Pre-service ELT Teachers' Prospective Needs and Desires for their Pre-service Teacher Education

Odiléa Rocha Erkaya[1], Onur Ergünay[2]
[1]Eskişehir Osmangazi University
 ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2086-1863
[2]Eskişehir Osmangazi University
 ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1688-0458

To cite this article:

Pre-service ELT Teachers' Prospective Needs and Desires for their Pre-service Teacher Education[i]

Odiléa Rocha Erkaya[1], Onur Ergünay[1][ii]
[1] Eskişehir Osmangazi University

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the voices of pre-service ELT teachers on their prospective needs and desires for their pre-service teacher education curriculum. A qualitative research was conducted with freshman and sophomore students at an ELT Department in a Faculty of Education of a public university in Turkey. To reach an in-depth understanding of participants' knowledge, qualitative data were collected through 10 focus group discussions which 66 pre-service ELT teachers attended. Inductive analysis revealed that participants' prospective needs are categorized under two emerging themes: (a) instructional/practical and (b) attitudinal/behavioural development. In addition, the prospective desires of them are categorized under two emerging themes: (a) instructional/practical development and (b) content development. Finally, the participants emphasize reducing the number of theoretical courses from the program and increasing practical courses instead.

Key words: Pre-service ELT teachers' prospective needs and desires, Teacher competencies, Curriculum evaluation, Professional development

Introduction

The overall goal of training effective teachers has never been stopped being discussed among the policy makers, teacher educators and scholars. Pre-service education curricula, the success in applying them and academic achievement of the preservice teachers pursuing these curricula are thought to be highly correlated with their future teacher efficacy (Brownell, & Pajares, 1999; Caprara et al., 2006; Goddard et al., 2000). Thus, when designing a curriculum for the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at any university in the world, curriculum designers should take pre-service teachers' needs and desires into consideration. It is crucial to understand that pre-service teachers must be well prepared not only in the content area but also in the pedagogical and professional areas which seem to prepare them for a better career. Accordingly, the Higher Education Council in Turkey redesigned the Teaching ELT program in 1997, having the 21st century demands in mind. The intention of the Council, according to Kırgöz (2005), was not only to add more methodology courses to the program but also to increase the number of hours that students spent in teaching practice in both elementary and secondary schools. Additionally, Kırgöz (2007) states that the Council understood the importance of adding a course entitled Teaching English to Young Learners to the program, so students would learn how to teach this group of students before they started their teaching practice in schools. The reform was then introduced to all ELT departments in the country.

In 2006, the Council attempted to reform the ELT program once again in order to introduce changes in the curriculum. In 2007, the new reform was put into effect and the program included many required and few elective courses (Karakas, 2012). Altunya states that the program consisted of courses related to general knowledge, English language, and teacher education (as cited in Karakas, 2012). Additionally, Seferoglu (2006) believes that the program emphasized courses on methodology and teaching practice. As a result of the changes, in the first year of the program, students had a chance to brush up on the four language skills as well as on lexis and grammar. As ELT students advanced in their program of studies, courses were geared towards their career,

culminating in the last year of the program with a focus on observation and teaching practice in elementary and secondary schools.

Some news about a new reform in all teacher education curricula, including the ELT program, had been spreading since 2017 and a revised program was recently introduced by the Higher Education Council (CoHE, 2018). The revised program is claimed to be based on the recent teacher competencies introduced by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2017). These competencies are framed under three categories, namely professional knowledge, professional skills, and attitude and values. Table 1 presents the main and sub-categories of the current teacher competencies:

Table 1. Teacher Competencies (MoNE, 2017)

Professional Knowledge	Professional Skills	Attitudes and Values
• Knowledge of subject matter • Knowledge of pedagogical content • Knowledge of applicable legislations	• Skills in planning instruction • Skills in developing proper learning environments • Skills in managing instruction • Skills in assessment and evaluation	• National, moral, and universal values • Attitude towards students • Communication and cooperation • Personal and professional development

As illustrated in Table 1, the three recently introduced areas of teacher competencies involve 11 sub-categories. The document through which the new competency areas are presented also includes a detailed explanation for each area and the sub-categories. Another change in the curriculum is in the number of hours in the program which has decreased from 175 to 155 hours, reorganizing the balance among different areas of teacher education as content knowledge (45-50%), professional knowledge (30-35%) and cultural knowledge (15-20%), and an increase in the number of elective courses in these three areas. It seems positive that the program has been built through a participatory approach based on several meetings and workshops with educators from different parts of the country. The changes in teacher education curricula appear to be in line with suggestions by Ell et al., (2019), a researcher based in Australia, in that they put forward the enhancement of student learning and the development of competent teachers with the help of essential "knowledge, skills and dispositions" (para 2) to reinforce learning.

