

## **Investigation of the In-service Teacher Training Programs in the United States and Recommendations for Turkey: The Case of Kent Education Excellence Partnership (KEEP)\***

**Necdet Aykaç\*\***

### **Abstract**

In the current study, the purpose was to evaluate the professional development school applications conducted under the coordination of Kent State University in the USA on the basis of the researcher's observations and the faculty members' opinions to come up with suggestions for the in-service teacher training programs conducted in Turkey. The study is a qualitative case study. Being an example of the professional development school applications, Kent State Excellence Partnership (KEEP) program was evaluated by seeking the opinions of two faculty members who are among the main elements of the program and of 17 teachers having participated in the program. Moreover, document analysis and observations were conducted to evaluate the applications. The data of the study were collected through the semi-structured interview technique, and a questionnaire. The data collected through the interviews conducted with the faculty members and teachers' written responses to the questionnaire items were analyzed by using the "content analysis" technique and then interpreted by the researcher. The application process of the program was observed by the researcher, who was in the position of a participant observer, and an assistant doing doctorate in Kent State University and thus, two separate observation reports were written. Recognizing that there are no significant differences between the observations, two reports were combined into a single report through discussion. The findings of the study revealed that the faculty members are of the opinion that teachers come together for professional development and learning within the context of the professional development school applications, that participating teachers make their own decisions about what they want to learn and that they learn in a learning process based on reciprocal interaction. The teachers having participated in the program stated that the most important contribution of KEEP applications is the creation of a university-school partnership and their working in cooperation with other teachers. According to the observations of the researcher, in professional development schools, teachers find opportunities to develop themselves, their colleagues and schools as practitioners, researchers, listeners and active participants in the planning and implementation of the learning processes.

**Keywords:** Professional development school, in-service teacher training, teacher education, teacher training, pre-service teacher education

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\*\* Associate. Prof. Dr., Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Muğla, Turkey. E-mail: necdetaykac@hotmail.com

## **Amerika’da Hizmetiçi Eğitimde Uygulanan Mesleki Gelişim Uygulamasının İncelenmesi ve Türkiye’ye İlişkin Öneriler Kent Education Excellence Partnersip (KEEP) Örneği**

### **Öz**

Araştırmada ABD Ohio Eyaleti Kent State Üniversitesi koordinatörlüğünde yürütülen Mesleki Gelişim Okulları uygulamalarını araştırmacının gözlemleri, öğretmen ve öğretim üyelerinin görüşleri doğrultusunda değerlendirerek, Türkiye’deki öğretmen hizmet içi eğitimine yönelik olarak öneriler sunulması amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma nitel bir durum çalışmasıdır. Mesleki Gelişim Okulları uygulamasının bir örneği olan Kent State Excellence Partnership (KEEP) uygulamasına ilişkin olarak programın ana unsurlarından olan iki öğretim üyesi ve uygulamaya katılan 17 öğretmenin görüşleri alınmıştır. Ayrıca doküman analizi ve uygulamaya ilişkin olarak gözlemler de yapılmıştır. Araştırmada veriler nitel veri toplama yöntemlerinden biri olan yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği ve anket ile toplanmıştır. Öğretim üyeleri ile yapılan görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler ve öğretmenlere yazılı olarak gönderilen anket soruları “içerik analizi” tekniği kullanılarak çözümlenmiş ve araştırmacı tarafından yorumlanmıştır. Programın uygulama süreci araştırma sürecine gözlemci olarak katılan araştırmacı ve Kent State Üniversitesi’nde doktora yapan bir asistanla birlikte gözlemlenerek iki ayrı gözlem raporu tutulmuştur. Gözlemler arasında önemli farklılıklar olmadığı görülerek iki rapor tartışılarak tek rapora indirilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda, öğretim üyeleri, mesleki gelişim okulu uygulamaları ile öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimi ve öğrenmeleri için öğretmenlerin bir araya geldiklerini, neyi nasıl öğrenme istediklerine ilişkin olarak kararlarının kendileri tarafından verildiğini, karşılıklı etkileşime dayalı bir öğrenme sürecinin oluştuğunu belirtmişlerdir. Uygulamaya katılan öğretmenler ise, KEEP uygulamasının en önemli yararının üniversite ve okul işbirliği olduğunu ve diğer öğretmenlerle işbirliği halinde çalışmalarını ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca öğretmenler, bu işbirliği sayesinde öğrenme-öğretme sürecine ilişkin farklı bakış açıları kazandıklarını, yeni arayışlara yöneldiklerini ve farklı okullardaki öğretmenlerin öğretim pratiklerini görerek birbirlerini zenginleştirdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Araştırmacının gözlemlerine göre de mesleki gelişim okullarında öğretmenler, araştırmacı, uygulayıcı, dinleyici ve öğrenme sürecinin planlamadan uygulamaya kadar aktif bir katılımcısı olarak kendilerini, meslektaşlarını ve okullarını geliştirebilme olanağına sahip olabilmektedirler.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Mesleki gelişim okulları, hizmetiçi eğitim, öğretmen eğitimi, öğretmen yetiştirme, hizmet öncesi eğitim

### Introduction

Training of qualified teachers is still an important issue for countries. Many national and international organizations conduct various comprehensive campaigns in this regard (UNESCO, 2012). Educational programs and teachers as the implementers of these programs play important roles in training of qualified individuals. The teacher is one of the basic elements of an education system. Countries that are successful in international tests (e.g., TIMMS) underscore the importance of training qualified teachers for their success (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). The quality of the teacher seems to depend on training them effectively. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to evaluate the teacher education and professional development systems in different countries and to revise teacher education programs in light of these evaluations.

