

A Record of the training needs of ESP Practitioners in Vocational Education

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Abstract: Acknowledging the fact that teacher training can be indispensable in delivering effective and efficient ESP courses, the present study set itself the purpose of identifying and recording the training needs of ESP teachers operating in the context of State Vocational Institutes in Greece. For conducting the study, a questionnaire, which was responded by seventy six ESP teachers, was used as the basic instrument; in addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a number of ESP teachers in order to gain more meaningful insights into the situation. The findings of the study provide a wealth of data and highlight the immediate need for the development and organisation of training courses for ESP practitioners.

Key words: ESP, teacher needs, in-service training, vocational education, research

1. Introduction

The impact of teacher training on optimizing teaching and learning opportunities in the ESP classroom need hardly be argued as the distinct characteristics and the nature of English for Specific Purposes require awareness on the part of the ESP teachers as to the diversified roles and the modern instructional needs assumed of them. For this reason, the study attempts to provide insights into the training needs of ESP teachers operating in the context of Vocational Education Institutes in Central Macedonia.

In an attempt to outline the context of the present research, a brief account of the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training in Greece (OEEK) will be provided. The Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK) was inaugurated in Greece in 1992 with the presidential decree 2009/1992. At the time it seemed essential to introduce alternative channels of applied education, comparable with the branch of theoretical studies offered until then at the university level. Furthermore, it was considered that proper training can be adopted as a means to battle unemployment, which usually affects the young unskilled school graduates. The number of Vocational Institutes has risen significantly since then along with the subject courses offered. Their major objective is to supply Vocational Training to school leavers so as to create a national trained workforce in a variety of fields, such as sales, business administration, secretarial work, accounting, computer operating and programming, tourism, electronics, mechanics, agriculture, etc.

All the teachers employed in the context of Vocational Education, including ESP teachers, work part-time, sign contracts for the duration of an academic semester (14 weeks) and are paid by the hour. The teaching of English has been included on the learners' weekly timetable for the whole period of study - four semesters- and takes place for three hours every week. Within the existing organisational framework, ESP teachers assume the heavy load to make decisions about course design specifications,

including syllabus and materials development, as well as manage the teaching and learning process so as to deliver effective ESP courses which are in accordance with the learners' needs.

2. Study

2.1 Rationale and objectives of the study

The motivation for the present study stemmed (a) from the fact that the rise of teaching English for Specific Purposes has changed the perception of teacher roles and has introduced new instructional needs and (b) from the absence of empirical researches into the specific issue in Greece. Nevertheless, ESP practitioners in the context of Vocational Institutes, though well educated and with a significant teaching experience, have simply been adapted from ELT and have not received any systematic training to meet the diversified roles of ESP practitioners as opposed to EFL teachers, because there is no planned INSET programme which focuses on issues closely related to ESP. Thus, the study attempted to provide insights into how ESP teachers perceive the lack of an integrated teacher training component, since it is acknowledged that teacher training can be indispensable in delivering effective and efficient ESP courses.

In particular, the basic objectives of the research were the following:

- To elicit information about the training experience of ESP teachers;
- To record their views and attitudes to ESP and their perceptions of ESP teacher roles;
- To identify the viewpoints of ESP teachers on practical arrangements with respect to the organization of future ESP training programmes;
- To investigate the training needs of ESP teachers and their expectations regarding the content of future ESP training courses.

2.2 Participants

The participants involved in the study were seventy six (76) ESP teachers (89% female and 11% male), employed in State Vocational Training Institutes in Northern Greece. Their ESP teaching experience varied: the least experienced teachers have been working for one semester to five years (68%), while the most experienced teachers for more than five years (32%). A significant percentage of the participants (36%) hold a master degree.

Moreover, 41% of the total number of ESP teachers has attended short-termed courses or seminars and conferences at some point in their career, which nevertheless involved issues of teaching English for General Purposes; 59% has not had the opportunity to attend any seminars. Also in an attempt to evaluate their training experience, most of them expressed the opinion that they were not particularly helped as the seminars they have attended seemed to be far from classroom reality.

