



## TEACHER EDUCATORS' EVALUATION OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM: A TURKISH CASE

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**Abstract:** This study explored the perceptions of teacher educators regarding the changes in the English Language Teacher Education Program introduced by the Turkish Higher Education Council (HEC) in 2006. Employing a qualitative design, open-ended questionnaires were administered to 18 lecturers working at five different state universities. The analysis of the data yielded that while teacher educators found some of the changes appropriate, such as the addition of some courses, they raised far more serious concerns with the new program regarding the sequence, content, structure, procedure and removal of courses. In addition, the top-down and centralized program restructuring movement, disregarding the opinions, experiences and the practices of the end users of the program, such as teacher educators, teachers and teacher trainees, was also criticized heavily by the participants.

**Keywords:** Teacher training; innovation; improvement; program evaluation

**Özet:** Bu çalışma 2006 yılında Yüksek Öğrenim Kurumu (YÖK) tarafından gerçekleştirilen İngiliz Dili Öğretmeni Yetiştirme Programındaki değişikliklerle alakalı öğretmen yetiştiricilerinin algılarını incelemektedir. Nitel bir dizayn kullanarak, beş farklı devlet üniversitesinde çalışan 18 öğretim görevlisine açık uçlu anketler uygulanmıştır. Veri analizi ortaya çıkarmaktadır ki öğretmen yetiştiricileri her ne kadar bazı derslerin eklenmesi gibi değişiklikleri uygun bulsalar da onlar sıralama, içerik, yapı, prosedür ve bazı derslerin kaldırılması gibi konularla ilgili olarak çok daha ciddi eleştirilerini dile getirmektedirler. Ayrıca, öğretmen yetiştiricileri, öğretmenler ve stajyer öğretmenler gibi programın nihai kullanıcılarının fikirlerini, tecrübelerini ve uygulamalarını önemsemeyen yukarıdan aşağı ve merkezi program yeniden yapılandırma hareketi katılımcılar tarafından şiddetli bir şekilde eleştirilmektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Öğretmen yetiştirme; yenilik, gelişim; program değerlendirme

### Introduction

Several studies have indicated that teacher education is a strong predictor of teacher quality and student achievement (see, for example, Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain 2005). In this context, the quality of initial teacher education (ITE) needs to be considered more thoroughly since it is “the first entry point to the teacher professional career” where prospective teachers acquire the necessary academic and professional qualifications that they will use and build on in their future career (Musset, 2010: p. 16). ITE quality, on the other hand, largely depends on sound teacher education programs that require constant reforming and restructuring to keep up with the demands of a fast-changing world and dynamic individual needs.

The past two decades in Turkey, like in many OECD and European Union countries, have witnessed great changes in initial teacher education resulting in two program reform movements that took place in 1998 and 2006. These have resulted in the investigation of

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teacher education programs by researchers from different perspectives in different subject areas such as preschool, mathematics, physical education teacher education (see, for example, Dereobalı & Ünver, 2009; Çoban, 2010; Çoban 2011), since the quest for change inevitably leads to the assessment and evaluation of existing programs.

Within this framework, different aspects of the English language teacher education programs (ELTEPs) of 1998 and 2006 have also been studied using different techniques and with the participation of different stakeholders (see Hismanoğlu, 2012; Karakaş 2012; Kızıltan 2011; Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Coşgun-Ögeyik, 2009). Nevertheless, all these studies have investigated the ELTEPs only within the borders of the settings in which the researchers worked. Therefore, there seems to be a need for a wider perspective, to understand how the 2006 ELTEP have been perceived by different stakeholders at different universities in Turkey. Hence, this study tries to undertake such an endeavour by eliciting the opinions of teacher educators from different universities and investigates the following research question:

How do teacher educators evaluate the 2006 program change in the English Language Teacher Education Program?

### **Brief Historical Perspective of Educational Change in ITE in Turkey**

Although there have been several models for teacher education since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, it was in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the two main changes in teacher education policies in Turkey took place: the “Basic Law of National Education” in 1973, which determined the general framework of the Turkish national education system, and the reorganization of teacher education through the HEC in 1981, which had been under the control of Ministry of National Education (MoNE) until then (Tarman, 2010: p. 80).

However, another decade passed until rapid changes took place in initial teacher education in the 1990s, relating directly to the issues concerning the effectiveness of teacher education. Firstly, primary teacher education was extended from two to four years, automatically qualifying these programs for graduate status in 1991, which was followed by new national policies extending the period of compulsory education from 5 to 8 years in 1997, a decision which had profound consequences for education faculties throughout the country (Tarman, 2010).

