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CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The educational and technical courses in the ELT program in Turkey: Do they contribute to ICT skills?

Levent Uzun^{1*}

Abstract: The present study investigated the contribution of the educational and technical courses in the English Language Teacher Training Program (ELTTP) at universities in Turkey to the information and communication technologies (ICT) knowledge and skills of the students. The participants were 74 teachers/trainees who were attending their last year in the Faculty of Education at Uludag University or graduates of the ELTTP from nine different universities in Turkey. The data were collected by a Likert scale questionnaire by which teacher trainees were asked to rate each course that fell under the specific group of educational or technical courses that they attended during their education; and by interviews through which participants were asked to evaluate to what degree the technical courses contributed to their ICT-informed personal and professional development, and whether they felt ready to employ ICT in their classes as teachers. Results revealed that neither the educational nor the technical courses supported the ICT knowledge and skills of the participants at a satisfactory level, suggesting that the pedagogical knowledge that teacher trainees receive during their education is not in parallel with the technical knowledge that in fact should facilitate the implementation of pedagogical skills in the current age of technology. The present study speculated that the insufficient technical knowledge of the field and underdeveloped technical skills result in evasion of technology use and innovation in education. The study ended with suggestions related to teacher training programs and to the philosophies and approaches to English Language Teaching education.

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The present study discusses about the paradoxical state related to education. Naturally, other fields should be expected to develop in parallel with the improvements in education as it is the mother area, but the current state seems to be not as it is explained. Although the educational policies and investments seem to be organised toward technology-enhanced education for future, the observations show that neither teachers in general nor the educational settings and programs are technology guided, which suggests that technology, and maybe other fields as well, develop separately and independently of education. This paradoxical situation reveals that education has lost its power and fallen far behind the technological progress and innovations. The findings propose that the Teacher Training Programs of the Faculties of Education need urgent revision and careful alterations to catch up with the recent advancements in ICT and educational technologies.

Subjects: Assessment; Curriculum; Education Policy; Higher Education; Higher Education Management; Information & Communication Technology (ICT); Pedagogy; Teaching & Learning

Keywords: ICT; teacher education; program evaluation; technical courses; educational courses; Turkish higher education

1. Introduction

As everything is subject to change and the only thing that does not change is change, for consistent development education also should be expected to undergo a transformation with all of its components. However, the current situation in education seems not to be exactly as explained. There is a discussion that education does not benefit as much as it should from the innovations in technology and the educational technologies (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Fabry & Higgs, 1997; Tondeur et al., 2012). Another point that is under discussion is the ineffectiveness and insufficiency of teachers with regard to their technical and/or technology-informed knowledge and skills that can neither compete with nor assist in their pedagogical competencies (Aldunate & Nussbaum, 2013; Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Sadik, Sendurur, & Sendurur, 2012; Hixon & Buckenmeyer, 2009; Howley, Wood, & Hough, 2011; Levin & Wadmany, 2008). In other words, although teachers possess basic pedagogical knowledge and skills, their technical knowledge is not at the same level, which hinders the activation of their present pedagogical capabilities especially in technology-enhanced settings. The problem is quite similar to what Prensky (2001) stated about education in the USA: "Today's students are no longer the people our education system was designed to teach." Related changes, transformations, or modifications can be realized by the help of educational programs and/or curriculums, an approach that has been often used in Turkey. However, the solidity and appropriateness of the applications of these approaches are questionable, as the evidence of the present situations indicates ineffective outputs.

Uzun (2015) explained that teacher training programs (TTP) in Turkey have undergone an extensive investigation and modification since institutions and faculties of education were established, and that this has emerged from the innovative approaches to and models of teaching, which have been suggested by the trends and findings of the time. Nevertheless, although there has been a desire to follow the global trends, the Turkish educational system has experienced serious problems between theory and practice. The tendency has been toward technology-aided education, which, however, has been tried to be realized by traditional means and materials. Buildings and classrooms have been equipped with the necessary ultimate technologies but the minds of the instructors and students have remained the same. Moreover, nothing innovative has been included in the TTP and curriculums to improve the educational philosophies of the stakeholders and to realize the ideological transformation from traditional to digital or innovative. That is to say, the physical environments have been prepared but the most essential part of the process, which is the mind, has been ignored. In fact, innovations and transformations should be triggered by the mind as a natural process, but things in the Turkish educational system work in the opposite way, that is, from innovation to the mind rather than from the mind to innovation. This is caused most probably by the strong authoritative and hierarchical cultural tradition of Turkish society. Turkey is a country where a strong top-down tradition exists, which reinforces the hierarchical settings and circumstances, and reduces tolerant and equitable discussions among the stakeholders (Uzun, 2015).

