interesting results is that only 6 of 26 universities had separate teacher training programs, one of which was a voluntary unit with teacher trainers. Four institutions had specific training programs like COTE, while two institutions implemented their training programs in the form of workshops and seminars. The study shows that 86% of teachers and 92% of administrators and teacher trainers stated that there was a need for training programs, the reasons being the high number of newly graduated teachers and the necessity to increase the student success rate and level of proficiency.

The main forms of professional development activity for participants in Tevs’s study were conference attendance, workshops, and seminars. The study concluded that workshops were the most accessible to teachers though they were found to be inadequate in number and, sometimes in content. Eighty five percent of the teachers listed workshops and seminars as their only form of TTP but only 18% of them were content with the content. In regard to teacher training programs, only 17% of the participants were content with pre-service training programs, 7% with DOTE, and 6% with COTE. Generally, however, teachers could not attend teacher-training programs, though most teachers thought that such programs were necessary.
Tevs (1996) found that teachers were positive about participating in training programs in general, but she further claims,

Neither A/TT [Administration/Teacher trainers] nor T [teachers] are content with the quantity or quality of TTPs at their institutions. One of the issue that seems to cause this pleasure is the low attendance rate of participation in TTPs. In spite of the fact that teachers seem to be willing to up-date their knowledge through TTPs, TTPs seem to be inaccessible at most institutions, especially those specific training courses like COTE, DOTE, DTEFLA, or CEELT. (P. 108)

The primary reason given for not participating in TTPs was time. Twenty five percent of teachers stated that the times TTPs were held were inconvenient while 60% of those teachers stated that lack of time was the reason why they were reluctant to participate in TTPs.

Tevs (1996) further found that other reasons for not participating in any kind of professional development activity were stated as teachers’ satisfaction with what they already knew and their perception of professional development as “a matter of experience” (p.106). Additionally, not all teachers were interested in sharing their experiences and exploring their teaching.

In spite of these negative responses, Tevs found that in general teachers were positive about participating in training programs and professional development activities. In fact, “Holding regular meetings with colleagues was another issue mentioned as a form of self development that was both advocated and actually carried out by half of the participating teachers” (p. 106). Therefore, given the infrequency and inadequacy of most forms of TTPs, working with colleagues may be
one way to promote a shared understanding of how to produce effective teaching and learning processes. This might indicate support for an alternative idea for professional development, known as a Teacher Study Group (TSG).

Teacher Study Group as a Means of Professional Development

Clair (1998) states that “one professional development approach that is consistent with what is known about teaching, learning, and effective professional development is teacher study groups (TSGs)” (p. 469).

Palmer (1998) states,

The sources we need in order to grow as teachers are abundant within the community of colleagues. How can we emerge from our privatization and create continuing conversation about pedagogy that will allow us to tap that abundance? Good talk about good teaching is what we need to enhance both our professional practice and the self-hood from which it comes (p. 144).

As Palmer suggests, talking with colleagues on professional issues contributes to teacher development. Teacher study groups provide teachers with the opportunity to share their experiences and to build on and live in a professional learning community. Matlin and Short (1991) indicate that by means of the TSGs, teachers have an opportunity to “think through their own beliefs, share ideas, challenge current instructional practices, blend theory and practice, identify personal and professional needs and develop their own classroom innovations” (p. 68). Thus, a TSG is recognized as an alternative approach within professional development.
Definition

A TSG is defined as a group composed of teachers who meet on regular basis to share and discuss professional topics and issues based on their shared interests, beliefs, and practices (Birchack, Conor, Crawford, Kahn, Kaser, Turner, Short 1998; Cramer, 1996; Pfaff, 2000; and Saavedra 1996). An online resource describes TSGs as “zones of safety” in which teachers can “openly discuss their beliefs and practice and find support” and “find challenges to their ways of operating within their teaching context” (http://www.ets.org/ccxiv/services.html).

Properties

Forming a TSG requires some initial preparation and thought. Herner and Higgins (2000) state that first of all, who the participants will be and whether faculty or other staff members will be involved or not need to be determined. Apart from determining participants, group size, group goal(s), time and place of the meetings, and how participants will be grouped should also be carefully planned. Herner and Higgins suggest that grouping may be determined by grade level, subject matter taught, or teachers’ interests and needs.

There are types of teacher study groups which serve different purposes. One type of study group is formed online via e-mail. As Bowman et al. (2000) suggest, this type of study group may engage people from all over the world. In the structure of this study group, there is one volunteer "focus" teacher posing questions to other members called “responders”. This focus teacher poses a question or issue to the responders in the first week of each month. The responders send their answers to the
entire group within two or three weeks. In the fourth week the focus teacher sends out a summary of the responses. Other types of study groups which may be formed are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Types of Study Groups and Focus of Discussion (taken from Birchack et al. 1998, p. 19).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of study groups</th>
<th>Focus of discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job-Alike Groups</td>
<td>Educators who have the same type of position in different schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Based Groups</td>
<td>Composed of educators within a particular school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic-Centered Groups</td>
<td>Educators from different schools who are interested in the same topic or issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues Discussion Groups</td>
<td>Formed around questions and concerns on a shared issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher research Groups</td>
<td>Educators who come together to discuss their systematic, intentional, classroom inquires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers and Writers Groups</td>
<td>Formed to discuss literary works or pieces of writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Book Discussion</td>
<td>Initiated by a common interest to read a professional book or set of articles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Birchack et al. (1998) list four features of teacher study groups: voluntary commitment, building community and care, challenging the thinking of participants, and integrating theory and practice. First, Birchack et al. state that voluntary commitment is necessary, since teachers should be responsible for their own learning and development, and add, “this belief is violated when they are forced to attend the group” (p.16). Next, the study group is not a place where the members share only their professional concerns but they share their personal concerns and frustrations, as well. Thereby, they build community, and get to know each other better which facilitates their sharing and thinking about their teaching practice deeply and
critically. The final feature of a study group is integrating theory and practice. It is not as meaningful if the group members exchange practical issues without discussing the underlying theories and concepts that provide the base for these practical ideas and activities.

A teacher study group is not in-service training, where an outside expert comes and presents theoretical and practical ideas. However, having a TSG does not mean that participants consider only their own beliefs and experiences, omitting outside experts. Birchack et al. (1998), reflecting on their experiences in a TSG study, say that they started to question outside experts and used these ideas as a source for group discussion and dialogue. They also emphasize that they see the TSG as an alternative professional development tool, adding another dimension to other professional development forms, not replacing them. Therefore, integrating local solutions with outside help may result in more productive professional development activity.

Advantages

In many studies, the TSG is defined as a means of professional development or teacher improvement for its participants (Boggs, 1996; Cramer, 1996; Dontanio, 1990; Fishbaugh & Hecimovic, 1994; Garmon & Mariage, 1998; McCotter, 2001; McWhorter & Bullion-Mears, 1997; and Pfaff, 2000). The results of these studies revealed that teacher study groups contribute to participants’ personal and professional development. Regardless of topics, interest areas, and participants, these
studies, which are either about or done through a TSG, concluded with positive results relating TSG activity to teachers’ professional development.

The TSG became a place for teachers, where they could talk about their own beliefs and practice critically, try to learn about alternative practices, and, in their words, “take charge of our own professional journeys” (Birchack et al., 1998, p.13). Cramer (1996) sees TSGs as both an opportunity for professional development and a chance to develop autonomy. Furthermore, Saavedra (1996) states that the TSG provides a social context for critical dialogue, presents teachers with opportunities to learn about current teaching theories and practices, permits collaboration and planning with peers, provides a supportive context for teachers to experiment with ideas and innovative practices and to share these experience, and allows teachers to become actively responsible for their own learning and change (p. 272).

One of her points is that by participating in a TSG, teachers take charge of their learning and “take ownership”, adding that teachers “become involved in a process that enables them to express, define, address, and resolve problems by creating appropriate changes” (p. 272). She indicates that the TSG contributes to teachers’ professional development and that the most important aspect of the TSG is that it creates opportunity for teachers “to reflect, analyze, and critique practices together” (p. 272).

Sanacore (cited in Herner & Higgins, 2000) emphasizes that professional development activity should give teachers opportunities to have a voice in the development of teachers and schools. As an alternative professional development, the TSG is also a way for teachers to make their voices heard in their profession, as
is indicated by Clair’s study result. Teachers can design their own content for professional development and benefit from their knowledge and experience as a source of content. Clair (1998) also claims that “TSGs represent a radical change from the teacher as receiver to the teacher as creator of information” (470). Herner and Higgins (2000) support this idea stating that “study group members are no longer passive recipients of information, but active seekers of knowledge” (n. p.). They also point to the fact that the TSG provides teachers with the “opportunity to read and share current research and literature within their study group and mentor others within their school, they create a school-wide synergy that benefits the whole school” (n. p.). When teachers have the opportunity to investigate their knowledge, beliefs and practices, they can come up with the new perspectives in their profession and solutions to the problems they face which agrees with Wallace’s (1982) reflective model mentioned before. Since the context and source of information is not external to the teachers, they find solutions to the problems by discussing and sharing or conducting research instead of applying a method without thinking about it. They do not receive the information but create the information.

A teacher study group provides teachers with the opportunity to design and implement their own content for professional development based on classroom activity; they can enjoy reflecting on their teaching and being engaged in a meaningful conversation with colleagues on professional issues. Jenlink and Kinnucan-Welsh (2001) discovered in their study that “professional development is most meaningful to educators when they have responsibility in the design and
implementation of their own professional development and when it is closely connected to their work in the classrooms” (p. 2), which Breen et al., 1989; Freeman, 2001; and Fullan, 1982 supported.

In addition, McCotter (2001) found in her study that individual growth was supported in the TSG studied, a LEADS (Literacy Education for a Democratic Society) group which was inspired by “communities of colleagues who want to study and support each other and change together” (p. 685). In this study, there were 10 participants, seven of whom attended meetings regularly. The group was composed of female teachers coming from different contexts such as universities and public schools who participated in the LEADS group "because of an expressed belief in the importance of social justice in education" (p. 686).

McCotter (2001) studied the LEADS group and transcribed and analysed data collected by means of audio recording of meetings and interviews. As a participant researcher, she was concerned with the issues of reflective subjectivity, face validity, catalytic validity, and triangulation of methods and tried to meet these criteria. For example, she used multiple methods and data sources for triangulation, a procedure also followed in this study. Her analysis indicates that the characteristics of the LEADS group were collaboration, dialogue, support, reflection, and critique, and she states:

Collaboration in the LEADS group, then, has involved sharing ideas with and learning from each other without hierarchical relationships. It also meant establishing an arena where these processes can occur safely because we have a common outlook (p. 700).
Not only was the specific content of the group’s conversation important for growth, but the ways in which members talked with each other helped construct a ‘sacred space’ in which growth was nurtured and promoted (p. 685).

This suggests that not only content but also group structure becomes important for group members. The environment in a TSG provides for teachers to discuss their beliefs and practices, and helps them to develop themselves professionally through this sharing of ideas. McCotter claims that “belonging to LEADS [a collaborative teacher study group] gave them [participants] a kind of personal and professional growth that was not available to them through traditional staff development activities” (p. 686). She concludes that effective professional development should be experiential, ongoing, collaborative, empowering, contextual, and relate theory and practice.

In another study, Pfaff (2000) investigated how participation in a school-based professional study group affected general and personal teaching efficiency, and how participants perceived the effect of participation in their teaching performance. Further, the study compared the differences in the level of participant and non-participant teachers’ teaching efficacy. A study group formed by volunteer elementary school teachers was investigated, and data was collected by means of questionnaires, interviews, and The Teacher Efficacy Scale, the latter used to collect quantitative data to evaluate teacher efficacy and to make statistical comparisons of personal and general efficacy of all staff members. One of the results in the study was that the TSG provided participants with a collegial atmosphere. Next, teachers
perceived that their teaching style and behaviours changed, which was reported as a consequence of participating in the TSG. Pfaff claims that this change “provides positive support suggesting that teachers meet regularly in small instructional support groups to examine research on teaching and learning as a vehicle for change” (p. 6). Investigating the participants' perceptions of the value of the study group experience as a professional development model, Pfaff summarizes the participants' comments, which were that the TSG provided “quality time to interact with colleagues and opportunity to establish stronger relationships with study group participants which increased the level of respect and credibility that each held for the other” (p. 6). Also, it was stated that “the diversity of the study group broadened the over all understanding of the context” (p. 6) since participants used their background knowledge while discussing the readings. Further, the group appreciated that “the team building and collegiality that evolved strengthened the level of understanding and increased the learning that occurred” (p. 7). The last comment was that "the shared expectations and comment to the process increased the level of accountability to the process of professional development” (p. 7). Pfaff suggests that the results support “the value of collaborative, and collegial work relationships to the professional development process” (p. 7). Quoting a secondary source, she emphasizes the role of collegiality for professional development:

Spark's (1988) study noted that teachers who met regularly in small groups to examine research on teaching and learning gained the confidence to try new things and set higher expectations for their performance in the classroom... study group provided a safe environment for teachers to discuss their challenges and successes and to learn together (p. 7).
The responses categorized as evidence for teachers’ transferring the content of TSG discussions to classroom practice indicated that discussions helped them link theory to practice which resulted in “a clearer understanding of instructional purposes to the varied language activities in which they engaged their students” (p. 7).

When participants and non participants' general teaching efficacy were compared, the results showed that the difference between them was insignificant in the fall whereas this difference was found to be significant in the spring, which may suggest the TSG group members sustained general teaching efficacy over the academic year. Pfaff suggested that:

Differences in general teaching efficacy between the two groups at the end of the year suggest that the collaboration and purposeful discussions in which study group members engaged had a positive effect on their general teaching efficacy as compared to non-study group teachers (p. 10).

Pfaff (2000) concludes that when teachers are provided with professional development opportunities through which they can work collaboratively, make decisions, solve problems, and talk about professional issues, their personal and general teaching efficacy improves. She also states study groups “can potentially help teachers feel a greater sense of control over their professional lives and increase their sense of teacher efficacy” (p. 5) and adds that sharing ideas and experiences contributed to the construction of collegiality.

Clair (1998) states in her study that “the participants saw the benefits of the TSG over other professional development options” (p. 479). The benefits reported by the participants indicate that the TSG provided an opportunity to concentrate on
participants’ needs, to share what participants already knew, to explore new opinions and methods, to help to learn from peers, to identify needs while teachers were spending time together, and to have a voice in their profession. Clair concluded that “The findings depict evidence that some participants began to think independently, trust their expertise and that of their colleagues, and value the merits of sustained professional development” (pp. 486-487). She emphasizes that participants in the TSG started to benefit from their colleagues’ expertise and tried to find ways to work with their colleagues outside of the group. She also reports that the TSG became a basis for one school’s professional development program.

Saavedra (1996) puts forward the idea that educational changes can be achieved as long as teachers who are “responsible for constructing the day-to-day interactions and mechanisms in our schools…[are] entrusted to create that change” and adds that the way to enable teachers to make changes is by giving them “ownership of their learning contexts in order to explore the development of knowledge and actions needed to transform schools” (p. 277). A TSG provides teachers with the opportunity to take ownership of their learning, as mentioned above. Boggs (1996) supports this idea and notes that teachers believe the TSG is a good way to change a school. His project findings suggest that a TSG not only initiates school improvement but also provides support for teachers to improve teaching practice.
Group Formation and Group Dynamics

In many fields, such as industry, management, and education, organizations and institutions tend to establish or encourage people to work in groups to reach success and higher productivity in accomplishing tasks. “Success of almost everything having to do with people has to do with the understanding and effectiveness of the groups to which they belong” says Dimock (1993, p. v). Understanding what the group is and how it is formed and organized may be crucial factor contributing to group success. Examining group dynamics of a group helps an observer understand how it operates.

Group Dynamics

Group dynamics refers to the “analysis of the behavior of small groups” (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997, p. 67) or, as Cartwright and Zander (cited in Forsyth 1990, p. 23) define it, a “field of inquiry dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups”. Forsyth (1990) states that group dynamics are also used to describe the social processes taking place in the groups. He lists these processes as: “the group capacity to serve as an arena for social interaction, the powerful impact of group structures on members actions, their usefulness as vehicles for accomplishing goals, and the way in which groups become cohesive”(p.12).

Mpofu and Das (1998) list eight categories of group dynamics, which they used in their study to investigate students’ perceptions of group dynamics: physical climate, emotional climate, involvement, interaction, cohesion, productivity, leadership, and facilitator. In the present study, using the frameworks adapted from
an observation sheet suggested by Dimock (1993) physical and emotional climate, involvement, interaction, and leadership will be covered. 

**Group and Group Characteristics**

Sherif and Sherif (cited in Forsyth, 1990, p. 8) define a group as “a social unit which consists of a number of individuals who stand in (more or less) definite status and role relationships to one another and which possesses a set of values and norms of its own regulating the behavior of individual members, at least in matters of consequence to the group”. While this definition focuses on certain features of groups, such as group structure and norms, Bertcher (1994) gives a broader definition for the term “group”:

A group is a dynamic social entity composed of two or more individuals. These individuals interact interdependently to achieve one or more common goals for the group or similar individual goals that each member believes can be best achieved through group participation. As a result of this participation, each member influences and is influenced by every other member to some degree. Over time, statuses and roles develop for members while norms and values that regulate behavior of consequence to the group are accepted by members. (p. 3)

This definition provides a general view of the formation and development of a group and contains ideas about the central features of a group, particularly group composition, goal, interaction which results in change in members, and group structure developed over time. Forsyth (1990) lists crucial characteristics of a group: interaction among group members, group structure, group size, goals, cohesion, and tendency for change.
Forsyth (1990) says that interaction among group members, which may be “physical, verbal, nonverbal, and emotional”, is “a key feature of group life” (p. 9) and adds that interaction is an important factor to provide influence among the group members, which means one member influences the other members’ behaviors. Group structure refers to “the pattern of relationships among the differentiated parts of the group” (Shaw, 1976, p. 238). Shaw suggests that the group structure may be explicit in formal groups or implicit in informal group structure. Shaw further explains that a group is a composition of individuals with different attributes, for example, some members may talk more, have more impact or be shown more respect than other members. When members meet and interact, these different attributes affect and establish relationships among the members. So each member has a position in the group, which reflects the “total characterization of the differentiated parts associated with an individual group member” (p. 238). He suggests that “the pattern of relationships among the positions in the group constitutes a group structure” (p. 238). Shaw further explains that the evaluation of each member’s position by the other members with regard to “prestige, importance and value to the group” (p. 238) is each member’s social status, while the behavior expected from members in each position refers to social role in the group structure. Supporting this, Beebe and Masterson (1997) define roles as “sets of expectations people hold for themselves and for others in a given context” (p. 47) and state that “people with higher social status generally have more prestige and command more respect than do people of lower status” (p. 85). They further state that members’ status or social rank have
considerable impact on interpersonal relationships and add, “the status or reputation an individual has before joining a group certainly affects the role he or she assumes” (p. 86). The research results about how status differences affect the relationships among the members of a small group indicate that high-status group members talk more and have more influence on group decision making than lower status members and “the leader of a small group is usually the member with the highest status” (pp. 86-87). Based on the studies on groups, Banner (1959) states that in some groups, some members “became central persons and initiated interaction” (p. 499) though they were not assigned as leaders or did not have any leadership properties. He believes that this is the result of these central persons’ “status qualities as individuals, their attitudes, their ascendant personalities” (pp. 499-500).

Forsyth (1990) states that the role of leadership may emerge in a regular pattern although the structures in a group are not formally defined, and adds, some groups like study groups, discussion groups or parties may be formed as leaderless groups at first, but during the development of these groups, someone emerges as leader. Beebe and Masterson (1997) point to the issue of leadership in the leaderless groups and states, “Most people think of a leader as someone who takes charge and organizes a discussion. Predictably, group members often perceive as leaders those who actively participate in the group and who direct communication toward procedural matters” (p. 304). In terms of operating a group, however, in Mpofu and Das’ (1998) study it was found that group members felt that “having a powerful individual within a group was not important” (p. 424) and as Dimock (1993)
suggests, “if a group has some members who want to be in control and others willingly to accept that control, it will function better than a group with ‘all chiefs and no indians’” (pp. 10-11).

In addition to positions, status, and roles, the group also establishes group norms as an aspect of the group structure. Each group is unique, since it has different values and attitudes which constitute group norms. Brown (2000) defines “norm” as “a scale of values which defines a range of acceptable (and unacceptable) attitudes and behaviors for members of a social unit” (p. 56). According to Brown and also Mills (1984), norms specify how members are required to behave in certain situations. Brown adds, norms, “thus are the basis for mutual expectations among the group members”(p. 56). He suggests that norms help not only group members to know how to behave in new or ambiguous situations but also help to “coordinate group members’ activities”(p. 60). Further, Dörnyei and Malderez (1997) define norms as rules and standards which are necessary for “efficient functioning of the group” and add, group norms are developed by the members through interaction “as part of the group’s organic development”(p. 69).