As a result, these initial reform movements called for changes in all aspects of teacher education that were basically three fold: the unification of teacher education programs at pre-service level; the inclusion of new perspectives/courses related to pedagogical and content knowledge as well as teaching skills that were more in touch with the classroom realities; and the creation of a structured partnership between schools and faculties, that emphasized the significance of the practicum before graduation. The demands of this new era, thus, necessitated designing new teacher education programs comprising all subject areas, including English language teacher education.

### ***The 1998 and 2006 English Language Teacher Education Programs***

As briefly mentioned above, the 1998 teacher education program reform was basically the result of the increase of compulsory education from 5 to 8 years, where English language teaching started from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, as well as the need to standardize pre-service teacher education and to make it compatible with social, economic, technological and communication advancements (YÖK, 1998). The new ELTEP set out to lessen the theoretical load on teacher

education courses, opening more space for courses such as ‘Teaching English to Young Learners’, ‘Short Story Analysis and Teaching’, ‘Drama Analysis and Teaching’, ‘Approaches to English Language Teaching’, ‘Instructional Technologies and Material Development’, ‘Material Evaluation and Adaptation’ and the like. The new program also heavily emphasized the teaching practicum by introducing 3 courses, namely, ‘School Experience I’, ‘School Experience II’ and ‘Teaching Practice’, in different terms, that required student teachers to be placed in primary and secondary schools to observe and experience ‘real’ teaching (see Appendix 1 for the 1998 ELTEP).

The second biggest restructuring in ITE was introduced in 2006 and the HEC rationalized the need for this new reform movement as follows (YÖK, 2007):

- To refine the teacher education programs in the light of the findings of scientific research studies
- To define the learning outcomes of undergraduate programs according to the criteria of the European Higher Education Area
- To cover the tenets of the Constructivist Approach that was introduced with the second program change in Basic Education in 2003

As a result, some new courses were added, and some removed, while some courses’ terms were changed, and some courses’ class hours were increased or decreased. The courses were also coded as Field Knowledge (FK), General Culture (GC) and Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) (see Appendix 2 for the 2006 ELTEP). The following table summarizes these changes (see Table 1):

Table 1  
*Changes in the 2006 ELTEP*

<b>Removed Courses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Turkish Phonetics and Stylistics</li> <li>2. Turkish Sentence Structure and Semantics</li> <li>3. Reading Skills I, II</li> <li>4. Writing Skills I, II</li> <li>5. School Experience I</li> </ol>
<b>Added Courses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listening and Phonetics I, II</li> <li>2. Effective Communication</li> <li>3. Lexicology</li> <li>4. Turkish Educational History</li> <li>5. Teaching Language Skills I, II</li> <li>6. Second Foreign Language</li> <li>7. Drama</li> <li>8. Public Service</li> <li>9. Special Needs Education</li> <li>10. Comparative Education</li> <li>11. Turkish Educational System and School Management</li> </ol>
<b>Resequenced Courses</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advanced Reading and Writing (reading and writing skill courses are merged and placed in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> terms)</li> <li>2. Research Skills (from 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> term)</li> <li>3. Linguistics I (from 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> term)</li> <li>4. Linguistics II (from 5<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> term)</li> <li>5. Language Acquisition (from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> term)</li> <li>6. Approaches to Language Teaching I (from 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> term)</li> </ol>

<b>Class hour changes</b>	1. Research Skills (from 3 class hours from 6 <sup>th</sup> term to 2 class hours to 4 <sup>th</sup> term) 2. Teaching English to Young Learners (from 3 class hours from 6 <sup>th</sup> term to 4 class hours to 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> terms)	
<b>Modified Courses</b>	<b>1998 ELTEP</b>	<b>2006 ELTEP</b>
	1. English Grammar I, II 2. Advanced Reading Skills 3. Advanced Writing Skills 3. Speaking Skills I, II 4. Introduction to Teaching 5. Introduction to English Literature I, II 6. Development and Learning 7. Introduction to Linguistics I, II 8. Approaches in ELT 9. Planning and Evaluation 10. Teaching English to Young Learners 11. Short Story Analysis and Teaching Novel Analysis and Teaching Drama Analysis and Teaching Poetry Analysis and Teaching	1. Contextual Grammar I, II 2. Advanced Reading and Writing I, II 3. Oral Communication Skills I, II Public Speech 4. Introduction to Educational Sciences 5. English Literature I, II 6. Educational Psychology 7. Linguistics I, II 8. Approaches in ELT I, II 9. Testing and Evaluation 10. Teaching English to Young Learners I, II 11. Literature and Language Teaching I, II

