



## THE ROLE OF INDUCTION PROGRAM IN NEWLY RECRUITED TEACHERS' ADAPTATION TO A NEW TEACHING ENVIRONMENT: A CASE FROM ANADOLU UNIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>

MESLEĞE YENİ BAŞLAYAN ÖĞRETMENLERİN ÇALIŞMA ORTAMINA UYUM SAĞLAMALARINDA İŞE ALIŞTIRMA PROGRAMININ ROLÜ: ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ ÖRNEĞİ

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### Abstract

Induction for newly recruited teachers is considered an important phase of professional development of in-service teachers. Carefully planned and implemented induction can act as a bridge between pre-service and in-service teacher education and foster the effective identity formation of newly recruited teachers. This descriptive study explores the effectiveness of an induction program designed for newly recruited teachers. The data for the study comes from semi-structured interviews with the participants, exploring different components of induction and how useful these components were perceived by the participants. The participants were generally content with all components of the induction and expressed positive views regarding the induction. In further implementation of the induction program, mentoring and teaching observations will be included.

**Keywords:** Induction, In-service teacher education, Beginning teachers

### Öz

İşe alıştırma programı hizmete yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişimlerinin önemli bir aşaması olarak kabul edilmektedir. Özenle planlanan ve uygulanan işe alıştırma programları hizmet öncesi ile hizmet-içi eğitim arasında bir köprü görevi görmekte ve hizmete yeni başlayan öğretmenlerin mesleki kimliklerinin oluşumunu desteklemektedir. Bu betimsel çalışmanın amacı mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenlere yönelik bir işe alıştırma programının etkililiğini araştırmaktır. Araştırmanın verileri katılımcılar ile gerçekleştirilen ve programın katılımcılar tarafından nasıl algılandığına ilişkin yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ile elde edilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçları katılımcıların işe alıştırma programının bütün unsurlarını beğendiklerini ve söz konusu program ile ilgili olumlu görüşleri olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İşe alıştırma programı, Hizmet-İçi öğretmen eğitimi, Mesleğe yeni başlayan öğretmenler

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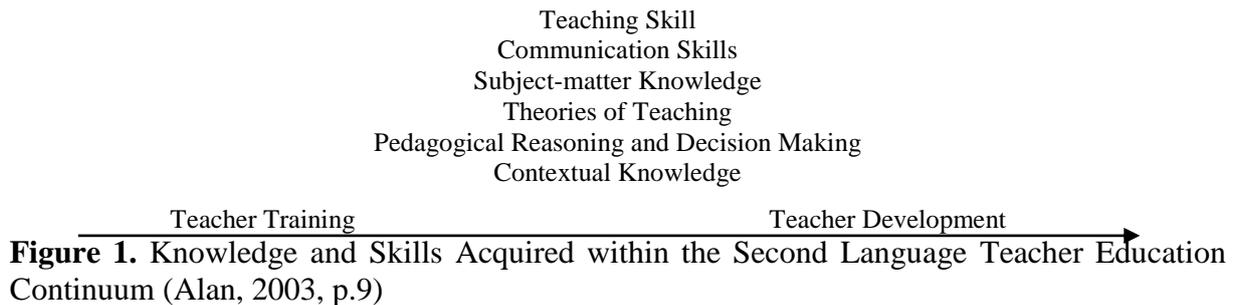
## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a skill that is shaped by theory and practice. Prospective teachers gain their fundamental knowledge and skills through their initial training generally at tertiary level. They learn the basic knowledge that will help them survive when they first start teaching. In fact, some argues that their knowledge about teaching is shaped much earlier as they start schooling by observing their teachers' practices and they begin to have an understanding of what teaching is and how it should be. Lortie (1975) calls this as "apprenticeship of observation". However, most of these preconceptions about teaching are the "intuitive" images and assumptions of student teachers and since those intuitive assumptions are not tested in real teaching contexts by those student teachers, it may result in deeming teaching profession simpler and easier than as it really is (Borg, 2006; Bullock, 2011; Darling-Hammond, 2006 Elliot & Calderhead, 1993; Hammond & Berry, 2006).

Prospective teachers' earlier images are difficult to change regardless of state of the art training they take and they are inclined to imitate their teachers' practices as they have observed. They find it difficult to put the theory they have learned in their preservice education into practice during their short and limited practicum period or in the initial phase of their teaching due to the teaching settings, student profiles and school policies, which might vary from the ones they are accustomed to. Darling-Hammond (2006) states that what Lortie (1975) defines as "apprenticeship of observation" creates some problems for teacher candidates. Those prospective teachers transfer their earlier images of what teaching is and who the good teacher is to their preservice education. However, they just observe what is visible to them and they are not fully aware of the mental processes involving critical thinking, decision-making and pedagogical reasoning in course of a lesson (Borg, 2006; Lortie, 1975).

Teaching is a complex skill requiring other multiple subskills apart from subject matter knowledge in order to address students with differing motivation levels and interests, learning styles and preferences. It; therefore, necessitates teachers to take interactive decisions depending on the context and situation they teach, which is difficult to learn how to do in preservice education (Bullock, 2011; Borg, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006). Professional second language teacher education is a process aiming to equip teachers with the skills and knowledge that will help them to be able to teach. Those core teaching knowledge and skills are "theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning and decision making, and contextual knowledge" (Richards, 1998). They are gained through teacher training which refers to preservice education stressing basic classroom skills and teacher development programs targeting professional growth and transformation, i.e. in-service teacher development (INSET).