Norms can be both explicit and inexplicit. Ellis and Fisher (1994) explain that the norms that are “formal and intentionally adopted by the group such the procedures the group adopts or the rules it abides by in its meetings” (p. 129) are explicit ones, whereas the those that “emerge during the interaction of the group members and become ‘knowable’ as the interaction continues” (p. 129) are implicit ones. Some of the group norms listed are dress, attitudes towards time, type of
language, use of humor, modes of address, address using first name (Beebe & Masterson, 1997), and seating arrangement (Mpofu and Das, 1998). In discussing seating arrangement, Shaw (1976) claims that it affects both patterns of communication and qualitative aspects of group interaction. He further states that “the more distance there was between the two persons, the less friendly, acquainted, and talkative they were perceived to be” (p. 135).

Size is another characteristic, which may have considerable effect on the other aspects of a group. Forsyth explains Georg Simmel’s taxonomy based on group size and identifies the groups as dyad (2 members), triad (3 members), and small group (4-20 members). Forsyth (1990) states that as the group size enlarges, the group “becomes more complex and formally structured” (p. 10) and adds that the group size has an impact on forming subgroups and on members’ influencing each other, since, as Beebe and Masterson (1997) mention, an increase in group size decreases the interaction among individual group members. Beebe and Masterson discuss Herbert Thelen’s principle: “the principle of ‘least group size’... groups small enough to encourage maximum participation yet large enough to generate maximum number of ideas” (pp. 125-126). They claim that five to seven members is the right size while twelve is considered the right size for small groups if five of them do not come on a regular basis.

Each group has a goal for which it exists. Shaw (1976) claims that people join groups since they see groups as places to satisfy their need(s). The individuals may join a group for the group activities, membership, or a goal that the group is
dedicated to. Group goal is recognized as one of the factors in attracting members to group (Beebe and Masterson, 1997).

The last two characteristics of a group listed by Forsyth (1990), cohesion and tendency for change, will not be discussed in this study since the research concerns only initial stages of group organization and the limited time frame is not enough to build cohesion among the members.

Creating a Group

Bertcher and Maple (1996) provide stages to follow in creating groups:

a. Group goal or purpose. The type of group and the reasons for which a group is formed determine the group purpose(s) while group members’ interests, needs, and concerns determines the group goal(s) once the meetings start.

b. Recruiting group members. A crucial step in creating a group is finding potential members. In order to recruit members, recruitment conditions for becoming a group member are listed. Some conditions are voluntarily membership, which contributes to empowering individuals, group purpose fitting the current interest of potential members from which members will benefit, members’ being responsible for the operation of the group, and the potential members being able to determine individual and/or group goals, which empowers them as a group.

c. Group composition. Desirable group composition is stated as bringing people together who have descriptive attributes, such as age, but who differ with regard to behavioral attributes, which refer to individual actions, such as being
talkative. However, it is mentioned in some settings, for example in educational and task groups, there may not always be control in composing the group.

d. Time, size and space/place. Those factors are necessary details in group organization that need to be carefully planned. There are no specific guidelines for determining those items, however, it is suggested that group purpose can be the reference for determining these factors.

e. Planning the first meeting. This step is important since it is seen as the stage in which a group is actually created. It may involve stating “at least one goal for him or her [participants] with regard to his or her participation in this group” (Bertcher and Maple, 1996, p. 82), leaving the group with a “clear picture of what would happen in the next meeting” (p. 82), and describing roles and responsibilities as well as the general operating procedures of the group.

Group Observation

Dimock (1993) defines content and process in the group. Content is what group members talk about or discuss, or what activity they do. Process is defined as “how the group is working and how the members are relating one to another” (p. 2). Then he emphasizes that group process is much more important than the content and claims that “it is in the group’s process where the important dynamics in the development of the group take place” (p. 2). Dimock further states that to observe a group’s growth and development, we have to decide what we are looking for in the group; what areas we choose to reflect what we think is important to observe. He believes that the framework developed helps “understand the groups, make
predictions about the groups, and communicate with others about what is happening in the group” (p. 1).

Since the focus of this study is the initial formation stages of group organization, developmental areas and interpersonal relation viewpoints listed by Dimock (1993) were used for group observation and for preparation of the behavioral framework charts designed to analyze the data collected in the study. The developmental areas viewpoint framework helps to “identify the areas that are worth observing, and to help explain the relationship among various happenings in the group” (p. 2). It includes five areas, climate, involvement, interaction, cohesion, and productivity, however, only climate, involvement, and interaction were covered in this research. Group climate refers to both the physical and emotional climate of the group, which are equally important for a group’s growth and well being. Dimock (1993) defines group involvement as the extent to which “members are occupied or absorbed with the group” (p. 3) and adds, that it is “usually determined by attraction to the other members in the group and to the activities or product of the group” (p. 3). Gautschi (1994) states that researchers have found that a group can attract people when it meets their needs, helps them reach their goals, makes them feel proud of belonging to that group, and feel appreciated by the people outside the group. Furthermore, group members’ level of commitment to the group decisions and goals depends on how much they participate in determining those decisions and goals.

Group interaction is seen as a necessary part of the group’s growth. Dimock (1993) claims that the group’s development and task accomplishment is strongly
related to the interaction among the group members. Furthermore, Shaw (1976) describes the relation between the group interaction and development as follows:

The group develops over a moderately long period and probably never reaches a completely stable state. Development proceeds rapidly at first; much structuring and organization may occur in the first minutes of interaction and certainly within the several hours. Much early development is oriented toward the establishment of the social structure of the group: the formation of status and role relations, norms, and power relations...It is probable that the kinds and sequences of phases in group development are similar for all groups, although the content and duration of phases vary with the kind of group and the group task (p. 97).

The relation between emotional climate and interaction is also important since if the group members feel secure and accepted, they can interact with others in the group. Hartley (1999) states that “communication plays a crucial role in small group behavior” (p. 212). Communication is a necessary element to provide interaction among the members, however, it is not easy to establish communication among the members. As Banner (1959) suggests, “the establishment of communication among the various classes of people involved in...does not take place automatically”(p. 243). Supporting this, Dörnyei and Malderez (1997) state,

The relative statuses of group members influence the amount and quality of communication they initiate or receive from others: in general more communication is both initiated and received by high status than by low status people, and the content of such messages tends to be more positive than messages directed downwards in the status hierarchy. Higher status members are also more likely to criticize, command, or interrupt others (p. 72).
Pointing to one pitfall, not providing equal opportunity to speak in the group, Hare (1968) states that “individuals who do not have enough chance to speak are the ones who are dissatisfied” (p. 515).

The second viewpoint, interpersonal relations, suggests that groups need to satisfy three basic developmental needs: inclusion, control, and intimacy or openness. In the inclusion stage, group members try to get to know each other, try to figure out what the group expects of them, and try to decide whether they will make a commitment to this group or not. This stage ends when the group members accept each other. In the control stage, members try to figure out “who gets to decide what for whom” (p. 12). This is called the decision making stage and covers not only who makes the decisions, but also how the decisions are made. Further Forsyth (1990) states that there may be a connection between how group structure is developed and decisions made by group members. In the openness and intimacy stage, the main concern is stated as “working out how open or authentic members are prepared to be with one another considering the purposes of group”. It is also mentioned that in this stage, group members pay more attention to the ideas and abilities of each member than to the “status hierarchy or key players” (p. 13). The members are also expected to express their feelings and ideas freely and develop trust among themselves. Further, Bavelas (1968) states that in the groups free of outside control, social processes determine interaction among the members and adds, “A group which exist as a part of a larger organization, however, seldom has the freedom to make such an adjustment” (p. 493).
Gautschi (1994) states that “understanding what happens in a group often removes communication barriers and encourages candor and true interaction. This, in turn, generates commitment through involvement, which results in effective performance” (p. 322). As mentioned before, examining group dynamics in a group contributes to understanding the group and its components, which may be necessary to achieve desired results.

This chapter dealt with the literature related to the teacher study groups. There was a brief discussion on professional development issues in general and in Turkey. As an alternative method of professional development, the TSG was defined and described in light of the studies done. The chapter also dealt with group dynamics, the observation of which is needed to clarify the group formation and organization procedures. The next chapter will cover the instruments and procedures used to collect and analyze the data.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The aims of this qualitative study were to investigate the formation of a teacher study group (TSG) in the Foreign Languages Department (FLD) at Osmangazi University (OGU), along with the participating instructors’ expectations and perceptions of the group’s contribution to their professional and personal development. In the group formation process, the initial procedures of setting up a TSG, particularly the group formation and central features of group organization, were investigated.

The TSGs were formed with thirteen volunteer participants from FLD at OGU. A pre-questionnaire was given to the participants after which TSG participants met once a week over two months. The researcher observed the TSG meetings and conducted follow-up interviews at the end of the two-month period.

In this chapter, the participants in the project, the instruments used throughout the study, and the procedures to collect the data will be explained and a brief description of data analysis process will be given.

Participants

The participants in the study were instructors currently teaching English in the FLD at OGU. There were thirteen participants, all of whom were non-native speakers of English. Five out of the 13 instructors were male and eight were female. Four of the participants stated they were married. Initially, marital status was considered as a possible factor that might affect participants’ level of commitment to group tasks and attendance to group meetings. The age of seven participants were 22-27 and three were 31-35. Four of the instructors had less than 3 years teaching
experience in EFL, seven of them between 3 and 7 years, one of them 9 years, and the other 12 years of EFL teaching experience. They were currently teaching English in the preparatory program at different levels and in the regular program where teachers teach basic level English courses to university students in different faculties. Five of the 13 participants were teaching in both preparatory and regular programs, while two of them were teaching only in the regular program and six of them were teaching only in the preparatory program. All the instructors but one held BA degrees in Teaching English as Foreign Language; the one held a degree in English Language Literature. Four out of the 13 had an MA degree in ELT, and three were still attending MA programs in ELT (see Table 2).

The participants were divided into two groups, randomly. The researcher wrote numbers for each participant on their questionnaire papers and wrote those numbers on a slip of paper for each participant. Then she asked someone she did not know to draw seven slips. Those seven numbers became group A and the rest of the numbers were group B. Only one group was the focus group. The researcher wrote A and B on different pieces of papers and asked someone to draw one of them to select the focus group. Thus, group A became the focus group. The participants were told who would be working with whom in this project after the random selection of group participants. The non-focus group met out of personal interest, but no data from this second group was used in the study. The meeting schedule was different for each group; one group met at 13:00 and the second met at 16:00. The focus group delayed one meeting since there were not enough members present and arranged to meet the next day. The non-focus group held five meetings out of 8 because of institutional
constraints, such as examinations or other meetings. All the participants were given informed consent forms (see Appendix A), which they signed.

Table 2

Participant Background Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>MA</th>
<th>Experience in EFL teaching (yrs)</th>
<th>Workload in OGFLD yrs.</th>
<th>Workload in (+) outside the class</th>
<th>Programs they were currently teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>32-35 Y</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20+4</td>
<td>Prep and regular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-27 N</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20+7</td>
<td>Only prep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28-31 N</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20+20</td>
<td>Only prep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>32-35 Y</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20+20</td>
<td>Prep and regular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22-24 Y</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6+6</td>
<td>Only prep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22-24 N</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>ELTb</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 mont</td>
<td>2+10</td>
<td>Only regular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>28-31 N</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18+10</td>
<td>Prep and regular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8a</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28-31 Y</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10+15</td>
<td>Only prep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25-27 N</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>ELTb</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3+3</td>
<td>Only regular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10a</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>28-31 N</td>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>ELT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20+10</td>
<td>Prep and regular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-27 N</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>ELTb</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10+2</td>
<td>Only prep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13a</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25-27 N</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3+40</td>
<td>Prep and regular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a: These participants are the focus group members.
b: Currently enrolled in an MA program.
The numbers written on participants’ pre-questionnaires became their pseudonyms in this study. For the focus group, Participants 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 13 were chosen randomly, while for the other group Participants 1, 2, 4, 9, 11, and 12 were chosen. Throughout the study these numbers are used instead of their names.

The Researcher’s Role

In qualitative studies, there are three types of participant observer. Anzul, Friedman and Gardner (as cited in Ely (1991)) state that types of participants are classified as “the active participant, the privileged observer, and the limited observer” (p. 47). The researcher in this study, in order to provide objectivity, chose to be a limited observer. Anzul, Friedman, and Gardner state that a limited observer “observes, asks questions, and builds trust over time, but does not have a public role other than researcher” (p. 45) and emphasize that most researchers choose to be limited observers. The researcher attended meetings and took field notes, but intended not to interfere with the natural flow of the group formation, format, and dynamics when she chose to be a limited observer.

Materials

The materials used in this study were a pre-questionnaire, audio-taped recordings of the TSG meetings, the researcher’s field notes and reflective journals, participants’ reflective journals, and interviews with the TSG participants. A variety of instruments was used in order to obtain data from different sources and enhance the reliability of the analysis.

The pre-questionnaire, reflective journals, and interviews were used to obtain data to explore participants’ expectations, perceptions, and attitudes. Through these instruments, participant instructors reflected on what they did, how they did it, and
how they felt. Furthermore, participants’ expectations, perceptions, and attitudes might not be observable in the meeting recordings; therefore, there was a need to make them visible and concrete by means of these instruments. Recordings of meetings and the observer’s field notes recorded the data about the initial procedures of group formation and the on-going group dynamics. With the help of these two instruments during observation, the process of group formation and the group dynamics over a period of time were analyzed.

**Pre-Questionnaire**

The first step in constructing the questionnaire was to determine relevant questions for answering the first research question and for providing background information for the TSG in terms of participants’ background, TSG content, and participants’ goals, expectations, and concerns. An initial questionnaire was written and piloted with the MA TEFL students at Bilkent University who were also experienced teachers. The questionnaire was then revised based on the suggestions and comments of the pilot group.

In the pre-questionnaire (see Appendix B), there were six sections, which asked questions about participants’ background, professional development activities, group organization and possible topic content for the TSG, the role of collegiality in teacher development, goals and expectations of group participation, and participants’ concerns about the TSG. The questionnaire format included four different types of questions: fill-in-the blank, Likert-scale questions, relevant option questions, and open-ended questions (see Appendix B). The table for participants’ background information gained from Part A was needed to profile the participants (see Table 2). The responses to Part B were used to learn whether participants had any experience
with professional development activities and also used as reference for the individual interviews. The questions in Part C about group organization and possible topic content of the TSG were included in the questionnaire primarily for orienting the participants to some of the aspects of group organization and the responses were recorded for analysis to report participants’ initial thoughts about group and possible topic content. Part D was used to indicate participants’ attitudes towards collegiality in teacher development. Parts E and F were used to report participants’ expectations, goals, and concerns for participating in the TSG as an alternative method of professional development.

**Audio Tape Recordings of Meetings**

The researcher recorded each meeting by using two tape recorders in order not to lose data due to technical problems. The researcher chose audio tape recording since participants felt that video recording might interfere with the natural flow of the meetings more than audio recording. These recordings enabled the researcher to explore how the group was formed and how the group norms and roles were established. These recordings also helped to document group communication patterns, dominant members of TSG in the discussions, and the format of the discourse in the meetings.

**Researcher's Field Notes**

The researcher took focused field notes in order to record nonverbal communication, physical environment, and group interaction. Notes were taken on the areas of group dynamics determined as the focus of this study. Field notes were not used as a main source in data analysis but these notes were intended to be a tool to assist in analyzing the tape recordings.
Reflective Journal

Participants’ Reflective Journal Entries

Participants were asked to write reflective journals in order to provide information about their feelings and thoughts about participating in the TSG. After the first meeting, participants were supposed to write reflective journal entries without having been given any specific guidelines apart from being told to write about what they had done in the meeting and how they felt about it. For the following meetings, participants were given guidelines for their reflective journals (see Appendix C).

Researcher’s Reflective Journal Entries

The researcher decided to also keep a reflective journal. These reflective journal entries enabled her to look at the data collected through the materials mentioned in a systematic way and follow the flow of the study.

Interview

The interview was conducted to explore participants’ perceptions about how this study contributed to their professional development and to elicit their attitudes towards participation in the group. The interview helped to collect data about participants’ perceptions of the group dynamic as well.

The interview was semi-structured. The researcher scheduled the interviews with each participant one week in advance. Before conducting the interview with the participants of the focus group, the researcher piloted the interview questions with the second group that also participated in the study, after which necessary changes were made in the interview questions. The participants in the focus group were interviewed using the revised schedule of interview questions (see Appendix D).
The interview guide consisted of two summary questions at the beginning and end of the interview, four general questions directed at answering the research questions, and follow-up questions under each general question. The questions included in the interview were about the participants’ expectations from the TSG, their perceptions about how the group was organized by them and what decision making procedures were followed, and how they felt this experience contributed to their professional and personal developments. Their thoughts about the TSGs as a means of professional development and their willingness to remain as a member of the TSG were also elicited. After the two-month observation period, the researcher interviewed the participant instructors individually, tape-recording the interviews.

Procedures

Step 1: Finding Volunteer Participants from among the Instructors Currently Teaching English in the FLD at OGU

Participants were selected on a voluntary basis. On January 11, all the English instructors at OGU FLD were informed about the TSG project which was to be conducted for an MA TEFL research study. The researcher participated in one session of each OGU level meeting (elementary, pre-intermediate, and intermediate), explained what the TSG was, how it would contribute to professional development, and initiated a small discussion about the need for a kind of professional development activity in the department. However, no information was given about specific guidelines for forming a TSG. Afterwards, the researcher asked for volunteers to participate in the TSG project. Thirteen of the English language instructors volunteered to participate in the TSG as a professional development activity. This willingness was the only criterion for participation in the study.
Step 2: Designing and Piloting the Pre-Questionnaire

In January and February, a pre-questionnaire was prepared using examples in the literature. The pre-questionnaire was piloted on February 13, 2002. The participants for the pilot were MA TEFL (2002) students. This group was more or less representative of the real participants in the FLD at OGU since they had similar backgrounds in terms of the faculties they were graduated from, such as ELT and ELL, and the departments in which they taught, which were EFL in regular or prep school programs, just as the study participants. The piloting was done in a group setting with clarification provided as needed by participants. After filling out the questionnaire, the participants made some comments and suggestions for improving the questionnaire design. A section asking people for a commitment to participate in at least three sessions was omitted, being considered too close to an official contract since participants’ voluntary participation was the goal.

Step 3: Administering the Questionnaire as a Group and Determining the First Meeting

The next step was to administer the questionnaire to the TSG participants in a whole group setting, which was done at OGU on February 15, 2002. The researcher made a short introduction, walked through some parts with the participants as was done in the pilot, and answered their questions. The questionnaires were collected immediately upon completion. After making sure the participants understood that they could withdraw from the study whenever they wanted to, the researcher asked participants to set a date for the first meeting.
Step 4: The Initial Meeting and Orientation

The participants arranged the time to meet. The researcher needed to arrange the place herself, since she had to prepare the tape-recorders to record the meetings and had to be careful about the place in order to minimize interruptions and noise coming from the outside. The library was chosen as a meeting place since it was not being used on Friday afternoons, outside effects could be controlled to some extent, and the place provided easy access outlets for the electrical equipment necessary to record with two tape recorders. Furthermore, the place was light, and there were a table and several chairs designed to enable participants to sit as a group.

At the first meeting, the researcher gave a brief orientation. Participants were told why they were there and that they would start and maintain this project based on their own decisions, without guidance or direction from outside the group. Immediately after the orientation, the tape recorders were activated to record the first meeting. The researcher’s role was to take field notes in which she wrote down non-verbal behaviors and recorded the physical description of the room, where each participant sat, and the placement of the tape recorders and the observer. The main focus of the field notes was to record how participants interacted with each other during the meeting. At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to write down what they did and how they felt during the meeting. This was done to elicit their first impressions and thoughts and provide information for reflective journal guidelines (see Appendix C for a sample page).

Step 5: Preparation of a Data Analysis Framework

Reading the group dynamic literature, the researcher designed framework charts to record the data relevant to features of group dynamics (see Appendices E
Each framework chart reflected one of four specific aspects of group organization and group structure: setting up the group and operation of group, group interaction, and group involvement.

Developing the framework charts required several revisions. Data from field notes, recordings, and interviews were gradually entered into these frameworks.

