

# IN SERVICE TRAINING OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AT A DISTANCE IN TURKEY

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## INTRODUCTION

The most recent comprehensive effort for teacher training in Turkey is the Two-Year Diploma Program for Primary School Teachers (TDPPST) carried out by distance education. The aim of the TDPPST is to provide two years of higher education to the 145.000 primary school teachers who had completed only secondary education. The goal was to help them become more effective in teaching and provide them with a better standard of life. As it was impossible for them to leave their teaching positions, the Ministry of Education asked Anadolu University, which already had a distance education program, to train those teachers.

The existing resources of Anadolu University, such as the radio and television studios and the printing house were used for this program and the Ministry of Education paid for the printed materials and for the examination and additional expenses for all of the teachers attending the program. As a result, the TDPPST was prepared and realized by the Faculty of Open Education of Anadolu University between 1985 and 1990.

## Student Characteristics

A total of 141.713 teachers were enrolled in the TDPPST. Almost 45% of the teachers enrolled are female and 55% of them are male. The ages of the teachers range from 27 to 67 and they each have between 6 and 40 years of teaching experience. By the end of the 1989-1990 academic year, 117.618 of them finished the program successfully and attained their higher education diplomas.

## The Courses and the Media

The TDPPST is a multi/media program consisting of three main components: general culture, teaching methods, and field of specialization. The courses for these components are as follows:

### First Year

Behavioral Sciences  
Social Sciences  
Science  
Mathematics  
Principles of Ataturk &  
History of the Turkish  
Revolution I

Turkish Language I  
Foreign Language  
(English) I

### Second Year

Educational Sciences  
Special Methods of Teaching  
History of Thought and  
Civilization  
Principles of Ataturk &  
History of the Turkish  
Revolution II  
Contemporary Developments  
in Technology

Turkish Language II  
Foreign Language  
(English) II

Three instructional media were used for the TDPPST: Printed material, television and radio programs and academic counselling.

The printed material was the main instructional medium of the program. The printed material for each course generally was prepared in three volumes. In all, 55 volumes of the printed material were sent to the teachers by post at three different times during the academic year.

The television and radio programs were prepared to support the printed material. A total of 179 television programs each lasting 20-25 minutes and 147 radio programs each lasting 15-

20 minutes were prepared and broadcast daily by the Turkish Radio and Television for all courses.

All the instructional media were authorised by selected academic staff of various universities in Turkey and edited by experts of Anadolu University.

The academic counselling for the teachers was planned to be done during the summer holidays as face-to-face teaching (Özgül, Hakan and Acikalin, 1985). But unfortunately it could not be realised because the economic aspect of it was quite heavy for the individual teachers and also for the government because of the big number of the teachers attending the program. Instead, special printed material and television programs were prepared and introduced for the teachers' benefit.

A part from the ones above, a number of special television programs called The Journal of Teachers were produced and broadcast on television periodically, about seven times a year. They were non-academic programs providing communication between the university and the students.

#### Examinations

*Examinations were given to the teachers, one in the middle and one at the end of each academic year from each course to measure their level of learning. A make-up examination was also made for each course. The examinations made were all summative type. All the examinations were carried out at 22 different centers of Turkey, and the teachers took them at the nearest centers to the town where they live.*

#### Conclusion

It can be stated that the TDPPST was realized successfully. More than 140.000 primary school teachers were trained in a five year period by distance education, providing important advantages to the teachers. As the teachers themselves stated, they had an opportunity for higher

education," they renewed their "professional knowledge and skills by studying the latest developments," they "gained more self-confidence in teaching and respect in society" and they "received increases in salary and retirement benefits" (Özer, 1987).

An additional benefit was the development of a positive attitude toward distance education among the teachers and the decision-makers in the government. Recently an agreement has been signed by the Ministry of Education and Anadolu University for a new distance education program for secondary school teachers. The university has learned that more than 90,000 teachers from different branches are willing to attend it. This is the victory of the teachers, of Anadolu University and of distance education.

#### REFERENCES

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