The related literature has accumulated an important amount of research on teacher education (e.g. Erozan, 2005; Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006; Hardin et al., 2010; Karakas, 2012; Lozano, Sung, Padilla, & Silva, 2002; Lozano et al., 2004; Oguz, 2009), and also on program and curriculum evaluation (e.g. Angell, DuBravac, & Gonglewski, 2008; Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Dunworth, 2008; Erdem, 2009; Lee, Altschuld, & Hung, 2008; Ögeyik, 2009; Peacock, 2009; Romeo & Dyer, 2004; Seferoğlu, 2006). Nevertheless, there is hardly any evidence about the effect of the educational and technical courses within TTP, which also compare the contribution and efficiency of these courses in relation to innovative technology-enhanced language teaching abilities and skills. The present research aims at filling this gap by addressing the Faculties of Education as a sample of the Turkish educational context.

The main motivation of the present study originates from the need to reveal the opinions and needs of the students related to the educational and technical courses in the latest English Language Teacher Training Program (ELTTP), and to discuss the correlation between these two types of courses in the ELTTP in relation to how much these courses contribute to the development of the 21st-century skills and teacher trainees' information and communication technologies (ICT) capabilities. The philosophical perspective of the present study is deliberately "down" oriented rather than "top" in terms of the "top-down" and "bottom-up" discussion in the literature. Therefore, teacher trainees were allowed and asked to evaluate the specific educational and technical courses that have been selected for them to study by the top (the policy makers); instead of asking some authorities to evaluate the impact or efficiency of the imposed courses.

1.1. Technical education in TTP

ICT have improved significantly within the last two decades, and a considerable growth in the adoption of technology within higher education has been observed (Kirkwood & Price, 2014). However, it would be impossible to suggest that educational technologies and technology-enhanced educational practices have progressed dramatically in parallel with the progress in technology (Kirkwood & Price, 2005). Incorporating technology successfully into the teaching and learning process has been one of the main priorities of formal educational policies of many countries, which is closely associated with positive teacher and learner attitudes (Christensen, 2002; Woodrow, 1992). Garm and Karlsen (2004) remarked that although educational reforms might be seen as actions with a national mission and agenda, they emerge from the global processes. Therefore, global trends in teacher education, as in all other areas, seem inevitable (Garm, 2002). That is why different perspectives and new approaches to reforms in teacher education and teaching practices are most probably to be adopted by governmental authorities, if not today, certainly in the future (Uzun, 2015).

The current ELTTP seems to be far from displaying the characteristics of a collaboratively prepared and organized curriculum; not only because it does not offer the most interesting and efficient content to the students but also because regardless of the alterations in the program, the educational philosophy, that is the mind, of the instructors that deliver the courses as well as the contents and procedures of the courses remain the same. Students who are enrolled on any educational programs are exposed to outdated approaches, methodologies, materials, procedures, and even knowledge. If the desire is to employ technology more often and efficiently in educational settings, there are very significant and serious questions, as in the following, that the educational policy-makers, academic bodies, and educators need to ask and also answer:

- How can educational knowledge of teachers be assisted by educational technology knowledge?
- Who should be responsible for equipping teacher trainees with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable technology-enhanced education?
- What courses or course units, topics, procedures, etc. should be embedded within the current TTP?
- Are pedagogical knowledge and technical knowledge of a field sufficient to activate technology-enhanced education?
- Can knowledge and skills related to educational technologies be transmitted through the course types such as educational and/or technical courses that are installed in the present TTP, or is there a need for new types of teacher training curriculums or courses such as educational technologies courses, ICT courses, etc.?

