**OUR STORY**

Having been interested in Professional Development and having had experience as a staff developer, I was very excited to be invited by Kenan Dikilitaş at last year’s Teacher Research Conference to take part in a Teacher Research Project across Turkey with my own group of researchers from my institution, School of Foreign Languages, Cukurova University. When I was back home, I talked about this idea to my colleagues, and realized that they sounded very enthusiastic. It was summer time then. At the beginning of the school year, we promised to come together. As an enthusiastic group of teacher researchers differing in age, teaching experience and academic rank, we wanted to further our professional development by doing action research studies in our own classrooms. Soon, we became a community of critical colleagues. We investigated what we were doing in our classes and supported one another in exploring challenges and situations with a view to improve our teaching and students’ learning. The project served as a journey of enquiry both to me as the leader and an EFL instructor as a part of the group, and the eight EFL teachers who voluntarily joined my group. In this poster, the thematic findings of this survey whose questions were answered by the group members is shown.

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**SURVEY RESULTS**

**REASONS FOR JOINING THIS GROUP**

- The need to change and develop new teaching strategies
- Interacting with colleagues
- Interest in teaching-related research
- Learn about Action Research
- To improve to be in harmony with change
- To improve teaching in a systematic way
- Go further in professional life
- To be a part of a group (a community) who can understand one’s problems
- Collaborate and share classroom experience with colleagues

**THE EXPECTATIONS MET FOR BEING A PART OF A RESEARCH GROUP**

- More content with teaching because of synchronizing personal philosophy with teaching practice
- Benefits of being a part of a research group in terms being listened to, understanding self and the research process while talking to others in the group and feeling understood, having the chance to ask for and get help from others in the group
- Leader’s enthusiasm, feedback and suggestions
- Cooperation with the research partner in terms of complementing each other and boosting one another’s vision
- Feeling valued and accepted to be asked for recommendations for betterment of others’ research in the group
- Having meetings, discussions, sharing opinions with the other group members and getting informed about new topics in the field
- Reflecting on personal teaching experience and thus evaluating and fine-tuning teaching style, strategies, approach, etc.
- Group members’ supporting and helping each other
- Sharing ideas and getting feedback
- The opportunity to learn from one another and share way of thinking

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**THE MAJOR ISSUES EMERGED IN THE PROCESS**

**PROBLEMS**

- Difficult to put ideas into words and plan the action
- Lack of time because of workload (2)
- Difficulty in arranging group meetings because of different work hours
- Having limited time for the study (2)
- Following an action research cycle is challenging (requires constant review of the tool, expected outcomes, etc.)
- When compared to academic research
- Narrowing the initial focus of research

**GAINS**

- Positive change in perspective towards teaching
- Refreshing point of view and feeling encouraged
- Learning about Action Research
- Having the chance to build a bridge between knowledge and experience
- Implementing new strategies to the class and developing activities
- Observing students more and noticing individual differences in a better classroom practice
- Getting closer with some colleagues on personal and professional levels
- Sharing change in some students
- Improving time management skills throughout the process to meet the deadlines to be followed by the research group
- Cooperation with the research partner

**THE NAMES GIVEN TO THE GROUP-OUR METAPHOR**

- *Nebbie* (there is always more to learn...)
- *Eczericins* (what we are doing is not the middle road)
- *Together on track* (like optimistic adventures who keep trying to find something precious inside the mysterious, enticing jungles)
- *Researchers* (blending of the words teacher+researcher)
- *United we stand, divided we fall* (to talk about professional development, teachers need to interact)
- *Coming out of shells* (we open a window to our classes through research show and share)
- *The stage is ours* (we learn as teacher researchers like our students)

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**WHO ARE WE?**

Asst. Prof. Dr. Seden Eraldemir Tuyan

Seden Eraldemir Tuyan is a graduate of the ELT department of Dokuz Eylül University, Turkey (1992). Since then, she has been teaching at YAVI, the School of Foreign Languages at Cukurova University. Her major interests are classroom management, classroom methodology, action research, personal and professional development, character education and emotional intelligence.

**Researcher(s)**

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**Dr. Esra Altunkol**

Esra Altunkol has been an English teacher researcher and a trainer for 4 years. Having taught English at various higher education institutions in Turkey and abroad, she has been working as an English instructor at the School of Languages at Cukurova University since 2006. Her research interests are second language acquisition, applied linguistics and Turkish/English.

**Berna Balo**

Berna Balo is a PhD candidate in English Language Teaching. She has been an English Language Instructor for nine years and currently she teaches English at Cukurova University. Her research interests are critical discourse analysis, pragmatics and applied linguistics.

**Elcin Petek**

Elcin Petek has been an English teacher researcher for about 10 years and a trainer for 4 years. Having taught English at various higher education institutions in Turkey and abroad, she is a PhD candidate at Cukurova University EFL department. Her current research interests include: Critical & creative thinking in English teacher education and EFL, action research in EFL.