Below in Figure 1, Alan (2003) puts what Richards (1998) defines as core knowledge and skills onto a continuum. Theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills, and subject matter knowledge are generally gained in the initial phase of the continuum. The initial teacher training or preservice education also aims to teach the last two ones - pedagogical reasoning and contextual knowledge – but they are usually gained in the later phases of the continuum especially in-service teacher development programs or acquired over time as a result of experience (Alan, 2003).



The conception of ‘the one who knows can teach’ in education has long been forgotten. The mere subject matter knowledge is not sufficient to teach effectively. Moreover, qualifying a teaching degree or certification program does not mark the quality of the teacher and does not guarantee the success of that particular teacher. In Turkey for instance, teachers are often employed according to the results of some kind of multiple-choice tests assessing their subject matter knowledge in a way that does not allow testing prospective teachers’ pedagogical competences. Or in some situations they are evaluated by both written exams and short interviews in which they can easily pretend to possess certain skills or to disguise their deficiencies resulting from inexperience of contextual knowledge. The situation is almost similar in developed countries as well. Hammond & Berry (2006) state that some states in the United States accept teachers as ‘highly qualified’ if they pass some multiple tests assessing their basic skills. This type of recruitment cannot allow evaluating the actual teaching performances of teachers. So, when those novice teachers start teaching, they face the real challenges and demands of teaching that they have never experienced before and it might be hard to cope with them because they specifically lack the last two knowledge bases shown in Figure 1 above; pedagogical reasoning and contextual knowledge.

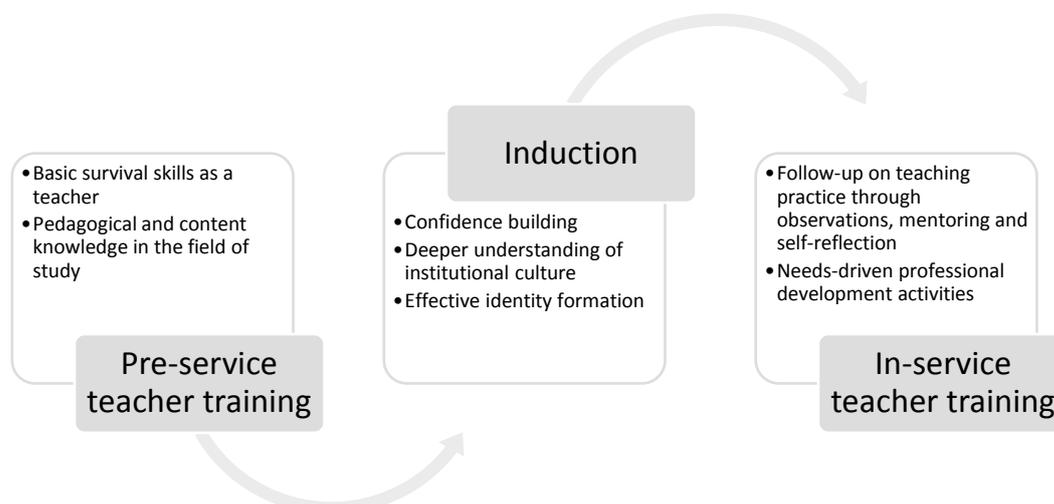
Review of studies on novice teachers’ initial years of teaching show that there are two sources of concern for these teachers; namely concerns about the actual “teaching practice” and concerns about the “the new teaching context”. The first one is related to the transition from the ideal world to the reality (Achinstein & Barret, 2004). It is during this transition when novice teachers realize the deficiencies in their initial teacher training and seek support. The second one is related to challenges arising from the contextual properties of the new teaching environment and can be named as challenges stemming from and leading to cultural mismatch. These refer to a wide range of variables, including challenges of adjusting to a new culture to understanding the dynamics within the institution. This is different from the first one, in that these variables are generally fixed, and the novice teachers need to get accustomed to these pretty quickly.

The ones who can persevere the initial difficulties of this transitional period can be successful along with enough and systematic support from the administration and colleagues. On the other hand, the beginning teachers who cannot find such a supportive and collaborative environment from their co-workers and superiors are likely to have serious problems. A considerable amount of teachers -up to %30 in some countries- leave their profession within the first years due to lack of support and being unprepared for the challenging and contextual difficulties of teaching (European Commission Staff Working Document SEC, 2010; Hammond & Berry, 2006; Strong, 2009; Wong, 2004). This also result in loss of resources and waste of money to employ and train teachers. Even worse, a higher teacher attrition rate might cause instability in the staff, which will eventually affect the quality of education and student success (Kessels, 2010). After graduating from a teaching program and starting teaching, the novice teachers take the full responsibilities of the

classroom they are going to teach. They have to struggle with all the difficulties on their own and while doing this they need to prove their competence and skills to the administration, their colleagues and students in an environment they are not familiar with (European Commission Staff Working Document SEC, 2010; Kessels, 2010).

Therefore, those beginning teachers need a bridge, which will facilitate their transition into their new jobs, as well as new schools, which have their own teaching culture, philosophy, resources, student profiles and other internal dynamics making them idiosyncratic places. Novice teachers need to develop their pedagogical reasoning and classroom management skills, which may be specific to their context along with the workload they need to cope with. However, the prospective teachers are not trained for a particular school or context, which creates a crucial need for contextualized training for their well-beings and future professional developments and this can be realized through well-designed induction programs.