The following section presents brief information related to the ELTTP in Turkey, and to the relationships between the technical courses of the field and the educational courses. Additionally, how these courses complement and enhance each other, and to what degree they utilize educational technologies as well as whether the instructors and lecturers convey updated knowledge about ICT or provide opportunities to improve skills for technology-enhanced education are discussed.

1.2. The ELTTP in Turkey

The latest ELTTP in Turkey was determined, restructured, and launched in the 2006–2007 educational year by the Council of Higher Education (CHE). Although there might be some slight differences among the names, content, and procedure of performing the courses in different universities, the package program is implemented uniformly in English Language Teaching (ELT) Departments throughout Turkey. The courses within this package program have been grouped under four main titles by Uzun (2015). In the current study, two of the courses (*Educational Technologies and Materials Development* and *Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development*) that were classified as pedagogical courses were relocated to the technical courses group, since the content and procedures of these courses have been observed to have been modified toward the improvement of creative and constructive material development and adaptation skills as an aim rather than the improvement of teaching skills. The present study concentrated on the technical and educational courses. These courses are presented in Table 1.

The technical courses are intended to contribute to the knowledge of the specific field which is English language (EL) education in the current condition. Therefore, the technical courses focus on further matters related to EL education (e.g. Linguistics, Pragmatics, Syntax, Discourse Analysis, etc.) as well as the supportive fields that may help in the educational process and implementation of EL teaching and/or learning (e.g. Computers, English Literature, Scientific Research Methods, Testing and Evaluation, Materials Development, etc.). These type of courses should naturally be expected to contribute to and assist the development of the 21st-century skills that could be closely associated with successful use of ICT. The total number of technical courses within the whole program is 18 (49 credits-75 ECTS). On the other hand, as a unique feature of Faculties of Education, educational courses are installed to improve the pedagogical awareness and abilities, that is, the very basic components of the “teaching” profession (e.g. Introduction to Educational Sciences, Psychology of Education, Special Teaching Methods, Instruction Principles and Methods, etc.). The total number of educational courses within the whole program is 16 (59 credits-81 ECTS).

Regarding the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), the total credit number of the program is 240, within which the ECTS credits of the technical and educational courses are 75 and 81, respectively. Table 2 presents the ECTS credits and weekly hours of the technical and educational courses with regard to the years and semesters when they are included in the ELTTP.

Table 1. The educational and technical courses in the ELT program in Turkey

Technical courses	Educational courses
Computer I-II	Introduction to Educational Sciences
Literature and FL Education I-II	Psychology of Education
Linguistics I-II	Approaches to ELT I-II
Language Acquisition	Instruction Principles and Methods
Scientific Research Methods	ELT Methodology I-II
Educational Technologies and Materials Development	Teaching English to Young
Short Story Analysis and Teaching	Learners I-II
Poetry Analysis	Teaching Language Skills I-II
Novel Analysis and Teaching	Classroom Management
Testing and Evaluation	<i>School Experience</i>
Elective I (Pragmatics)	Guidance
English Language Testing and Evaluation	Special Education
Elective III (Discourse Analysis)	<i>Teaching Practice</i>
Comparative Education/Syntax	
Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development	
49 credits-75 ECTS	59 credits-81 ECTS

Table 2. The credits and ECTS credits of the technical and educational courses

Year	Semester	Technical courses		Educational courses	
		Credits	ECTS	Credits	ECTS
I	1st	3	4	3	4
	2nd	3	4	3	4
II	1st	6	8	6	9
	2nd	13	21	7	10
III	1st	9	9	14	21
	2nd	3	4	8	11
IV	1st	5	11	10	14
	2nd	7	14	8	8
Total credits and ECTS		49	75	59	81