A very recent decision announced by CoHe (2020) also highlights the dynamic and continuing tendency to review and revise the pre-service teacher education curricula. The decision enable each university and faculty of education to revise and redesign their pre-service education curricula according to their specific contexts and needs. Although the overall framework for all teacher education curricula is set as including content knowledge, professional knowledge and cultural knowledge, the universities are now authorized to redesign their pre-service teacher education curricula. This very recent amendment introduced by CoHE once again underlines the significance of conducting research studies, mapping the specific needs and desires of both target groups and stakeholders in institutional contexts, and revising the preservice education curricula accordingly. To this end, exploring the opinions of pre-service teachers on the overall structure of pre-service teacher education curriculum that is pursued by them appears to provide a better understanding of the effectiveness of these curricula and to contribute to set better grounds to review and revise them.

Literature Review

Much research has been conducted in the area of pre-service teachers' needs to become efficient teachers; however, so far most have been on the views of researchers based in Turkey and abroad (Coskun, & Daloglu, 2010; Fillmore, & Snow, 2000; Lazar, 2018; Mann, 2005; Sheridan, 2011; The Professional Development of Teachers, 2009; Wichadee, 2011). Additionally, in-service or experienced teachers have participated in research studies on what pre-service teachers need to be prepared for in-service teaching (Faez, & Valeo, 2012; Farrell, 2018; Gandara et al., 2005). What is lacking in this array of research is more on the perspectives of those who should be considered a priority, pre-service teachers in Turkey. Pre-service teachers are those who experience first-hand their own transformation from English language students to teachers. Nevertheless, few researchers have asked pre-service teachers directly what they need and desire to become competent teachers of English.

In-service Teachers' Perspectives

The perspectives of in-service teachers about pre-service teachers' development should be considered. The former once experienced first-hand what it was to be on the other side of the fence. After a while, as in-service teachers, they began to put into practice what they had learned as pre-service teachers. To illustrate, Faez and Valeo (2012) include in their research in-service teachers working less than three years. Their research is about how they perceived their own preparation as teachers of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) right after graduation and up to three years of experience, how successful they felt after some practice in adult education classrooms, and how useful the courses they took towards their degree were. The findings show that as the in-service teachers became more experienced, they realized that they were more prepared. Another study by Farrell (2018) focuses on novice in-service teachers discussing problems that usually surface once pre-service teachers become in-service teachers. Farrell explains the gap between before (during preparation) and after (during development), and how this gap could be bridged, stating that in-service teachers face a different reality once they graduate. They have to take care of everything by themselves, from planning classes to teaching, and so on. They do not have anyone on whom they can rely. Thus, Farrell makes several practical recommendations for pre-service teachers to feel more confident moving to the role of in-service teachers. He suggests that their program of study should equip them with three areas: "the content of L2 [what they need] . . . the pedagogies . . . taught in L2 teacher education programs [how they should teach], the institutional forms of delivery through which both the content and pedagogies are learned [how they learn how to teach]" (p. 439).

Furthermore, Gandara et al. (2005) have investigated in-service teachers' professional development needs, knowledge and efforts. In their literature review, the researchers list what has been said about teachers' needs to become successful: "ability to communicate with students [and] . . . engage students' families, knowledge of language uses, forms, mechanics, and how to teach these, and a feeling of efficacy with regard to teaching English language learners" (p. 3). The results of their study show that teachers found that their most important need was to be able to communicate with their students and their families, and that was very challenging due to their inability to speak the parents' language and parents' inability to speak English. Another important need was being well prepared for the profession. According to the researchers, teachers should trust their ability to do their work efficiently and should be supported by administrators and colleagues.