2.3 Instruments

The *questionnaire* was used as the basic instrument for conducting this research. It was designed based on researches conducted in foreign countries (Akon 1991; Alansari 1995; Champers 1997; Fradd and Lee 1997; Grenfell 1995; Hayes 1997; Kennedy 1993 and Sander 1994), on bibliography concerning research design (Brown 2001; Verma 1999; Wallace 2000) and on bibliography regarding language teacher training. The questionnaire was divided into the following sections:

The first section, entitled 'personal details', consisted of items related to personal data concerning the ESP teachers' level of qualification, ESP teaching experience, current place of teaching and training experience. The second section was concerned with the 'future training needs' of ESP teachers, and consisted of items related to

teachers' needs regarding the content of training courses. The third section dealt with the practical arrangements for future training courses; that is, how the teachers wish their training to be assisted in respect of: time, venue, teaching methods, training staff and incentives for the future training courses. The fourth section consisted of one open-ended question where the respondents had to make suggestions about the difficulties they face and their needs in teaching ESP.

Moreover, semi-structured *interviews* (Kvale 1996) were conducted with ten (10) ESP teachers in order to gain more meaningful insights into the situation.

2.4 Data analysis

Data derived from the questionnaires were analyzed by using descriptive statistical methods. Frequencies and percentages for all items of the questionnaires were obtained. Moreover, Chi-square-test (X^2) was used to test possible differences in teachers' training needs according to their demographic characteristics. Further, the techniques of t-test and ANOVA were performed in order to identify differences in ranking the various items concerning teachers' viewpoints on training courses.

The *Verbal* data underwent the following procedures. Data reduction involved first and second level coding as well as pattern coding, which involves giving descriptive or conceptual names (Papadopoulou 1999). Codes resulted in groups of categories, 'labelled' by a specific name (Miles & Humberman 1994). Then similar concepts with common characteristics were clustered into themes, so as to reduce the number of categories (table 1). The data was tabulated and displayed on individual tables and in crosschecking formats (tables 3-5).

Table 1. An example of displaying themes, categories and codes

THEMES/CATEGORIES	CODES
<i>B. NEEDS</i>	
6. Adult education	- PRTEADU Principles of teaching adults
7. Language for specific purposes	- SPKNLA Specialized knowledge in target domain language
8. Material selection	- SEORTEM selection and organization of specialized materials
9. Effective teaching	- CLAMAN classroom management - TEMIACL teaching methods for mixed – ability classes

3. Questionnaire results

3.1 Needs related to planning and organising training programmes

3.1.1 Course attendance

The vast majority of the respondents welcomed the idea of participating in training courses in the future; 67 % of the total number of the participants expressed their desire to receive training and scored the scale 'very important', while 32% of them scored 'important enough'.

3.1.2 Course incentives / Reasons for attending training courses

The most popular incentive (38,4%) for teachers in order to attend training courses appeared to be the improvement of 'language teaching methods'; the second priority of the teachers (29,7%) was to 'be trained on ESP syllabus' and the third priority (29,6%)

of the participants was to 'update ESP teaching methods'. They also viewed the 'strengthening of self-esteem' as meriting an important level of priority (4,2%). The majority of the sample showed little interest in "promoting professional growth" (1,4%), financial incentives (extra payment on salary) (2,8%), and exchanging ideas with colleagues (1,4%).

Although the majority of the participants showed little preference for 'promoting professional growth', there were significant differences ($t = 2.108$, $df = 72$, $p < 0.05$) between teachers holding a Master Degree who ranked it highly ($m = 4.6$, $sd = 1.63$) compared to those with Bachelor degree ($m = 5.65$, $sd = 0.95$).

3.1.3 INSET course time

Teachers preferred most training to be held during two weekly courses just before the beginning of the semester (68,1%). Furthermore, they had preference for a) summer training courses (26,5%), as teachers are not engaged in teaching duties then and b) courses which take place during the semester (16,2%).

3.1.4 Course length

It appeared that the teachers prefer training courses (54,8%) of two-week duration. Courses of one month duration were listed as second priority (25,4 %), meanwhile short-term seminars lasting up to one week were selected by the 19,1% of the total number of the participants.