European Commission Staff Working Document SEC (2010) divides the teaching profession continuum into three major phases. The first phase is the initial teacher training of student teachers and it refers to the preservice education where students gain the basic skills. The second phase is called the ‘*induction*’ phase where beginning teachers first face the realities of their profession and realize some contextual mismatch with what they have learned and the challenges they meet. The third phase is the continuing professional development which is a career-long process. Hence, the potential success or failure of beginning teachers depends on the quality of training and support they receive during the induction period. In other words, the induction phase is the period where beginning teachers start professional development by building on the basic knowledge and skills they have learned in the first stage, which can be defined as teacher training. Because teacher training is not situation or context oriented, it is difficult to prepare prospective teachers to the requirements of their future posts. So, they need professional development programs where localized information and training are highlighted by enabling the novices to transfer their previous knowledge into the context they start teaching. As Lange (1990) stated teacher development is a “process of continual experiential and attitudinal growth of teachers”. This type of a growth can be gained through programs where the novice teachers can see and test the impact of knowledge, skills and strategies via on-the-job training (Freeman, 2001). In this respect, the induction phase and programs can be the ideal means of making this end happen. Figure 2 below shows the flow of teacher education and the importance of induction as a bridge between pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher training.



**Figure 2:** The Flow of Teacher Education

Referring back to Richards's (1998) core knowledge and skills of teaching and Alan's (2003) continuum of teacher education, induction is the period when teachers start to gain contextual knowledge and make their own understanding of the context of their teaching by blending the skills and knowledge they acquired during pre-service teacher education with contextual knowledge. This understanding also leads to effective identity formation and help beginning teachers survive the initial years of their teaching career. Therefore, induction programs are vital for beginning teachers.

In literature, the induction period has various definitions and there is not a consensus on how long it takes either, but those definitions all share certain features in common (Strong, 2009; Kessels, 2010; Tickle, 2000; Wong, 2004). It usually refers to the first year(s) teaching of beginning teachers in order to facilitate a smooth transition to their new schools by providing a systematic support and usually along with a mentoring system. Since mentoring is an integral part of induction, the two terms are sometimes used as synonyms. However, induction and mentoring are two different terms. Whereas induction is the whole process of assisting beginning teachers in their first or new job, mentoring is just one major component of it conducted with usually experienced and preferably well-educated trainers (Strong, 2009; Wong, 2004).

Induction period is defined as "the first independent steps as teachers, the first years of confrontation with the reality to be a teacher in school" (European Commission Staff Working Document SEC, 2010). Beginning teachers need continuous support during the induction period, which is why orientation or induction programs are very important for beginning teachers' adaptation to their new roles. Induction programs may include different elements, such as mentoring, collegial relationships with peers, reflecting, inquiring, researching oneself and others, observing other teachers and being observed, and workshops (Britton, Paine, Pimm, & Raizen, 2003).

Induction programs can have various purposes. According to the European Commission Staff Working Document SEC (2010), the aims of induction programs are:

- sustaining the teacher retention,
- developing teachers' quality by building on their initial knowledge with either formal or informal programs,
- providing professional support,
- giving feedback to preservice institutions to improve teacher training.

Similarly, Kessels (2010) states that induction programs have two main purposes. The first objective is to ensure the retention of novice teachers. No matter how qualified a teacher preparation program is, it is almost impossible to properly prepare the teachers for the contexts they are going to teach. They might receive quality education from competent and qualified teachers especially in terms of subject matter and basic pedagogical knowledge mostly on a theoretical basis, but some inherited issues to novices are difficult to teach regardless of the quality of education. Those issues are classroom management, pedagogical factors requiring instant decision making when a need arises, coping with the workload and assessment since they are usually learned by practice over time (Alan, 2003, 2015; Kessels, 2010). For this reason, a well-designed induction programs can play an important role in bridging this gap between preservice and in-service focusing on novice teachers' immediate needs to help them stay in teaching.

Secondly, induction programs should improve novice teachers', as Kessels puts it, 'well-being'. Beginning teachers not only need academic but also mental and social help from

their trainers and colleagues in order not to be overwhelmed by the physical and emotional challenges they need to cope with in their induction. The frustration and concerns because they need to prove themselves to the administration, students and peers and also the workload they need to complete might put a great strain on them (Alan, 2015, Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001; Farrell, 2012, Eggen, 2002; Kessels, 2010, Strong, 2009). As a result, many beginning teachers leave the profession or suffer trouble in overcoming the obstacles they face, which eventually affect student success and motivation negatively.

Strong (2009) examined the induction programs in the United States and despite little differences; the purposes of these induction programs share certain characteristics; namely