Pre-service Teachers' Perspectives

Pre-service ELT teachers should be considered top priority when researching their needs and desires for their transformation into efficient in-service teachers. The literature, however, lacks research on the topic. Sheridan (2011) refers to this issue as "the lack of voice of pre-service teachers." She continues by saying: "… Much of the discourse mirrors the understanding and practices of experts rather than pre-service teachers" (p. ii). The literature supports the fact that pre-service teachers have not been voicing their opinions on the topic as often as they should (Coskun, & Daloglu, 2010; Fillmore, & Snow, 2000; Lazar, 2018; Liu, 1998; Mann, 2005; The Professional Development of Teachers, 2009; Wichadee, 2011). One of the studies that has used pre-service ELT teachers as participants in Turkey, which to a certain extent is related to the topic of the present research, is the study of Seferoglu (2006). However, she explores in-service teachers' perceptions of an area that most first and second year pre-service teachers are not prepared to discuss, that is, methodology and practice teaching courses. In Seferoglu's (2006) study, participants found no link "between the course materials and practical application in real classrooms" (p. 372). They also affirmed that they did not have much micro-teaching practice or school teaching practice. In addition, they wish that they had had the opportunity to observe several different teachers teaching students in different grades. Furthermore, Gan's study (2013) also deals with pre-service teachers' experiences in a teaching practice course at a university in Hong Kong. The pre-service teachers found the course to be an unsettling experience because they were unable to manage the class. Moreover, Wu and Garza's (2016) research also focuses on pre-service teachers professional learning experiences, more precisely on their interaction with various aspects of a teaching practice course, that is to say, from peers, to materials, to tasks to see how they developed. The results show a strong relationship between the pre-service teachers and their peers. As for the materials that they had studied, the results indicate that they learned from them and might be able to use them when teaching. In addition, about the activities they took part in, they also learned from them and might use the knowledge gained in the future.

Nevertheless, Sheridan (2011) focuses on pre-service teachers' views of in-service teachers' qualities-- "attitudes, knowledge and skills" (p. ii). In her dissertation, Sheridan acknowledges the fact that pre-service teachers' perspectives have not been top priority. As a result, she decides to determine pre-service teachers' thoughts on, ". . . the qualities of an effective secondary school teacher (attitudes, knowledge and skills) as they

[sic] progress through their [sic] four-year undergraduate degree" (p. 1) . One of the qualities that Sheridan states that pre-service teachers should have is different types of knowledge: "subject content, educational theory, pedagogical knowledge and professional knowledge" (p. 36). According to Sheridan, in-depth content knowledge helps pre-service teachers to make a connection between theory and practice, and results in more successful students. She goes on to say that ". . . the knowledge about the content to be taught; knowledge of pedagogical strategies for teaching the content; and knowledge about students" (p. 40) are all linked together. Therefore, the knowledge in these areas should all be considered important. Her findings obtained from the focus groups have resulted in five themes and respective categories: "content/knowledge . . . interpersonal. . . management and organizational. . . instructional techniques (pedagogical). . . [and] professional. . ." (p. 122).

Purpose of the Study

This study was undertaken with the purpose of exploring pre-service ELT teachers' views on their prospective needs and desires for their pre-service curriculum. Particularly, it sought to address the following questions:

1. What do pre-service ELT teachers believe is necessary for them to develop into competent teachers?
2. What do they desire to study to develop into competent teachers?
3. What courses do they perceive should be included in or removed from the program of study to prepare them for their profession as ELT teachers?

The Study Context

The study was carried out at the ELT Department in the Faculty of Education of a public university in Turkey. Although the faculty has a 20-year experience in teacher education, the ELT Department has been preparing EFL teachers for the past 5 years. The Department was established with a limited number of academic faculty members and efforts have been made by these members over the years to do their best to provide pre-service teachers with whatever they need to be competent teachers. Currently, the Department comprises of six full-time lecturers, two part-time lecturers from another Department and three part-time lecturers from another university in the city, and more than 200 students. Teacher training has been conducted with research-based curriculum development efforts. In this regard, the students' views on their needs and desires are considered extremely important when introducing elective courses, and planning workshops and seminars.

Method

Research Design

Qualitative research design was used in the present study. The researchers tried to reach an in-depth understanding of participants' knowledge of the targeted issue (Creswell, 2013). The rationale for selecting this design was to specify the current and prospective needs and desires of the ELT pre-service teachers in-depth. As such, the study also seemed to function as providing insights to practitioners to develop better pre-service teacher education curricula and sources for pre-service teachers as Long (2005) highlights.

Data Collection

The data were collected by means of 30-minute focus groups ($n=10$ focus groups in two separate sessions with two different instructors) on the research topic. Gill et al. (2008) define focus groups as those in which participants discuss a specific topic, and the researcher–a facilitator or moderator–uses this method when s/he needs to generate a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs. Each group was made up of 6-8 students ($n=66$ students) and were given a form involving open-ended questions referring to three research questions. The questions on the form were as follows: *What do you think is necessary for you to develop into competent teachers? What do you desire to study to develop into competent teachers? What courses do you think should be added to or removed from the program?*

The students were asked to discuss the questions in their focus groups and report their roles on the form. As for their roles, they were asked to choose a leader (note-taker and observer to make sure everything went well during the discussion), presenter (presenter of results to the group and class), time keeper (allocator of time for each question and observer of effective use of time) and monitor (observer to make sure everyone participated). Then, the researcher explained each one of the four roles. Once the discussion was over, the leader finalized the discussion group report and the presenter shared it with the group and class orally in the classroom. The

presenter also gave a copy of it to the researchers for analysis. By following these steps, on one hand, the participants were given the opportunity to make presentations in align with the course objectives. On the other hand, the researchers would have the opportunity to have written records of what had been discussed in each focus groups.