3.1.5 Institutions

The University was identified as the main training institution (46,7%) for organising training programmes. The active involvement of institutional conveyors was also considered essential with the Ministry of Education being both the main representative of educational policy and sponsor and the OEEK (19,4%) as the institution to assume the scientific responsibility and the undertaking of educational programme design and implementation. Moreover, the teachers showed their preference (18,3%) for special teacher training colleges to undertake the organization and conduct of programmes

3.1.6 Trainers

When asked about the staff to be involved in training, the teachers expressed the view that they could benefit from having qualified colleagues as their trainers. In addition, they wish to receive their learning from highly qualified academic staff. More precisely, the highest percentage (46,6%) was given to fellow teachers with special qualifications and experience. Very high percentage (30,7%) was given to the university lecturers; however, fewer votes were cast for trainers from the British Council and TESOL (14,1%) as well as from OEEK (11,4%).

There were statistically significant differences between novice teachers and those with a long working experience regarding their first choice of training staff ($F_{2,64} = 3.757$, $p < 0.05$). More precisely, teachers with ESP teaching experience showed their preference to British council trainers 1-5: $m = 2.91$, $s.d. = 0.95$, 6-10: $m = 2.57$ $sd = 0.79$, 10+: $m = 2.08$, $sd = 1.19$.

3.1.7 INSET course teaching methods

'Workshops' received the highest percentage (61,3%) as the most preferred teaching method. Microteaching was the second most favoured teaching approach chosen by the teachers (17,6%) and the 'lectures' followed (16,9%). It is surprising to note that a large number of teachers (16,9%) chose the lecturing method although so much criticism of its usefulness has been made by educationalists recently. 'Collaboration with colleagues of other subject disciplines' gained the lowest percentage from ESP teachers (7%).

There were significant differences between the teachers with training experience and those who have not attended training seminars ($t = 2.26$, $df = 70$, $p < 0.05$). More

precisely, the former showed a greater preference to “microteaching” ($m = 1.89$, $sd = 0.63$) than those with no training experience ($m = 2.27$, $sd = 0.79$).

3.1.8 Components of a training course

Regarding the components of a training course, the great majority of teachers expressed their training need in ‘Modern methods of teaching English for Specific Purposes’ (78,38%) along with a high number of participants who stated that ‘motivating students’ (75%) and ‘identifying students’ needs’ (65,71%) are important elements for their teaching practice (Figure 4). The teachers who hold a master degree ranked ‘Identifying students’ needs’ lower than those who have a bachelor degree ($\chi^2 = 9.028$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.05$).

Furthermore, ‘ESP vocabulary’ (63,77%), ‘material design’ (72,2%) and ‘Theories of Adult learning’ (58,33%) received significant percentages. Statistically, there were significant differences resulting from the teachers’ training experience; the teachers who had no training experience declared higher needs (88,6%) in ‘Theories of Adult learning’ than the rest of the participants (62,1%) ($\chi^2 = 8.715$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.05$). Moreover, the teachers who had no training experience declared higher needs (72,1 %) in ‘ESP vocabulary’ than the ones who have attended some seminars (48%) ($\chi^2 = 7,577$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.05$).

An important percentage of participants (53,42%) indicated that they need training in ‘designing activities’ and a number of participants (50%) emphasized the need in ‘Lesson planning and preparation’. Furthermore, they stated a high training need in ‘teaching the productive skills’ (52,78%) and ‘teaching the receptive skills’ (52,17%) (Figure 5). The teachers who had no training experience declared higher needs (63,6 %) in ‘teaching the productive skills’ (63,6%) than the rest of the participants (33,3%) ($\chi^2 = 6.335$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.05$). In contrast, ‘evaluation’ and ‘testing’ were the least popular components among the respondents of the questionnaires which were scored highly by the 37,14% and the 35,71% of the teachers respectively. The teachers who had no training experience declared higher needs (45,5%) in ‘students’ evaluation’ than the ones who have attended some seminars and scored on the rating scale ‘very little’ (41,7%).