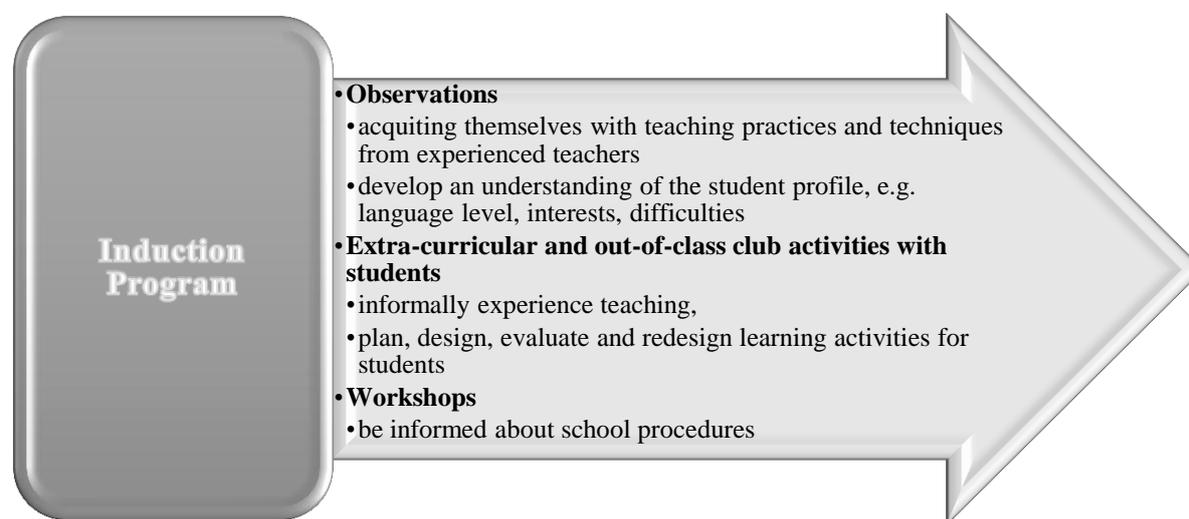
- to provide ongoing continuous professional development emphasising local knowledge about districts, schools and students,
- to improve subject matter knowledge of teachers,
- to provide personal support for beginning teachers to assist their transition and adaptation to the schools.

However, it should not be thought that novices are the teachers who have many shortcomings that need to be eliminated and induction is the process and means to do it. Most of the deficiencies beginning teachers have stem from their inexperience and lack of contextual knowledge. With systematic and continuous support during and after the induction, novices can also contribute to school systems, teachers and students as well (Kessels, 2010; Wong, 2004). Beginning teachers, especially the foreign language teachers, graduate from teacher training programs with recent and the latest knowledge, skills, and they are competent at using and adapting technology in their classes. They are usually eager to put their knowledge and skills into practice. So, their enthusiasm can create a positive atmosphere in the school environment both for the students and teachers. Their energy and wish to teach might motivate their students and can again trigger some more experienced teachers to teach more efficiently, or it may refresh some experienced teachers who are about to burn out because prevailing thoughts and practices in a school environment easily spread to all staff. Therefore, implementing well-designed induction programs are for the benefits of all parties.

According to European Commission (2010), induction programs should address three dimensions, namely professional, social and personal. According to European Commission's 2010 handbook on induction programs, an effective induction program should address three areas, namely professional dimension, social dimension and personal dimension. In the professional dimension, the focus is development and use of essential teacher competences. These include both pedagogical knowledge and skills. The aim is to boost the confidence of beginning teachers. Induction programs can address the professional dimension by scheduling observations and workshops for the beginning teachers. Observing others and being observed by experienced teachers help beginning teachers evaluate their teacher competences, whereas workshops help them to compensate for their lacks and weaknesses. Nonetheless, focusing only on teacher competences is not enough, because the beginning teachers should also feel that they are a valuable member of the learning community and their presence is valued and appreciated by other members of the community. The support from the community and the development of effective identity formation is addressed in the social dimension. The focus is on helping beginning teachers understand the culture of the learning community. Some important elements of school culture are the qualities, norms, manners and organizational structure. Parallel with the development of social dimension, addressing the personal dimension is also a vital component of effective induction models. In the personal dimension, the beginning teachers form their own norms, values and qualities as teachers. They decide on the professional path they want to engage in and plan what kind of professional development

activities they are going to engage in. Developing beginning teachers' self-efficacy and self-esteem play an important role, so induction programs should be supportive and encouraging, focusing on the strengths, rather than weaknesses.

As part of its induction program, a state university's intensive English language program in Turkey (AUSFL) implemented a program for 10 newly recruited teachers in the fall term of 2014-2015 academic year. These teachers had either limited or no teaching experience at all. Even though they were hired before the semester, they were able to start officially just one month after the semester began because of some regulations and procedures. Therefore, they weren't assigned any classrooms. The induction program was designed taking into account the three dimensions of effective induction programs, as proposed by the European Commission and was implemented by the Professional Development Unit (PDU) of AUSFL. The teachers working for the unit were rather experienced teachers who are either pursuing a career in teacher training or volunteer teachers interested in life-long professional development. These teachers were also assigned as mentor for the beginning teachers. Figure 3 below show the components of the induction model implemented.



**Figure 3.** Induction Program

The induction program mainly consisted of the classroom observations at different levels. The purposes of the observations were to get to know the academic staff, student profile, regulations, assessments and the school's philosophy of teaching. Each week beginning teachers were given a different observation task and they observed the lessons. After the lessons, the experienced teacher being observed and the beginning teacher who observed the classroom got together, to further elaborate the observation sessions and discussed the issues raised. This allowed the newly recruited teachers to become aware of different practices applied by different teachers, which enriched their teaching repertoire at the beginning of their career. The discussion sessions after the observations also allow the beginning teachers to further analyse the logic behind different implementations. At the end of each week, the teachers of PDU and the beginning teachers met and reflected on the observations. Besides, these meetings were used for academic reading discussions. The beginning teachers read some articles or book chapters concerning each week's topic and they had a chance to compare the theory and practice and their applicability in their teaching situations.

Another major component of the induction was student club activities. At AUSFL, there are student clubs organizing both language and non-language related activities for the

academic and social needs of the students. Since these teachers were not assigned any classroom, they are asked to prepare lessons or language learning activities for different levels. This also gave a chance for the beginning teachers to have an idea of student profile, materials as well as experiencing a teaching practice at four language levels.