Step 6: Preparation and Pilot of Interview Questions

The interview questions were prepared on April 25, 2002 using the research questions in this study and the literature on conducting interviews. Because the interview questions were intended to explore participant instructors’ perceptions of and attitudes towards participating in the TSG as an alternative professional development tool, data from the pre-questionnaire, participants’ reflective journals, and some notes from the recordings of the meetings that they held were also used while preparing the interview questions. The researcher scheduled interviews with the non-focus group members to pilot the questions. The piloting took place between May 3 and 5, 2002. Each interview took more than 50 minutes and was found to be tiring for the participants. The researcher made necessary changes by decreasing the number of questions and asking more direct questions in order to obtain more relevant answers to the research questions.

Step 7: Participant Interviews

The date and time for each participant interview was scheduled one week before the interview was conducted. This was done to make sure that the participants would be prepared psychologically to be interviewed and that they would schedule at least 45 minutes for an interview. Each interviewee was interviewed on the date that had been determined beforehand, and all the interviews were audio taped. In the final
interviews, two summary questions, four general questions, and approximately three to five follow-up questions for each general question were asked (see Appendix D).

The first summary question was about the participants’ overall experiences in participating in the TSG and their perceptions of the TSG. This initial summary question helped the participants to relax and be ready for more specific and detailed questions. Before the interview, the researcher prepared a data recording chart which included four categories: expectations, group organization, attitudes, and personal and professional development (see Appendix G). While participants were summarizing their experiences in the TSG, the relevant responses were noted down under each category in the chart. The notes were referred to in the rest of interview to guide the researcher. In the process of interview, if a question was answered earlier in the interview than expected, these questions were not repeated. Interviewees were asked to elaborate on those comments that needed clarification.

**Step 8: Analysis of Interview Data**

For the analysis of the interview data, a chart was prepared using four categories for answering the research questions (RQ): participants’ expectations and goals, group organization, participants’ attitudes, and participants’ perceptions of personal and professional development. Raw data were recorded under the appropriate categories in the chart prepared for each interviewee (see Appendix G for a sample page)

- RQ 1, participant expectations and goals
- RQ 2 & 3, group organization
- RQ 4, attitudes
- RQ 4, professional and Personal Development
Data Analysis

By means of the prepared instruments, qualitative data on initial procedures of the TSG formation and teachers’ expectations from, perceptions of, and attitudes towards participating in the TSG in terms of their personal and professional growth were obtained.

Procedures

The following procedures were all carried out by the researcher. Collected questionnaires were analyzed by the use of the charts prepared for each section of the questionnaire. The data was put into charts in order to get a general idea about participant interests, expectations, and concerns. The data collected by means of questionnaire were entered into charts and summarized in different tables (Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) for different sections to provide information about participants' background, interests and initial thoughts about and expectations from the TSG. Participants' responses to open-ended questions in the Part E and Part F were entered into charts (see Appendices H and I) and summarized in Table 7 to report participants' expectations and concerns respectively. Overall, the pre-questionnaire results recorded participants’ thoughts about participating in TSG just before the study started and provided necessary data for interview questions.

The recordings and field notes provided data relevant to the group formation and dynamics. The tape recordings of the meetings were not transcribed but were analyzed through behavioral framework charts mentioned earlier in this chapter (see Appendix E). The tapes were listened to and relevant data were entered into the charts, which were used to report the initial procedures of group organization and
certain aspects of the group dynamics, such as physical and emotional climate, group interaction, and group involvement.

The reflective journals were used to gain some insights about participants’ thoughts and feelings with no attempt made to analyze the raw data gained through this instrument as they were not a primary source of data. However, reflective journal entries were referred to in the individual interviews. This instrument also provided information about participants’ thoughts on participating in the TSG during the study.

The individual interviews were conducted after the researcher completed the observation period. The results gained from the interviews were entered into charts for each individual interview under four categories: participants’ expectations and concerns, group organization, participants attitudes and their perceptions of personal and professional development (see Appendix G). In the individual charts, the category for expectations and concerns was summarized in a chart (see Appendix F) to report participant expectations and group involvement and the responses concerning their attractions to the meetings and their worries about participation. Responses under the category for group organization were entered into the relevant parts of the behavioral framework tables to record participants’ perceptions of how the group was formed and organized. The categories concerning participants’ attitudes towards and perceptions of the TSG in terms of professional and personal development were entered into charts (see Appendices J and K) and summarized in tables to show how participants saw the TSG and what their attitudes were towards the TSG.
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Overview of the Study

The aims of this study were to explore the initial formation procedures of a TSG as professional development tool at OGU, FLD and to investigate participant instructors’ expectations and perceptions of the TSG’s contribution to their personal and professional development.

In this study, there were 13 volunteer participant instructors who were teaching English at OGU, FLD. There was a need to split this large group into two smaller groups because of the anticipated amount of the data to be collected and because of information from the literature about the importance of group size. The participants were chosen randomly for each group. Data were collected from two TSGs over a two-month period. However, the data collected from only one of the groups was included in this study due to the time limitation. The focus group (Participants 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, & 13) was chosen randomly after a pre-questionnaire was given to the participants. The focus TSG consisted of seven English language instructors from FLD at OGU. The participants came together in each group and organized their groups. They met each week for two months. The meetings were tape recorded and observed by the researcher. The researcher also took field notes and wrote reflective journal entries. In addition, the participants were asked to write reflective journal entries about their experiences in participating in the TSG. After the two-month period of observation, the researcher interviewed the participants of the TSG, tape-recording each interview. This was a semi-structured interview.
Procedure for Analysis

The data was organized and analyzed through the instruments used in this study. The pre-questionnaire was designed to answer research questions 1 and 3 concerning participants’ expectations from TSG and their initial thoughts about TSG organization respectively. Meeting recordings and field notes were intended to collect data about group dynamics and answer research questions 2 and 3 related to the formation of the group and group organization. An interview was used to learn participants’ perceptions of group organization and answer research question 4 on participants’ attitudes towards and perceptions of the TSG in terms of their personal and professional development. Reflective journal entries were used to support the data collected by means of individual interviews.

Pre-Questionnaire

The participants filled in the pre-questionnaire. The raw data was entered into a series of charts, one for each part of the pre-questionnaire, in order to learn participants’ background information, expectations, and initial thoughts about group organization. The chart for part A was used to report background information (see Table 2).

Part B in the questionnaire aimed to investigate whether participants had experience with any kind of professional development activity and in what ways they tried to develop themselves professionally. The regular reading of journals and books (listed by four of 7), ELT seminars (five of 7), and peer observation (four of 7) were the responses to the question concerning the way in which participants tried to keep themselves up to date with the developments in ELT. Five of seven participants reported that they participated in some form of professional development. Four of the
participants reported that they participated in ELT seminars, while none of the seven participants participated in teacher training programs outside of workshops and seminars. Further only three participants reported that they had contact with three organizations in Turkey, INGED, Turkish-American Association, and the British Council. The resources read regularly were listed as Time/Newsweek (five of 7), Forum, and material on the internet (four of 7). Overall, participants seemed to be interested in professional development in some way.

The responses to Part C in the questionnaire revealed participants’ initial thoughts about the TSG organization and content. The responses were entered into Table 3.

Table 3

Responses to the Pre-Questionnaire, Part C, Concerning Group Organization and Content of the TSG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Optimal group size</th>
<th>Length of the meetings</th>
<th>Frequency of the meetings</th>
<th>Language to be used in the meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8-15</td>
<td>1 h.</td>
<td>2 / month</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>1,5-2 hrs</td>
<td>1 / week</td>
<td>English &amp; Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>1,5 h.</td>
<td>1 / week</td>
<td>English &amp; Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>45 min.</td>
<td>1 / month</td>
<td>English &amp; Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30 min-1 h.</td>
<td>1 / week</td>
<td>English &amp; Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1 h.</td>
<td>1 / week</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2 hrs.</td>
<td>1 / week</td>
<td>English &amp; Turkish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to the group size range from 5 to 15, but overall, participants expected group size to be about 8 members. The length of the meetings was from 30 minutes to 2 hours, but the most frequent choice was 1 hour. Five of the participants reported that they would hold TSG meetings each week. Again, except for two participants, they stated that the language in the meetings should be both Turkish and
English without any restriction since they thought that sometimes they could express themselves more easily and effectively in their mother tongues, and they did not want any communication problems to occur. Only some participant thought that they should speak in English during the meetings since they teach English.

Question 5 in the pre-questionnaire, Part C, regarding the possible topics for TSG discussions, was considered as one of the aspects of group dynamics and entered into Table 4. One intention of this section was to orient the group to possible content areas, which might help them get started in determining the content for the group discussions.

Table 4

Possible Topics for TSG Discussions, Pre-Questionnaire Part C, Q.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>g</th>
<th>h</th>
<th>i</th>
<th>j</th>
<th>k</th>
<th>l</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>o</th>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X / total</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The letters refer to the list of topics. a. integration of skills, b. testing language skills, c. classroom management, d. classroom activities, e. course book evaluation, f. teaching grammar, g. teacher / student motivation, h. new theories and practices in ELT, i. using course materials and activities, j. teaching methods, k. use of technology in teaching, l. preparing lesson plans, m. teaching language skills, n. curriculum evaluation, o. problems and / or situations in class / institute, p. others, please specify, and r. none of the above. Suggestions.

The data displayed in Table 4 reports the participants’ initial thoughts about the content for the group discussions in the meetings. The topics reflecting the most participant interest were integration of skills, testing, and teacher/student motivation (listed by seven of seven participants). Following that were classroom management,
classroom activities, using course materials and activities, and use of technology in teaching (six of seven participants) and new theories and practices in ELT, teaching methods, and problems and/or situations in class (five of seven). Of least interest was course book evaluation. One participant wrote in teacher attitudes as another possible area to talk about.

Table 5 displays the responses to Part D in the questionnaire, which revealed participants’ thoughts about the role of collegiality in teacher development.

Table 5

**Responses to the Pre-Questionnaire, Part D, Concerning the Role of Collegiality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>P. 3</th>
<th>P. 5</th>
<th>P. 6</th>
<th>P. 7</th>
<th>P. 8</th>
<th>P. 10</th>
<th>P. 13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I find it easier to work with colleagues than doing the work by myself.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I find it enjoyable working with colleagues.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I find it a productive use of time to work with colleagues.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I find it rewarding to work with colleagues.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe that I can benefit from dialogue with colleagues and their experiences for my own professional development.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I have positive thoughts and feelings about sharing my experiences and knowledge with my colleagues.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Likert Scale rank: Strongly disagree = 1 to Strongly agree = 5*

As can be seen in Table 5, the responses to the statements in Part D indicate that participants were already positive about working with colleagues and sharing knowledge and experiences on professional issues, which might have contributed to the positive responses from participants about the TSG.
In part E of the pre-questionnaire, the participant instructors were asked why they wanted to participate in the TSG. The data gained from question 1 in Part E on the goals and expectations of the TSG participation were entered into Table 6.

**Table 6**

Goals and Expectations of Group Participation, Pre-questionnaire, Part E: Q.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals and Expectations</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>g</th>
<th>h</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 8</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The lower case letters represent the list of goals. a) to solve teaching based problems, b) interest in study groups and dialogue with other teachers about professional issues, c) need to engage in meaningful conversation with a colleague, d) need for more community in the school among the staff members, e) need/want to learn more about my profession, f) benefit from others’ expertise in group discussions, g) hope to influence the thinking of other teachers in the department, h) want to support other teachers by sharing my experiences, i) curious about what the teacher study group is and whether it is worth my time, j) others, please specify, k) none of the above. My reasons to participate.*

The data displayed in Table 6 indicates that six of the seven participants participated in the TSG primarily because they were interested in study groups and dialogue with other teachers about professional development. The next most frequent responses indicate that teachers expected to engage in meaningful dialogue with their colleagues on professional issues, benefit from others’ expertise, and find solutions to the teaching problems (five of seven participants). These responses revealed that participants were mainly interested in sharing ideas and experiences on professional issues but it is interesting that only one participant indicated that there was a need for more community among group members. This could be interpreted two ways. One,
that they did not feel community was as important as other areas, or two, that they already felt a sense of community due to group level meetings and sometimes good interaction among the colleagues in the school. Another interesting response was that one participant, the FLD assistant director, wanted to see if people were willing to spend time to improve their professional skills. This response might be interpreted as a signal of her perception of her status and responsibility.

Questions 2 and 3 in Part E were open-ended questions. Question 2 was about participants’ short and long term expectations and goals as individuals. Question 3 was about participants’ short and long term expectations and goals as a group. First, the responses to the questions 2 and 3 were recorded verbatim on a chart (see Appendix H). Then they were summarized in Table 7. Part F on participants’ interest level and concerns was treated in the same manner, and entered on a chart (see Appendix I) and summarized in Table 7, as well.

Overall, most participants expected that the TSG would contribute to their professional development, and they would find a platform to share experiences and improve their teaching. Since it was listed by five participants as both an individual and a group goal, sharing experiences and ideas stand out as the primary expectation of the TSG. The next most frequent answer was to improve teaching practice, which was also stated as both an individual and group goal by 4 of 7 participants. One of the interesting results that was reported as a group goal, listed by four participants, was to initiate a kind of teacher training program in the department, which was the initial aim of this research study.
Table 7

Participants Expectations and Their Concerns, Pre-Questionnaire, Part E & F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part E</th>
<th>The frequency of the responses, total 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing ideas and experiences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to improvement of teaching practice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshing knowledge and learning new about ELT</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming aware of the problems in the institution</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve relationship with colleagues</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing experiences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming an in-service teacher training in the department</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to improvement of teaching practice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group interaction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting others’ ideas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part F**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concerns</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find time to attend meetings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual trust</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of organization about time (and place)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were also goals stated by single individuals. One participant wanted to become aware of the problems in the institution, another, as an FLD assistant director in the department, expected to improve relationships with colleagues, and another, expressing a group goal, expected that the TSG would teach the participants to respect each other’s ideas. As a group goal, only two participants aimed at developing group interaction among the members, which may be a result of the fact that group members already knew each other, having been working in the same institution for at least one year when the study started.
The participants' major concern was that they might have difficulty finding time to attend the TSG meetings. This can be seen as a positive response, suggesting that they really wanted to participate in the TSG, and they were worried about finding time to attend. Contrary to the researcher’s anticipation, only one participant was concerned about mutual trust. These responses along with their voluntary participation indicate that teachers started the TSG with positive attitudes.

Interviews/Meeting Recordings/Field Notes/Reflective Journals

Interviews

The participants were interviewed on the dates scheduled and the interviews were tape-recorded. The audio tapes of the interviews were listened to and responses concerning the research questions were entered under relevant categories on a chart (see sample page, Appendix G).

As discussed earlier, the interview consisted of 2 summary questions, 4 general questions, and follow up questions in each general one (see Appendix D).

The first general question and its follow–up question, all about participants’ expectations, goals, and concerns, were used to answer the first research question. The tape-recorded interviews were listened to; the responses were entered under “expectations” category in the chart and then recorded in a chart (see Appendix F).

The second general question and its follow–up questions were all about the participants’ perceptions of the TSG formation and organization. The participants were asked about certain features of group structure and the procedures they followed in organizing the group. The responses to these questions were listened to twice. During the first playback, the responses were entered under the group organization category in the chart mentioned above, while during the second
listening the data were reported through the behavioral framework tables for group structure (see Appendix E).

The responses to the third and fourth general questions and their follow–up questions about personal and professional development and perceptions of TSG as a tool for these purposes (see Appendix D), were entered under participants’ attitudes and personal and professional development categories in the chart prepared for the interview results. These responses were summarized and reported in two different categories, attitudes and perceptions.

The second summary question was asked to obtain data about participants’ general attitudes towards participating in the TSG. The responses to this question provide insights on participants’ feelings about the TSG experience.

**Recording of Meetings**

The tapes of the meetings were listened to and the data which related to research questions on group organization and dynamics were recorded on behavioral framework charts which were designed in a checklist format using input from the literature. There were four charts related to setting up the group, operation of the group, group involvement, and group interaction (see Appendices E and F). Each meeting cassette was listened to and these charts were used as checklists to answer research questions 2 and 3, along with the interview results.

**The reflective journals and field notes**

In order to keep the amount of the data manageable for the scope of this study, the reflective journals and field notes were not considered as primary sources of data. Therefore, the data from these instruments were just highlighted by the researcher and used as background information, as a reminder for the participants.
during the interviews, since the interviews took place at the end of the 8 weeks, and for specific information not available in other data. Further, the participants were asked to elaborate on the comments that they made in their reflective journal entries during the interviews. Quotations from the reflective journals are included in relevant discussion sections to support the findings and include participant voice.

The findings from interview and/or meeting recordings will be dealt with under individual topic headings below. These findings will be supported by field notes and reflective journals, as well.

**Findings related to Expectations**

Participants’ responses to the questions concerning their expectations, attraction to the TSG meetings, and worries are summarized in Table 8.

Under expectations, sharing experiences and learning from other colleagues and learning about ELT were the most common responses, given by four of seven members, a finding similar to that of the pre-questionnaire, where the number was higher. The difference may be the result of the fact that the pre-questionnaire was given before the study started in order to elicit participants’ initial expectations while the interview was conducted two months later to learn about their perceptions of and attitudes towards the TSG after having participated in it.

As can be seen in Table 8, five participants reported that their desire to teach and learn something new was the most effective factor in their continuing to attend TSG meetings. The next most common response, listed by 3 participants, is interesting since it suggests that participants’ enthusiasm and desire in doing this kind of study are effective factors in maintaining such groups.
Table 8

Participants’ Expectations, Attraction to the TSG Meetings, and their Worries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expectations</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share experiences and learn from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about ELT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss the subjects decided on before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to MA studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Become aware of common problems and talk about general issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a better chance of collegiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted everybody to contribute to the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve institutional problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attraction to the TSG</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and learning something new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm and desire to do something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted to make people aware of general issues like prep school concept in Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worries</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some participants’ talking too much in the group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried about uncertainties about what to do and how to do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing less than they wanted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned whether she would be able to attend all meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants also expressed some concerns. One concern shared by two participants was uncertainties about group meetings and organization before the group actually started, which may suggest that TSG participants should be given more guidelines in advance to lessen the anxiety. The other concerns reported were related to on-going process. Some members’ talking too much was reported by two participants as a disturbing element, while one participant mentioned that she talked a lot which might cause problems for others. However, she felt that this was natural for her personality, a self-assessment with which some other participants agreed. One
participant was concerned about her ability to attend all meetings due to personal and institutional reasons, which indicated that she wanted to participate fully.

In their reflective journals, participants also mentioned their expectations and concerns. Participant 13 wrote in his first reflective journal entry,

Before starting the meeting, I did not know what would do in this group and had doubts about to what extent this TSG would be beneficial to me. In participating in the TSG, I had goals, such as benefiting from colleagues’ expertise, sharing ideas about theoretical and practical aspects of ELT issues, learning how other colleagues solve the problems we face during the lessons. The meeting was more beneficial and productive than I had expected and I started to think that I could achieve my aims.

Participant 7 pointed to the fact that knowing what to do contributed to his feeling relaxed and wrote in his first reflective journal entry that “In fact, I participated this meeting [first meeting] concerning what would happen since every decision was left us. I wondered what we could talk and do... After these issues are talked and determined, there was clearer and more relaxed atmosphere”.

In her journal, Participant 8 reflected on her concern about her talking a lot in the group meetings and in her third reflective journal entry she discussed this and another concern:

By the way, I sometimes wonder whether I am talking too much; but unfortunately, I could not help speaking if I had something to say because of my personality. Further in the group, there are a few friends who are actively teaching, therefore, I believe that it is important to share the difficulties and students’ reactions to what is presented in theoretical aspects and activities.

During the discussions, she was observed to comment on the second point, whether the activities or materials presented in the group were suitable to the context in which they were teaching.
Findings Related to Group Organization

The responses to the second group questions were on how the group was organized at the beginning and how the group members determined the content and format of the discussions (see Appendix E). The participants’ responses in the interview were supported by other instruments, meeting recordings, field notes, and reflective journals.

Setting up the Group

Participant perceptions about setting up the group covered time and day of the meetings, group goal, the procedures in the group, general structure of the discussions, content for the group discussions, and members’ roles and leadership in the group.

The participants stated that they decided time, day, and frequency of the meetings at the first TSG meeting. They decided to meet each week on Friday at 13:00 in the library. Meeting recordings and field notes supported this response, also indicating that they decided to make up for any meetings that could not be held at the determined time. They further decided to meet for at least 8 weeks and then they would consider the results and decide whether or not to maintain the group. This decision making process can be seen in the extract taken from the first meeting below:

Participant 8: ... we can start
Participant 13: 8 weeks
Participant 3: First of all let’s arrange the time.
Participant 8: If we have eight weeks, can we meet each week and is each week 13:00 o’clock suitable for all? At 14:00 we have our group level meetings start
Participant 10: Yes yes
Participant 8: For now let’s say each week.
Participant 10: For now let’s make such decision.
Participant 8: Yes
Participant 7: Is there any other possibility except for Friday. 
Participant 8: Well, it will be very difficult to find any other suitable day except for Friday. 
Participant 7: Yes, the only choice is Friday. 
Participant 3: We have to arrange our own time. Friday 13:00. 
For example, we hardly arrived in time. We went downtown and came back. Further in my case, I sometimes go to Istanbul and my train leaves at 13:00.