The skills necessary for teachers to succeed in their classes can be improved through effective training programs. By doing so, investments that are made for the professional development of teachers will not only increase the quality of the education system but also open the way to train successful students and to develop schools. In this respect, providing professional development opportunities for teachers is required. However, professional development activities provided for teachers should not only be limited to conferences and seminars but also teachers should be allowed to conduct research with their own students in their classes (Levin and Rock, 2003). In such a professional development program, the teacher will be able to take on the roles of planner, practitioner, and researcher not only that of the listener. According to Darling-Hammond and Mc Laughlin (2011), in in-service teacher training programs, the training approach designed in line with active learning process and including different methods such as cooperative learning should be adopted. One of the teacher training models that allow teachers to actively participate in learning process, conduct research like a researcher and develop on their own and together with other teachers in cooperation with a university is the Professional Development Schools (PDS).

By establishing a link between schools and universities, PDSs focus on training of pre-service teachers, professional development of experienced teachers, provision of quality education for students and continuous improvement of practices (Teitel, 1997). PDSs provide teachers with many opportunities including learning from peer discussions, independent reading and observing the work of their colleagues (Mizell, 2010).

In PDSs, teachers try to contribute to others' professional development as well as their own development and they believe that they are responsible for the success of the whole school. PDSs present opportunities for teachers to learn in cooperation with their colleagues. In PDSs, pre-service teachers are provided with environments where they can work together with their mentors and scientists from universities and learn from their experiences so that they contribute to everyone's professional develop (Gürşimşek, 1998). PDSs not only train pre-service teachers but also offer lifelong learning opportunities for novice and experienced teachers on the basis of a school-university cooperation (Holmes Group, 1990). PDSs share learning practices of teachers working in teams to enhance the educational quality of school communities. These practices also help students to learn better (Panich, 2012). In addition to this, such programs focus on learning rather than training of teachers through group discussions directed towards their day-to-day professional practices (Mitchell and Sakney, 2001; Toule and Lours, 2002). Professional development schools involve a learning and teaching process in which teachers actively participate in learning and decision making, work like researchers in cooperation with academicians from universities, take important responsibilities and invest great efforts for their personal development and development of other teachers and schools. By allowing democratic participation in management and organization and in decision making process, PDSs develop the teacher's leadership role. In the administrative committees of PDSs, teachers, school directors and academicians can take part in. Thus, in these administrative committees, democratic processes can be run and everybody can participate in decision making process. These committees undertake the task of disseminating, planning, administering and evaluating the policies of PDSs (Benedum, 2004).

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Today there is a common agreement that the most effective professional development practices are those that provide teachers with classroom practices and collaboration. In this respect, PDSs put great emphasis on the professional development of teachers, promote cooperation, sharing and common goals and make intensive efforts to achieve them. PDSs focus on lifelong learning in schools as well as on the external and internal dimensions of learning (Early and Bubb, 2004). In order to improve professional development practices at schools, PDSs carry out research, develop new models, and share them with teachers through conferences and presentations (Kofman and Green 1993). Also for teachers, they organize reading clubs, regional and national conferences, peer coaching, visits to other schools and workshops. By doing so, PDSs aim to create educational opportunities that are flexible and cooperation-oriented as opposed to in-service training (Teitel, 1997). In this cooperative atmosphere of PDSs, the leadership role of teachers is strengthening (Jet-Simpson, 1992). Teachers adopting the role of leadership can more effectively promote and interpret educational programs (Ben-Peretz, 1990). In this respect, PDSs can play a very important role in the professional development of pre-service teachers and teachers as well as in the promotion of the leadership role of teachers.

Professional development schools include all the professional development activities improving the quality of learning process and through which teachers actively participate in a learning process aiming to encourage teachers to develop themselves (Bolam, 1993). PDSs adopt an effective approach for teachers to develop themselves by drawing on their experiences. For this approach to be effective, teachers should share information in groups, carry out planning activities together, make decisions in cooperation, construct educational process together and share the outcomes of their practices with each other. These applications can play an important role for novice teachers to make use of the knowledge and experiences of experienced teachers (Darling – Hammond, 2005). Seen from this perspective, while professional development schools enable novice teachers to be informed about the experiences of teachers from different schools by participating in workshops together with experienced teachers, they also provide opportunities for qualified teachers to take responsibilities for the development of novice teachers as mentors. Moreover, PDSs establish university-school cooperation and thus enable academicians to see the problems at schools and teachers to capitalize on academicians' knowledge base. University-school cooperation particularly provides opportunities for trainee teachers to make observations and applications, to get guidance and counseling services, to participate in seminars and to share with their colleagues. Though there are some differences among the states, professional development schools are effectively functioning in the US with their school-based in-service training activities.

PDSs in the United States (US) aim to set some learning standards including:

- Working with inexperienced teachers,
- Training experienced teachers as mentors / group leaders,
- Working with teachers, researchers and trainers in the application process,
- Teachers are both colleagues and learners,
- Creating a learning-centered structure (Darling Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995).

PDSs function like a place where trainee teachers complete their teaching practice under the guidance of these standards. School-university cooperation is one of the primary tenets of professional development schools. Schools working in cooperation with universities are called with different names such as professional development schools, professional practice schools, partner schools, clinic schools and teaching schools. The most popular one among these is professional development schools (Hallinan and Khmelkov, 2001).