Participants

The study was carried out with freshman and sophomore students of ELT department at a public university. As the overall purpose of the study is to examine the perceptions of pre-service teachers on their needs and desires for the following years in the pre-service education, the participants were confined to the freshman and sophomore students who were in their initial years in the program. To this end, specifying the preliminary and prospective needs and perceptions of pre-service teachers is targeted in the study.

More specifically, the participants were a total of 66 volunteer pre-service ELT teachers enrolled in two sessions of Oral Communication II (a first year course), taught by two different instructors acting as the researchers. 31% of the participants were males and 69%, females. 32% were enrolled in the 2nd semester and 69%, in the 3rd and 4th semesters of the program. The average age of the male students was 22.5 and that of female students was 24.5. The percentage of students who attended the Preparatory English Program from one to two semesters before being admitted to the ELT Department was 55% and from three to four semesters was 12%. The percentage of those who scored 70 or higher in the proficiency exam given by the Preparatory English Program before the fall semester started and, therefore, did not attend the English program, was 33%. This proficiency exam which is prepared and applied by the department of foreign languages includes three sections. First, students take a test of eighty multiple choice items which assess students' listening comprehension, reading comprehension and use of language (grammatical and lexical competence). In the second sections, they are asked to write an academic paragraph about a given topic. Finally, they are interviewed for at least fifteen minutes or more to assess their speaking skills in the English language. The exam is designed towards assessing B2 English language level outcomes and the students who achieve the required language level can start the ELT department at the beginning of the academic year.

Data Analysis

An inductive approach was used for the data analysis. The analysis involved three interwoven flows of activity: data condensation, data display and conclusion drawing/verification, as suggested by Miles et al. (2014). First, the reports including responses to the questions provided by each group were copied for both researchers. Each researcher used the three research questions as the overall framework for classifying the data and then coded the data independently. Specifically, each researcher first identified the initial codes for each research question separately. The rationale for this separate flow is to increase the inter-rater reliability. After this initial coding, a meeting was carried out and the codes for each research question were finalized by two researchers together. Next, these finalized codes were categorized and themes were developed for each research question which resulted in two themes for the first and second research questions, and three themes for the third research question. The finalization of these themes was made by both researchers jointly. Then, the findings related to all research questions were presented through an interpretative approach based on the emerging codes and themes. To display the data, the second flow of data analysis, figures were designed. They include the research questions and consolidated codes and categories on a matrix of rows and columns. After that, through several meetings, the researchers drew and verified conclusions.

Ethical Measures

Before the data collection period, students were informed of the purpose of the study and consents to participate in the study were taken from each of them. As such, volunteer participation in the study was ensured by the researchers. In addition, the participant students were explicitly informed that their responses would not have any positive or negative effect on their assessment procedures in the courses they had taken during the time of the study. This measure was taken as the researchers were also teaching courses in the department that the participants were already enrolled in. As for the institutional research permission, the head of the department at the time of data collection confirmed that the research could be conducted with volunteer participation, which was another ethical measure taken in the current study.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the data obtained from the focus group forms regarding the three research questions has been presented below:

RQ1. *What do pre-service ELT teachers believe is necessary for them to develop into competent teachers?*

The first research question refers to participants' needs to become competent ELT teachers. Their responses have been categorized into two emerging themes: instructional/practical development and attitudinal/behavioural development. Figure 1displays the codes for both emerging themes.

Pre-service teachers in this study have an idea of what they need to transform themselves into competent teachers, and their knowledge may be based on their experience as students and on what they have heard from their peers about the program of studies (see Figure 1). The participants appear to understand what should be applicable for all teachers: the fact that they will have to prepare for classes before teaching, find the right materials for their classes, and know what type of technology to use and how to use it. Some reported views of the groups on these findings are as follows:

> *A good teacher should know the techniques of teaching quite well and prepare the courses well (Focus Group 4 [FG4]).*
> *Being good at using technological devices is a must for becoming a competent teacher (FG2).*
> *To become an effective teacher, you need to find new and innovative teaching materials to get your students' attention (FG6).*
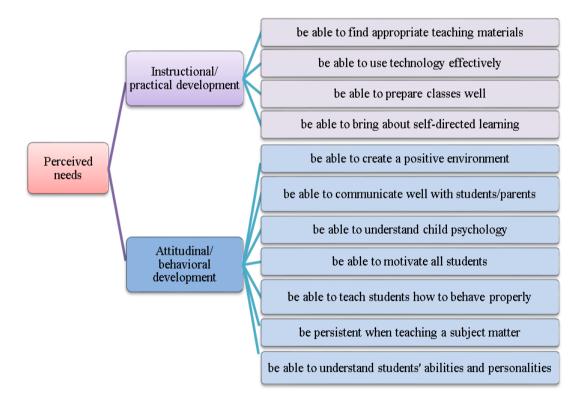

Figure 1. Perceived needs to become competent ELT teachers

In addition, one of the groups highlights designing instructional materials as '*The first thing a teacher should do is to prepare materials related to specific topics' (FG4)*. They know that even public elementary, middle and high schools in Turkey use technology to teach English.

Another finding related to instructional and practical development is promoting self-directed learning. The report by FG5 involves a direct reference to self-directed learning:

> *We should support students in self-directed learning. Particularly, effective teachers must create positive environments for students where each learner feels safe to share thinking, ask questions and participate in conversations naturally (FG5)*

The quotation by FG5 also implies the pre-service teachers are aware that they should teach their students to learn by themselves. The report by FG5 refers to self-directed learning as creating positive learning contexts where learners freely ask questions and share their thoughts.

RQ2. *What do they desire to study to develop into competent ELT teachers?*

The second research question is on participants' desires to become competent ELT teachers. Their responses have resulted in 10 emerging codes that have been categorized into two themes related to participants' desires. The themes and codes are displayed in Figure 2.

The researchers observed participants' considerable enthusiasm about making suggestions for their preservice programs in focus group discussion. Their list of needs in Figure 1 ended up supporting their list of desires in Figure 2. For example, the items in the instructional/practical development displayed in Figure 1 (needs) relate to the items in the Instructional/practical development in Figure 2 (desires). Hence, in the former, participants' needs refer to their professional development and courses that they believe are necessary for self-development. Some student voices related to instructional/practical designs are as follows:

> *A competent teacher needs deep knowledge in the area of educational psychology (FG3).*

> *To become good teachers, we need to study psychology to understand the children's abilities, emotions and the issues they have encountered in their families and social lives (FG5).*

> *Maybe one of the most important course is educational psychology to become a good teacher. This is because it trains teachers to monitor and reflect on different learning situations (FG6).*

> *More classes on communication are needed to be in harmony with kids (FG10).*
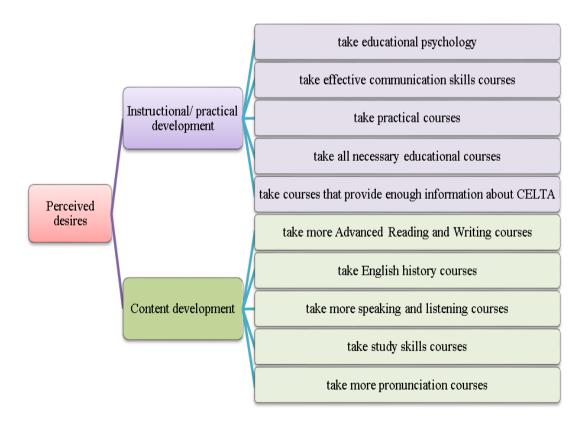

Figure 2. Perceived desires to become competent ELT teachers

In addition, some of their needs in Figure 1, such as "*be able to communicate well with students/parents*" and "*be able to understand child psychology*" resulted in these desires in Figure 2, "*take effective communication skills courses*" and "*take educational psychology*" respectively as quoted above. These findings are supported by Gandara et al. (2005), too. The in-service teachers that Gandara et al (2005) examined also agreed that for them to develop into competent teachers, they had to communicate well with students and parents, to use the language correctly, and be well prepared in pedagogical and professional areas in addition to content areas. Moreover, based on the results of his study, Farrell (2018) confirms the importance of teachers being prepared in the three areas listed by Gandara et al. (2005), and so does Sheridan (2011).

In reference to content development shown in Figure 2, some of the pre-service teachers were about to finish their second semester of courses, but the majority were already taking courses from the 3rd and 4th semesters, with the exception of very few courses. This was because the latter finished the preparatory English language program a semester before the former. As a result, the latter knew what they desired to take more of and what they thought was necessary for them to take further, such courses as English history to understand the English culture better and study skills to learn the skills necessary to succeed in their courses. The participants probably felt that their knowledge in the four language skills as well as phonetics could be enhanced, too, because they desired to take more of these courses they had already taken. The importance of being very competent in the content area is supported by Farrell (2018), Gandara et al. (2005) and Sheridan (2011), too.