Although the general group goal was professional development, one participant reported that the participants also set their own goals at the first meeting by considering their expectations from the group.

The procedures in the group to be followed were also determined in the first meeting. Participants reported that they determined what they were going to do in the TSG meetings for at least 8 weeks as can be seen in the following excerpt taken from the first meeting:

Participant 8: Now, let’s try to produce ideas about how can we benefit from these meetings. What can be done? Well, as [Participant 3] mentioned, first of all it may be... well it may be about a routine experience in the classrooms that we have on that day. We can talk about it.
Participant 7: Will we start from that point?
Participant 8: We can start from that point. By the way, among us there are friends who are not teaching [in the preparatory school] currently.
Participant 13: Yes.
Participant 8: Ha. Thus we can get feedback from them in different ways. We will also have asked their opinions. We can ask such questions as ‘What would you do in that situation’ or there may be some questions that they have or they want to ask. We can answer those and...
Participant 13: It was one of the most important goals that I had; benefiting from our more experienced teachers’ experiences.
Participant 3: Well it may be so, for example, we can create a sample lesson. How can we prepare that lesson or how can we make an effective reading activity for that?
We can talk about this, friends. This may be reading or writing.

The meeting recordings and field notes support this and indicate the following procedures were agreed on. Participants would meet at the determined time and place for TSG meetings, each of them would bring materials for the discussions, and they would inform others when they could not attend or be late for the meetings. They would also follow an outline of the possible content and format for discussions, which would include talking about experiences, reviewing articles, and presenting materials and activities. There was no predetermined discussion agenda for the group discussions.

Another aspect determined at the first meeting was the general structure of the discussions. In the discussions, the participants decided to blend theory and practice since they thought discussing just theory might be boring. They decided that experienced teachers would share their experiences and talk about the situations in their classes while inexperienced teachers would bring materials that they found through sources in ELT. The experienced teachers’ workload and insufficient free time (see Table 2) to do research was an important factor in deciding this division of labor. Some of these suggestions and discussion on those issues can be seen in the excerpt taken from the first meeting:

Participant 13: Friends, before starting I have a question. Are we going to discuss theoretical issues? I have a suggestion. For instance, each week we can discuss about a theory or something more specific such as vocabulary teaching. We can read an article from an ELT magazine. If there are interesting articles on such issues each week two or there people might bring articles then we can choose on of them since we cannot do all of them. A friend might explain the gist of the article.
Participant 8: Might be. This may work out in this way. Frankly, with my current program I cannot do any article research but I can comment on the articles I read previously.
Participant 13: Yes, why not.
Participant 8: I can make comments which are parallel with the readings I have done during my master studies.
Participant 13: Yes, why not.
Participant 8: You [inexperienced teachers] might have more time to look for and find these sorts of things. You might bring some and you might say that some researchers support this and I might remember another article and I might support the opposite.
Participant 13: Yes it might be.

... 

Participant 5: Are we going to bring the topics beforehand or are we going to bring the topics that day.
Participant 13: No, I think...
Participant 3: No
Participant 8: No. In my opinion this is unnecessary. To limit the topics means to limit ourselves.
Participant 13: For example, we might have seen an interesting article on a web site that week or this might be an ELT technique....
Participant 10: ...We might talk about the activities or practices in the previous seminars or in the workshops and we might think that we can practice them in class.
Participant 8: Even we implement those and we can observe it all together, as I mentioned before.
Participant 13: Yes
Participant 10: Hı hı

In terms of possible content for the discussions, participants reported that they decided on an outline of possible topics at the first meeting. Their responses indicate that the topics reflected problems in their classes and in the institution, for which they were looking for solutions, participants’ experiences, missing points in the institution, and broader issues such as the educational system in Turkey. Supporting this report, meeting recordings and field notes show that in the first meeting, participants did not decide on a pre-determined discussion agenda but they did some brainstorming about possible topics for discussion in the meetings. In general, they
decided to discuss or talk about the experiences and the topics in ELT that they were individually interested in. Participants talked about the issues of personal interest and suggested the group discuss those. Samples can be seen in the following excerpt taken from the first meeting:

Participant 10: In addition, I have something to say. For example, personally I mind too much some issues. I am thinking on them. I wonder other views on them. Actually I can guess them more or less but. One of these... we can discuss these. For example, let me tell you one of them.
Participant 8: ıh ıh
Participant 10: Using mother tongue in language classes. I mean how much it should be used and how much it should not be used. I think it is really a controversial issue.

Participant 7: ... In that case in our talks, then, starting from the situations in our school,
Participant 8: in the reality of our school
Participant 7:; does it mean that we will always talk about in order to find solutions to our problems?
Participant 8: In general
Participant 10 No
Participant 3: No
Participant 7: The things that we will talk about, for example, will be specific to our context? For example, we are trying a new book and a new system, will it be specific issues or problems that are based on those?
Participant 8: Sure. There is no sense in talking about the impractical things. Eventually, the reality of our institution matters.
Participant 3: Beside, many universities are implementing different systems...

Specific topics proposed by the participants were lesson planning, testing, problems they had in teaching practice, the Turkish educational system, particularly in relation to preparatory schools in Turkey, and the theoretical aspects of those topics. They also decided to observe each other’s classes and discuss those in the group meetings; however, they did not implement this decision during the study.
The group participants did not choose a leader officially in the first or following meetings. Two of the members stated that they did not think that they needed a leader, and one participant said that they did not choose a leader since all of them knew that Participant 8 would lead the group.

In the interview, one participant mentioned that "Participant 8 was our leader. We did not choose her but she has a leading personality. In her personality, she has leading sense and she took the control of us and she leads us". She also reported that Participant 8’s being assistant director affected the group and stated,

…during the meetings, she was talking too much. Always she talks too much. Maybe it made us choose her as a leader without conscious [subconsciously]. We choose her subconsciously…She was a natural leader and also Participant 3, her best friend was vice leader. If they were not in the group Participant 10 was our leader because she was more experienced than us.

She continued by saying that experience determined the leadership in the group and gave an interesting perception of experienced and inexperienced teachers

Because, you know, there were three research assistants [inexperienced teachers] and four lecturers [experienced instructors] and in our school we are regarded as second grade teachers… because we are inexperienced, by the way we do not have the right to give lessons [in preparatory school]. I think this is the reason. If we were teaching since the beginning of our teaching semester, we would be accepted as experienced. But we are working as research assistant from the beginning of our working career; this makes us as the second grade teachers.

The participants did not determine any specific individual roles as defined in the literature in the first meeting, according to both field data and interviews, but it was clear that there was a labor division, also determined by level of experience. The group determined that experienced teachers would talk about their experience while
the inexperienced ones would read and bring in the results of reading, which division changed a little during the meetings. Some experienced teachers also presented materials they read and, sometimes, inexperienced teachers shared their classroom experiences, especially problems, during the discussions.

Operation of the group

In this section, three aspects of group organization that were observed are discussed, physical and emotional climate, group leadership, and members' roles and decision-making.

The physical climate was acceptable. Except for one participant, all stated that the room was comfortable in general, but there were also some small problems, such as a few occurrences of interruptions and cleaning. No pattern developed for member seating (see Appendix L). In the first two weeks, the seating arrangement was the same except for Participant 13. In the other meetings, there was no significant pattern observable, although three of the members tended to sit in the same place in several meetings. According to the field notes the seating arrangement did not reflect the formation of any sub-groups.

In terms of emotional climate, participants expressed positive responses. Six of seven participants felt that the emotional climate was supporting and accepting. They stated that they felt free, and there was a friendly atmosphere in the group. One participant, however, said that she felt alone in the group, even though she also reported that group members were friendly and close to each other. The supportive and accepting environment in the group was also observed and recorded in the field notes. In the discussions during the meetings, participants were observed to be listening to each other, taking notes, nodding their heads, and backchanneling (uh,
Field notes showed there were some situations when the TSG members did not appear to freely share their ideas or manage to complete their sentences due to other members’ interruptions. However, when they were asked whether they felt they could freely talk in the group discussions, these same members were positive. They mentioned that because of the fact that they knew each other well and there was nobody superior to them within the group itself (e.g. an outside expert), they felt free to talk or share ideas in the group discussions without any hesitation or irritation.

The group appeared to be a good place for members to share their ideas and experiences. The group members already knew each other since they had been working in the same for place at least two years. This contributed to the atmosphere of the group meetings in terms of feeling free to talk, sharing, and participating in the group discussions. All the TSG members expressed that they felt they were a part of the group and a member of the group although they reported different sources for those feelings. Some of the responses were that they felt responsible to the group, contributed to and participated in the group discussions, shared with colleagues, willingly attended the group meetings and enjoyed being there or participating in the discussions, and were listened to and appreciated.

During the group meetings, there was no conflict nor were problems observed in the discussions, however, two participants reported that they felt that they shared less than they expected. The group members listed the following indications of an effective climate for group functioning. One of the members said that she was encouraged to speak in these group meetings though she generally hesitated. Two
members stated that it was not a formal meeting, so they relaxed and enjoyed being there. Again, one of the participants stated that the group decided on and talked about anything they wanted. There being no superiority in terms of an outside expert or someone with a Ph.D. in the group also helped members relax, and they shared whatever they wanted to even though there was an assistant director in the group.

Group leadership is the second observable area of group operation. Although the group did not choose an official leader in the first or in the following meetings, the participants reported that there was an unofficial leader in the group as discussed under setting up the group. Participant 8 emerged as the natural leader in the group possibly because of both her personality and position in the unit, assistant director, although the second reason was not reported directly by the participants. The members of the TSG stated that she was leading or dominating the group because of her personality and/or her experience. One member reported that if she had not been the leader or dominant person in the group, another experienced instructor would have filled that role, an event which in fact was observed by the researcher in some of the meetings.

Participant 8 was asked whether her being an FLD assistant director affected the other members in the TSG. She stated that “...I did not think that my being assistant director did affect the group. I did not consider myself as an assistant director or chair of the group. I explained some rules since I know those rules...” In some cases she thought that some ideas suggested seemed good but were not suitable to the context in the FLD at OGU. So, she suggested members think about something suitable for the institution since they were incapable of changing some institutional regulations and rules.
Four out of seven members thought that Participant 8 was leading the group. In fact, almost all members thought that Participant 8 was dominating the group but one member stated that she was just an active member and was not actually dominating the group. There were other dominant members, as well. Participant 3 and Participant 10 were also reported as dominating members. The definition was not clear here as members’ understanding of “domination” differed. Two participants thought that domination meant most active but they did not describe what they meant, even after clarification questions, and reported that active members were dominating the group, while some other members thought that the members talking the most were dominating the group. The difference between “active” and “talking the most” was not clear. Another definition was based on experience, with one member stating that more experienced instructors dominated the group. In the interviews, only one of the members reported any displeasure about someone’s dominating or leading the group. Most stated that it did not cause any problem for them personally, furthermore, they, especially the inexperienced instructors, said it helped. However, two members reported that they were really disturbed by the dominant persons’ amount of talk in the group.

In the TSG, there were individuals having power as explained above, however, there were no subgroups trying to take on a leadership role reported or observed in the two-month observation period. The subgroups emerged among experienced and inexperienced teachers in the group, which is possibly the result of the perception of experienced and inexperienced teachers in the department.

The third aspect of group operation observed concerned members roles and decision making. The TSG members did not determine any role structure except for
the division of labor among experienced and inexperienced teachers. In fact they did not decide to assign roles among the group members, such as scribe or secretary, but operated according to their predetermined procedure, with different individuals leading or at least initiating the group discussions. They all contributed to the discussions, so nobody expressed that they felt there was unequal participation in discussions but some said there were members who talked too much. This contradiction may suggest that participants made a distinction between the term "equal participation" and talking too much, or they felt that they said what they wanted though there was an unequal participation.

Field notes, meeting recordings, and interview responses indicate that the group members did not decide on any pattern for decision making. It is interesting that, though it was unspoken, there was a pattern for decision making. In the group meetings, each member expressed their ideas and the group either agreed or disagreed with those ideas. They decided everything as a whole group, which meant all the decisions were group decisions. One participant perceived that the topics they discussed such as learner autonomy, testing, and course book evaluation were determined by one of the group members but she added that they (the group) did not oppose discussing those points, since they were good ones. However, meeting records and field notes indicate that possible discussion topics were determined as a group by considering the suggestions of all the participants (see Appendix M, excerpt from the meeting 1).

In the first meeting, no rules were set up about coming to the meetings on time or completing the work that they had. One of the members stated that since they were adults, there was no need to decide on rules so, nobody did. However, in the
following meetings, when two of the participants came late, the members talked about this situation by making jokes without offending anybody for coming late. Then they decided to come on time for the meetings, and, if they had an excuse, they would inform the other participants about that in advance. One of the participants who came late stated that they went to the meetings late and nobody said anything to them. However, the other participant reported that the group members were making each other feel responsible about attendance and bringing materials and added, “but there was no pressure”, which may suggest no official pressure but just a kind of peer pressure.

Group Interaction

To analyze group interaction, the tape recordings of the meetings were listened to twice, and all utterances were recorded in five-second segments on graph paper. While listening to the tape recordings the researcher checked a box every five seconds indicating which participant was speaking for what purpose. The signs used to indicate speaker’s purposes were: √, +, -, ?, and Ø for speaking, confirming or agreeing, opposing or disagreeing, seeking information or asking questions, and failing in an attempt to talk, respectively. This procedure was followed a second time with new charts and a digital sound recorder to increase reliability. Then the charts were analyzed to determine the amount of talk for each participant, over and under participation, and the discourse pattern in the group discussions (see Appendix E, Table 3). The percentage of talk time for each participant over the eight meetings can be seen in Table 9.

In the group meetings, it was observed that there was only one occurrence of one to one communication. Participants did not talk with each other during
discussions. Except for the one occurrence, all the participants talked to the group during the meetings.

Table 9

The Amount of Talk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>% of presentation in the group meetings</th>
<th>% of other talk in the group meetings</th>
<th>Total amount of communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>15.22</td>
<td>16.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 5</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>11.04</td>
<td>20.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 6</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 7</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>17.41</td>
<td>19.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 8&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>37.27</td>
<td>43.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 10</td>
<td>12.56</td>
<td>16.10</td>
<td>28.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 13&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>9.30</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>18.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Those participants were absent from some meetings but their amount of talk was calculated the same as the ones who were present in 8 meetings. Participant 3 was absent 3 meetings while Participant 13 was absent 1 meeting and Participant 8 left one meeting after 5 minutes.

Table 9 shows evidence that one person led the group. As interview results and tape recordings also indicated, Participant 8 was reported to be the dominant person in the group. She was not chosen as a leader for the group; however, it was found that she was leading the discussions in six of eight meetings. In those meetings she opened the meeting sessions, told people what to do next, asked the other participants whether they had any more ideas, and directed them to the following step in the meetings. In some meetings, Participant 3 also attempted to lead the group but she could not, since Participant 8 was the more dominant member. In the sixth meeting, the most experienced participants, Participants 3 and 8, were absent, and there was no pattern of leading the discussions. All the other participants talked and expressed their ideas in a natural flow of the discussion and nobody seemed dominating but they asked Participant 10, who was the most experienced of them at that meeting, for confirmation or for her thoughts on certain topics.
It was observed in the group meetings and found from data gathered through meeting recordings that instructors who were more experienced and had an MA degree seemed to be the dominant persons in the group. As can be seen in Table 9, the over-participant member was participant 8 while the under-participant member was Participant 6. Participant 8 was the most experienced instructor with an MA degree in ELT, and she was the assistant director in the department. Participant 6 was the least experienced instructor in the group. She reported in the interview that she could not participate as much as she wanted since she was inexperienced and she needed to prepare for the discussions, which she could not do for some meetings because the topics were not pre-determined for each meeting. So she could not help keeping silent in the meetings. Further, it is interesting that when the percentage of presentation and that of other talk in the group meetings are compared, the result of labor division between inexperienced and experienced teachers is clear; for inexperienced teachers, the percentage of presentation is higher than that of other talk in the group meetings.

An interesting result was that, though Participant 3 was absent from three meetings due to institutional or personal reasons, her percentage of talk was comparable to other members who attended all meetings.

Although no specific roles were determined, it can be seen from the above that there was a tiered group structure. There were three tiers in the group. First, Participant 8 occupied the highest status perhaps because of her status as a FLD assistant director and/or as the most experienced teacher with MA in the group. As Beebe and Materson (1997) state, “people with higher social status generally have more prestige and command more respect that do people of lower status” (p. 85). It
was supported by the literature that Participant 8’s being assistant director affected the relationships and group structure. To again quote Beebe and Masterson, “the status or reputation an individual has before joining a group certainly affects the role he or she assumes” (p. 86). Second, experienced teachers with or without an MA, Participants 3, 7, and 10, were in the second tier in the group. It was observed that they had higher status than inexperienced teachers did since they were asked for their ideas, and experience determined more or less the status of the participants in the group. In this group, third tier involved inexperienced teachers, Participants 5, 6, 13.

All the participants seemed to be listening to each other talk and contributing to the group discussions. During the presentations and group discussions, participants were listening to the person talking, and they were asking and answering questions or commenting on what someone had said. They also built on each other’s ideas, agreeing, disagreeing, supporting, or opposing those ideas. For example, after listening to a presentation, they became involved in follow-up discussions, where they talked about the relationship of the topics discussed in the presentation to their institution. They expressed their ideas by giving reasons for their thoughts and building on other participant’s ideas.

**Group Involvement**

Group involvement is one of the central features of group organization. The aspects of the group involvement covered in this study are participants’ reasons for joining the group, their attraction to the TSG meetings, the level of commitment they made to the group, and personal benefits gained from TSG meetings (see Appendix F).
All the participants had their own expectations and goals for participating in the TSG. As discussed earlier, sharing experiences and learning their colleagues’ ideas was the most frequent answer that the participants gave as a reason for participating. Learning about ELT or developing professional knowledge was the second expectation, shared by three members. Other expectations stated by individual members were to benefit from what they had learned in TSG meetings for the MA program they were enrolled in, to become aware of common problems in the institution, to create an opportunity for improving collegiality, and to solve institutional problems. Participants reported that most of their expectations from the group were met.

The participants wanted to keep going to the meetings. When they were asked what made them want to continue, it was interesting to find that all enjoyed the opportunity to learn and/or teach something new. One member stated that she enjoyed the atmosphere of the meetings, which was different from other meetings and which people took seriously and were conscious about.

All the members willingly contributed to the group discussions and did their assigned tasks on time. Each member presented materials they had prepared at least once. Throughout the study, inattention or non-commitment to the group discussions and tasks was not observed by the researcher or reported by the participants. There were few occurrences of absenteeism and coming late to the meetings. The participants informed their colleagues about their reasons for coming late or being absent, and appeared to feel responsible to the other members of the group. Four of the members were present in all meetings held during the two-month period. One of the members came for all but one of the meetings, having to leave one meeting after
five minutes because of a health problem. One of the members was absent in one meeting while another member was absent from three meetings for personal and institutional reasons. Four participants came late to meetings; two of them were late due to a misunderstanding among members, and the other two were late because of meeting with students. There were five occurrences of absenteeism over eight meetings, a positive indication of group involvement.

Comments made by various participants belonging to the group were that they had the opportunity to get to know each other well professionally and personally, and share knowledge and experience. Six of the seven members stated that they felt positive and good, and that they thought the experience was good for them. Learning something new and developing vision were also among the stated personal needs that were met by belonging to the TSG.

Findings Related to Participants’ Attitudes towards and Perceptions of the TSG

In the interview, participants were asked whether they thought that this TSG had contributed to their personal and professional development and in what ways it contributed to their development. The data obtained from the results of interviews were entered into the charts in Appendix J as teachers’ attitudes in terms of likes and dislikes and in Appendix K as teachers’ perception of the TSG in terms of its contribution to their personal and professional development. The data in those charts were summarized in Tables 10 and 11 as teachers’ attitudes towards and perceptions of the TSG, respectively.

The data displayed in Table 10 reports participants’ feelings about the TSG and participating in the TSG. They expressed what they liked or disliked in terms of
group formation, group organization, and participation in the TSG. All said the TSG was a good place to share and discuss experiences, ideas, and knowledge.

Participants’ responses to the question concerning whether they enjoyed being in this group indicated all were more or less positive about participating in the TSG.