The last major component of the induction was the meetings and workshops conducted by different unit of AUSFL. The units -technology integration, testing, student clubs, curriculum development and materials development- organized meetings with the newly recruited teachers to inform them about the implementations and procedures followed explaining the logic behind them. Some of these meetings were organized as workshops where the beginning teachers had a chance to grade sample papers, conduct speaking interviews and used some technological applications used in the classrooms and laboratories.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the induction program from the perspectives of the nine beginning teachers. AUSFL has implemented various induction and orientation programs. Each program has been conducted by learning from the previous ones and from previous participants. The main objective of this study is also to evaluate the effectiveness of the induction program conducted in 2015-2016 and based on the results obtained to develop it for future programs.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at AUSFL in 2015-2016 academic year. This qualitative study was carried out with the participants of the induction program implemented in the previous year. The data was obtained through a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions in order to allow participants to give elaborated answers and in order for the researcher to collect rich qualitative data. The data was analysed based on the emerging themes. The themes were analysed and categorized by two independent researchers in qualitative research for reliability. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to further analyse the findings obtained from the questionnaire responses.

## 3. FINDINGS

The data analysis revealed that the overall perceptions of the participants towards the induction program were highly positive. They found the program specifically prepared for them beneficial for their professional development and for their smooth transition to their new schools. Without any exception, all participants expressed their contentment about the induction program. Below are quotations from the participants to the question ‘How would you evaluate the induction program you took?’ to show their overall satisfaction of the induction. Although the level of contentment may differ, the orientation was considered “(undeniably / really) beneficial”, “(very) good”, and “helpful”. Table 1 shows their responses.

**Table 1.** Participants’ Views 1: A General Evaluation of the Induction

<b>Participant 1</b>	<i>“It was helpful as we were new to the school environment.”</i>
<b>Participant 2</b>	<i>“Personally I found it undeniably beneficial...”</i>
<b>Participant 3</b>	<i>“Helpful to get how school system works.”</i>
<b>Participant 4</b>	<i>“The orientation was very beneficial.”</i>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>“Very good. We had the chance to get familiar with the school.”</i>
<b>Participant 6</b>	<i>“The program was good overall”</i>
<b>Participant 7</b>	<i>“...It was good and beneficial for me.”</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>“The induction program was really beneficial for us.”</i>
<b>Participant 9</b>	<i>“The induction program was really beneficial for us.”</i>

As a follow up question, the participants were also asked whether they would change anything about the induction program if they were to organize it. Here are the responses to the question “What would you do differently if you were to conduct an induction for novice teachers?”

**Table 2.** Participants’ Views 2: A General Evaluation of the Induction

<b>Participant 3</b>	<i>“No change is needed.”</i>
<b>Participant 4</b>	<i>“Everything was fine...It was a well-designed program. I can’t think of anything to add.”</i>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>“I can’t say I’d do anything differently because I was very satisfied with the program.”</i>
<b>Participant 9</b>	<i>“I am generally satisfied with the program and cannot think of any means to change to make it more beneficial.”</i>

As can be seen from the excerpts above, participants are all happy with the induction program they undertook. However, this does not mean that they did not want to change anything if they were asked to design this induction program. Despite the fact that the participants were highly content with the induction, some highlighted the need to include some observation sessions after they start teaching for further professional development.

### 3.1. The Emerging Themes

The analysis of the data resulted in three major themes; *observations for effective identity formation, bridging the gap, (transition) and support*. These are the issues revealing the participants’ positive and/or negative opinions and perceptions of the induction that provide a framework and structure of the program. They also include participants’ suggestions to improve the quality and contribution of the induction for future recruitments and are of invaluable importance for the researchers and AUSFL. Despite little differences among the responses of each participant, the rest of the responses revolved around three themes mentioned above and they will be discussed in detail by providing sample quotations taken from participants’ responses.

#### 3.1.1. Observations as a means for effective identity formation

Regarding the opinions of the participants of the induction program, the most frequently mentioned issue was the value of observations. As stated in the background to study, observations were the most important component of the induction. In a way, almost all responses required to answer a different aspect of the induction were associated with the observations by the participants. This shows the significance of observation for the participants and its vital role in the induction. The observation process lasted nearly three months and the participants observed many classes across four different proficiency levels taught at AUSFL. Initially, it was thought that the participants might get bored with the length of the observation process. Considering the fact that AUSFL has more than 90 classes, it was a busy schedule for the participants to handle. They also had reflection and discussion sessions after the observations, which brought them extra workload. Interestingly enough, the participants stated that they could have observed more teachers and observation sessions might have been extended to second semester, a time when the formal induction was completed. Below are some quotes to exemplify this phenomenon.

**Table 3.** Participants' Views 3: Assign more observations

<b>Participant 1</b>	<i>"Assign them more observations."</i>
<b>Participant 2</b>	<i>"I am aware most people are afraid of being observed or criticized. However, I suppose it could've been great if we'd taught classes with more experienced teacher..."</i>
<b>Participant 7</b>	<i>"I would extend the observation time...also I would arrange some observation programmes for the novice teachers when they have their own classes..."</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>"I would prepare observation sessions and make the novice teachers observe each other and other teachers also...so at the beginning of their careers, they would have a chance to change their ineffective strategies."</i>
<b>Participant 9</b>	<i>"Maybe if we had taught the subject and one of the teachers observed and commented on our teaching it could have been better."</i>

The participants' responses above show that the beginning teachers found the observations beneficial for their professional development, so they did not want them to finish. Even though it was a long and tiring process, the observations contributed to their professional development at different areas, which might explain the reason why the observations were liked by the participants. The beginning teachers thought that they learned different and interesting ideas and as well as activity types that they could use in their classes by observing other experienced teachers. They believed that the opportunity of seeing the application of these activities at first hand would serve as helpful teaching tips since they saw these activities and techniques proved to be useful for the particular student profile they would teach. The following excerpts support this.