PDSs are a concept covering lab schools, partnership schools, in-service learning and all the other attempts (Wong and Glass, 2009). Professional development schools aim to train teachers and develop schools based on the idea that for good schools, good teachers are needed and for good teachers, good schools are needed (Clark, 1999). In this regard, professional development addresses the development of schools and teachers simultaneously and provides important opportunities for schools to develop their quality by working in cooperation with universities.

States have different policies in terms of the support they offer for their teachers who want to participate in PDSs. While some states give free time to their teachers to participate in professional development programs, some others encourage their teachers to participate in these programs within school hours. Teachers are supported for their participation fees to workshops and conferences and transportation fees and for their university tuition fees (Darling-Hammond, 1994). This support positively affects teachers' participation in professional development programs. High participation in these programs has positive impacts on increasing the quality of teaching profession. It can be said that teachers are highly motivated to participate in PDSs because they must renew their teaching certificate/license in every five years and holding a master or doctorate degree increases their wage.

In the current study, professional development services offered to teachers in the US have been examined through observations, interviews, school trips and analysis of curriculum and if the good sides of these services are determined and then they will be integrated to the teacher training programs organized in Turkey; thus, great contributions can be made to the development of teachers.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the professional development applications conducted in the coordinatorship of Kent Education Excellence Partnership, in the Ohio State of US in accordance with the researcher's observations and university faculties' and teachers' views and by this way to provide recommendations regarding the in-service teacher training of Turkey. With regards to this purpose, this study mainly sought to address the following research questions:

1. What do the academicians at Kent State University think about the application of Kent Education Excellence Partnership (KEEP)?
2. What are the opinions of teachers who participated KEEP regarding the application?
3. What are the observations of the researcher regarding the application of KEEP?
4. What can be recommended for the in-service teacher training of Turkey?

**Method**

**Research Model**

This study was designed as a qualitative case study. Data were collected in 2015-2016 academic year. In this study, the opinions of academicians and teachers, who are the main elements of the programs, concerning Kent State Excellence Partnership (KEEP) program, an example of professional development schools were received. In addition to this, document analysis and observations regarding this application were conducted.

**Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of 52 teachers who participated in the application conducted in the coordinatorship of KEEP. However, the data were collected from 17 teachers who submitted the online interview and also two academicians with whom face-to-face interview was performed and who maintained the coordination of the application.

Table 1. *Characteristics of the participants*

Subject area	School level		Educational level		
All subjects (General)	3	Kindergarten	1	Bachelor	3
Science	1	Elementary (1 to 8 grade)	7	Master's Level	14
Chemistry	1	Secondary (9 to 12 grade)	6		
Mathematics	1	Curriculum director	3		
English	4	Administrator	3		
Government/Economics	1				
Math, Science, Lang. Art	1				
Early childhood	2				
Total	17		17		17

As seen in Table 1, some of the teachers who participated in the application and voluntarily answered the interview form are school principals, program coordinator,

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kindergarten, elementary school or high school teachers and also they teach various subjects including mathematics, English, general, science and chemistry, etc. The most important finding distinguished in this table is that among these 17 teachers, 14 teachers have master's degree whereas only 3 of them have undergraduate education.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

In this study, multiple data collection methods were used including semi-structured interviews, observation and structured open-ended questions. The written semi-structured form consisted of two parts: a) six open-ended questions about the teachers' views about the KEEP and b) demographic information. To establish validity, three experts who specialized in curriculum development, educational administration, and assessment and evaluation were asked for their opinions about the semi-structured interview form. In line with their feedback, the questions were revised. By this way, the semi-structured interview form consisted of 10 questions. The interviews with academicians were conducted in their offices. It was paid attention for the interview to be at a silent and natural environment. The interviews were recorded with permissions.

The open ended-question form consisted of nine questions. In accordance with expert opinions, three questions were omitted and at last a form with six questions was attained. Once IRB permission was granted, structured open-ended questions were administered to teachers via email. 17 voluntary teachers submitted the structured open-ended question form on Qualtrics. The structured open-ended form included questions aiming to reveal the participating teachers' opinions about the application of the KEEP, the negative and positive sides of the KEEP, how the KEEP contributed them and lastly about the mentoring applications. Besides, the interview conducted with academicians comprised of questions about mentoring applications aiming to elicit the faculty members' opinions about the KEEP, its advantages and disadvantages and the reflections of this application into the collaboration between universities and the schools.

Another data source was the researcher's observational field notes. The researcher participated in the application process of KEEP and observed workshops, presentations, discussions, evaluations and reported his observations and applications regarding them together with an assistant working at Kent State University. The researcher participated in the applications for five months as an observer in 2015-2016 spring and summer terms. During the spring term, four meetings were held within the scope of professional development school applications. Besides, in the summer months, two meetings lasting for two days were conducted. In these meetings, two-day symposiums were arranged in which teacher presentations, workshops and panels took place.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study data obtained from interviews with two faculty members and from the teachers via online open-ended question form were analyzed by utilizing qualitative content analysis method and interpreted by the researcher. All the data which were obtained by the interviews with faculty members and recorded were transcribed. Interview analyses were checked by the researcher's reading them carefully. In order to provide reliability, one fourth of the data set was analyzed by another independent researcher. The transcribed data of interviews were compared and 88% agreement was calculated. The disagreements were solved through discussion. In addition, the opinions of interviewers were reflected as they were and no changes were made. The researcher participated in the application process of the program together with an assistant taking his doctorate at Kent State University, hence two different observation reports were attained. After determining that there were not significant differences between the reports, two reports were combined and a report was obtained.