3.2 Effectiveness of a training course

In order to discover the potential factors that make an INSET course effective, four statements were presented to the respondents to choose the most desirable. A significant number of teachers ranked ‘applying modern ESP teaching methodology’ (69,3%) first. Teachers welcomed the ‘Understanding the principles of modern ESP teaching methodology’ as second priority (16,7%) and ‘training on principles and content of ESP courses’ as third priority. Although the participants showed little preference to ‘reflection on teaching practice’ (5,7%), there were significant differences ($F_{2,63} = 4.251$, $p < 0.05$), as the novice ESP teachers ranked it more important: 1-5: $m = 3.2$, $sd = 0.94$, 6-10: $m = 3.25$ $sd = 1.17$, 10+: $m = 4$, $sd = 0$. Moreover, it was found that there was a significant difference between the teachers with regard to their teaching experience in ‘understanding the principles of modern ESP teaching methodology’ ($F_{2,65} = 3.865$, $p < 0.05$); the more experienced teachers ranked it higher: 1-5: $m = 2.7$, $sd = 1.03$, 6-10: $m = 2.5$ $sd = 0.93$, 10+: $m = 1.85$, $sd = 0.86$.

3.3 The skills of an effective ESP teacher

With respect to the skills of an effective ESP teacher, the most important skill which makes a good ESP teacher is undoubtedly ‘knowledge of specialized aspects of ESP teaching’ (40,5%). Moreover, the participants were very sensitive (31%) to

‘understanding student needs and difficulties’ and believed that it is important that they can respond effectively to their students’ needs.

Furthermore, they seemed to rank highly the skills of ‘high level of language for specific purposes’ (17,6%) and ‘modern teaching methods’ (16,4%). However they showed little interest in ‘completing and improving the existing syllabus’, since only 1,4% of the participants ranked it as the first priority.

Significant differences ($F_{2,64} = 4.221$, $p < 0.05$) were identified concerning the skill ‘understanding student needs and difficulties’ as the novice ESP teachers ranked it more important: 1-5: $m = 2.26$, $sd. = 1.36$, 6-10: $m = 2.38$ $sd = 1.5$, 10+: $m = 4.23$, $sd = 1.39$. It was also found that there were significant differences between the teachers with regard to their studies in ‘knowledge of specialized aspects of ESP teaching’ ($t = 2.108$, $df = 72$, $p < 0.05$); the teachers who hold a master degree ranked it low ($m = 2.84$, $sd = 1.89$) in contrast to the rest of the participants who do not hold one ($m = 2.16$, $sd = 1.4$). Similarly, there were significant differences between the teachers with a master degree and those who do not hold one with regard to their studies in ‘completing and improving the existing syllabus’ ($t = 3.096$, $df = 71$, $p < 0.005$); more precisely, the former ranked it higher ($m = 4.11$, $sd = 1.05$) than those with no master degree ($m = 3.23$, $sd = 1.34$).

3.4 Suggestions for covering teaching needs

The data derived from the open – ended question ‘what are your proposals about facing your teaching needs in ESP?’ resulted into the following categories and sub-categories. As shown in table-2, syllabus and coursebooks are the category of very high occurrence frequency. This indicates a) the need for the development of a new syllabus addressing the specific nature of each subject discipline and b) the ESP teachers’ preference to rely on ready made materials and use published coursebooks.

Table 2. Categories – sub-categories	<i>References</i>
1. Building up libraries	19
1.1. ESP bibliography	14
1.2. Subject-discipline bibliography	5
2. Syllabus and coursebooks	77
2.1. Renovation of syllabus	32
2.2. Material production	45
3. Subject-discipline teacher cooperation	3
4. Training courses	12
5. Streaming	10
6. New technologies	8
7. ESP in all semesters	5
8. ESP certification	5
9. Student mobility	4

4. Interview results

Rich insights into ESP teachers’ training needs and their viewpoints on training provision were provided through interviews, which complemented the findings of the questionnaires. The data, after being coded, resulted into 35 codes, which were grouped into eighteen (18) categories classified into four basic themes: a) difficulties - problems, b) needs, c) future training provision and d) suggestions (tables 3-5)

4.1 Difficulties – problems

4.1.1 Lack of formal ESP qualifications

All ESP teachers in the context considered, who have been adapted from EFL, declared that ESP has not been at issue either during their initial training or their pre-service training. Since they have been assigned to teach ESP courses without any initial training, they felt that the subject-specific content is alien to their previous experience, because they lack in formal ESP qualifications. Under these circumstances, ESP teachers highlighted certain problems regarding selection and organisation of materials, ESP teaching methods and techniques, and motivation of adult students.