The CHE launched the current program with the claim that it would graduate efficient and skilled teachers who would serve not only Turkish society but also the world. When the weight of the educational and technical courses embedded in the program is examined, it can be observed that there is relative balance in the weekly class hours of the courses in the two groups (49 and 59 respectively), which should suggest that a balanced technical and pedagogical education is realized by the help of the ELTP. Nevertheless, not only the content and quality of the program but also the instructors that control and operate the program might be the subject of much debate, because the teaching approaches and methods in our current educational system appear to be mostly traditional, not innovative, and therefore not providing room for technology-informed and enhanced individual progress. Moreover, due to the authority-guided educational tradition in Turkey, both the attitudes and manners of the educators but more importantly the habits of the learners seem to remain static and traditional, that is, far from improving the general line of vision and understanding of how technology can be incorporated into education. That is why the ongoing criticisms and discussions related to the insufficiency of ICT in education and the underdevelopment of educational technologies should be approached not only from the surface but also by going deeply into the reasons of why this is so, by delving into the problem from a perspective that investigates the processes and procedures more closely and carefully.

Focusing on the technical and educational courses, the present study aimed at eliciting the opinions of teacher trainees to reveal to what degree the claim of the CHE has been realized, and to find out to what degree the educational and technical courses have helped students become effective “international teachers” who can successfully incorporate technology into the educational activities. The present study aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

- (1) Which courses (technical or educational) are more effective or beneficial for the teacher trainees in improving their ICT knowledge, teaching skills, and abilities?
- (2) What are the students’ opinions related to the contribution of the technical courses to their technology-enhanced teaching knowledge and skills?
- (3) What are the students’ self-perceptions with regard to their readiness to employ ICT in their classes?

2. Methodology

The present study adopted both the quantitative approach that was realized by the help of a 5-point Likert scale, and the qualitative approach that was implemented by the help of interviews, which were applied to ensure a crosscheck and to elicit more in-depth information about the problem.

Having noted this, however, rather than arguing about the quantitative and qualitative paradigms, it would be more beneficial to stress and discuss the *top-down* vs. *bottom-up* approaches in the implementation of data collecting procedures (Uzun, 2015). The current study is fundamentally bottom-up in nature since it asks the teachers/trainees to express their feelings and thoughts rather than consulting the educators, curriculum developers, or policy-makers with regard to the efficacy of the courses that have been under investigation. Therefore, besides emphasizing the type of the data, perhaps the source of the data and the procedure by which they were collected should be philosophically and principally emphasized as a much more significant factor to consider, especially in the social sciences where the problems are deeply rooted within the nature of human beings (Uzun, 2015).

2.1. Participants

The participants were 74 teacher trainees or teachers, who were enrolled on the ELT Departments of nine different universities and have completed their education successfully throughout the 4 years of the ELTP, and who were either eligible to receive their graduation diplomas, or graduated from the Faculty of Education of a university in Turkey. Their age ranged between 21 and 30. The participants were randomly selected from among the volunteers who were reached by posting a Google Form on Facebook pages.

2.2. Instruments

Data collection tools (a Likert scale questionnaire and interview questionnaire) were validated through piloting with a separate but similar group of students. The Likert scale questionnaire (LSQ) was adopted and adapted from Uzun (2015) to assess the effect of the technical and educational courses; and the interview aimed at eliciting student opinions about the technical courses in relation to their contribution to the teacher trainees' technology-enhanced teaching skills. Teacher trainees' self-perceptions about their readiness to employ ICT in their classes were also collected during the interview.

2.3. Procedure

Data collection procedures were carried out in two sessions. First, the LSQ was applied, which took no longer than 5 min for each individual. The participants were asked to rate each course by giving a point between 1 and 5 (1 less—5 more) to evaluate how effective was each course in contributing to their teaching skills and ICT competencies. The total points for each course were calculated and the mean scores for each group of courses (technical and educational) were estimated.

In the second stage, the interviews were conducted. The participants were asked whether or to what degree the technical courses contributed to their technology-informed teaching skills and competencies, and to evaluate themselves concerning their readiness to employ ICT in their classes. In other words, the trainees were asked whether they considered themselves competent enough to employ ICT during their professional careers. The collected responses of the participants were subjected to content analyses, and the commonly emphasized topics were noted and grouped for evaluation, so that conclusions related to research questions 2 and 3 could be synthesized and discussed.