### **Limitation of the Study**

In the study, as a limitation of the professional development schools, it can be asserted that practical implications of the professional development school in the US might vary in different states. Because, the interviews and observations of this study were limited with the teacher training programs applied in Ohio Kent State University, and also with the opinions

of teachers who participated in the application of KEEP and faculty members working in the application.

### Findings

#### Faculty Members' Views on the Application of Kent Education Excellence Partnership (KEEP)

Two faculty members at Kent State University and principal investigators of KEEP reported that the KEEP was a different project mainly aiming at promoting teachers to develop their professional development by themselves. The faculty members described what makes the KEEP different from others as follows:

*P1: I think, often professional development in schools work in a way that the schools bring in an expert and the expert is, is teaching and its sort of a top down... but this particular, this KEEP Academy, is a little different because it's totally the teachers coming together to plan what they want to learn and how they want -, in the manner in which they learn in.*

*P2: We organize workshops and conferences that with our committee and then we offer them to the schools. But sometimes we plan workshop stuff with the school committee.*

The faculty members mentioned that experts who specialized in professional development taught teachers at the schools. However, teachers came together and decided what and how they wanted to learn. Teachers stated that by doing this, they took active roles on their professional development and learning. Therefore, the KEEP involved a process in which faculty members and teachers participated in the decision-making process together and learned from each other. In addition, the faculty members stated that teachers could attend in educational training seminars or workshops organized by the faculty on any topic teachers asked for. The faculty members described the collaborations between the university and the school established through the KEEP as follows:

*P1: Professional development office of Kent state university provides opportunities for teachers' professional learning. We are working with schools in a variety of ways. For instance, we are offering professional development training for teachers and pre-service teachers as well.*

*P2: I think that at Kent State University, we do a very good job about professional development, but I think it's important for every university to be aware of teachers' needs and provide professional development for them.*

Faculty members stated they always keep in touch with schools because they need schools and schools need them. They reported that the purpose of professional development is twofold: a) to provide teachers with in-service training for their professional development and b) to give practical implication to pre-service teachers at classrooms. Thus, professional development schools not only play a critical role in increasing the quality of teaching for teachers and pre-service teachers but also create an environment for collaboration between the university and the school. Additionally, professional development schools allow faculty members to be aware of what the schools need and bring theory and practice together. Faculty members described how they contact with schools and find teachers as follows:

*P1. We asked the school districts close to us whether they would like to be involved in the professional development schools project; thus, we increased the number of school districts we are working in cooperation with from 8 to 13. People are positive, you can see that positivity and willingness.*

*P2. Three are two people from the university and the remaining 55-60 people are from different schools. I took long time and great effort to organize this; we had to make a lot of phone calls, send a lot of e-mails and hold many meetings. All of these took nearly one year.*

Faculty members stated that they are always in interaction with schools and provide professional learning activities for teachers. In this respect, they have now thirteen schools whose teachers voluntarily participate in the KEEP. Faculty members stated that they use different ways to reach these teachers including e-mail, phone calls and meetings. They

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stated that teachers seem very motivated to participate in the KEEP. They also mentioned that most of teachers in KEEP enthusiastically attend workshops, take active role in class discussions and do not miss any activity in the KEEP. This indicates that motivation and enthusiasm teachers have may positively influence the outcome of the KEEP. Faculty members described the benefits of the KEEP as follows:

*P1. I think there are a couple levels of benefit. the first is it's giving, as a researcher, it's an opportunity to see , how certain aspects of public policy are affecting teachers, but also then how their applying pedagogical practices that either we teach or you know, are deriving from their settings so it's, its wonderful contact that way. with teachers and with students but then the other aspect of it that's very interesting is you know, just socially, there's a benefit from connecting to teachers because I was a public school teacher so to have that interaction again is personally enriching for my own teaching I found. Because I've gone to the conference and I've listened to people present about teaching and you know, it's the same job I do.*

*P2. KEEP Academy is a program with 13 other school districts and you saw that teachers are planning professional learning for other teachers. We have other graduate programs like this where some of these are our professors, they are on our faculty and they teach these workshops. At the KEEP Academy, the teachers are the ones doing the workshop. so KEEP is a little bit different. we also had a just last week, we had a school psychology conference and there were about 100 people who came to the workshop and several of them earned graduate credit and one of our professors taught an online class so to, KEEP Academy, this is another kind, people go to conferences and when they attend the conference, they can get a graduate credit and, and our professors were teaching the class so there is all different ways that professional learning is provided.*

Faculty members stated that observing teachers' practices, communicating with them and teachers' presentations in the meetings enhanced their teaching and learning visions. This indicates that PDSs does not only contribute to professional development for teachers but also give opportunities for faculty members to develop their visions. Thus, PDSs have potential to increase the quality of teacher education by contributing to the development of teacher educators. Additionally, they stated that the KEEP strengthened the collaboration between teachers and faculty members. Faculty members' views on this collaboration are as follows:

*P1: I think there are benefits in many different ways. Firstly, participants can see how certain aspects of public policies are affecting teachers. They can also share their classroom experiences and practices with us and other teachers and this is enriching for everyone. "*

*P2: KEEP Academy is a program working in cooperation with 13 school districts and as you can see in this program, teachers are planning professional learning for other teachers. We have other graduate programs like this where our professors are giving workshops. At the KEEP Academy, the teachers are the ones doing workshops, so KEEP is a little bit different. We also organize one-week psychology conference in which more than 100 people participate and we also teach on-line courses."*