4.1.2 Materials

According to the participants there is no pre-determined syllabus or coursebook, which they are required to follow and the ESP course content is not clearly specified. The selection and organization of the materials are entirely left to the teachers who declared that they face a lot of difficulties. In that case, ESP teachers stated they have to determine the basic organising principles and to consider the target domains in which the students will need the language, as well as the themes arising from these contexts.

4.1.3 Subject – discipline

Teachers have to develop expertise in teaching different courses, as they are required to teach various aspects of ESP according to the type of course they are assigned to instruct. They declared they have problems as the courses are specifically oriented towards the subject content and teaching is related in content to various disciplines. They believed the problem is that they are supposed to become ‘experts’ in the subjects and to put this expertise into practice in a foreign language without any previous specific training in it.

4.1.4 Heterogeneity

Furthermore, the participants reported that large classes, common in many vocational institutes, can be the norm for students following ESP courses. In addition, the classes are exceedingly mixed in terms of linguistic level, as students are grouped by specialism and not by language level or competence. As such ESP teachers stressed the fact that they face some difficulties in finding solutions as to how these multilevel classes should be taught.

4.1.5 Demotivation

Also the problem of demotivation was pointed out. The majority of the respondents claimed that students are poorly motivated; perhaps they feel that the study of the language was imposed upon them by the institutions or they may not appreciate the value of their ESP course.

In addition, the students’ lack of interest in learning ESP causes a lot of problems in the teaching process, as most of the participants stated that they cannot develop their students’ motivation. ESP teachers declared they need to adapt to the multifaceted nature of ESP and find ways to encourage the students’ intention to learn and to act as consultants, which involves diagnosing the learners’ language and communicative needs.

4.1.6 Lack of Libraries

The fact that no libraries are available for the ESP teachers employed in the Vocational Institutes is also reported to affect the course design procedures. It seems that they have limited resources when setting up an ESP course since they have access either to course books purchased by themselves or by materials available on the Internet.

Table 3. Crosschecking Format: Difficulties and problems

CATEGORIES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES
1. Profile	1 Teacher	2 Teacher	3 Teacher	4 Teacher	5 Teacher	6 Teacher	7 Teacher	8 Teacher	9 Teacher	8 Teacher
A. DIFFICULTIES - PROBLEMS										
2. material	LSP MAT	LSP MAT	LSP MAT	LSP MAT	LSP MAT	LSP MAT	LSP MAT	LSP MAT	LSP MAT	LSP MAT
3. Subject – discipline	EXD ICOU	EXD ICOU		EXD ICOU				EXD ICOU	EXD ICOU	EXD ICOU
4. No libraries	+					+			+	
5. Heterogeneity		LHE TCL	LHE TCL	LHE TCL	LHE TCL			LHE TCL		LHE TCL
6. demotivation			LINT ESP	LINT ESP	LINT ESP			LINT ESP		LINT ESP
7. lack of formal ESP qualifications	NTR ESP LEX ESP	NTR ESP	NTR ESP	NTR ESP	NTR ESP	LEX ESP	NTR ESP LEX ESP	LEX ESP LEX ESP	NTR ESP LEX ESP	NTR ESP LEX ESP

4.2 Needs

Focusing on the ESP teachers' needs, all interviewees expressed the wish for receiving adequate training in the principles of *adult education*. They considered as the starting point for ESP teaching an understanding of how adult students learn since learning and teaching are determined by the learners.

Moreover, they declared that they need guidance in the following areas:

Most of the participants claimed they need specialized knowledge in *target domain language* which they are supposed to teach, since a) linguistic difficulties constitute a basic area for teachers, b) teachers with little or no scientific background may fail to fully understand subject specific texts and will inevitably feel insecure c) they have to provide students with an effective way of realising the scientific knowledge they have acquired through the English language.

A further need expressed by ESP teachers is some guidance on classroom management techniques which would result in more *effective teaching*. They declared that they need guidance in generating activities and organising a class around tasks and activities in which all students can participate and to which they can contribute at their own level. Some of the ESP teachers stated that laboratory availability which allows for the use of technical equipment in language teaching would inevitably result in more effective teaching.

According to the participants' statements, most of the ESP teachers experience difficulties when either *selecting* or *producing teaching materials*. Thus, they need proper guidance since all tasks involved in planning the course, selecting the materials, teaching and coordinating are 'required' to be performed by the ESP teachers themselves. These tasks call upon particular skills and capabilities, which the teachers have not acquired during a pre-service training stage.