**Table 4.** Participants' Views 4: Value of observations

<b>Participant 1</b>	<i>"The best of all. Observing an experienced teacher is better than learning the theory of approaches and techniques."</i>
<b>Participant 2</b>	<i>"Got lots of ideas for different activities...from almost every colleague of mine I observed."</i>
<b>Participant 3</b>	<i>"With some interesting activities that I learned by observing the other teachers..."</i>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>"I noted down several teaching tips and activities during these observation sessions."</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>"I learned different activities for some specific grammar points...Some teachers were very effective in classroom management..."</i>

However, despite being liked and found the most beneficial part of the induction, the participants predicated that the observations could have been more beneficial if the beginning teachers had observed each other and had given peer feedback. They also stated that some teachers were hesitated to be observed.

**Table 5.** Participants' Views 5: Experienced teachers' attitudes towards observation

<b>Participant 9</b>	<i>"...but I think some teachers weren't happy to be observed in their classes and it wasn't good to feel that. Also, instead of observing same teachers, we could've watched different teachers."</i>
<b>Participant 2</b>	<i>"...not everyone would feel like it (observation)...even if they don't enjoy it or want to do it, it'd be quite constructive in terms of professional development..."</i>

### 3.1.2. Bridging the Gap

The second major theme emerged from the responses of the beginning teachers were related to the issues due to their lack of contextual knowledge and teaching experience. They stated that the induction program helped them get to know the student profile, school system, the responsibilities of being a teacher apart from teaching and the school environment. The participants believed that this type of knowledge and experience are difficult to gain in preservice education in nature. Even if a teacher is somehow experienced, it is also difficult to adapt to a new school because of the unique characteristics of that particular school. Below are the quotes showing participants responses concerning "bridging the gap".

**Table 6.** Participants' Views 6: Bridging the gap

<b>Participant 1</b>	<i>"After the observation parts with the professional development unit we talked about good and bad sides of the classes we observed so I learned what could be good and bad about the lesson."</i>
<b>Participant 4</b>	<i>"Yes, sure were given a writing norming session before we evaluated the exam papers. We observed a speaking exam, as well..."</i>
<b>Participant 3</b>	<i>"I felt competent because I learned student profile and how the classes go...which helped me do the same in my classes."</i>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>"My preservice-education taught me how to be a teacher, on the other hand, this induction programme taught me what can I do more as an AUSFL teacher."</i>

As stated above, beginning teachers start teaching with some deficiencies that are difficult to gain during preservice education. Classroom management, grading papers, conducting speaking examinations, coping with paper work, how to give effective instructions are some issues and skills that are not sufficiently covered in preservice and are usually gained in-service or on-the-job training over time. The induction program with its observation scheme addressed the professional dimension of teacher development. The following excerpts show participants opinions.

**Table 7.** Participants' Views 7: Bridging the gap 2

<b>Participant 2</b>	<i>"I do feel better every day though. I guess I could say I have some problems about classroom management, or motivating students."</i>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>"We were given a writing session before we evaluated the exam papers. We observed speaking exams as well. We taught different levels as substitute teachers. Hence, I wasn't only told how to do things, but I had the chance to observe how it is done and practised it."</i>
<b>Participant 6</b>	<i>"... there are a lot of things in a school which are also our responsibility like paperwork etc. The program especially helped a lot in these matters."</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>"Some of the teachers were very effective in classroom management so I had a chance to see the importance of being calm and during the lessons, short and to end to the point instructions."</i>

Regarding bridging the gap, there is another subtheme, which can be defined as "transition". A great deal of the responses of the participants were related to the adaptation to their school, namely, AUSFL. The reason why this subtheme was not considered as a major theme was that it is part of the knowledge bases beginning teachers didn't possess, but helped them to adapt to the school. The induction program provided a smooth transition for the beginning teachers due to their lack of contextual knowledge. Thanks to the induction focusing on the institutional system and procedures, the beginning teachers felt better and more confident before prior to teaching and they started to feel themselves as part of the school and gained an ownership on the program. The responses also shows that the induction program addressed the social dimension very effectively, as all participants learned something valuable about the school system and the culture. The responses below illustrate their views.

**Table 8.** Participants' Views 8: Social dimension of induction program

<b>Participant 1</b>	<i>"Experienced teachers were with us during the sessions and explained how things work here."</i>
<b>Participant 4</b>	<i>"Every institution has its own dynamics and a different student profile so the induction programme helped me to learn these."</i>
<b>Participant 3</b>	<i>"Helpful to get how the school system works."</i>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>"We had the chance to get familiar with the school."</i>
<b>Participant 6</b>	<i>"very helpful because the school has a different system, different books etc..."</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>"Actually the induction programme was specifically for AU SFL. We learned the system and we quickly became a part of the school..."</i>

However, it cannot be said that the induction program was completely successful in preparing beginning teachers to their new professions. Although the participants revealed their contentment of the program and they benefited from the program in many ways, some issues

seem to be existing and difficult to change. The participants stated that they still have some problems such as classroom management, error correction and feeling confident while teaching and it seems these problematic areas can be developed over time with practice in a particular teaching context. Below are their responses.