Faculty members stated that one of the main objectives of the university is to establish collaboration and coordination among schools in the districts. Faculty members described their views on how other universities cooperate with schools for projects as the KEEP does as follows:

*P1. I do not know. I heard that Ohio State is doing something similar to this. And they may be. I'm sure all public universities are doing similar things.*

*P2. I don't know. Therefore, there is probably something similar at Akron and Cleveland States. You know, we want people to come here to earn graduate credit; it is what keeps the university going. Therefore, I think that Akron and Cleveland States have their own Professional Development schools, but I do not know how they operate.*

Faculty members stated that other universities like Ohio States University, might have projects like the KEEP but they are not sure how they work. In addition, they mentioned that professional development school programs like the KEEP could be in different forms across



the US universities. According to faculty members' views, because other states and districts have different professional development objectives; it is difficult to say that the KEEP may work in the same way in other states. Faculty members described the disadvantages of the KEEP for faculty members as follows:

*P1. I think, well, I think a disadvantage is, in our case, we don't have a lot of urban districts involved. I mean, we have 1 or 2. I think it would benefit, I think it would be useful to have greater economic diversity among the school districts. So I would say that one disadvantage is the way we work; the districts that are close to us are suburban districts or rural. We have a couple rural districts. So I think it would be beneficial to include one larger urban district like Akron Public or something. More diverse school demographics..*

*P2. The cons, I do not know that there are any. I think it is all, it is all good, you know.*

Faculty members stated some disadvantages of the KEEP. First, they stated that schools that involved in the KEEP were mostly from rural areas. If they were more schools from urban areas, it would create an economically diverse environment for the KEEP. Next, because teachers decide what they learn, sometimes they might have disagreements about it. Other than this, faculty members mentioned the following advantages of the KEEP:

*P1. I think this is an advantage because the schools are a little more heterogeneous, they are all suburban schools, mostly suburban schools and similar levels of funding, they can understand each other's ways of doing things a little bit better, it's a little easier for them to relate to each other.*

*P2. Well, the pros are obvious. Lots of learning, good relationships, money, it all helps the world go round, right? I think there are many advantages.*

Faculty members stated that the heterogeneous structure of the schools could be an advantage for the schools. Because the schools were in similar economic status, they could easily contact with each other. They stated that the KEEP allows teachers to establish good relationships and earn money by attending in workshops. The views of faculty members may provide evidence how the KEEP creates effective learning environment for teachers and establish a solid communication with other teachers and schools. Moreover, faculty members mentioned that the KEEP also allows faculty members to provide online mentorship for teachers and principals.

### **Findings Regarding the Researcher's Observations in the Application of KEEP**

Data from observations indicated that the PDSs are implemented under different names in the US. PDSs in different states of the US provide mentoring in the training of pre-service teachers, establish cooperation with universities and schools and offer in-service training for teachers. In doing so, they contribute to the professional development of both teachers and teacher educators. They can also improve learning and teaching at schools through the training they provide for teachers. Professional development school is funded by Kent State University's both academically and financially and it comprises of 13 school districts since 2010. The KEEP was supported by the Marta Holden Jennigs Foundation in 2015. The foundation supports the learning and quality improvement of the teachers and the implementation of the projects yielding outcomes conducive to the development of education. In this way, PDSs make important contributions to the enhancement of learning and teaching processes and the development of schools based on mutual interaction and sharing of teachers, students and faculty members. The KEEP seems to be one of the best examples of professional development schools. The motivation and enthusiasm of the faculty members in accomplishing the program objectives positively affect the teachers who participated in the program voluntarily. Such programs also motivate teachers because with their improving qualifications, their wages also increase. The presentations organized in the program are attended by faculty members, teachers from primary, secondary and high schools, school principals and district education representatives, students and parents. Teachers and faculty members meet to hold discussions and workshops on previously determined topics. In addition, teachers share their professional experiences with other teachers so that they can benefit from others' experiences. Furthermore, discussions are held

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among teachers about how they teach particular subjects, question asking techniques, learning and teaching goals, formative evaluation, effective feedback, special education, inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, constructivist evaluation, social and scientific studies and professional learning societies. While classroom practices are usually discussed during first sessions, second sessions are usually allocated for the discussion of different topics selected by the participants. Teachers are also asked to demonstrate examples of their good practices. During the discussions, everyone is equal. Presentations in the last session are made in the form of a symposium. The symposium takes two full days. Here teachers also present their work, either individually or in a group, in their schools by using visuals. After these presentations, discussions are conducted with the participation of teachers, students, parents and school directors. Thus, what has been learned in the KEEP can be transferred to school environment. In this way, some of the studies applied by teacher in their classes are;

Writing Center: it is conducted by a team consisted of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and students, coaches from eight grade and library assistants. In this way, students can improve their writing skills by using technology, peer collaboration, self-evaluation and editing.

The power of place value in first grade: The first grade students are taught the concepts of numbers and additions by using cards, wooden bars, and beads. In this way, students can touch the learning materials and be involved in creative learning.

From observations it can be said that the KEEP program has been implemented since 2010 with the participation of teachers and principals from 13 school districts. It was observed that the KEEP Academy supports all the works done to enhance the quality in education. People participating in the program have to participate in meetings, to make presentations, to carry good practices into their classes, and to send the studies they have made to the evaluation committee at the end of the semester. In addition, participants must attend at least 3 meetings in order to be able to receive a certificate. In return, they can borrow money to attend master and doctorate courses free of charge.