RQ3. *What courses do they perceive should be included in or removed from the program of study to prepare them for their profession as ELT teachers?*

The last research question seeks the participants' opinions of the courses that they have taken and their recommendations for adding courses to the program and/or removing courses from the program. The emerging codes and themes related to the third research question are shown in Figure 3.
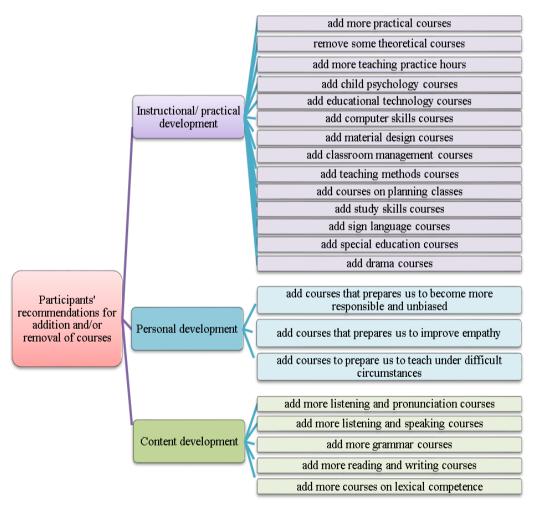

Figure 3. Participants' recommendations for addition and/or removal of courses

The findings imply that theoretical courses, in general, made the list of courses that the participants believed that should be removed from their program of study:

> *We want less theoretical courses; more interactive courses (FG10).*

This finding can make sense from a student perspective and be interpreted as preservice teachers might think that theoretical courses offer very little or no excitement whatsoever from their perspectives. It must be noted here that pre-service teachers seem to look forward to courses that will develop them into professionals, what they themselves call, "exciting courses." Nevertheless, instructors understand the importance of theoretical courses for the development of future teachers: These courses represent the backbone for what awaits the pre-service teachers. Without these courses, pre-service teachers cannot rationalize their practice. For example, in the first semester of the third year, pre-service teachers take Literature and Language Teaching I, a theoretical course. This course emphasizes the theoretical and historical backgrounds of literature, approaches to use, popular culture in the teaching of EFL and benefits of using literature to teach EFL. In contrast, Literature and Language Teaching II emphasizes the practical aspects of using literature to teach EFL. Without the first course, pre-service teachers are unable to use literature to teach EFL in an informed manner. Fillmore and Snow (2000) affirm that both theoretical and practical courses have a place in pre-service teachers' program of study.

The responses given by the participants in Figure 3 confirm the existing courses in the first year and suggest courses for later years; nevertheless, the latter are already found in the curriculum. This may reveal that participants do not know about the existence of these courses or they may have learned about these courses from their peers. Also, some courses that are not offered in the Department, but participants think that they should be added, such as Study Skills (FG3 and FG8) and Sign Language (FG1 and FG2), may be explained by the fact that pre-service teachers may feel that they need help to do well in courses, and that students who are hearing impaired or have other disabilities are being placed in "inclusion" classes (regular classes).

Courses on personal development emerge as the second theme. Some quotations by the focus groups on personal development courses are as follows:

> *We should be trained for conditions that we may face while communicating with students. The program should make us responsible and unbiased (FG6).*

> *We need courses that will improve our empathetic emotions (FG7).*

> *It [pre-service teacher education] should prepare us for harsh areas like suburbs or Eastern cities [Terrorist attacks may eventually occur in the Eastern part of the country] (FG10).*

About adding courses to help with their personal development, it may not be possible because how can courses teach students to be more responsible, unbiased and empathetic, or to be able to teach in dangerous environments, areas in which terrorism exists? Some of the teacher educators may be role models. In fact, the present study does have neither positive nor negative finding on this critical role of teacher educators in preservice teacher education. Considering the influence of teacher educators' on preservice teachers' professional understanding and practices, it can be suggested when teacher educators behave responsibly, and are unbiased and empathetic, pre-service teachers may be inspired from them. On the other hand, it can be noted here that principles and values are mostly learned at home. If pre-service teachers have not acquired them by the time they enter college, it may be difficult for them to do so at this point or they may have to try hard to learn by themselves. Nevertheless, these appear to be among the professional learning needs that should somehow be catered for during the pre-service education period and enhanced through in-service training programs formally or in professional learning communities in the schooling context in informal ways. In relation to content development, participants' responses overlap their desires displayed in Figure 2. This can be explained by their expectations to enhance their content knowledge.