3. Results and discussion

The criteria for evaluating the results were determined on a scale of 1 to 5 similar to the Likert scale as follows:

1—Inefficient, 2—Poor, 3—Moderate, 4—Efficient, 5—Very efficient

Therefore, prior to analyzing the results, it was determined that any record below 4 would be evaluated as an indicator of low efficiency, while 4 and over would count as sufficient. Table 3 presents the total points and mean scores that were calculated for each technical and educational

course with regard to what degree these courses were considered to contribute to the ICT skills and abilities of the teacher trainees.

3.1. The quantitative results

According to the results, the lowest mean score of the technical courses was $M = 1.10$ and the highest was $M = 3.77$; while the lowest mean score of the educational courses was $M = 1.09$ and the highest was $M = 3.56$. It was observed that except for the two educational courses (School Experience, $M = 3.42$, and Teaching Practice, $M = 3.56$) the scores of all other courses were below $M = 3$. Likewise, the scores of all technical courses except the Educational Technologies and Materials Development courses ($M = 3.77$) were below $M = 3$. There was no indicator of a satisfactory mean result for any course, as all were below $M = 4$. These indicators showed that both course groups (technical and educational) seem to be quite insufficient in contributing to the ICT skills and knowledge of the students according to the predetermined criteria for efficiency/sufficiency. The total mean scores calculated for the technical and educational courses were $M = 2.05$ and $M = 2.12$, respectively.

This should have been an expected outcome, judging by the observations in the present practices in education. However, another expectation, at least of the policy- and decision-makers, should have been that these two course groups take the lead in improving the ICT knowledge and skills of the teacher trainees. For, there are no other courses in the TTP that will perform this task otherwise. In fact, it seems to be obvious that the present courses are far from being innovative or technology-mediated. All of these courses seem to possess every feature of the traditional minds and philosophies. The current state of education both in Turkey and abroad is more or less similar since the staff that occupy the positions in the educational establishments are the same individuals that have successfully guided the societies with their researches, experiments, operations, and decisions during the modern era, before the beginning of the digital age. For many educational authorities, educational technology still means primitive adoption and adaptation of primitive or outdated tools such as slides, radio, tape player, TV, video player, CD, teletext, etc. (Saritas, 2007). Unfortunately, the mean scores of the courses in Table 3 show that teacher trainees begin to use technology only when they step practically into the profession and feel the necessity to meet the needs of their young and technology-addicted students, as observed in the scores of School Experience and Teaching Practice, which however still remain below the satisfactory level.

Having recorded these findings, the participants were interviewed regarding research questions 2 and 3. Participants' opinions were collected and classified in relation to the contribution of the technical courses to their technology-enhanced teaching skills; and to their self-perceptions with regard to their readiness to employ ICT in their classes. The interview sessions revealed similar results to the results obtained from the LSQ.

3.2. The qualitative findings

Participant responses in relation to research questions 2 and 3 indicate very serious flaws with regard to inclusion of ICT in the educational process of the teacher trainees. The findings revealed in the LSQ propose that the contribution of the courses to the ICT knowledge and skills of the students is not much above $M = 2$, out of a possible $M = 5$, which has been verified by the interviews. The classified findings that were revealed after the content analyses have been presented and discussed in the following.

3.2.1. Responses given to research question 2

When students were exposed to questions related to the contribution of the technical courses to their technology-enhanced teaching knowledge and skills, the common points that were noted were around three main topics: (1) what they knew/learned, (2) how the classes/lessons were carried out, and (3) the instructors'/lecturers' attitudes/approaches/methodologies. The obtained information is as follows.