Table 10

**Participant Instructors' Attitudes towards the TSG.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ interview results in terms of what participants liked and disliked about the TSG and participation in this group</th>
<th># of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 7</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Participants’ Responses in terms of what they like about the TSG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good place to share and discuss</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy to join and enjoyed being in the TSG</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No limitation or set of specific rules in the group</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal meeting structure</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good group interaction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No outsider telling the group members what to do</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group composition</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal matters as well as professional issues discussed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No trouble makers or no big problems in decision making in the TSG</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of the group</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Participants’ Responses in terms of what they disliked about TSG.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time determined for the meetings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of the group</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of the amount of talk in group discussions</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No pre-determined discussion agenda</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dislike discussing a topic from linguistic field</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of the meetings (too short)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing the topics that the participants already knew</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of the meetings</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Though positive about participating in the TSG, did not much enjoy Being in the group</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six of 7 participants stated that they enjoyed being in this group. In the interview, Participant 13 said that “All members of the group come there to share
experiences, to contribute to others, and learn from others. We all have positive attitudes about the group and group members”. Participant 6 said that she enjoyed being in the group but she also mentioned in the interview that “it would be more enjoyable if the topics were predetermined”. As the lone detractor, Participant 7 stated that he was positive about participating in general but he did not much enjoy being in this group and in the interview he stated,

[I did] not much enjoy being in this group. One of the reasons was timing of the meeting. Most of the time, I felt responsible about contributions. I felt sorry when I did not bring anything. But, I think, the problems general or specific can be best discuss in such groups, with a group of colleagues who know the problems best, systematic problems and educational problems since we are the only people who could see the problems from different point of views and we are the only people who can suggest ideas and solutions. Nobody else. That kind of meetings would be very useful meetings to discuss.

Participants were positive about being given no limitations for group discussions and having no specific rules set in the group (listed by four of 7 participants). At first, they felt a bit uncertain about not being given any clear guidelines but later they liked the idea of being free to decide everything in the group. In her reflective journal entry written on the 22nd of March, Participant 3 said, “There is no limitation, which was the best aspect of the TSG. Everybody is enjoying. Knowledge and experiences are being shared”.

Four of the 7 participants reported that they liked the idea of no formal meeting structure for their group meetings. In the individual interviews, they stated meetings were not formal, strict, or compulsory, which helped them to relax and enjoy being in this group.
Three of the participants mentioned that interaction among the group members was good and this friendly atmosphere contributed to group discussions in a positive way. Participant 10 said, “Since I know these people I felt free with them.” Participant 6 mentioned that “we are close to each other, we are friends. The meetings like a visit to our friends; we are visiting our friends in the library.” The other members did not state anything negative or positive about group interaction in the interviews. Two of the participants stated that there was no outsider or superior person telling the TSG members what to do, which made them feel relaxed and able to talk about whatever they wanted.

One participant reported that she liked the idea of discussing personal matters as well as professional issues. Another participant mentioned that she was pleased to see that no one made any trouble and that they did not have any big problems in making decisions in the TSG.

Five of the seven members expressed that the time they determined for the group meetings was not suitable for two reasons. First, since they had group level meetings just after the TSG meetings, they needed to rush to those meetings. Therefore, sometimes they had to limit the discussions. Secondly, since it was at the end of the week; they were tired. However, all agreed that it was the most suitable time for all. Participant 8, in her reflective journal entry written on the 19th April, “Because of other meetings, we needed to shorten the length of the meeting. In fact, our decision about choosing time was not right, I think.”

The participants' responses in terms of group size differed. While one of the participants stated that the group size was appropriate since it would be difficult to find time to come together with a larger group, five of the participants suggested that
the group size should be larger in order to increase the productivity of group
discussions and lessen the deficiencies due to absenteeism or group composition (i.e.
dominance of experienced teachers over inexperienced ones). Participant 8 wrote in
her reflective journal entry,

Since the size of the group is not large, when some members
were absent, the meetings were not enjoyable. In such a group,
there should be at least ten to fifteen members, so absenteeism
of members does not affect and group members maintain the
group discussions. (19.04.02)

In the interview she mentioned about the same topic and said,

If our group were more crowded as I said, probably there
would be more people to talk about on the same topic and then
I would not be the one or my other prep teachers would not be
the people to speak a lot.... For me it was not a problem but for
my inexperienced teachers they may think that or they may
feel irritated ‘we [inexperienced teachers] did not talk too
much’ or they may feel a little bit shy about the situation. I do
not know how they feel but they stated that if they knew the
topics before [knew the discussion content in advance], they
would feel more confident.

However, the literature suggests that the group size should be five to seven.
When the group size increases, Beebe and Materson (1997) state that the interaction
among the individual members decreases or as Forsyth (1990) suggests the group
becomes “more complex and formally structured” (p. 10).

Three of the participants stated that group was composed of both experienced
and inexperienced teachers and added that the presence of experienced teachers
helped the group in terms of deciding on and discussing the topics and sharing ideas.
One experienced participant mentioned that though she was positive about
experienced and inexperienced teachers coming together in this group, it would be
better if she could work with people who worked in certain topics that she was
interested in. Another, inexperienced participant stated that she learned from experienced teachers, and she was not opposed to the idea of bringing experienced and inexperienced teachers together in a group; however, she did not like the idea of experienced teachers’ talking a lot in the group, even though they had more to say.

Some members’ talking too much in the group discussions was one of the issues disturbing participants. Two of the participants, one experienced and one inexperienced, reported that they could not participate in the group discussions as much as they wanted due to this imbalance of talk. Participant 6 expressed in the interview that she “felt alone because some experienced teachers talked a lot and we could not share but just listened to them as in methodology lessons”. This comment may be interpreted as one of the strong evidences of a tiered group structure. Some members’ talking too much was not a problem for just inexperienced teachers but also experienced ones. In an interview, an experienced participant stated,

> I sometimes was disturbed with my colleagues talk, amount of talk. Yes, of course they should talk but we have limited time, and I mean they should not make so long speeches. Because of that I could not add some points or I could not say my ideas. They should have been more thoughtful about that”

One of the experienced participants felt that the reasons inexperienced teachers remained quiet was a result of their own decision or behavior, perhaps because they were unfamiliar with the topic, had little to say, or because of their mood, which may suggest that this participant did not understand the inexperienced teachers’ concerns.

Another issue raised by two participants, both inexperienced, was that discussion agenda was not determined in advance. The participants suggested that the topics might be determined in advance, so they could be more prepared for the
discussions in the group meetings. As a result of their input, at the end of the eight meetings, group members decided they needed to develop a discussion agenda for future meetings, however it would be a flexible one, allowing for change. Recordings of the meetings showed that in four of the meetings the group had decided on topics for discussion in the previous meeting and talked about the determined topic. In one of the meetings, they decided that everybody was supposed to bring materials for the following meeting. In fact, they planned the next meeting every week but one. Furthermore, in the first meeting they had decided as a group that for each meeting all the participants would bring materials, and then they would decide what to talk about in that meeting. However, the two participants felt they needed more structure than this, with a discussion agenda set at the very beginning.

Individual comments on dislikes listed the length of the meetings, which they wished to be longer, the place of the meetings, a specific discussion topic from linguistics, and discussion content which was already known or very familiar to them.

As mentioned above, the interview responses related to participant instructors’ perceptions of the TSG and its contribution to their professional and personal development were summarized in Table 11. The responses in Table 11 indicate that all participants felt they benefited from the TSG meetings in terms of their professional and personal development in some way.

In terms of participants’ personal development, the most frequent response indicated that the TSG made participants feel more responsible about their professional development and their participation in the TSG, listed by five of 7 participants. Participant 13 stated in the interview,
Nobody else can do something for me. Even I attend such a group, I have to contribute to the group. They cannot give me something if I do not want to take them.... I realized that I knew too little on ELT, not experienced at all. I desperately need to develop myself in my profession.

Table 11

Participant Instructors’ Perceptions of the TSG’s Contribution to Their Professional and Personal Development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ interview results in terms of what they think about the TSG’s contribution to their personal and professional development</th>
<th># of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 7</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt more responsible</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt good and thought it was useful for development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned to respect each other’s ideas</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned that they can learn from other colleagues</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked freely and expressed ideas in front of people</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Became aware of personal potential and professional development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave academic enthusiasm and dynamism as well as new vision</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributed to self confidence</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared ideas, experiences, and knowledge</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved collegiality among participant instructors</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned about ELT</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about the problems in teaching practice</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned from other colleagues and their experiences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulated thinking of new ideas</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Found solutions to problems in teaching practice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to make research in ELT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshing their knowledge in ELT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning what was happening in the department</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realization of alternatives in teaching practice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped to enhance teaching and learning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realizing that teaching and learning were complex processes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling need to develop oneself in the profession</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They expressed that they felt they needed to come to the meetings prepared. Two participants reported the TSG was a useful way to develop oneself personally and professionally. It also helped two participants to realize that they could learn from other colleagues as they learned to respect other colleagues’ ideas. It was also interesting to find that the TSG encouraged two of the participants to overcome their fear of talking in front of people.

Another participant said that she became aware of her potential as an English language instructor and added that previously she had not trusted her abilities and what she knew; however, after she participated in the TSG, she realized what she could do as an instructor. One participant stated that the TSG gave her academic enthusiasm, dynamism, and new vision as well, contributing to her self-confidence. In the interview, Participant 10 mentioned that she was shown respect for her ideas and showed respect to others’ ideas and that her ideas were appreciated in the group, all of which contributed to her self-confidence.

In the area of professional development there were two major points that all the participants stated in their individual interviews. First, the TSG provided the opportunity for the participants to share their experiences, knowledge, and ideas, which helped them learn more about their profession, diagnose their problems in their teaching practice, see the problems from different point of views and explore solutions to those problems in their discussions. The second point was that the TSG helped the participants improve collegiality among themselves. One of the participants stated that since the TSG they have felt that when they have problems, they may go and ask their colleagues and find solutions together, while another mentioned that they started to talk more about ELT issues with their colleagues and
do research together. Participant 13 stated in the interview that “We can collaborate each other to solve our teaching problems and our institutional problems. I can work with them in other projects.” He also mentioned that “our discussions and talks are not limited to TSG discussions. We talked about these issues after the meeting. We kept talking about them,” Participant 10 also stated that “we were already close friends but we started to talk more about ELT issues. My relationship with my friends developed in terms of these ELT issues. We did not talk about ELT issues too much or much [very much or much at all] but we started to talk about them much [a lot]” (Interview).

As can be seen from Table 11, five of 7 participants reported that the TSG provided an opportunity to talk about their teaching problems and helped them learn more about ELT and realize that they could learn from their colleagues and their experiences. The participants stated that they became more aware of the problems in teaching and talked about those problems so as to find solutions. Participant 13 stated in the interview,

We are more aware of the problems.... I am more aware of those problems. I am more aware that to solve these problems and deal with those problems, complex sophisticated problems, we need to learn about these, need to learn from colleagues from our and another institutions.

In the TSG, the participants felt they shared knowledge and their experiences, which helped all participants to learn about the ELT topics they had decided to talk about and to learn from each other’s experiences regardless of whether they were experienced or inexperienced. However, the inexperienced participants focused more on theoretical aspects as decided at the first meeting.
Three of the participants said that the TSG stimulated them to think of new ideas. For example, one of the participants decided to combine CALL and learner autonomy and do research on that. Two other participants stated that the TSG was an opportunity for them to do research on ELT. To bring materials to the group discussions, they found and read articles from ELT journals and on the internet. Group discussions helped two other participants to refresh their knowledge in ELT.

Two of the participants stated that the TSG was an opportunity to learn what was happening in the department and what other teachers were doing in their classroom so they could see problems from different points of views.

There were also statements made by single participants. Sharing ideas and experiences with other colleagues helped one participant realize there are alternatives in teaching and he should be more aware of them. Another participant said that the TSG helped her enhance her teaching and learning, while another reported that teaching and learning were complex processes and felt that he needed to develop himself in the profession.

In this chapter, the data collected by means of pre-questionnaire, interview, and meeting recordings were analysed and reported. The findings were also supported by participants' reflective journals and field notes. In the next chapter, these findings will be discussed considering the research questions. Implications, limitations of the study, recommendations, and suggestions for further research will be also covered.
CHAPTER: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

A discussion of the findings with respect to the study research questions will be presented in this chapter along with implications and recommendations, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

This study aimed to investigate the initial formation procedures of a TSG as a means of professional development at OGU, FLD. It also aimed to explore the participant instructors’ expectations from the TSG as well as their perceptions of the TSG’s contribution to their personal and professional development.

This research study was conducted at OGU, FLD. Two TSGs were formed with 13 volunteer instructors currently teaching English, six and seven instructors per group. The determination as to which participants made up each group and which group became the experimental group in the study was made by random choice. Because of the time limitation, data was collected over two-month period. The primary instruments used to collect data were a pre-questionnaire, interview, and meeting recordings. Reflective journals and field notes were used to support findings revealed in the primary instruments. The data collected through these instruments were entered into a series of tables and analyzed to answer the research questions in this study. The research questions were:

1. What are the members’ expectations from the TSG at Osmangazi University in terms of personal and professional development?

2. What are the procedures participants follow in forming the TSG at Osmangazi University?

3. What are the central features of group organization of the TSG at OGU?
4. How do participants feel this experience has contributed to their personal and professional development?

Summary of Findings

The Expectations from the TSG as a means of Professional Development

The first research question concerned the participants’ expectations from the TSG. On the pre-questionnaire given before the group meetings started, the participants were asked why they wanted to participate in the TSG. Both in the pre-questionnaire and in the interviews, the common goal and expectation shared by most participants was to share experiences and knowledge by engaging in a meaningful conversation with colleagues. In the pre-questionnaire, the second goal was to find solutions to teaching problems, while in the interview just one person mentioned this as an expectation. Although not shared by all the members, learning about the profession and interest in study groups were also among the most frequently reported expectations in the pre-questionnaire. However, in the interview, only two participants mentioned that they participated in the TSG to learn about ELT and be aware of latest developments.

When participants were asked about their long and short term individual goals, the responses indicated that participants expected to share their experiences and ideas and thought that the TSG would contribute to their teaching as well as to their professional development and help them learn more about ELT. Short and long term goals for group achievement were sharing experiences and setting up a kind of in-service teacher-training program in the department. The participants' responses also indicated that they, as a group, could help each other to diagnose problems in teaching, and this would contribute to their teaching practice.
There were also concerns reported by participants. The participants most frequently expressed concern was to find time to attend meetings, which could be a signal that they really wanted to participate in the TSG. It was interesting that just one participant was concerned about mutual trust and no one mentioned it again throughout the research study, contrary to the researcher's expectation.

To summarize the pre-questionnaire findings, the participants' expectations from the TSG were that attending the TSG would:

- enable them to share experiences, ideas, and knowledge with the colleagues in the TSG.
- contribute to their teaching practice and professional development, and
- help them find solutions to teaching problems

However, they anticipated that it might be difficult to find time to attend the TSG meetings due to institutional constraints and responsibilities.

The Procedures Participants Followed in Forming the TSG at OGU, FLD

As indicated in Creating Groups by Bertcher and Maple (1996), there are some steps to follow to set up a group: determining the group purpose for which the group is formed, finding the potential members, determining the group composition, and determining the time, size and place for the meetings, and planning the first meeting. The usual first step, group purpose, in this case professional development, was pre-determined as a focus of the research study. Then group members were chosen randomly among the volunteer participants. The group members were English language instructors, experienced and inexperienced, who wanted to participate in the TSG as an alternative professional development tool. Since the group members were chosen randomly there was no pre-determined group
composition developed by considering the individual members’ attributes except for those inherent to the situation, EFL instructors in the same unit meeting for professional development purposes. Place and size of the TSG were determined by the researcher due to the requirements of the study.

The TSG members decided the time for the first meeting. The first meeting, as Brccher and Maple (1996) state, is a very important phase of the group organization, since the group was actually created in this stage. Since the participants were working in the same institution and knew each other, there was no need for mutual introduction.

In the first meeting, group members came together and decided to talk about what they would do in the TSG meetings and how they would benefit from those meetings. Then they made decisions about the procedures they would follow in the group discussions, and they determined time, length, and outline of possible discussion topics for at least eight weeks. The findings concerning participants' initial thoughts about organizing TSG in terms of length and frequency of the meetings, language to be used in the discussions, and possible topic content for group discussion seemed to be consistent with the decisions participants made on those items in the first meeting. Further, in terms of general structure of group discussions in the meetings, participants decided to blend theory and practice, which in fact was seen as a necessity to have a productive and successful professional development activity as is suggested by Breen, 1989; Freeman, 2001; Şentuna, 2002; and Wallace, 1991.

Group members did not assign any specific roles as defined in the literature to individual members in the group such as leader, scribe or facilitators but they divided
the labor between experienced and inexperienced teachers, which assigned inexperienced teachers the responsibility to bring materials and do research to contribute to the TSG discussions and experienced teachers the responsibility to share their experiences and utilize existing knowledge in the discussions. They did not choose a leader in the first meeting.

The TSG members were deliberately not given any guidelines for organizing the group. This omission was to empower them to organize the group to meet their own needs. Although they were not clear about what they would do in these meetings, which caused a bit uncertainty at first, they left the first meeting with a “clear picture of what would happen in the next meeting” (Bertcher and Maple, 1996, p. 86).

Central Group Features Observed in the TSG

Group Structure

The focus of this section is the interaction and pattern of relationships among the group members. The TSG group members met each week over the two-month period. They worked in the same department; therefore, in terms of acceptance, proximity (physical distance), and contact (situations where individuals meet and communicate), the members had easy access to each other and were already experienced working together, although not in such a group. There was no conflict observed among the group members over the two-month period.

In the constitution of group structure each member has a position in the group on the basis of their different attributes, which determine the pattern of relationship among group members (Shaw, 1976). In this group, the most observable attribute in determining the position in the group was experience in their profession and status in
the department; the three experienced members and FLD assistant director elicited
most respect during the meetings. Although not explicitly stated, the group structure
was established by these positions. The assistant director became the one occupying
the highest status and therefore, the unofficial leader in the group, though she did not
seek that position. This exemplifies Beebe and Masterson’s (1998) claim that “the
leader of the small group is usually the member with the highest status” (p. 86-87).
When she was absent, the other two experienced participants with MAs seemed to be
filling that position and dominating or leading the group. As Beebe and Masterson
(1997) state, a group members’ social status or social rank has considerable impact
on interpersonal relationships and members’ previous social status determines their
position in the group. In the second rank were the experienced teachers with and
without an MA, while in the third rank were the inexperienced teachers. Although it
was not stated explicitly by the participants, there were two subgroups, experienced
and inexperienced teachers, which may be the result of the perceived status of the
inexperienced teachers in the department. However, there were no subgroups trying
to take on a leadership role or gain power in the group.

Group Norms

The group had both explicit and implicit group norms, as is stated by Ellis
and Fisher (1994). They decided how the group would meet, its procedures, and
topics for discussions. They did not determine any specific organizational roles for
the members or choose a leader, as was mentioned above. However, there were roles
assigned to experienced and inexperienced teachers in terms of labor division, which
changed a bit during the process, as some experienced teachers also brought readings
and research findings for group discussions, and there emerged an unofficial leader
in the group during the process. Furthermore, although group members did not determine any pattern for decision making, such a pattern emerged in the process.

There were no explicit social and/or behavioral norms established, perhaps because these already existed in the unit, although later they needed to establish explicit norms about coming on time, informing the other members in advance if they could not come to a meeting, and giving reasons for coming late or being absent from meetings. Sometimes groups tend to develop implicit norms about where each member sits (Mpofu and Das, 1998). Such was not the case with this group.

**Group Size**

The TSG was composed of seven instructors. According to Bertcher and Maple (1996), this is an optimal number, “small enough to encourage maximum participation yet large enough to generate maximum number of ideas” (pp.125-126). Each member could have maximum participation in the group discussions when other factors such as group dominance are ignored. However, participants did not feel that seven was enough people for such meetings since, when some members were absent or came late, it affected the group meetings in a negative way, which confirms Beebe and Masterson’ (1997) claim that, when there are members who do not attend meetings regularly, twelve may be the right number for small groups.

**Group Interaction/Communication**

The composition of the group had a definite impact on the group communication. There was a clear distinction between experienced and inexperienced teachers in terms of their contribution to talk in group meetings. While for inexperienced teachers, the percentage of talk in presentation was higher than that of other talk in the group meetings, the situation was the opposite for experienced
teachers. When the total amount of talk was considered, Participant 8 was found to be the member who participated most in the meetings while Participant 6 was the member who participated least. The participant who participated most in the group discussions appeared to lead the group discussions and emerged as unofficial leader in the group. The others accepted her as leader, perhaps not only because of her status in the department or her personality, but also as Beebe and Masterson (1997) point out concerning the issue of leadership in the leaderless groups, “Most people think of a leader as someone who takes charge and organizes a discussion. Predictable, group members often perceive as leaders those who actively participate in the group and who direct communication toward procedural matters” (p. 304). Therefore, dominance in the group discussions appeared to affect the leadership in the group.