As far as teaching practice, participants have responded that they believed more practice hours should be added:

> *We should go for practicum every year. For example, there should be practicum schools near the Faculty of Education. What I mean is that we can practice teaching all the information we learn, so that we can get feedback (FG9).*

Maybe they were told by their peers that the school practice was not enough. This is confirmed by Seferoğlu (2006) in a study conducted in Turkey. Moreover, by looking at Figure 3, the researchers understand that most

of the courses in the pedagogical and content areas of development highlighted by the participants to be added to their teacher education program have been supported by Farrell (2018), Gandara et al. (2005) and Sheridan (2011).

Conclusion

The current study was designed to scrutinize the voices of pre-service ELT teachers on their needs and desires about their pre-service teacher education program. The first major finding refers to participants' eagerness to reveal their needs and desires for their professional development as they all seemed to actively participate in the focus group discussions and to undertake their roles willingly. This might be interpreted as that the study allowed them to articulate their opinions about the pre-service teacher education program. Secondly, they appeared to be aware of their demanding contexts of learning how to teach and to be competent teachers. In addition, they all seemed to be highly motivated towards their profession and to care about their professional development. The third major finding is that the study enables researchers to reflect on pre-service ELT programs, in general, and on their concerns about the courses and methods they use. It appears that students' voices–even those of freshmen–should not be underestimated, which implies further regular studies in our department to strengthen the pre-service teacher education program.

Although the study was initiated towards enhancing our understanding of pre-service ELT students' voices on their needs and desires for their professional development, the findings have also enabled us to suggest several implications for enhancing the pre-service ELT program. First, the study reveals that pre-service ELT teachers have asked for courses on developing their attitudes and emotions towards the profession. This desire is associated with the recently announced teacher competencies and renewed national pre-service teacher education program in that pre-service teachers highlight their needs and desires on their attitudinal/behavioural development, noticeably more than in other areas, content knowledge and practical development. Fortunately, the newly introduced pre-service ELT program involves compulsory courses which are devoted to enhancing attitudinal/behavioural development. Yet, although the titles of these courses have been decided, their descriptions are brief and need to be extended, according to their contexts. Furthermore, all the professional development courses do not have sufficient class hours to give opportunity to all individual students to practice and get feedback on their performance. In the new ELT program 22 practice hours have been abolished CoHE (2020). Thus, pre-service teachers' voices must be included when designing the content of these courses. In particular, the perceived needs and desires of the participants in the current study lead us to integrate pre-service ELT teachers' attitudes and professional values into compulsory courses, such as Educational Sociology, and Morals and Ethics in Education. In addition, the number of elective courses has been increased in the revised ELT program, which sets departments free to choose elective courses. The evidence from this study contributes to determining elective courses in the department in that offering Values Education course will fulfil the pre-service teachers' needs. In addition, the very recent delegation of authority by CoHE (2020) in designing pre-service teacher education programs in faculties of education appear to lead comprehensive curriculum evaluation and development studies at institutional levels in Turkey. The findings of the present study which showcase the beliefs and desires on the pre-service ELT curriculum they pursue can set a well-grounded framework for designing further institutional pre-service teacher education curricula in the present study context. The findings can also be useful for designing pre-service ELT curricula in similar institutional contexts.

To conclude, several limitations to the present study need to be acknowledged and a set of recommendations for future research are presented accordingly. First limitation of this study seems to involve freshman and sophomore ELT pre-service students instead of junior and senior ones. This is because the overall aim of the study was not to evaluate the pre-service teacher education curricula but to examine the opinions of ELT pre-service students on their programs that they will pursue in further years. Yet listening to the voices of junior and senior students who have taken more courses in their preservice education programs might provide a more detailed framework of the needs and desires as they have much experience within the curricula. Secondly, the study is restricted to qualitative data obtained from 66 participants in 10 focus group discussions. Further research using mixed method designs and involving more ELT pre-service students within the program and/or voices of teacher educators in the faculty is highly recommended to elaborate the perceived needs and desires. This might lead to a more consolidated pre-service teacher education program, based on the needs and desires of both sides. Finally, it appears that policy makers, curriculum designers and teacher educators/trainers not only from Turkey but also from English speaking countries (Ell et al., 2019; Liu, 1998) and other countries may benefit from similar studies when designing more efficient pre-service teacher education curricula.

References

Brooman, S., Darwent, S., & Pimor, A. (2014). The student voice in higher education curriculum design: is there value in listening? *Innovations in Education and Teaching International, 52*(6), 1-12.

Brownell, M.T., & Pajares, F. (1999). Teacher efficacy and perceived success in mainstreaming students with learning and behavior problems. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 22*(3), 154-164.