Thus, the professional development program, which is carried out with the cooperation of Kent State University and 13 regional schools, enables the teachers to participate in every step of the application from planning to implementation, to learn with the university faculty members and other teachers, to learn on their own and to transfer good practices into their classes. As it is obvious from the statements of the participating teachers, the KEEP is seen to be successful in providing self-development opportunities for teachers. Motivation and enthusiasm of the course instructors and better prospects to be attained when the course is completed contribute to the success of the program. The opinions of the teachers about the implementation of KEEP support the observations of the researcher and the views of the faculty members.

### The Views of Teachers Who Participated in the Application of KEEP

The views of the teachers were given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The Views of the Teachers Being Involved in Professional Development Schools (PDS) Seminars about the Benefits of PDS

Codes	f
Learning from each other	14
Interaction between teacher and lecturers	11
Learning new methods, strategies, and techniques.	8
Sharing practices of classroom inside	9
Inappropriate time related to seminars (negative side of the views)	6

Given the Table 2 above, the teachers mostly mentioned that they have positive attitudes towards the KEEP. They also stated some negative aspects of the KEEP relevant to inappropriate time of the seminars. Some quotations from the teachers' views were presented below.

T4. *“Learning from each other and building partnerships are wonderful. This can be the opportunity for teachers to make presentations to their colleagues. Teachers may find trying new things inspirational when taught by peers and not experts. The only drawback is that it is difficult for them to maintain their network during the school year.”*

T7. *“A big advantage is that it provides time for local professionals to meet and collaborate, alongside the KSU instructors. This kind of collaboration is what helps teachers learn and grow in their field. I don't see any disadvantages of the KEEP.”*

T11. *“The advantages are mostly centered around the opportunity to interact with other highly motivated professionals and learning new techniques. Disadvantages are mostly of a time related nature. Finding time to create and go through meaningful PD can be difficult.”*

The teachers stated that the most positive aspect of the KEEP is the cooperation created between universities and schools. They mentioned that they found good opportunities to explore different teaching techniques and to put them into practice. Earning credit that the teachers can use for taking courses at the university is one of things that make the program appealing to the teachers. Some teacher mentioned some negative aspects of the KEEP. Less communication in online, less time spent for some important points, and giving all courses simultaneously might cause them to miss other courses that they would like to take are the negative aspects of the KEEP. When the KEEP program is examined, it can be said that the meeting held in summer times (June and August) may meet teachers’ needs. When the teachers were asked, “why this program should be continued”, all of the teachers stated that the implementation of the KEEP should continue and be continuous. The views of the teachers were presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. *The views of the teachers concerning the effectiveness of the program*

<b>Codes</b>	<b>f</b>
Importance of continuity of program	14
Specialty and desire of lecturers	8
Improving professional skills	5
Economic	5
Teacher interaction	14
Continuity of professional development	11
Learning topics needed	6
Renewing undergraduate process	4

The analyses showed that teachers believed that the program has profound impacts on the teachers and should be continue. Also, teachers told that the program provides a variety of professional development possibilities for teachers. Some quotations from the teacher views were presented below:

T6. *“It is extremely encouraging to have refined educators seeking our opinions on professional development to help colleagues grow in their field.”*

T8. *They really appreciate learning from expert peers, and are enthusiastic and empowered by the fact that the conference is created among themselves. No cost is always enticing as well! KSU faculty often help to keep a focus when conversations veer off content/ purpose, and provide insight for post- K-12 needs.”*

T12. *“Teachers within the KEEP program continue to do PD because the platform provides teacher to teacher interactions between different schools. This provides various perspectives to be shared that otherwise would not be available if you were to stay within your own district. The faculty from KSU provide the platform for this teacher-to-teacher interaction. Additional resources and connections that we, as teachers, may not have access. As well as professional thoughts and opinions in their respective field that may be above and beyond what the current teachers know.”*

T15. *“First and foremost, continual professional development is required for license renewal. Teachers within the KEEP program are able to pursue topics of interest and topics where they need further assistance. It's incredibly helpful for the opportunity to participate in a program where a number of needs are met.”*

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The teachers stated that they believed the KEEP should continue in near future. They mentioned that they were able to see how passionate the faculty members were in the KEEP to teach the teachers about teaching. They also stated that the KEEP is a well-organized program that brought teachers from different schools together. Working with other teachers allowed them to see different perspectives in teaching. They also stated that they were able to learn from faculty members from university and in turn faculty members learn from them. They mentioned that they had opportunities to refresh what they had learned from college and to find new information in teaching and learning. Another positive aspect of the KEEP is that earning credits for taking graduate courses at university makes them motivated to study in graduate schools; otherwise, they had to pay for fee for graduate schools. Attending in the KEEP, they stated that their confidence to teach was increased.

The success of professional development schools depends on the quality of communication amongst the university, schools, teachers and students. Teachers' views on the collaboration amongst Kent State University, teachers and schools are as follows.