Table 3. The mean and total mean scores of the technical and educational courses

	Course name	Mean score	Total mean
Technical courses	Computer I	2.66	2.05
	Computer II	2.72	
	Literature and FL Education I	1.93	
	Literature and FL Education II	1.84	
	Linguistics I	1.42	
	Linguistics II	1.15	
	Language Acquisition	1.51	
	Scientific Research Methods	2.15	
	Educational Technologies and Materials Development	3.77	
	Short Story Analysis and Teaching	2.32	
	Poetry Analysis	1.72	
	Novel Analysis and Teaching	2.15	
	Testing and Evaluation	2.88	
	Elective I (Pragmatics)	1.31	
	English Language Testing and Evaluation	2.60	
	Elective III (Discourse Analysis)	1.10	
	Comparative Education/Syntax	1.12	
Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development	2.60		
Educational courses	Introduction to Educational Sciences	1.96	2.12
	Psychology of Education	1.35	
	Approaches to ELT I	2.13	
	Approaches to ELT II	2.20	
	Instruction Principles and Methods	1.44	
	ELT Methodology I	1.47	
	ELT Methodology II	1.22	
	Teaching English to Young Learners I	2.69	
	Teaching English to Young Learners II	2.49	
	Teaching Language Skills I	2.40	
	Teaching Language Skills II	2.16	
	Classroom Management	2.49	
	School Experience	3.42	
	Guidance	1.09	
	Special Education	1.93	
Teaching Practice	3.56		

What they knew/learnt during the courses/classes/lessons:

- Most things related to technology in the classes were about using PowerPoint for the presentations.
- Students searched the Internet which necessitated using computers and other equipment.
- Some students used photo and video editing tools/software, which in fact was reported to be what they could already do, and not what they learnt in the courses.
- Some participants mentioned creating digital stories and using some related websites for this purpose (which was a positive addition).

- *Working with Microsoft Office was the most common point mentioned by the students in relation to ICT and the contribution of the technical courses (which was mentioned for educational courses, too).*
- A few participants declared that they were introduced to the interactive whiteboard, but could not use it.

How the classes/lessons were carried out:

- Many students stated that the lessons were held in a traditional way and that they usually used printed materials (books, notebooks, etc.).
- Most of the participants expressed that they were very much familiar with using the computer and projector in the classes for their presentations.
- *A few participants said that an interactive whiteboard was used in some lessons, but that only the instructor/lecturer could practice using it.*
- *The coverage of the courses hardly contained any innovative or technology-based/assisted information and applications.*
- The classes were carried out in primitive computer laboratories with old computers.

The instructors'/lecturers' attitudes/approaches/methodologies:

- The instructors/lecturers did not seem to be technology sympathizers or advocators to any great extent, which was reflected in their teaching styles.
- Many lecturers/instructors left the delivery of the course topics on the shoulders of the students without exemplifying any technology-enhanced lesson deliveries.
- *The lecturers/instructors were mostly traditional-minded and therefore initiated and encouraged traditional practices.*
- The instructors/lecturers did not use or introduce any educational ICT, not even the interactive whiteboard.

3.2.2. Responses given to research question 3

When students were exposed to questions related to their self-perceptions with regard to their readiness to employ ICT in their classes, they tended to admit that they felt unconfident, but pointed out that this was not only due to the insufficient education that they had received but also because of the conditions of their country. They pointed out that using advanced technologies in education was an unrealistic hope for the present times in the current conditions of their country as some schools did not even have water or electricity, let alone computers, Internet connection, etc. Some of the participants seemed convinced that they would not have to use technology throughout their entire professional lives. However, they also believed in the power of technology and its impressive and effective results once integrated in education. Moreover, many of the students accentuated that it would be an advantage and a positive contribution to their professional development if more opportunities were provided for them to work with ICT during university years, so that they could improve these skills and seek ways to embed them in their activities whenever possible.

To review, the opinions of the participants showed that except for the two educational courses (School Experience and Teaching Practice) and one technical course (Educational Technologies and Materials Development), students' benefit acquired from the educational and technical courses is very little, and usually limited to conditions such as working on simple computing tasks by the help of Microsoft Office tools in order to prepare homework or presentations. Additionally, although the students were keen on trying and implementing educational technologies, they were allowed very limited opportunities and provided with insufficient conditions to improve their ICT knowledge and skills. This seems to occur both because of the attitudes and habits of the lecturers/instructors and the traditional educational philosophies that urge the adoption and use of traditional approaches, materials, methodologies, etc. in teaching and learning. These positions in the system of Turkish