Furthermore, the participants expressed the wish to familiarise themselves with a set of various techniques which could enable them to cope with any problems related to *mixed-ability ESP classes* – comprising adult learners of various levels of linguistic competence- which is a common phenomenon in the Greek educational reality.

Table 4. Crosschecking Format: Training needs

CATEGORIES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES
B. NEEDS										
8. Adult education	PRT EADU	PRT EADU	PRT EADU	PRT EADU	PRT EADU	PRT EADU		PRT EADU	PRT EADU	PRT EADU
9. Language for specific purposes	SPK NLA	SPK NLA	SPK NLA	SPK NLA	SPK NLA	SPK NLA	SPK NLA		SPK NLA	SPK NLA
10. Effective teaching	CLAMAN	CLAMAN	CLAMAN	CLAMAN		CLAMAN		CLAMAN	CLAMAN	CLAMAN
	LABAVA	TEMIACL	SMHOMCL	TEMIACL		LABAVA		LABAVA	TEMIACL	LABAVA
11. Material selection		SEORTEM	SEORTEM	SEORTEM	SEORTEM	SEORTEM	SEORTEM	SEORTEM	SEORTEM	SEORTEM

4.3 Future training

Any further training provided has to consider time constraints since it was reported to be the main problem of the teachers who claimed that they do not have much time available (to attend any training). For this reason, it was suggested that they should attend short-term seminars (lasting two weeks), which can be held mainly before the beginning or end of the semester. At the same time three of the teachers showed preference for attending programmes lasting up to one month, perhaps because they believe that they could be given more chances to renew and improve their ESP knowledge. Instead, training which focuses on various aspects of ESP course design in a rather intensive mode is favoured.

It is also the degree of their *motivation* which is largely determined by the availability of free time since most of them work long hours and are employed in more than one teaching contexts. However, most of the participants felt the need to be trained in order to achieve a degree of specialisation in (aspects of) ESP and become aware of key features in ESP course design.

In addition, it was reported that the favoured *methodology* needs to integrate theory and practice through ‘workshops’ and ‘microteaching’. Almost all interviewees felt that theoretical training brings little change to their teaching practices in the classroom (Ellis 1986; Richards 1990; Wallace 1991), as training should be a practical process, directly applicable to the teaching context (Duff 1988).

Concerning the *content* of the courses, all ESP teachers had a marked preference for briefing on issues involving modern teaching methods and approaches, basic principles of teaching adults, guidance on everyday teaching problems and classroom organisation problems in order for them be able to implement new approaches and techniques (Hawley & Valli 1999). Most of them believed that ESP is for adult learners and thus it may use different methodology from that of general English.

Moreover, ESP teachers stressed the need of having guidance on ‘material organization’; they are above all interested in receiving guidance on how to develop their own material, as sometimes no suitable published material exists for certain ESP courses. Training on ‘student needs analysis’ was much emphasised so that they could lead to a learner –centered approach to language teaching and learning. They declared that they need to combine information about what the students know, what they want to know and what the syllabus would like them to know in order to determine what to

teach. The needs analysis process is expected to provide a solid ground for a number of decisions which have to be reached with respect to course design and materials development.

4.4 Suggestions

From the total of the answers given, it comes out that the necessity for attending seminars was considered highly valued by all ESP teachers in order to enhance their knowledge in ESP teaching. In addition, some of the participants stressed the importance for being provided with teaching material of particular subject disciplines and being familiarized with ESP methods and techniques (table 6).

Table 5. Crosschecking Format: Future Training

CATEGORIES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES	CODES
D.SUGGESTIONS										
16. Attendance of seminars	ESP TEME ESP VOC	ESP TEME ESP VOC	ESP TEME	ESP TEME	ESP TEME	ESP TEME	ESP TEME		ESP TEME	ESP TEME
17. Subject – discipline Coursebooks	COUB PRO PROTEAID	COUB PRO PROTEAID	COUB PRO EXPI NST	MAT GUIL	COUB PRO PROTEAID	COUB PRO MAT GUIL	COUB PRO MAT GUIL	COUB PRO	MAT GUIL	COUB PRO MAT GUIL

5. Discussion- Concluding remarks

The study provided some useful information about the ESP teachers' needs, expectations, and attitudes concerning training programmes and illustrated a number of issues, which need to be considered.