Overall, in the group discussions, the experienced members with MA degrees became dominant. Inexperienced teachers could not participate in the discussions as much as they wanted to since they either did not have enough experience and knowledge on the topics to contribute to the group discussions or their felt status as inexperienced teachers affected their participation in the group discussions. This may be the result of either an already established unit perception about the roles of experienced and inexperienced teachers or feeling their not confident to speak among the experienced teachers. This suggests that future groups could be designed to encourage their greater participation, perhaps through a predetermined discussion agenda, which might help these inexperienced teachers be prepared for the group discussion. In this group, they prepared presentations or reviewed articles, which initiated follow up discussions in the group. This is one of the reasons why
inexperienced teachers needed pre-determined discussion topics to participate in the
discussions.

In general, all the members contributed to and participated in the group
discussions in different ways: presenting activities that could be used for teaching,
reviewing articles, and sharing classroom experiences. They each listened to other
members attentively, asking questions, making comments, and giving ideas.

Group Involvement

The group goal, professional development, was the attraction for the group
members to participate in this group. All the participants but Participant 8 stated their
commitment level was only medium; Participant 8 felt a high commitment (see
Appendix I). The TSG members wanted to participate in the group to share
experiences and learn about ELT and said that their expectations in this area were
met. During the two-month period, four of the seven participants attended all the
meetings, whereas one participant was absent from three meetings and two
participants were absent from one meeting. All members expressed their desire to
continue to participate in the group after this study was completed since they all
enjoyed the opportunity to learn and teach something new.

Throughout the observation period, there was no inattention or non-
commitment to the tasks in the TSG and absences or lateness were explained to the
group which indicate that members felt responsible to each other. As Gautschi (1994)
states, researchers have found that participants “will be attracted to a group when it
satisfies their needs, helps them achieve important goals...[and] will be committed to
a group decision or goal in proportion to their participation in determining such
decisions or goals. (p. 322). In this group, teachers came together to design their own
professional development tool regarding their own needs and interests, and they decided everything in forming and organizing the group except for determining members and place for the TSG meetings. All the discussed behaviors show a high degree of member involvement in the TSG.

The participant Instructors’ Perceptions of and Attitudes towards the TSG in terms of Professional and Personal Development

Participants expressed positive feelings about the TSG participation, found it a good place to share and discuss experiences, ideas, and knowledge, and enjoyed having no specific guidelines or formal structure for group discussion and meetings. Group interaction and not having an outsider telling group members what to do were among the items that participants liked. Most participants reported they did not like the time they had determined for the meetings. This was a problem shared by most participants. All but one participant thought that the group size should be larger to include others with more information and to reduce the effect of absences which was supported by Beebe and Materson (1997) as mentioned earlier. Distribution of the amount of talk was another issue that some participants were displeased with. As Hare (1968) states "individuals who do not have enough chance to speak are the ones who are dissatisfied" (p. 515). Perhaps because of this, two participants reported that they shared less than they wanted though they also stated there was equal participation in the group discussions.

All the TSG members stated that the TSG contributed to their personal and professional development in some way. In terms of personal development, with some participants expressing some reservation, the TSG helped most participants feel more responsible for their professional development. It also contributed to some
participants’ understanding that they could learn from their colleagues and learn to respect each other’s ideas. It was interesting to find that it encouraged two members to speak in front of people, though they had hesitated to do so before. In terms of professional development, the TSG provide participants a platform to share ideas, experiences, and knowledge and to improve collegiality. It also helped some TSG members learn more about ELT. By participating in the TSG, the members had an opportunity to talk about problems they faced in their teaching situations and to learn from their colleagues. The TSG also helped different members in a variety of other ways, helping them consider new ideas, find solutions to teaching problems, refresh their knowledge in ELT, and learn what was happening in the department.

Participants’ Final Evaluation

In the third meeting, Participant 10 asked whether they would do anything about teacher training in the school. As a response to this question, Participant 8 suggested they wait for a while, and then they could evaluate the TSG meetings, as they had already decided to do in the first meeting, and decide whether to continue with this as a method of professional development if everybody thought it was good tool for professional development. In the eighth meeting, Participant 8 initiated a discussion on the TSG and asked other participants what they thought (see Appendix M for excerpts from the first and eighth meetings).

In this final discussion, the points highlighted were time and institutional constraints, limitations to the productivity of the TSG meetings things such as workload of the instructors, other meetings they were obliged to attend, size of the group, contribution of the TSG, and the need for a pre-determined discussion agenda. All the members expressed their thoughts.
The time was not suitable for the TSG meetings since it was just before the level group meetings for which the participant had assigned work, and they needed to rush to those meetings after the TSG meetings. Further, the group size was found to be too small, and they decided to enlarge the group size to have more productive group sessions even though there were members who could not attend those meetings. This decision of enlarging the group may have both positive and negative effects on the group as literature suggests that enlarging the group may decrease the interaction among the group member whereas it can also be a solution when there are members who do not attend group meetings regularly as mentioned earlier.

Participant 7 thought the TSG discussions resembled discussions in the group level meetings; however, Participants 10 and 8 disagreed. They described the topics of level meetings as being on more specific issues such as the number of quizzes. Furthermore, inexperienced teachers did not attend. After discussion, Participant 7 agreed and pointed to the format difference between these two meetings.

Participant 8 and 10 stated that they went through the materials they had read in their MA programs, which gave them an opportunity to refresh and share what they learned, providing a challenge for them. Participant 10 mentioned that since they were having the TSG meetings while they were teaching, they had the opportunity to see whether the things they discussed were applicable to the real classroom or not. Participant 13 said that he learned about ELT and became more aware of the problems he had and tried to solve them.

Participant 6 said that though she thought that the TSG was good and she refreshed her knowledge, she was dissatisfied with no pre-determined discussion agenda. She suggested having a syllabus for meetings. The group supported her idea
of having a syllabus but wanted a flexible one in which they could decide on just main headings and leave room for changes in specific topics. Participant 7 suggested discussing the issues in general, not limiting them to the institution.

At the end of the discussion, members decided to enlarge the group, determine a flexible syllabus for the meetings, hold the meetings in the summer time, and have them open for voluntarily participation. For each TSG, the time would be determined so as to have for both morning and afternoon sessions, and participants would chose to belong to whichever group they wanted to.

Implications and Recommendations

The TSG proved to be productive and effective in terms of personal and professional development with reservations, both explicit and implicit, from the participants’ point of view and from observed behavior.

For professional development, outside help and local solutions should be integrated to find solutions to problems and improve teaching and learning as is suggested by Breen, 1989; Freeman, 2001; Şentuna, 2002; and Wallace, 1991. Since the TSGs provide teachers with the opportunity to blend theory and practice, teachers not only reflect on the teaching-learning process utilizing their experiences, existing knowledge, and classroom resources, but also benefit from the outside resources to create a whole program of professional development. For example, outside experts or trainers can be called to give lectures or workshops, and some group members can be rewarded to attend seminars or specific training courses/programs on the condition that they share what they learn and inform others about innovations in the ELT field. Further, the TSG meetings can also be used as a place where teachers evaluate peer, self-observations, and research they do in their own contexts/classrooms, which
certainly contribute to professional development, not only in terms of individual development but also for institutional development. In this way, teacher training and development can be integrated, which provides teachers more effective and successful professional development opportunities.

Although the participants were used to working in groups in group level meetings, they were not familiar with study groups where all the decisions were left to participants, and no one was responsible for organizing and coordinating the group. Further, in the group level meetings, the focus was specific to teaching and testing, whereas in study groups, the focus was on more general issues, particularly professional development and there were some points that some individual participants were not content with such as their inability to share or participate as much as they wanted to. Perhaps the unstructured nature of the group might have been a cause for the perceived problems in group structure and dominance. There are some possible solutions to those problems. The participants may develop a more overt structure for the group in advance. The roles for participants may be predetermined. Internal guidelines may be changed or activities to engage all the participants may be developed. Further, group members may be given clear guidelines to form a TSG. It may also be helpful if cooperative learning principles are introduced to the TSG members.

The participants were not content with the group size and they suggested enlarging the group for further meetings. In the literature, the right group size is suggested as five to seven members and stated that when the group size increases, the interaction among the group members decreases. Increasing the number of group members may just result in more dominance by the few and it may be better to have
more structured group than a larger one. However, the literature also states that 12 could be an ideal size if there is a pattern of five absences from each meeting (Beebe and Masterson, 1997), which ratio seems to apply here as absences were a factor in this group’s decision.

One of the aims for conducting this study was to change the perception of “experienced” and “inexperienced” teachers in the department and help inexperienced teachers feel that their ideas are worth listening to and appreciated by the experienced. To some extent, it seemed to succeed since they reported that they learned from each other, but the group itself developed a tiered group structure where the inexperienced teachers occupied the third rank. A more overt group structure in which the roles of group members are predetermined may help to overcome this problem. Further, the groups may be formed among teachers having equal status.

The results of this study may be beneficial in several ways. The FLD at OGU, which does not have any kind of teacher training or an in-service training program, can see some evidence of the effectiveness of the TSG and may continue to support and improve it. More than one TSG may be formed to discuss different areas of ELT, for example, curriculum development and testing. And finally the positive experiences of these instructors may encourage other instructors to participate in such groups voluntarily.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study concerns the fact that it was limited in scope. Since it investigated one TSG in one location and had no specific guidelines, the study focused on a very small number of participants in a particular context, so the findings of the study may not be generalizable to all TSGs. Although data from the
second group was not analyzed for this study, it was interesting to note that the group differed in the areas of group structure, procedures they followed in organizing the group, interaction, and involvement. Therefore, replication of this study with another group at FLD would provide clearer information about the TSG as a professional development tool. This researcher could also enlarge this study to include data from the second group and compare the study groups.

The second limitation was time, since it limited the scope of the study. Investigating the group in more detail and over a longer period of time would allow for the collection of more data on group dynamics and analysis of changes over time.

Also, the researcher observed the group and analyzed the data. This could have affected the analysis, since the researcher was an insider, which may have affected the participants’ responses. They may have wanted to help their colleague achieve positive results. Further, the fact that this was a unique experience for all of the participants could also have contributed to the positive response.

The fact that there was a natural obvious leader in the group could have affected the data in both positive and negative ways. While having such a leader created some problems of group dominance, it lessened possible frustrations involved in group formation and decision-making. The fact that this leader was also the assistant director in FLD in the group could also have affected the data.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The study could be carried out for a longer period of time. In a longer period of time, group dynamics can be examined in more detail that may contribute to better understanding of the group itself. There would be a detailed investigation of group and task roles of the members. Understanding group dynamics is required to allow
for a more productive and efficient group. Further it may be useful if the members were given feedback about the group and its organization regularly.

As mentioned above, other data collected during this study could be analyzed to expand the findings. The findings of this study may also be compared with those of other study groups, which may be formed by participants who have equal status in the group. Further, the findings of this study group can be also compared to those of larger groups. However, it should be kept in mind that each group is unique, and so comparison studies could focus on finding areas of similarities in all groups to inform the establishment of TSGs.

Conclusion

Professional development is necessary for teachers to expand their knowledge and understanding of teaching and develop their teaching skills and techniques in their profession. The TSG proved to be an effective professional development method providing teachers with the opportunity to explore their teaching by sharing with colleagues and to find solutions to the local problems they face in their contexts. TSGs can be formed especially when teachers have limited opportunities to benefit from other types of professional development activities.
REFERENCES


Boggs, H. (1996). Launching school change through teacher study groups: An action research project. . ERIC (Online) NO: ED402286 (From Abstracts).


http://www.ets.org/ccxiv/services.html

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant,

The aims of this study are to explore the initial procedures of setting up a teacher study group and its group dynamic as well as participant teachers’ expectations from Teacher Study Group (TSG) at Osmangazi University Foreign Languages Department. It also looks at the participants’ perceptions about the contributions that they received from the group in terms of personal and professional development. I will ask you to answer the questions about your experiences in participating in the TSG during the interview.

Your participation in the study may be a valuable contribution to Turkish EFL teachers’ understanding about TSG as an alternative professional development tool. Any information given to the researcher will be kept confidential and your name will not be revealed in any reports made for this data. The study involves no risk to you. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time if you wish to.

I would like to thank you for your participation in advance. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the phone number given below.

Very Truly Yours,
Nadire Arikan
MA TEFL Program
Bilkent University
Ankara

Phone: 0312 290 6082
e-mail: arikannadire@yahoo.com

I have read and understood the information given above. I know that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time. I hereby agree to participate in the study with the understanding that the collected data will be published in a Master's Thesis.

Name : _______________________________
Signature : __________________________
Date : ______________________________
APPENDIX B

PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear colleagues,

I am an MA TEFL student at Bilkent University. This questionnaire is designed to investigate your interests, concerns, and expectations about participating in a Teacher Study Group (TSG) as a professional development activity. By means of teacher study groups, teachers have opportunities to “think through their own beliefs, share ideas, challenge current instructional practices, blend theory and practice, identify personal and professional needs... develop literacy innovations for their classrooms” (Matlin, 1991: 68). Any information you give will be kept confidential and will not be used for administrative purposes. Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Nadire ARIKAN

PART A: Background Information

1. Personal Information
   Name: ________________________________
   Age: ( ) 22-24 ( ) 25-27 ( ) 28-31 ( ) 32-35 ( ) over 35
   Are you married: Y / N

2. I got my BA in _____.
   a) Teaching English as a Foreign Language
   b) English Language and Literature
   c) American Language and Literature
   d) other, please specify ________________________________.

3. I have taught English as a foreign language for _____ years. (3, 3.5, etc.)

4. I have been working in this institution for _____ years. (3, 3.5, etc.)

5. I am teaching English _____ hours a week in __________________________ level(s) at prep / regular program / both in 2001-2002 Spring semester.

6. I spend approximately _____ hours per week outside the class on school related non-teaching duties (meetings, student consulting / office hours, gathering materials, lesson planning, etc.).
PART B: Professional Development Activities

1. I try to keep myself up-to-date with changes and improvements in ELT in the following ways: (You can tick more than one.)
   ____ a) ELT seminar(s) given by any university in Turkey
   ____ b) workshop(s)
   ____ c) local in-service training seminar(s)
   ____ d) summer in-service training course(s)
   ____ e) swap shop(s) organized by publishers
   ____ f) teacher training program(s)
   ____ g) self development form(s) (Action research, reflective journal, etc.)
   ____ h) regular (at least once a month) reading of professional journals, resource books
   ____ i) peer observation
   ____ j) I do not have time / opportunity to participate in the above listed activities.
   ____ k) others, please specify ________________________________________________.

2. Have you ever participated in any form of professional development?  
   Y / N

3. If yes, please tick the one(s), which you have participated in
   ____ a) ELT seminar(s) given by any university in Turkey
   ____ b) workshop(s)
   ____ c) local in-service training seminar(s)
   ____ d) summer in-service training course(s)
   ____ e) swap shop(s) organized by publishers
   ____ f) teacher training program(s)
   ____ g) others, please specify ________________________________________________.

4. Please tick the professional organizations you have had any contact with and specify the kind of contact you have had (membership, attending meetings, contact with individuals, etc)
   ____ a) INGED
   ____ b) TESOL
   ____ c) IATEFL
   ____ d) Turkish-American Association
   ____ d) British Council
   ____ d) Turco-British Association
   ____ e) others, please specify ________________________________________________.
5. Which of the following resources do you read regularly either in hard copy or online?
   _____ a) TESOL Quarterly  _____ b) TESOL Journal
   _____ c) ELT Journal       _____ d) Forum
   _____ e) Time / Newsweek   _____ f) Turkish Daily News
   _____ g) Modern English Teacher _____ h) material on the internet
   _____ h) IATEFL Newsletter _____ i) others, please specify ______

**PART C: Group Organization and Content of the TSG.**

1. What do you think the group size (number of participants) should be? _____.

2. How long do you think the group meetings should be? _____ minutes / hour(s).

3. How often should the group meet? _____ meeting(s) per _____.

4. **English / Turkish / both** should be the language spoken in group discussions. Can you briefly explain why? _____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________

5. What are some areas that could provide content for the Teacher Study Group discussions?
   There are some possibilities below. You can tick more than one of these and / or write your own.
   _____ a. integration of skills  _____ i. using course materials and activities
   _____ b. testing language skills  _____ j. teaching methods
   _____ c. classroom management  _____ k. use of technology in teaching
   _____ d. classroom activities  _____ l. preparing lesson plans
   _____ e. course book evaluation  _____ m. teaching language skills
   _____ f. teaching grammar  _____ n. curriculum evaluation
   _____ g. teacher / student motivation  _____ o. problems and / or situations in class/institute
   _____ h. new theories and practices in ELT  _____ p. others, please specify ______
   _____ r. None of the above. Suggestions: ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________
PART D: Role of Collegiality in Teacher Development

Please read each statement, and then circle the number that most closely corresponds to your opinion.

SD  Strongly disagree = 1  
D   Disagree    = 2  
U   Uncertain  = 3  
A   Agree      = 4  
SA  Strongly agree  = 5

1. I find it easier working with colleagues than doing the work by myself.      1        2       3       4       5
2. I find it enjoyable working with colleagues.         1        2       3       4       5
3. I find it a productive use of time to work with colleagues.    1        2       3       4       5
4. I find it rewarding to work with colleagues.            1        2       3       4       5
5. I believe that I can benefit from dialogue with colleagues and their experiences for my own professional development.  1        2       3       4       5
6. I have positive thoughts and feelings about sharing my experiences and knowledge with my colleagues 1        2       3       4       5

PART E: Goals and Expectations of Group Participation

1. Why do you want to participate in this group? There are some possibilities below. You can tick more than one of these and / or write your own.
   _____ a) to solve teaching based problems
   _____ b) interest in study groups and dialogue with other teachers about professional issues
   _____ c) need to engage in meaningful conversation with a colleague
   _____ d) need for more community in the school among the staff members
   _____ e) need / want to learn more about my profession
   _____ f) benefit from others’ expertise in group discussions
   _____ g) hope to influence the thinking of other teachers in the department
   _____ h) want to support other teachers by sharing my experiences
   _____ i) curious about what the teacher study group is and whether it is worth my time
   _____ j) others, please specify _____________________________________________________.
   _____ k) none of the above. My reasons to participate ___________________________________.

S D  D  U  A  SA  
1  2  3  4  5
2. Do you have any short and long term goals that you think this Teacher Study group will help you to achieve in terms of your own professional and personal development? If so, list them, please. Short term goals: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Long term goals: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

3. Do you have any short and long term goals that you think this Teacher Study Group may achieve as a group? If so, list them, please.
Short term goals: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Long term goals: ________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

PART F: The Study
1. Please list any concerns you have about this study (especially in terms of time, confidentiality, mutual trusts, professional and personal development, etc.).
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

2. What is your level of interest in this study group?  High / Medium / Low
APPENDIX C

REFLECTIVE JOURNAL ENTRY

The purpose of the reflective journal is to record thoughts and feelings about your growth and development as a participant in TSG project. You can include what happened, what you did, and how you felt. You can also include evidences, examples, responses, and descriptions in your journal entries. Possible topics for consideration in the reflective journal are:

Reflections on the concepts and activities in the TSG.

Responses to participation in the TSG activities.

Ideas gained through interactions with peers/colleagues in the TSG meetings.

Descriptions and reflections on your professional relationships with your colleagues in TSG.

Reflections on your role and participation in TSG.

Awareness of your personal growth as a professional educator.

Development of your personal philosophy of teaching and learning by participating in the TSG.
APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Introduction
In this interview, I will ask you to summarize your experiences and some specific questions about your participation in the TSG. I ask you to discuss more about the comments you made in your journals about that participation.

First, could you summarize for me your experiences in the TSG, what happened, what you did, and how you felt? Then later I will ask you specific questions about your experience.

R.Q. 1
What were your expectations from this group?
- Were they met?
- What were your first impressions when the group started? Did anything worry you?
- What was it about the group that made you want to keep going to TSG meetings?

R. Q. 2 & 3
How was the group organized at the beginning and how did you determine the content and the format of the discussions?
- Was the room comfortable to hold such meetings?
- Did you choose a leader?
- Did you think anyone was dominating in the group?
  - Did that help or cause problems?
  - Did that make you feel you were not having an equal participation?
- Did the group members set any spoken or unspoken rules?
  - If yes, what were the rules? How did you decide on these rules? What were the decision making procedures in TSG?
  - If no, What effect did that have on group process?
- Did you feel that this was your group?
- What did you like most about how you form the group and decided the content of the meetings?
- What did you like least about how you form the group and decided the content of the meetings?