**Table 9.** Participants' Views 9: Personal dimension of induction program

<b>Participant 2</b>	<i>"As a literature graduate, it is only natural to overlook things like error-correction or classroom management."</i>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>"The induction didn't help me much about confidence in my teaching. For me confidence comes with time, so I can't say the program helped a lot."</i>
<b>Participant 7</b>	<i>"Actually it didn't change my confidence because I didn't teach anything. In my first lesson I felt incompetent about using the technology and managing the classroom."</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>"To be honest, unfortunately I couldn't feel confident in my first class because at that part you are on the stage and it is very different from observing."</i>

The final issue regarding the theme of "bridging the gap" may seem to be negative but it may also have a long term gaining for the future professional development of beginning teachers. The participants expressed their disappointment with one of the implementations of the induction program. As part of the program and because they were not assigned any classes, the beginning teachers were asked to prepare some activities for student clubs. Some weeks they prepared lessons for the teaching of four different skills or some weeks they prepared some games or plays aiming to teach certain skills or vocabulary. However, the students sometimes were not interested in these activities and the participation was very low or sometimes the activities didn't work as they intended. So, the beginning teachers felt disappointed, which can also be educative for their professional development because they need to be prepared for different situations and should have alternative plans. It is also another pedagogical skill that is gained over time and experience. The following quotes indicate their views.

**Table 10.** Participants' Views 10: Outside class club activities

<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>"We did a lot of brainstorming to generate new ideas for activities. I enjoyed my time working for the club. However, the results were not very satisfying. Few students attended the clubs and activities."</i>
<b>Participant 7</b>	<i>"A little bit disappointing because we wanted to help and take students' interest, but even though we tried hard we couldn't manage it so it wasn't a good beginning for me."</i>
<b>Participant 9</b>	<i>"...but somehow demotivating because students aren't interested in these activities. You organize something, few students join it and you can't enjoy it."</i>

As can be seen from the quotations above, one of the most influential gains of the induction for the newly-recruited teachers was "bridging the gap", which drives from the lack of contextual knowledge, practice and inexperience. Even though the induction didn't help all the participants to overcome their anxieties -specifically classroom management- before they started teaching or didn't gain self-confidence for some of them, it helped them to cope with the rest of the challenges by providing a smooth transition to their new school.

### 3.1.3. Support

The third major theme was "support". The participants stated that both the academic and social support they received from the administration, professional development unit and colleagues of AU SFL assisted them to adapt to their schools, responsibilities, and their new roles as teachers. They found a friendly and collaborative environment which relieved their concerns stemming from being in a new context with different people who had different values, culture and a different philosophy as well. The participants expressed their opinions as follows.

**Table 11.** Participants' Views 11: The school culture

<b>Participant 3</b>	<i>"The induction was so beneficial. It helped us know both the school system and get to know the staff."</i>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<i>"So, I learned what should I do or whom I should speak to when I have a problem..."</i>
<b>Participant 7</b>	<i>"Yes, it is helpful because we got information about the units of the school and met with other teachers...It was a good chance to get used to school."</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>"These induction programs are helpful in terms of adapting to the school atmosphere."</i>
<b>Participant 9</b>	<i>"This was my first full time job so I was nervous and this programme helped me to get over them."</i>

The beginning teachers also revealed that the teachers working for the professional development unit, who were also the people conducting the induction program, were helpful and always supportive. This was another positive aspect of the program and helped beginning teachers to adapt to their school. Below are their responses concerning the support they received from the trainers.

**Table 12.** Participants' Views 12: Mentors

<b>Participant 1</b>	<i>(trainers were) very helpful and understanding</i>
<b>Participant 7</b>	<i>helpful because they answered our questions patiently and tried their best to show us everything we need</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>helpful and good-humoured so it was important for me to adapt easily</i>
<b>Participant 9</b>	<i>Most of the presenters were friendly and this is very important when you are a new comer to somewhere. We worked with them and ...shared our experiences and ...talked about how to do things in better ways</i>

However, some participants thought that the induction program could have been more supportive if they had practised teaching different skills. Some also stated that the observation sessions could have been shorter and they could have done different activities. Below are their ideas about some alternative applications.

**Table 13.** Participants' Views 13: A need for observations related to different skill areas

<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>and maybe for the other induction programs for novice teachers, we can organize a schedule that they can observe different parts of the lesson...I couldn't observe any writing lesson ...we could have observed different skills</i>
<b>Participant 9</b>	<i>I think we could have had more workshops and we could have shared different activities (about) how to teach skills and different topics</i>

Some participants also expressed a need for more effective mentoring system in a way that could allow them to have immediate feedback on their teaching practice. Because they had little teaching experience which was only limited to student club activities before they were formally assigned classes, they felt a need for a reference person to show and check their teaching practices. They wanted to be sure whether they were teaching effectively and helpful for their students. Below are some quotes regarding this issue.

**Table 14.** Participants' Views 14: Suggestions for further implementations

<b>Participant 3</b>	<i>...However, I suppose it could have been great if we'd taught classes with more experienced ones. It would've helped us see things we cannot normally see</i>
<b>Participant 7</b>	<i>Maybe if we had taught the subject and one of the teachers observed and commented on our teaching it could have been better</i>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<i>...I would arrange some observation programmes for the novice teachers when they have their own classes. So, at the beginning of their careers, they would have a chance to change their ineffective strategies</i>

The analysis of the participants' responses revealed three main themes - observations, bridging the gap / transition, and support. The beginning teachers stated that they found the observation sessions valuable for their future professional development. They also stated that

the observations could have been more helpful if they had been extended to period after they started teaching. The beginning teachers' accounts indicated the fact that there is a gap between preservice education and in-service. The induction program helped to close the gap and facilitated their transition to their current profession. The beginning teachers expressed their contentment about the academic and social support they got from all the staff and this was a factor that lessened the beginning difficulties they experienced.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality, content and timing of the induction programs are vitally important in preparing newly recruited teachers into their new roles. Carefully planned and implemented induction can bridge pre-service and in-service teaching; however, ill-planned induction may affect the retention and lead to early drop-outs from the profession. Review of studies on induction showed that support, effective identity formation, and appropriate apprising about instructional and institutional practices help novice teachers in their transition from pre-service to in-service teachers.