Caprara, G.V., Barbaranelli, C., Steca, P., & Malone, P.S. (2006). Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs as determinants of job satisfaction and students' academic achievement: A study at the school level. *Journal of School Psychology*, *44*, 473-490.

Cook-Sather, A., & Reisinger, O. (2001).Seeing the students behind the stereotypes: The perspective of three pre-service teachers. *The Teacher Educator, 37*(3).

Coskun, A., & Daloglu, A. (2010). Evaluating an English language teacher education program through Peackcock's Model. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 35*(6), 24-42.

Council of Higher Education (2020). Retrieved from: https://www.yok.gov.tr/Sayfalar/Haberler/2020/egitim-fak%C3%BCltelerine-yetki-devri.aspx

Council of Higher Education (2018). New Teacher Education Undergraduate Programs. Retrieved from https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim_ogretim_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/Ingilizce_Ogretmenligi_Lisans_Programi.pdf

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.).

Thousands Oak: SAGE.

Ell, F., Simpson, A., Mayer, D., Davies, L.M., Clinton, J., & Dawson, G. (2019). Conceptualising the impact of initial teacher education. *The Australian Educational Researcher, 46*, 177-200.

Faez, F., & Valeo, A. (2012). TESOL teacher education: Novice teachers' perceptions of their preparedness and efficacy in the classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(3), 450-471.

Fan, S., & Le, T. (2009). *ESL pre-service teachers: What do they need?* Paper presented at the Conference AARE 2009, Canberra, Australia. Retrieved from https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2009/fan091517.pdf

Farrell, T.S.C. (2018). Novice-service language teacher development: Bridging the gap between preservice and in-service education and development. *TESOL Quarterly, 46*(3), 435-449.

Fillmore, L.W., & Snow, C.E. (2000). What teachers need to know about language. Center for Applied Linguistics Washington, DC, 1-42.

Gan, Z. (2013). Learning to teach English language in the practicum: What challenges do non-native ESL student teachers face? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(3), 92-108.

Gandara, P., Maxwell-Jolly, J., & Driscoll, A. (2005). Listening to teachers of English learners: A survey of California teachers' challenges, experiences, and professional development needs. *The Center for the Future of Teaching & Learning*. ED491701

Gill, P.W., Stewart, K.F., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal, 204*, 291-295.

Goddard, R.D., Hoy, W.K., & Hoy, A.W. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy: Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 37*(2), 479-507.

Groundwater-Smith, S., & Mockler, N. (2016). From data source to co-researchers? Tracing the shift from 'student voice' to student-teacher partnership in Educational Action Research. *Educational Action Research, 24*(2), 159-176.

Karakas, A. (2012). Evaluation of the English language teacher education program in Turkey. *ELT Weekly*, *4*(15), 1-16.

Kırkgöz, Y. (2007). English language teaching in Turkey: Policy changes and their implementations. *RELC, 38*(2), 216-228.

Kırkgöz, Y. (2005). English language teaching in Turkey: Challenges for the 21st century. In G. Braine (Ed.), *Teaching English to the world: History, curriculum, and practice* (pp. 159-175). Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lazar, A.M. (2018). Creating teachers of promise: Growth toward equity-mindedness in a landscape of practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 71*, 308-318.

Liu, D. (1998). Ethnocentrism in TESOL: Teacher education and the neglected needs of international TESOL students. *ELT Journal, 52*(1), 3-10.

Long, H.M. (2005). *Second language needs analysis*. UK: Cambridge University Press.

Mann, S. (2005). The language teacher's development. *Language Teaching, 38*(3), 103-118.

Miles, B.M., Huberman, A.M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Ministry of National Education (2017). *Overall competences of teaching profession.* Retrieved from https://oygm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2017_12/11115355_YYRETMENLYK_MESLEYY_GENEL_YETERLYKLERY.pdf

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2009). *Creating effective teaching and learning environments: First results from TALIS.* Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/education/school/43023606.pdf

Seferoğlu, G. (2006). Teacher candidates' reflections on some components of a pre-service English teacher education programme in Turkey. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 32*(4), 369-378.

Sheridan, L. (2011). *Exploring pre-service teachers' perceptions of teacher qualities in secondary education: A mixed-method study* (Doctoral thesis). Retrieved from University of Canberra, Australia Database. www.canberra.edu.au/researchrepository/file/6f1047f0-9fec-49db.../full_text.pdf

Wichadee, S. (2011). Professional development: A path to success for EFL teachers. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research, 4*(5), 13-21.

Wu, H.P., & Garza, E. (2016). Pre-service bilingual/ESL teacher identity from a sociocultural perspective. *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators, 5*(2), 172-191.