Table 4. *The views of the teachers participating in professional development schools seminars*

Codes	f
Providing equipment and material	6
Support of leadership management	4
Research practices in classrooms	7
Master's and PhD	4
Project collaborations with university	6
Summer schools	9
Mentoring for preservice teachers	15

As it is seen in Table 4, the teachers stated that by making collaborations with Kent State University (KEEP) named professional development school system provide many opportunities to them including doing research in classrooms, learning leadership management, doing master's and PhD, summer schools, making collaborations with university, mentoring for pre-service teachers, and equipment and material. Some quotations from the teachers' views were presented below:

*T7. "I collaborate daily with my team (all 7th grade teachers) and my subject partner. We plan common lessons and assessments."*

*T9. "Science - Biology has borrowed equipment from KSU to use in class. Conceptual Chemistry - summer PD class offered by KSU for grades 6-9 for teachers. Free equipment/supplies are given away during the course as well."*

*T14. "I have collaborated with KSU personnel with the teaching of mathematics within my classroom. I conducted an inquiry project on how to use conceptual discussion and guided math as a vehicle to further the development of my students."*

The teachers' views regarding coaching and mentoring processes were showed in Table 5.

Table 5. *The views of the teachers about coaching and mentoring*

Codes	f
Program is functional	12
Interaction between mentor and trainee	10
Integration into profession	13
Sharing classroom experience and practices	9
Enabling observation possibility for classroom practices	7
Doing more practices	14

Considering Table 4, the teachers stated collaboration patterns between university and the schools including, KEEP, the training of pre-service teachers, coaches and mentorship, practices of professional development, research implications at the classrooms, providing equipment for science experiments and collaboration on projects exist. The most important collaboration patterns the teachers stated were the training of pre-service teachers, and coaches and mentorship.

It can be asserted that in PDSs the cooperation of the teacher educators, the teachers and the prospective teachers is as effective as the in-service training of the teachers in the applications of the pre-service teacher education. This cooperation has shown that teachers generally have a positive opinion on the effectiveness of the mentoring and coaching system, which is based on the learning of students from experienced teachers and the guidance of teachers and university lecturers. They stated their thoughts as followings:

*T2. "Ongoing, meaningful observation and feedback is definitely more productive than single events. The challenge is timing/ scheduling."*

*T6. "If set up correctly with specific guidelines, mentoring is very functional. Pros: Shared experience - If the mentor is in the same field as the pupil and has time to share his/her experiences I feel this can benefit the pupil. Cons - Some mentors are not willing to share all their tricks or resources with the pupil."*

*T9. "The implementation is functional, but could absolutely be better. The biggest problem is the continual changes that both new teachers and mentors must keep up with."*

*T17. "I do not see cons to mentoring. Unless someone is incompetent and then mentoring someone else. Otherwise, mentoring is essential to maintaining quality teachers and further advancing the teaching profession. When done right, all involved benefit from mentoring experiences."*

Table 6. The views of the teachers the practices in the schools

Codes	f
A lack of knowledge about practice	4
Enough time	10
Increasing practice	12
Interaction among lecturer, mentor, and trainee	9

In general, teachers said that 'mentoring and coaching system were a useful application in understanding teachers' development. In particular, to train qualified teachers and to integrate pre-service teachers into school system, it is important that experienced teachers share their classroom experiences and practices with pre-service teachers. With mentoring, pre-service teachers can get familiar with the actual classroom environment, learn how to help student learn, try new things with confidence and get feedback about what they do. They stated that trust and equality are important elements in mentoring and the KEEP makes them feel trust and equality in mentoring. It can be said that this direction is very important in terms of the success of the system of choosing mentors who are professionals.

The following are teachers' opinions about how much time pre-service teachers at Kent State University spend for training in the KEEP, whether or not this training is enough for teacher education and what kind of relationships are established between faculty and teachers in this process:

*T9. "Given the time we had, we were able to accomplish quite a bit. The communication between my pre-service teacher's advisor, my pre-service teacher and me was excellent. We often met as a group, which allowed excellent conversations to occur as the year progressed."*

*T11. "It is generally a 16-week semester, though students are typically assigned for about 12 weeks. During that time, there are at least two evaluations to be completed for them by both the cooperating teacher and a supervisor from the university. The pre-service teacher, cooperating teacher, and university supervisor must all have good rapport and be willing to work together and speak candidly, when needed, to ensure success."*

While some teachers participating in KEEP indicated that they did not have knowledge about implementation, some teachers stated that during the four-year period they spend one semester for studying, one semester for observing in classrooms, one semester for studying and observing and the last semester for working full-time at schools. It has been stated that the students were gathered at least twice with their counselor and teachers to discuss together. In addition, teacher stated that given time for practicing would be enough but

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because they did not do practicing during all time they suggested that more time is needed for practicing. With this respect, teacher training can be seen as a reflection of the pre-service teachers' practice in which teachers, students, and university faculty members collaborate. It can be said that the effectiveness of PDSs includes the possibilities and conditions in which teacher candidates are able to provide significant contributions in the development and well-being of the students as well as teachers and faculty members have developed.

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of this study indicate that faculty members believed that KEEP, as an application of PDSs, was different from the other teacher training done by calling an expert. In addition, faculty members stated that this practice involves a process of learning based on mutual interaction, in which teachers make their decisions about what they want to learn and how they want to learn by bringing teachers together for professional development and learning. Moreover, the faculty members stated that the application of professional development schools is aimed to support teachers' pre- and post-service education. Faculty members stated that KEEP provided the development of teachers as well as affecting faculty members' views as they observed teachers' instructional processes of teaching. They said that although they might have different names, almost every state in the US has similar applications. Though teachers think that absence of urban districts from which teachers participate in the program as a disadvantage, the faculty members emphasized that because rural area schools are similar in economic conditions, it becomes easier for teachers to understand each other and to communicate.