The induction program implemented by AUSFL was designed, taking into account the qualities of a good induction program, as well as lessons learned from earlier induction programs implemented at the school; however, the success and failure of the induction can only be identified by analysing the participants' namely the newly recruited teachers' points of view about the induction and evaluating its effectiveness and usefulness based on these views. That is the driving force behind this study and the analysis of the results showed that the induction program can be considered a success. The participants had high opinions regarding the usefulness of the program and themes (the role of observations in effective identity formation, support, bridging the gap) derived from their responses correlated positively with the findings of earlier research on induction.

One of the marked benefits of the induction program was the inclusion of a vigorous observation schedule for the novice teacher. The observations helped the novice teacher in two different ways. First, they learned about the contextual variables, in other words the learner profile, mainstream teaching and learning approaches and the untold institutional rules. Second, through the observations, they learned practical ideas that they could use in their own classrooms. Through observation, the novice teachers said that they learned the basic survival skills, which are now considered as the key elements of effective identity formation. One of the shortcomings of the observation scheme employed in the induction program was not extending the observation to a period after the new teachers started their teaching duties. The participants clearly expressed a need for a follow-up observation program, where other teachers and their colleagues observed their teaching practice and provided feedback on their actual teaching. This study showed that observations, which have now become one of the most commonly employed PD activity in induction programs, can help novice teachers' effective identity formation and equip them with basic survival skills, as well as boosting their confidence. Follow-up observation sessions are desired, so in prospect implementation of the induction, this suggestion will be taken into account.

One of the commonly cited reasons of retention or early drop-offs from the profession in the early years of one's career is lack of support or appreciation from the colleagues, administrations and students. Support, respect and appreciation towards the newly recruits were in the core of the induction program implemented. It was important for induction program designers and executors that these new teachers felt important and their presence in the institution was valuable and appreciated. The support the new teachers received from the administration, the professional development unit members and other teachers also helped these novice teachers develop a positive identity formation. The comments of the newly

recruited teachers showed the importance of support in induction. Positive attitudes of the teachers involved in the induction program and their warm manner affected the novice teachers positively and contributed to their adaptation to the new work environment.

Successful induction programs act as a bridge between pre-service and in-service teacher education, because it is during the induction that the newly recruits both discover their potentials as teachers and realise areas that needs improvement, as well as gaining some insights into institutional and contextual variables. The participants stated that with the induction program, they found out about the student profiles, teacher's duties in and out of class and the dynamics of AUSFL. Based on the reflection and suggestions of the participants, a revised induction program is designed. Figure 4 below shows the revised induction program that will be implemented in the following years when there is new recruitment of teachers.

Observation	Mentoring	Workshops	Continuous Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing experienced teachers</li> <li>• Interviews with the teachers</li> <li>• Reflection on observed lessons</li> <li>• Diary writing or other forms of written reflective practices.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow-up observations on teaching practice</li> <li>• Reflection on observed lessons</li> <li>• Constructive feedback on observed lessons</li> <li>• Different models of mentoring, such as team-teaching, video recording</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School dynamics</li> <li>• Student Profile</li> <li>• Information about assessment, curriculum, materials and course-book</li> <li>• Needs-driven follow-up workshops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative support for positive identity formation</li> <li>• Activities that allow beginning teachers to meet other teachers and build networks</li> <li>• Activities with students through student clubs</li> </ul>

**Figure 4.** Revised Induction Program

In the revised program, observations, workshops and out of class students activities will be kept, as they were found to be useful in effective identity formation, learning about school culture and building new networks with other members of the school. As a new element, mentoring is included based on the recommendations of the participants. Mentoring is known to be an important part of induction programs. It could not be included in the former induction programs due to time constraints and heavy work load of experienced teachers, as well as the need to insert the beginning teachers into the school culture as quickly as possible. However, the number of current staff would probably allow building an effective mentoring scheme for beginning teachers. The mentoring scheme will allow beginning teachers to get feedback on their teaching practices and help them develop confidence in teaching. In the initials years of teaching, beginning teachers seek appreciation from their mentors and this appreciation helps them strengthen their skills and work on their weaknesses. Through mentoring, it is hoped that the bridge between pre-service and in-service teaching will lessen and the beginning teachers will develop confidence that they need in the initial years of their teaching career.

To sum up, the induction program implemented at AUSFL can be a model for educational institutions around the world that would like to help the newly recruited teachers' adaptation to the new teaching environment. The model implemented at AU SFL employed observations, workshops, one-to-one meetings with teachers as part of the induction program. The comments of the participants regarding the induction program showed that the components of the program were insightful and helped the newly recruited teachers develop an effective identity formation. The evaluation of the program revealed that observation is a vital component of the induction and should be extended to actual teaching practice period through an effective mentoring system. The participants were content with the observation scheme implemented in the program in order to understand the institutional dynamics; however, feedback regarding their actual teaching practice was desired, so in further

implementation of the induction program, mentoring is planned as a new component of the induction program.

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