R.Q. 4
Do you feel this experience has contributed to your personal and professional development? If so, in what ways?
- Do you think TSG was a good place to share your experiences, discuss your beliefs and daily practices, and find solutions to the problems?
- Did the group help you to stimulate new ideas in your professional and personal life?
- Do you think TSG strengthened collegiality among the instructors participating in TSG?

What do you think about TSG as a professional development tool?
- Did you feel more responsible for your own personal and professional development?
- How would you compare this activity with other professional development activities?

Did you enjoy being in this group?
Do you want to remain as a member of this group?
Anything you want to add?
APPENDIX E
Charts used for ongoing interview, recording of meetings, and field note data on group formation, structure, and interaction.

Table 1
Group Organization: Setting the group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>M*</th>
<th>I**</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Did the group determine day and time of the meetings?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M: The group decided to meet on Friday at 13:00 each week for regular meeting. They also decided to determine an alternative date to meet when they could not meet on regular basis. I: “On the first day of meeting, we decided on time, day... of the meeting” “At the first meeting we decided how often we will get together.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Did the group state a goal to achieve?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M: The group goal was professional development [the group was formed for this purpose at the beginning] I: “We set our goals at the first meeting”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Did the group determine the procedures in the group?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M: The group decided which procedures they would follow and these were: - everybody would bring materials to be discussed each week, - they would meet at the determined time and place, - when they could not attend or cancel the meeting they would tell it to the group and they would decide on alternative date to meet - they determined outline of the discussion content and format - they talk about their experiences, review articles, and present materials that they learned before in the group discussions I: “We decided about what we are going to do, we make an outline of 8 meetings [in the first meeting]” “We did not know what we are going to do. So, there were talks about what should be done... at the end of the fist meeting, we decided to bring activities, articles for the next meeting but no determined topic”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Did the group decide on general structure of the discussions?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M: They decided to discuss the topics related to their experiences and they are interested in ELT and review the articles from ELT journals. There was no pre-determined discussion agenda but everybody would bring material I: Since just discussion theory may become boring, they decided to discuss both theory and practice. Inexperienced instructors would search and bring materials covering aspects from theory in ELT and experienced teachers would talk about their experiences and practical aspects of ELT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Did the group determine the content for the group discussions?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M: In the first meeting they decided content for group discussions and decided to - discuss / talk about their routine experiences in their classes and when they have difficulty in discussing, they will talk about theoretical aspects, - create a sample lesson together on the basis of the topics, which members suggest for each week, - observe each others’ classes and discuss those in the group - talk about various topics and related examples, problems they face or struggle in their daily teaching practice, and the topics that they are individually interested, such as using L1 in the class or evaluation [testing]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
they are individually interested, such as using L1 in the class or evaluation [testing]
- discuss the practicality of the new approaches, materials, activities to their own institution thinking about their own institutional reality, local problems,
- discuss the “system”, “prep-school” concept in Turkey and those problems that the system caused reflected in their teaching practice,
- bring articles from ELT journals, materials or activities they learned in the workshops, seminars, and summer teacher training programs,

I: “all together we decided on the topics … focus on the missing points in the institution”
“…the topics related to our school and we have tried to find solutions”
“… decided to talk about problems in our school, classes but no pre-determined discussion agenda”
“On the first day of the meeting, we decided on the topics. We decided on the topics but there was flexibility to change the topics”
“… decided to talk about our experiences in teaching to determine a topic for the next meeting…”

f. Did the group choose a leader?  N  N  M: There was no leader chosen officially.
I: “We did not choose a leader since we did not need”
“We did not choose a leader since we all know that No. 8 will lead us”
“We did not choose a leader. We did not think that we need”

g. Were the roles determined at the beginning?  N  NS  -M: No specific role was determined at the beginning

* I: The results of the interview with participants were covered
** M: The results of group meetings recorded and field notes the researcher took during the meetings.
Y: Yes, N: No, Ns: Not stated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>M*</th>
<th>I**</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Physical and Emotional Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>a. Was there any common pattern for sitting?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>M: First two weeks, the same sitting arrangement;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Third week, one pair changed their places; after third meeting, this pattern disappeared</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>b. Was the room comfortable enough to held TSG meetings in terms of ventilation, lightning, and interruptions?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>M: The room was light, there was enough heat. There were less interruptions than anywhere else: just a few occurrences of people coming in, phone ringing and noise of passing over planes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>I: “Sometimes students’ interruptions but not a big problem”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Some of the days it was a bit cold but in general it was good”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We were not comfortable. It was library, chairs were uncomfortable”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“The room was good”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“It was not bad. It would be better if we could have a better one. It was comfortable, quite, and not cold but there were cleaning problems. It was really fine”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“It was comfortable.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>c. Did the members feel that the environment was supporting and accepting?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>M: Everybody was listening to each other, backchanneling or nodding their heads to confirm / show their approvals. They were thanking, as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I: “Group interaction encouraged me to speak.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Felt alone because experienced teachers talked a lot and we just listened to them but could not share as much as we wanted”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Since I knew those people, I felt free with them”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We were close to each other, there was a warm atmosphere.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“… friendly atmosphere in the group meetings, I started to feel relaxed”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>d. Did the members feel that they could freely talk in the group discussions?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>M: “I did not feel inhibited to speak because of being with a close friend in the group”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“In the group there was nobody with Ph.D. or reading on ELT, we were relaxed to say anything... share our ideas and others’ ideas without feeling irritated. There is nobody superior to you”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Because I know those people I felt free with them... I openly shared my ideas and felt free to talk.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2. Group Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Was there any official leader in the group?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: “I felt that some appeared as leaders”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“MA degree people (three persons). P. 8 was a leader in the group. We did not choose her but she was leading because of her personality. She has a leading personality and she took our control, natural leader. Also No. 3 was vice leader. If they were not in the group P. 10 would become a leader – because she was more experienced. Experience determined it... We did choose a leader since we all know that P. 8 will lead us. If it would not be No. 8, No.3 would be a leader”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“No. 8 was the leader. She was like a leader, she was dominating the group”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“We did not nominate a leader but there was a natural leader; sometimes dominated, sometimes led the group”</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We did not choose a leader”</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Was there anybody dominating the group?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I: “There was one person dominating the group discussions because some of the members preferred listening and the dominating persons was active one”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Two dominant people, P. 8 and 3”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“P. 8 was dominating the group”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Someone sometimes dominated the group”</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Experienced teachers dominated the group”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“There were two colleagues dominating the group, talk too much”</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“I think P.8 was active but nobody was dominating the group”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Did the group members accept the individuals having power?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: Throughout the meetings and interviews only one participant mentioned being displeased about individuals with power</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: “the persons leading / dominating the group did not cause any problem”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I did not mind someone’s dominating / leading the group. I was inexperienced and they had much to say. It was not demotivating ”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“This [someone’s leading / dominating the group] helped and gave no problem to us ”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It [someone’s leading / dominating the group] helped”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“It was not a problem for me”</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“The dominating people talked too much, which disturbed me psychologically. Because of their too much talk though I wanted to talk, I could not. I felt that those colleagues think that they are the leaders, they have to talk and we have to listen to them. I got that kind of impression. People think of hierarchy. Because of this, I respected listening to them. Some of colleagues wanted to share ideas and contribute but they did not let them open their mouths”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Were there any subgroups with power?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: No sign of subgroups and no one stated the existence of subgroups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Did the group members accept the subgroups with power?</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: Since there is no sign of subgroups, no comment on this aspect.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Member roles and decision-making

a. Was there any determined structure for role sharing?
   N   N   M: There was no statement for roles sharing.

b. Did the group members share the group work equally?
   Y   NS  M: All the participants brought materials, contributed to discussions and presented activities and articles.
   I: “I didn’t feel that there was unequal participation.”
   “I didn’t feel that I was not participating.”
   “It didn’t make me feel that I’m participating less.”
   “I didn’t worry about unequal participation, I think everybody could contribute.
   “Everybody is expected to prepare something for the next meeting.”

c. Was there any pattern for decision-making procedure?
   Y   Y   M: Each participant expressed that their ideas and the group as a whole either agreed or disagreed.
   I: “We expressed our ideas and decided / agreed on it.”
   “She [number 8] decided the subjects and we talked. It was good. We didn’t discuss [oppose] they were good points.”
   “Not vote but everybody is asked the things to be decided.”

d. Were the decisions the group decisions or individual decisions?
   Y   Y   M: All the decisions were group decisions.
   I: “Things appeared as a group ‘one sentence, one sentence and a paragraph, we can say.”
   “We decided as a whole group.”

4. Group Interaction

a. Did the participants feel themselves as a member of the group?
   Y   Y   M: All members expressed that they felt as a part of the group.
   I: “I felt a part of the group. I felt responsible to them”
   “I felt as a member / a part of the group, taking part in the discussions, participating”
   “I liked the group. We shared, they shared. We were close to each other, we were friends, friendly.”
   “I felt a part of the group. I became, started to feel more relaxed.”
   “I felt it was my group. Everybody was willingly attending the group and enjoy being there. ‘Real member’ was I.”
   “I felt as a part of this group. I was appreciated. I easily discussed, they listened to me in the discussion. They did not reject
   even I opposed to these people though I do not have that courage. I felt free with them.”
   “I felt it was my group since I contributed to the group, sharing my experiences, asking questions to my friends, shared
   experiences, and knowledge. All the friends did the same. I think we were a group.”

b. Did the group members express effective climate for group functioning?
   Y   Y   M: There was no conflict throughout the study. Members listened to each other, made comments, and sometimes thanked.
   I: “Group interaction encouraged [her] to speak ”
   “… did not feel being in a meeting... like a visit to friends. We were visiting our friends in the library. It was informal, it
   made us happy, group was enjoyable, we enjoyed a lot.”
   “That kind of groups would be useful, useful meetings to discuss. We decided and talk about anything”
   “In the group, there was nobody with PhD, we were relaxed to say anything. We have criticized anything, our system, our
   educational system, our system in our school.”
   “People all contributed. Interaction was good and everybody was appreciating the others’ ideas and encouraging.”
“It was not too formal. We made everything going smoothly not formal. We were relaxed, so.”

c. Was there any confrontation for late comers, incomplete work, or dominance in the group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M: It was not spoken in the first meeting but when tow participant came late group decided to come on time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: “One day, we came late and they did not say anything to us.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“We were making each other feel responsible about attendance, bring materials... But there was no pressure.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. Did the group members express interest in the group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M: They all participated in discussions, brought materials, and expressed positive feelings throughout the group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I: “Remain as a member of the group as long as it is enlarged”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Remain as a member of the group if the group is enlarged”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Remain as a member of the group in a larger group and maintain the group”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Remain as a member of the group”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I think we go on”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Remain as a member of the group”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Remain as a group member”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e. Were there any interpersonal conflicts in the group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>NS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M: No interpersonal conflict was observed or mentioned throughout the study.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* I: The results of the interview with participants were covered
** M: The results of group meetings recorded and field notes the researcher took during the meetings.

Y: Yes, N: No, Ns: Not stated, B: Both.

| Table 3 |
| Group Interaction |
| 1. Lines of communication |
| Occurrences and Percentages |
| a. 1 to 1 communication | One occurrence |
| b. 1 to group communication | All communication |
| 2. Distribution of participation |
| a. Occurrences of one person leading the discussion |
| No. 3 | 1 |
| No. 8 | 6 |
| No. 10 | 1 |
| b. Individual over-participation | 43,03 % of group talking |
| c. Individual under-participation | 5,67 % of group talking |
| 3. Occurrences of people listening and building on the idea of others | all % of group talking |
APPENDIX F

Chart used for arranging recorded responses of interview and field notes data on group involvement feature of group organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D.3</th>
<th>1. Why did the members participate in the TSG?</th>
<th>2. What attracted them to keep going to the meetings?</th>
<th>3. What level of commitment did they have to the group?</th>
<th>4. What personal needs did they meet by belonging to the group?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. 3</strong></td>
<td>To share my experiences</td>
<td>I think it was our enthusiasm. Everybody wanted to give something from themselves. Everybody wanted to teach and learn at the same time. I think that was good and they really I mean we really wanted to do this. And that was good I think. Nobody forced anybody to do something. We said ok. I can do this and another said, the other person said I would do this. I think it was our desire to do something</td>
<td>a) late came in 7th meeting</td>
<td>Feel good, good for me,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To learn about new things from our friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td>b) absent in 5, 6, 8th meetings,</td>
<td>Shared experiences,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To be aware of some articles, latest development</td>
<td></td>
<td>c) &amp; d) no sign</td>
<td>These meetings were only chance to see some of colleagues. I learned their personality and improved our friendship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To learn about new activities and the situations that I have met and have not met in the classroom, to see my friends' views for these situations, and to learn about their classrooms.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. 5</strong></td>
<td>I expected to learn something, Learn about ELT.</td>
<td>Yes, I really like learning. I can say I like learning more than teaching</td>
<td>a) two occurrences of late coming</td>
<td>Remember the previous learning experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Because I really like learning.</td>
<td>b) no occurrence of absenteeism</td>
<td>Self awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) &amp; d) no sign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P. 6</strong></td>
<td>To discuss the subjects decided before.</td>
<td>The group was very nice, there were experienced and inexperienced teachers. We learned lots of things, also they learned terminological things form us</td>
<td>a) two occurrences of late coming</td>
<td>It affected me positively personally and professionally,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am doing my MA degree, I thought it would be useful to participate in TSG</td>
<td></td>
<td>b) no occurrence of absenteeism</td>
<td>learned a lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) &amp; d) no sign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**P 7**  
Became aware of common problems, bigger problems  
Have better chance of collegiality  
Get to know other’s ideas, personalities, also what they think about the system  

Hope to learn something new  
Planned to learn about something new about what was going on in the school, wanted to make others be aware of concept of prep schools in Turkey  

a) no occurrences of late coming, but leaving the room early because of group level meetings  
b) no occurrence of absenteeism  
c) & d) no sign  

Get to know each other well personally and professionally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>b)</th>
<th>c) &amp; d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no occurrences of late coming</td>
<td>no occurrence of absenteeism</td>
<td>no sign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**P. 8**  
Wanted everybody to contribute to the group in a different way  

Everybody was really willing to do something, everybody liked and did not get bored. I think that everybody will think it was a good idea and we will go on with this in the department.  

a) one occurrence of late coming  
b) left one meeting after 5 minutes because of health problem  
c) & d) no sign  

Learning to respect each other  
Opportunity to see colleagues and learn about their problems with classes and administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>b)</th>
<th>c) &amp; d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one occurrence of late coming</td>
<td>left one meeting after 5 minutes because of health problem</td>
<td>no sign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**P 10**  
Share my opinions and experience and knowledge with my colleagues and learn theirs  
Wanted to impose "we should do this" to other colleagues  

People took it seriously and were conscious about those meetings... we have different atmosphere here from other groups  

a) no occurrence of late coming  
b) no occurrence of absenteeism  
c) & d) no sign  

Develop my vision  
Learned something

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>b)</th>
<th>c) &amp; d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no occurrence of late coming</td>
<td>no occurrence of absenteeism</td>
<td>no sign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**P. 13**  
An opportunity to develop my professional knowledge  
To talk about teaching experiences and to solve institutional problems  

Expecting teaching and learning  
Make research and share with my friends  

a) no occurrence of late coming  
b) absent in 7th meeting  
c) & d) no sign  

Share what he knew and come together with the colleagues  
I desperately need to develop my self in my profession and I learned. I think all of us learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>b)</th>
<th>c) &amp; d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no occurrence of late coming</td>
<td>absent in 7th meeting</td>
<td>no sign</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Note:**  
* a. Lateness  
 b. Absenteeism  
 c. Inattention to group discussions / tasks  
 d. Non-commitment to group discussions / tasks

** ** P: Participant
APPENDIX G
The sample page for the charts used to record interviewee responses. (First page of one participant responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>Group Structure</th>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>Personal &amp; Professional development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I hope this one be an opportunity to develop professional knowledge, opportunity to talk about teaching experiences. We are the people to solve institutional [local] problems, nobody from other situations. We work in the same institution and share the same problems. We [group members] have same students, syllabus, and problems. My expectations were met. We, all of us, learned, I think, due to this interaction with colleagues. Worry: We did not know what to do but then [in the first meeting] everything was determined and I felt relaxed. Attraction to the meetings: Learning new things. I made research and wanted to share it with friends.</td>
<td>We decided about what we are going to do, we make an outline of 6 [8] meetings. Decided to talk about our experiences in teaching but also determine a topic for the next meeting [in general]. This was very useful. So we could be prepared. Since we know what we were going to talk about, we could make research, read articles and get prepared for the next meeting. There is also flexibility, room for different topics. Some participants talked about their real experiences in the class. Group Format &amp; structure: In the first meeting we decided how often we would get together. We made the decisions. Room: It was comfortable. We did not choose a LEADER. I think Participant 8 was active but nobody was dominating the group. There were UNSPOKEN RULES such as coming on time, informing excuses when smo. not attend...</td>
<td>I was very happy to be with these people. Warm atmosphere, we were close, And there were friends. There was friendly atmosphere. I was very happy to be in this group. It was useful for me to share experiences with my friends.</td>
<td>I learned about using activities and classroom management. Listening to friends was useful. I became aware of the problems, which I did not know they were problems. I had the opportunity research latest topics in EFL both in theoretical level and application level. I think I am going to do these researches on the internet. All of us learned from each other. Contribution to professional and personal development: Yes. Now I am more aware of the fact that I can learn from my colleagues. I have known that I can share learning. TSG was a good place for sharing experiences and knowledge. But I think we can solve some of the problems in the group and other important problems are related to administration and university...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX H

The chart for pre-questionnaire Part E questions 2 & 3 results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Short term Goals</th>
<th>Long term Goals</th>
<th>Short term Goals</th>
<th>Long term Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No. 3</td>
<td>To enjoy the power of shared ideas To reflect the valuable things I could get from the meetings to my teaching.</td>
<td>To be an effective teacher</td>
<td>Group interaction Sharing different experiences</td>
<td>Being inspired and to inspire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No. 5</td>
<td>Discussions will help me to refresh my knowledge about ELT</td>
<td>It will also help me to learn more about ELT</td>
<td>I hope it will work. We will at least talk about ELT at least one hour Per week.</td>
<td>It will be like an in-service training program without professors but with teachers who attend classes and have lots of experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No. 6</td>
<td>It will help me to refresh my knowledge about teaching English</td>
<td>I will learn new techniques about teaching English and we will share our experiences to help ourselves about teaching</td>
<td>We will evaluate each other and see the missing points about teaching English and we will refresh our knowledge about it</td>
<td>Teachers will criticize themselves and the others and will teach more effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No. 7</td>
<td>It would better help me to be aware of the common problems faced by the staff at the school</td>
<td>It would establish a future formal (or informal) discussion platform where needs are better diagnosed</td>
<td>Diagnosis of personal teaching problems / needs</td>
<td>Formation of formal / informal in service training studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td><strong>Short term Goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Long term Goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Short term Goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Long term Goals</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 8</td>
<td>It is obvious that it might enhance my teaching skills and add a lot to my professional career</td>
<td>It might help me to know my colleagues better so that I can improve my relationship with them as the assistant director of this department.</td>
<td>[nothing was stated]</td>
<td>It might teach us to be respectful for each others’ ideas. It might encourage us to be more active in our careers. Since we do not have the opportunity of having teacher training programs in our department our success may lead us to have our own teacher training sessions and workshop hours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 10</td>
<td>I feel satisfied in terms of discussing on profession, discussing about teaching issues</td>
<td>I expect to get new different views, different perceptions</td>
<td>Sharing experiences of other colleagues</td>
<td>Most of the teachers could get different, useful ideas and they might lead themselves to try different strategies in the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 13</td>
<td>I would like to solve some problems that I encounter during my classes through utilizing the experiences of my experienced colleagues and improve my knowledge on ELT</td>
<td>I think this group can provide an opportunity for regular training and professional improvement.</td>
<td>I think we can share our experiences, solve the problems that we face when we lecture by producing solutions as a group</td>
<td>This group can be the beginning of a regular teacher training program at our institution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX I

The chart for pre-questionnaire Part F questions 1 & 2 results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>QUESTION 1</th>
<th>QUESTION 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. 3</td>
<td>Just curiosity!</td>
<td>Medium ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 5</td>
<td>Some of the members may not find time to attend meetings</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 6</td>
<td>Attendance to the meetings</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 7</td>
<td>My primary concerns are about time and mutual trust</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 8</td>
<td>It is really difficult to find enough time for different activities so I hope our regular meetings really become “regular” so the meetings become meaningful then.</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 10</td>
<td>I just consider about attention [attendance] or lack of organization about the time (and maybe place).</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 13</td>
<td>[nothing was stated]</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX J