National Education seem controversial when compared with what has been tried and intended with the FATİH Project (the biggest educational reform movement ever, which has invested over 8 million US Dollars so far by installing approximately 400,000 interactive whiteboards in schools throughout the country; and giving tablet computers to K-12 students for free). The two governmental establishments responsible for education in Turkey are the Ministry of National Education (MNE), and The CHE, which apparently do not cooperate in harmony. MNE obviously plans for futuristic education by surrounding the physical environments with the necessary equipment, but CHE does not train the teachers in a way that they can use the equipment efficiently. Teacher trainees, and initially their lecturers/instructors, either are not aware of the educational potential of ICT or simply do not have the clearest idea how these can be incorporated into the educational processes. Therefore, technology-assisted education still remains as a mere hope or a pleasant wish that waits to be realized somehow in the future that for some countries has already arrived. The problematic issues were revealed to be so because of lecturer/instructor-related matters, the curriculum, educational philosophies, current condition of educational technologies, and so forth. The majority of the students expressed that the technical courses contributed very little to their ICT skills and abilities. Likewise, the trainees emphasized that they felt unconfident about their readiness to employ ICT in their classes. In this sense, although it would not be possible to generalize the results to all Faculties of Education and teacher trainees, the local indices (predominantly the Uludag University, ELT Department sample) clearly showed that teacher training in Turkey is mostly traditional rather than innovative, and that thus, it is far from employing ICT in educational settings throughout the country. Therefore, expecting teachers to teach with technology seems to be naïve anticipation, since they are neither trained in this way nor expected to practice ICT during their education in university. This is why making modifications in the ELTP seems to be an urgent necessity. Moreover, it might be suggested that there is need to gather technologically informed materials and tools and to create a platform where these can be not only presented but also explained and exemplified with regard to how educators can adopt and adapt these for their classes. This might be accelerated by re-educating educators with the purpose of employing ICT in education, and by sharing the best practices throughout the world. The technological means are quite adequate for this. In addition, it might be useful to provoke discussions with regard to the higher education programs that according to the trainees do not provide them with the necessary ICT knowledge and practice.

4. Conclusion

To summarize, it will be possible to train teachers who possess high-quality ICT skills and technology-enhanced educational capabilities only when appropriate courses, the content of which should be developed and updated in parallel with the improvements in technology, are included in the educational programs; and also by following the innovations and trends as well as good and effective teaching practices all around the world. Additionally, it would be very useful to adopt a bottom-up approach while setting programs or structuring new methodologies rather than imposing predetermined ideas, contents, and procedures from the top. In the current age of ICT, education should be seen as a dynamic process which needs to be updated regularly, not only to catch and follow the recent trends and innovations in technology but also to meet the needs, interests, and habits of the new generations. It is now more obvious than at any time before that the future is digitally informed, and so should be education. There is need to find ways to integrate popular innovations in educational activities. Perhaps it is only this approach that might cultivate progressive results in education.

Teachers can improve both their pedagogic skills and also their technical skills if more technology-informed educational processes are integrated in the courses that will teach both innovative knowledge of the field and how these can be embedded in innovative classrooms. Teaching skills and technical skills should go hand in hand in TTP. Otherwise, the field of education will fall far behind other fields of science, which will create some kind of paradoxical situation because naturally education should be expected to be the leading field of all scientific fields. However, how can this be true if education is a field that occupies people only with standard, fixed, and traditional tasks that leave no room for any creative or innovative applications or inventions?

5. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research

Some limitations can be accentuated related to the present study. One of these might be the number of the participants. It would be certainly better and more illuminating if the current problem could be investigated with a higher number of participants from all Educational Faculties or ELT Departments in the country. It would be also interesting to compare the results obtained from Turkey with the data coming from other countries. Therefore, focusing on the TTP around the world and evaluating their contribution to ICT knowledge and skills of the teacher trainees should be a charming topic to work on in the following studies that concentrate specifically on teacher education, program evaluation, and ICT in education. This would be a good opportunity to share the best practices and improve technology-informed education in the world. Additionally, it might be interesting to research if the opinions of the teacher trainees, lecturers/instructors, and policy-makers differ.

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