First of all, the results showed that the majority of the participants declared dissatisfaction and insufficiency in regard to their pre-service preparation in the field of foreign language teaching methodology for specific purposes and they indicated the need for an INSET policy and plans to be established in the OEEK context. *Training* constitutes for ESP teachers a process of challenge for the development of their professional knowledge, skills, competence and interests, a process of reinforcement, which contributes to the familiarization with new ESP methods, to renew the teaching techniques and to the change of attitude and the role of ESP teacher (Lawton 1990). A significant number of teachers agreed that in-service training should take place systematically and should satisfy the needs as perceived by the teachers themselves (Akon 1991:191).

On the basis of the data emanated from the study, ESP teachers tend to be instrumentally motivated (Gardner 1985; Dornyei 2001) for attending INSET training. They feel the need to receive training for a utilitarian purpose, their professional development (Dornyei 1998 ; Dornyei 2001), which implies that they regard training “not as an end in itself but as a means to some other end” (Hutchinson & Waters 1987:48). In addition, there is a high degree of consensus in the teachers' perception that training is needed in the cluster of items related to teaching methodology, which, however, does not have exclusively theoretical character (Lawton 1989; Nunan 1989). Both theory and practice are of crucial importance for language teacher education (Duff

1988; Thomas 1987), which should involve a variation of learning techniques resulting in the trainees' active participation (Ellis 1986; Richards 1990; Wallace 1991).

Moreover, the teachers stressed the importance of exchanging ideas and experiences with subject teachers; stating their wish for "reflection and professional dialogue, which is absent from the majority of teachers during their careers" (Moon 1994: 347). It needs to be stressed that such cooperation might be further established by introducing team-teaching (Robinson 1991; Kuo 1993; Dudley Evans and St John 1998) in the ESP classroom. It seems that the establishment of team teaching would help the ESP teacher in finding out more about the learners' target domain, cope with issues of subject specificity emerging, and help the learners more effectively in dealing with subject specific knowledge in the target language, after all there is urgent need for relevant and subject specific ESP courses (Johns & Dudley Evans 1991). Nevertheless, despite the merits of team teaching (Johns & Dudley Evans 1980; Kennedy & Bolitho 1984; Mc Donough 1984; Hutchinson & Waters 1987; Brennan & Van Naerssen 1989; Dudley Evans & St John 1998) it has to be acknowledged that such cooperation between the language and the subject teacher presupposes a considerable level of good will, mutual interest and understanding (Adams-Smith 1983 ; Early 1981).

Furthermore, the adult education framework (Rogers 1989) is also considered in need to be dealt with in ESP teacher training, since adult learners share a variety of characteristics (Mc Kay & Tom 1999) which have certain implications for ESP course design specifications. It is considered that an awareness of the distinct characteristics brought in the language classroom by ESP learners is a prerequisite for effective instruction. It cannot be ignored that ESP teaching presupposes some basic linguistic competence in the target language on the part of the learners (Dudley Evans & St John 1998), and in certain cases it involves an engagement with the core of the subject discipline, which may range from theoretical to experiential (Robinson 1991) as well as a concomitant motivation to learn (Sifakis 2003).

In addition, the ESP teachers are positively inclined towards the employment of technical equipment in language teaching and seem to be aware of the merits of effectively using technology in the language classroom (Warschauer 1996; Warschauer & Meskill 2000).

It seems critical that ESP teachers need to be familiarized with needs analysis (Munby 1978 ; West 1994) , "the key concept or cornerstone of ESP"; (Dudley Evans & St John 1998). However needs analysis is regarded a complex process, thus, special emphasis needs to be laid in providing adequate training which clarifies its underlying principles as well as methodological implications. The needs analysis process is expected to provide a strong justification for all the decisions made on the part of ESP teachers with respect to course design specifications (Berwick 1989).

Concluding, the importance of developing a well organized INSET framework with the ultimate aim to optimize learning opportunities by means of promoting the development and implementation of a coherent ESP curriculum (Johnson 1989) within the context of Vocational Education and Training is signified.

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