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Likes</th>
<th>Dislikes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant. 3</td>
<td>She liked the idea that there was no limitation in the TSG in terms of discussions. They were free to decide anything, which was good. It was not boring and compulsory. It was the correct address to discuss. I enjoyed Being in this group.</td>
<td>She did not like one of the topics discussed in the group. Time would be different since they sometimes needed to hurry for the other meetings. The group size should be enlarged. Though she liked being in this group, she would like to work with the colleagues who worked on specific topics she was interested in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant. 5</td>
<td>TSG was a good place to discuss content, topics, and techniques. She was happy to join in TSG. Forming the group from both experienced and inexperienced teachers helped the group in discussions</td>
<td>Time for the meetings was not good since she had to rush from other department to attend the meeting. The length of the meetings had to be longer. Sometimes she got bored in discussions because of the topics already known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant. 6</td>
<td>Group interaction was good, friendly and they were close to each other. The group was enjoyable and she enjoyed a lot. It was not formal meeting format; no rules and no scope of topics or talking were determined, which make TSG good place to share and discuss. She enjoyed being in this group and was affected positively. It was good place to share and discuss.</td>
<td>She was displeased sharing less than she wanted experienced members talked too much. No-pre-determination of the topics and discussion agenda to be discussed caused her not contributing to the discussions as much as she wanted since she needed preparation for them. Time and place of the meetings were not good and the group size should be larger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant. 7</td>
<td>The group composed of both experienced and inexperienced ones, which helped the group. He was positive about TSG in general. There was no specific rules set and that they could decide and talk anything they liked. There was nobody from outside of the group telling the members what to do, which he liked. TSG was very useful for him.</td>
<td>He felt nervous when he felt that he was not understood when he tried to put his ideas. The group participants did not discuss the system. He did not much enjoy being in this group. Time of the meeting was not appropriate. Sometimes he was there just to be there because he was tired and did not have time to find good material to take to the meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>She felt well seeing inexperienced teachers so excited/enthusiastic about talking and searching about the topics they would discuss. She was relaxed due to no set rules. The meetings were not in meeting format; not strict, boring, formal, and compulsory. It was good to talk about variety of topics, sometimes even personal matters. TSG was the best place to discuss and share. She enjoyed being in this group. She liked the idea that there were no superior people in the group. Since they all had assigned roles for the group level meetings and had to rush to those meetings, the time was not suitable. The size of the group should be larger, so when someone was absent, this absence would not affect the group discussions. She also felt irritated her talking too much in the group discussions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The interaction in the group was good, ideas were appreciated, and people were encouraged. None of the members was troublemakers but there were hardworking people. There were no big problems in making decisions. She enjoyed TSG since people were really fine and all members were all willing to share and they were prepared for the meetings. TSG was good place to discuss. Sometimes she displeased when some members talked too much in the group meetings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>He stated that they had all positive attitudes about group and for group members since all came there to share experiences, to contribute to others, and learn from others. It was not too formal, we made everything going smoothly, so we relaxed. It was friendly atmosphere and happy to join in the group. He also stated that the size of the group was appropriate since it would not be possible to find time to meet for larger group. They did not determine the discussion agenda for each meeting. They were not precise while choosing discussion topics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX K

**Personal and Professional Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Personal Development</th>
<th>Professional Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. 3</td>
<td>She felt good and it was good way for personal and professional development. She felt responsible.</td>
<td>It was good for her. She shared ideas and experiences with her colleagues. TSG helped to improve collegiality. It just started to stimulate new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 5</td>
<td>She became aware of her personal potential and professional knowledge. She felt more responsible. She was afraid of speaking in front of people and TSG helped her to overcome this fear a little bit</td>
<td>She learned a lot about ELT, Because of being inexperienced teacher, she did not share her experiences, but she shared knowledge with her colleagues. TSG made her realize her problems in her profession and helped to solve some problems. TSG helped improve collegiality and made her feel more responsible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 6</td>
<td>TSG was useful for her and for other friends. It affected her positively both personally and professionally. She felt more responsible. Talking in front of people was something scary for her but she could talk freely in front of those people in TSG.</td>
<td>She learned about task based learning as well as how to write reflective journal. She learned a lot and shared knowledge and ideas when the topics were pre-determined. She learned a lot from other members’ experiences. She made research on problems and topics and she made academic research to contribute to group discussions. They refreshed their knowledge in ELT and talked about experienced teachers’ problems in teaching practice. TSG contributed to collegiality among the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 7</td>
<td>He felt responsible.</td>
<td>They get to know each other well personally and professionally, discussed, shared opinions, did some class activities but they did not do workshops. TSG provided opportunity to share ideas in a systematic way and concentrate on the problems and try to find solutions, which was different from their daily conversations on teaching problems. They diagnosed their problems in teaching and make projects in order to solve those problems. He learned to be more careful that there were traditional ways of teaching and there were some alternatives to teaching. TSG gave chance to talk about their ideas, opportunity to discuss their experiences and see problems from different point of views and learned what was going on in the department. They talked about their own problems in the institution and how they could solve those problems. However, personally he was concentrating on more general issues such as English medium instruction and prep school concept in Turkey. He thought that problems, either specific or general could be best discussed in such groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 8</td>
<td>TSG was a chance to know each other well. They learned to respect to each other and learned that they could learn from each other,</td>
<td>She became aware of other teachers’ problems and had a chance to learn what other level teacher were doing in their classes. She, as being a member of administration, also got an idea about who were willing to study. TSG helped her enhance her teaching and learning. They talked about variety of topics, criticize anything, such as their system, their educational system, their system in their school. She learned about her profession a lot and refreshed her knowledge in ELT. In the TSG, she shared her ideas and others’ ideas without feeling irritated. TSG helped to improve collegiality among the participants. It was an opportunity to learn what was going on in the department and realize the problems in the classes, books, and so on. She learned a lot of activities, as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 10</td>
<td>TSG gave her an academic soul, some dynamism about academic kind of study, and a new vision. It contributed to her self-confidence. It was good to show respect and to be shown respect for each other’s ideas and to be appreciated in TSG. They also could express their feelings and opinions freely in decision-making procedure. She felt more responsible.</td>
<td>In TSG, they have chance to exchange new things. She felt more responsible about her teaching practice when she learned something that she could do in her classes. TSG made her responsible to be ready for each week and read some articles and books. She learned something from other colleagues in TSG discussions. She tried to develop her vision inn her profession, which she did not think before. For example she was inspired to combine CALL with learner autonomy She said she learned a lot about teaching practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 13</td>
<td>He became more aware of the fact that he could learn from others, from his colleagues</td>
<td>TSG was useful for him to share his experiences with his friends. He learned about classroom management and using activities. In TSG, he became aware of the problems, which he had not known that they were problems. He had opportunity to make research on latest topics in EFL both in theory and application. TSG members learned from each other. He also learned new things at each meeting, searched on certain topics, and share with friends. He also found solutions for classroom problems. He realized that teaching and learning were too complex processes. TSG helped him to think of new ideas. He could solve some problems especially classroom problems in the group but the other problems were the ones that could be solved by administration or university. He became more aware of problems and need to develop himself in profession since he thought he knew too little on ELT. It also helped to improve collegiality. The discussions were not limited to group meetings.</td>
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APPENDIX L

Seating Arrangement (First 4 meetings)

1st Meeting (01.03.02)

2nd Meeting (08.03.02)

3rd Meeting (15.03.02)

4th Meeting (22.04.02)
APPENDIX M
Excerpts from Meeting 1 and 8

Excerpts from Meeting 1

Participant 8: ... we can start
Participant 13: 8 weeks
Participant 3: First of all let’s arrange the time.
Participant 8: If we have eight weeks, can we meet each week and is each week 13:00 o’clock suitable for all? At 14:00 we have our group level meetings
Participant 10: Yes yes
Participant 8: For now let’s say each week.
Participant 10: For now let’s make such decision.
Participant 8: Yes
Participant 7: Is there any other possibility except for Friday
Participant 8: Well, it will be very difficult to find any other suitable day except for Friday
Participant 7: Yes, the only choice is Friday.
Participant 3: We have to arrange our own time. Friday, 13:00. For example, we hardly arrived in time. We went downtown and came back. Further in my case, I sometimes go to Istanbul and my train leaves at 13:00.
Participant 10: Each of us can travel in any time.
Participant 8: OK then, let me check our weekly programs and we can suggest other alternatives to meet.
Participant 3: No, let’s meet on Fridays as much as we can.
Participant 13: Yes.
Participant 3: But we can think about even there are alternatives.
Participant 10: We can think of a solution
Participant 3: We can find a solution.
Participant 10: Or perhaps, the meetings can be held between 12:30-13:00. Let’s say Tuesday and Wednesday.
Participant 8: I think that half an hour would not be very much productive, so it would be better if we do not divide meeting.
Participant 3: Then let’s talk about it among us. For example, we can tell when any of us has something to on Friday at 13:00 or o’clock.
Participant 10: hi hi
Participant 5: hi hi
Participant 8: at least
Participant 10: at least
Participant 3: We will meet at least 8 weeks. Then we can talk about it.
Participant 8: Then we can decide whether maintain the group or not according to in the way we were directed.
Participant 3: For now, it seems Friday.
Participant 13: Friday, 13:00 o’clock.
Participant 7: Friday, 13:00 o’clock.
Participant 13: It seems it suit me. Only Monday afternoons have I something to do.
Participant 7: On Friday, we certainly have our group level meetings. It may be before or after these meetings
Participant 3: all right
Participant 8: Yes.
Participant 10: Well now,
Participant 8: Now, let’s try to produce ideas about how can we benefit from these meetings. What can be done? Well, As [Participant 3] mentioned, first of all it may be... well it may be about a routine experience in the classrooms that we have on that day. We can talk about it.
Participant 7: Will we start from that point?
Participant 8: We can start from that point. By the way, among us there are friends who are not teaching [in the preparatory school] currently.
Participant 13: Yes.
Participant 8: Ha. Thus we can get feedback from them in different ways. We will also have asked their opinions. We can ask such questions as ‘What would you do in that situation’ or there may be some questions that they have or they want to ask. We can answer those and
Participant 13: It was one of the most important goals that I had; benefiting from our more experienced teachers’ experiences.
P3 Participant: Well it may be so, for example, we can create a sample lesson. How can we prepare that lesson or how can we make an effective reading activity for that? We can talk about this, friends. This may be reading or writing.
Participant 8: Yes.
Participant 3: how can we lead our students study harder or how can we make it more enjoyable? If you like we can find weekly topics. Everybody finds any topic s/he is interested in. They can create a topic list. We can bring those lists and discuss. I may say that I have a reading activity and according to this reading passage, I can create such a lesson and prepare such an activity, how do you evaluate this?
Participant 13: Of course.
Participant 3: or my aim, my topic this week, the topic in the course book ‘word formation, suffix, pre-fix’, and further what we can do is...
Participant 8: We can suggest something in these meetings but do they work in the class. For example, the class hour may not suitable for you or we cannot arrange suitable time for pre-intermediate teachers but we can try anyway, I think that we can observe each other’s lessons.
Participant 10: That will be very good
Participant 8:.... Thus we can observe each other.
Participant 10: In addition I have something to say. For example, personally I mind too much some issues. I am thinking on them. I wonder other views on them. Actually I can guess them more or less but. One of these... we can discuss these. For example, let me tell you one of them.
P3 Participant: hi hi
Participant 10: Using mother tongue in language classes. I mean how much it should be used and how much it should not be used. I think it is really a Controversial issue.
Participant 8: Yes.
Participant 3: It is always discussed but cannot be answered
Participant 10: Yes. I would like to know what you think, for example.
Participant 3: Yes. Or how often it should be used.
Participant 10: Besides this, another thing I wonder in evaluation. Sometimes, I am not content with those kinds of tests
Participant 7: hi!
Participant 3: hi hi
Participant 8: hi hi
Participant 10: or I think that it should not be like this.
Participant 7: How?
Participant 3: Right.
Participant 8: hi hi
Participant 10: Even I am not content with the quizzes I prepared myself after a month.
Participant 8.: Yes.
Participant 10: I am looking them after and I am saying that I would not prepare them now.
Participant 8: Yes, right
Participant 3: Yes.
Participant 10: Well, I would like to talk about those when there is such a situation
Participant 3: We experience this among ourselves [among the group level teachers].
    Certainly each group level teachers experience this. And everybody will.
    Recently, we had an example that we talked about it in the group level meeting. What was it? Ha, “does not belong to”. Student forgot to use “to”, we discussed for example, ‘we should not give any point’ or ‘No, let’s give 5 points’.
Participant 10: Hi. Hi. In evaluation.
Participant 13: Yes.
Participant 3: “I have not seen him for four years” Student forgot to use “For”, ‘what shall we do?’, ‘Shall we delete and give zero’. We have to find a consensus about what to do in such situations.
Participant 10: Yes
Participant 13: Right
Participant 3: What are our criteria to give or not to give marks. We can talk about these or we can find solutions. Or when there are many issues which I am not content with the answer, how am I suppose to ensure the students for that answer. We experienced this in the previous years, for example, in testing office.
Participant 13: Yes, right.
Participant 10: Yes, yes. It is important for us to talk these.
Participant 3: Anyway testing is an important part of learning and teaching, so we can talk about testing.
Participant 10: Yes yes. There will be many many issues about testing.
Participant 7: Sure, I agree.
Participant 3: Except these, we can bring some topics and examples.
    Participant 7: Will we need to talk about any theoretical things?
Participant 13: What do you mean by theoretical?
Participant 7: Can it be any specific thing related to those issues mentioned
Participant 8: Well, I do not think so but.
Participant 3: Maybe, when we cannot overcome difficulties, we can refer it, maybe.
Participant 7: How it is dealt with or something like that.
Participant 8: Ha, sure
Participant 3: Sure
Participant 7: Can it be so
Participant 3: Sure
Participant 8: There are some topics we deal with in my MA courses but what important is to practice this.
Participant 3: Sure
Participant 8: Well, for example, there are best methods about evaluation. There are some latest trends which seem very good but
Participant 10: Practical?
Participant 8: These are not suitable in some cases when we consider our conditions in our country in our reality. For example, there is a positive approach towards students nowadays. Not only evaluation but also everything are positive. There is even an approach like in stead of marking their errors marking students’ correct answers and putting question mark for students’ mistakes.

.....
Participant 7: ... In our talks, then, starting from the situations in our school
Participant 8: in the reality of our school
Participant 7: will we talk about in order to find solutions to the problems?
Participant 8: In general
Participant 10: No
Participant 3: No
Participant 7: The things that we will talk about, for example, will be specific to our context? For example, we are trying a new book and a new system, will it be specific issues or problems that are based on those.
Participant 8: Sure. There is no sense in talking about the impractical things. Eventually, the reality of our institution matters.
Participant 3: Beside, many universities are implementing different systems

..........
Participant 8: If you like we can start with the things we have mentioned today.
Participant 13: Friends, before starting I have a question. Are we going to discuss theoretical issues? I have a suggestion. For instance, each week we can discuss about a theory or something more specific such as vocabulary teaching we can read an article from an ELT magazine. If there are interesting articles on such issues each week two or three people might bring articles then we can choose on eof them since we cannot do all of them. A friend might explain the gist of the article
Participant 8: Might be. This may work out in this way. Frankly with my current program I cannot do any article research but I can comment on the articles I read previously.
Participant 13: Yes, why not.
Participant 8: I can make comments which are parallel with the readings I have done during my master studies.
Participant 13: Yes, why not.
Participant 8: You might have more time to look for and find these sorts of things.
You might bring some and you might say that some researchers support this and I might remember another article and I might support the opposite
Participant 13: Yes it might be.
Participant 8: Such kind of controversial topics might be discussed. We can talk about them or you might talk about the activities that went well in class and I might say let’s try this in class friends.
Participant 3: Or I might say I did but it did not work
Participant 8: Or we might discuss that I did it but it did not work and we can discuss about it
Participant 5: Are we going to bring the topics beforehand or are we going to bring the topics that day.
Participant 13: No, I think...
Participant 3: No
Participant 8: No In my opinion this is unnecessary. To limit the topics means to limit ourselves.
Participant 13: For example, we might have seen an interesting article on a web site that week or this might be an ELT technique....
Participant 10: ...We might talk about the activities or practices in the previous seminars or in the workshops and we might think that we can practice them in class
Participant 8: Even we implement those and we observe it all together, as I mentioned.
Participant 13: Yes
Participant 10: Hi hi
Participant 8: The materials in the training sessions that we participated in England...
Participant 7: We have them....
Participant 13: ... The seminars conducted in September...

Excerpts from Meeting 8

Participant 8: I think it was very nice to have such group, though we could not meet so regularly, some of them were productive and some others were not as productive as those. Maybe the reasons for that: Maybe we did not choose suitable time for the meeting. And maybe it was because of the workload of the instructors teaching classes. There were also other meetings that they needed to attend throughout each week. Therefore, we were running from one meeting to the other. About time, we will be relaxed especially when we finish our classes. In summer.... we may have morning sessions or afternoon sessions If the there are more participants in the groups, the absenteeism of one or two participants do not cause any problem and then contribution to group discussions will be different. And I am leaving the announcement of this to all of us [group]. I mean if we can tell other friends what we did in these meetings and how we benefited from these meetings, I believe that they will also participate in the group. I talked with a few friends and they told that they did not know that these meetings would be like that. I believe there will be more participation. This was similar to MA group [one group member agrees] on various topics.
Participant 7: This was a part of research study. I thought this and wondered if it was not introduced us from the researcher, what would happen. Did it happen?

Participant 8: “... We do not have any kind of teacher training program. It is one of the biggest lacks we have ... We have MA students currently enrolled in MA programs, we have friends who are not doing MA but who are interested in reading and doing research, so we can meet and talk about. For example, we had a seminar yesterday, we can come together and talk about what she had presented and discuss which of those she mentioned we are doing in our school and which of those if we could not, what are the reasons for that. We are talking about ideal [application] however, when trying to apply that ideal to the institution, we face problems. Maybe we can discuss the problems we struggle while we are trying to apply those ideals to our institution.

Participant 10: It will be better if everybody participates

Participant 8: Instead of 3 or five people discussing those issues, there should be more people participating. If we tell other friends about this in summer, for example we could have meeting with more participants [Participant 10 agrees].

Participant 7: In fact we are having such exchanges in some parts of our meetings [level meetings].

Participant 8: Yes we do

Participant 7: Some parts of the meeting we are discussing such issues parallel to those we discuss [in TSG] but we are not focusing on sharing. Discussions were not framed like this.

Participant 10: since the only aim was not exchanging information

Participant 8: We are more specific in those [level] meetings.

Participant 7: At least we realized that it is different”

Participant 8: This is different. For example, you may hear something that you did not know... In this group we were told the people who would participate in which group. We may not do this. We may assign time for the meetings and whoever wants to participate; they could participate in those groups...

Participant 10: It is good because it challenged to reread the materials. I sometimes feel sorry that I am not rereading the materials I read in MA program. I felt I need to look at them. This was good for me, it was not something forcing but challenging since I look at the material willingly.

Participant 8: There was meaning to do MA then since you need to look again what you read.

Participant 10: Since we are having these meeting during the term while teaching, you have chance to see whether they were applicable or not.

Participant 8: “What are the instructors who are teaching in regular programs thinking?

Participant 13: “I learned how a technique for one skill could be used for others. Since we graduated from ELT department we did not read anything. These meetings then became a challenge to go back and reread the materials...I became aware of the problems which I did not know that they were problems. I try to solve those problems”

Participant 6: I think this was good. At least we refreshed what we learned. But there was a point missing. Since we were not experienced, you were completing our missing points in terms of practice problems. We attempt to do research
on theoretical aspects due to lack of experience. So the topics should be determined one week in advance for us to get prepared. When those preparation were made, there was no problem but when it was said that ‘let’s meet next week and talk about any subject’ at that time we all keep silent. Therefore, the topics should be determined one week in advance and people can do research and become knowledgeable on that subject.

Participant 5: Not one week in advance but if you decide such meetings, there should be a syllabus

Participant 6: “Like that [determining syllabus] is better.

Participant 8: “Sometimes predetermined syllabuses do not take you anywhere”

Participant 6: “But there would be more flexible one”

Participant 8 “More flexible one may be developed, at least we can determine the major headings.”

……

Participant 7: “We can talk about the things happened daily basis, as well.... We may also talk about the issues in general not limited to school.”

....