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Teacher's professional development in Turkey: Distance education perspective

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Abstract

Teacher education and development is an important policy that is regarded by all governments. In Turkey education system 993.794 teacher actively work. Continuing professional development of teachers after graduation is a big, exhausting and hard process in Turkey. To continue educational activities with initial teacher training is an inadequate basis for obtaining good and quality teachers and education systems. Development at Education systems, needs, government policies, demands and technological changes force teachers to engage in updating themselves and developing their profession. Continuing professional development activities are held on at two perspectives: Formal experiences and informal experiences. At this study Distance education opportunities and implications were shown as a solution for continuing professional development. Distance education is used both formal and informal experiences of teachers' continuing professional development in Turkey.

Keywords: Teachers, education, Turkey.

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1. Introduction

Professional development refers to the development of a person in his or her professional role after initial training. Glatthom describes Professional development for teachers as formal and informal experiences for development of a person for teaching and learning (Glatthom, 1995). Main two problems for sustaining teacher’s professional development are:

- Providing access to learning activities for teachers living and working different geography of Turkey
- Funding learning activities (Craig & Petterson, 2004)

Distance education plays an important role for solving main problems at continuing professional development. In Turkey education system 993.794 teachers work in a wide geography. To arrange structured in service training for teachers is very hard and quality of in service trainings are very low (Habaci et al., 2011). Distance education is also support teacher’s professional development with informal learning opportunities.

2. Distance education in Turkey and opportunities for teachers

In Turkey distance education activities for teachers are mainly organized for to supply basic skills for teachers, develop existing teaching and learning skills and supporting career development. Results of studies made for measuring satisfaction and success of teachers show that distance education supply positive attitude and increase teaching and learning skills of teachers (March et al., 2010; Robinson & Latchem, 2003; Shaqur, 2005). With the development of new technologies, Turkish Ministry Education policies forces Turkish Education system to use online technologies and online learning opportunities. In Turkey, Distance Education facilities for teachers are used for three purposes:

- To supply basic skills for teachers
- Develop existing teaching and learning skills
- Supporting career

Table 1. Distance Education Facilities for teachers in Turkey Education System

Distance Education Facilities		
Supplying Basic Skills for Teachers	Develop Existing Teaching And Learning Skills	Supporting career
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In service training programs • Certificate programs • Lifelong learning opportunities • Fatih Project (Special technology integration program for Turkish Education System) • Individualized learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In service training programs • Certificate programs • Lifelong learning opportunities • Fatih Project (Special technology integration program for Turkish Education System) • Fatih Project (Special technology integration program for Turkish Education System) • Individualized learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master Degree programs • Certificate programs

Table 1 shows facilities that are used by teachers in Turkish Education System. Some of the programs like in service training programs and certificate programs are compulsory for all teachers. Ministry of Education uses distances education facilities to support teachers' professional development.

3. Results and Discussion

Distance education is powerful way to supply teachers' in service training and continuing professional development. With new development at technology, especially mobile technologies increased to demand of using distance education for teacher development. After 2010, in Turkey education system, distance education is used commonly. Approximately 45.000 teacher graduate from master programs related their profession. Also all teachers had some in service trainings through distance education platforms.

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