According to the observations of the researcher, the applications of the PDSs include an active learning process in which the teachers carry out their own learning in cooperation with the universities and other schools, unlike the seminars and conferences that are made by inviting a specialist from the field. In this process, teachers take active roles as researchers, listeners and participants. University faculty members' efforts, coordination and effective communication skills play an important role in the success of the process. Financial support for teachers in the United States, higher wages for teachers who hold a master and doctoral degree and granting free credits for teachers can be important sources of motivation for teachers to improve themselves and participate in trainings. The professional development applications conducted in cooperation with Kent State University and school districts aim to create better teachers and accordingly better education and instruction for students (Bolam, 1993; Clark, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Darling Hammond and Cobb, 1995; Hallinan ve Khmelkov, 2001; Holmes Grup, 1990; Mizell, 2010). Sharing of good practices are conducive to the development of education in all the districts. The faculty members' overwhelming efforts as well as teachers' willingness and desire for learning also contributed to the success of the program.

Teachers stated that the most important benefit of KEEP is the cooperation created between the university and schools and among schools. Through this cooperation, they think that they have gained different perspectives of the learning-teaching process, that have started new quests and they professional developed by seeing the practices of other teachers. As a result of participation in this program, their motivation to learn and improve increased. This indicates that fostering teachers' professional development can play an important role in increasing their motivation.

The teachers are of the opinion that pre-service teachers can be trained better in cooperation with a university. Particularly, mentors' sharing their class experiences and practices with pre-service teachers is very useful. In this respect, it can be said that the interaction between the mentor teacher, the student and the faculty member makes significant contributions to the professional development of pre-service teachers.

When the results of the research are evaluated in general, it can be said that the practice of PDSs implemented as KEEP at Kent State University is an effective professional development learning activity which is based on school-university cooperation in which faculty members learns from teachers and in turn teachers learn from faculty members. This

sort of in-service training can offer significant contributions to teacher education in Turkey. There are important problems in Turkey regarding the effectiveness of teachers' in-service training. These problems include lack of cooperation between the Ministry of National Education in Turkey and higher education institutions, inadequate in-service training courses and participation of a limited number of teachers (Gökdere and Çepni, 2004; Kaya and Kartallıoğlu, 2010; TED, 2009).

Research has reported that there are important problems observed in Turkey in terms of in-service training programs and professional development programs offered to teachers. Some problems that research has reported include that the content and scope of the in-service training activities are not comprehensive enough to meet the needs, teachers' needs are not taken into account when in-service training programs are prepared, the timing is not appropriate, the physical and technological facilities are insufficient, and in-service training activities are inadequate. In addition, research reported the fact that in-service training activities were carried out by trainers not specialized in the field and giving more emphasis on theoretical knowledge and less emphasis on practical implications (Aydoğan, 2002; Uçar 2005; Durmuş, 2003; Demirkol, 2004; Gökdere and Çepni, 2004; Özen, 2006). Therefore, despite in-service training and seminars given to teachers, teachers seemed to have a lack of understanding of their professional subject area (Önen, Mertoğlu, Saka & Gürdal, 2009; Ulubey, Yıldırım & Aykaç, 2016).

The quality of in-service teacher training program can become more productive by a well-prepared training program in line with the needs of the teachers, as well as active participation of the teachers in the learning process in cooperation with each other. In the literature, it is reported that in-service training programs including active learning methods and techniques; when enough time and resources are allocated and teachers work in cooperation, would be more effective (Çakıroğlu, Doğan, Çavuş, Bilican and Arslan, 2011; İlğan, 2013). On the other hand, the application of the professional development school in America includes the active learning process, in which the teachers actively participate in the learning process and learn in cooperation with their colleagues. This aspect differs significantly from the in-service training activities usually carried out by an expert in Turkey. Although the School-Based Professional Development (SBPD) program launched in 2007 in Turkey shares theoretical similarities with PDSs in the US, due to the lack of sufficient cooperation between schools, not cooperation with university, and the lack of good planning and coordination, it is very difficult to say that it is successful. The reason behind this can be the fact that teachers take all responsibility in the process of planning and implementation of the SBPD and it does not have any rewarding system for teachers. For instance, Kaya and Kartallıoğlu (2010) reported that the deficiencies of the SBPD include too much work for documentation, teachers' resistance to professional development, and no financial benefit and rewards for teachers.

In Turkey, there is lack of cooperation between universities and schools in the training of pre-service teachers. If such cooperation can be established as through PDSs in the US, then teachers and pre-service teachers can develop better in Turkey. Thus, PDSs in the US can be taken as a role model for the development of pre-service teacher education in Turkey. In this connection following suggestions can be made:

- In Turkey, it can be possible to motivate teachers to pursue master and doctorate degrees by increasing their wages.
- Similar to the professional development department in the US, a department that conducts planning, research and implementation of in-service teacher training at universities can be established.
- The material and moral rewarding system can be used to encourage teachers to participate in-service trainings.
- In the seminars organized in June and September, teachers can gather at the regional schools with academicians from universities to discuss. Successful work and best practices can be rewarded.

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- Teachers selected from different fields and branches can be sent abroad for a week or 15 days to share their practices and observations with teachers in their own regions and schools.
- Graduate programs can be opened for teachers as evening classes or summer schools.
- Pre-service teachers can be sent to schools in their second year at university, university-affiliated schools can be created for teaching practicum so that students can put their theoretical knowledge into practice.
- The fact that teachers who will be employed as mentors in schools should be selected from among experienced teachers or teachers holding a master or doctoral degree and they should be given mentorship training might be helpful in terms of training the trainee students.

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