As seen in Table 1, while some courses, such as ‘Turkish Sentence Structure’ and ‘School Experience I’ were removed and ‘English Grammar I and II’ were modified as ‘Contextual Grammar I and II’; courses such as ‘Effective Communication’, ‘Teaching Language Skills I and II’, ‘Drama’, ‘Public Service’, and ‘Public Speaking and Presentation’ were introduced to the new ELTEP. Furthermore, the sequence and the teaching hours of some courses were altered, such as ‘Second Language Acquisition’ and ‘Approaches in ELT I and II’ (see Appendix 2).

In this new program, the courses that student teachers take in the first two years of their education, for instance ‘Advanced Reading and Writing I and II’, ‘Contextual Grammar I and II’ and ‘Language Acquisition’, are mostly allocated to the learning of content and pedagogical knowledge in theory, while pedagogical content knowledge, i.e. how to teach English, is delivered in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years, the teaching practicum being located in the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

When the literature on ELTEPs in Turkey is considered, it is seen that there have been relatively few studies concerning them. It can be observed that, before the restructuring of the new program in 2006, specific components of the 1998 program were evaluated rather than the whole program. In such an attempt, for example, Erozan (2005) evaluated the language improvement courses in pre-service education and found that these courses were considered to be effective by most students while the participants stressed the importance of more opportunities for practicing language and the use of authentic materials as well as different teaching techniques. In a further study, Seferoğlu (2006) also focused on the methodology and practice components of the 1998 ELTEP. Similarly, the participants in her study, who were all senior students, stressed the need for more teaching practice in the form of micro-teachings and real school experience in their initial education.

With regard to the 2006 program, there are only three research studies (Coşgun Ögeyik, 2009; Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Hismanoğlu, 2012) and one review study (Karakaş, 2012) carried out so far that evaluated the whole pre-service ELTEP. In the first one, 53 3<sup>rd</sup> year pre-service English language teachers were surveyed about their opinions regarding the content of the program, course contents, course characteristics, and sufficiency of courses with regard to the teaching profession. The findings revealed that while the practical aspects of the new program were appreciated by the participants and the development of teaching competences and linguistic competences were found adequate, the integration of culture specific courses was found problematic. In Coşkun & Daloğlu's (2010) study, on the other hand, the opinions of both pre-service English language teachers and lecturers at an ELT department of a state university were obtained and it was found that, while student teachers were not contented with the pedagogic aspects of the new program, the lecturers complained about the linguistic components. Hismanoğlu's (2012) study, however, elicited pre-service teachers' opinions about the general aspects of the program and course lectures' teaching techniques, evaluation and assessment procedures. It was found that the program met the needs and expectations of the pre-service teachers to a large extent but failed to instil in them higher thinking skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, and critical thinking. Karakaş (2012), on the other hand, evaluated the previous studies and focused on the weaknesses and strengths of the new program and suggested that the program should be updated with the addition of a well-defined philosophy of teacher education, culture-specific courses should be offered, micro-teaching activities should be increased, and reflective practice components should be incorporated. Finally, taking only one component of the program into consideration, a recent study by Kızıltan (2011) sought to obtain pre-service teachers' perceptions of the 'Language Acquisition' course and the results indicated that the participants held positive opinions about the importance of language acquisition for their career. However, they reported that they needed some preliminary courses on linguistics before taking this course.

The present study extends research on the 2006 ELTEP evaluations in two ways. First, as Karakaş (2012) states, teacher educators should be able to evaluate the program, since educating English language teachers is both a tough and pivotal process. Therefore, program designers, decision makers and policy makers should pay attention to the recommendations, understanding and evaluation of teacher educators as they are the end users of programs. Opinions elicited through their lenses can help tailor the ITE programs, with reference to subject matter, pedagogical skills and teaching competences.

Secondly, hearing the voices of teacher educators from different universities would enable the development of a collective understanding, shared language and agenda regarding the practice, interpretation and evaluation of the program. This is a particularly important point, as Turkey has recently undergone another major top-down educational restructuring that extends the 8-year compulsory schooling to 12 years, but divides it into three four-year stages: 4 for primary school, 4 for middle school and 4 for secondary school (see Official Gazette, 2012: 28261). With this new wave of changes in the basic education system of Turkey, teaching English as a foreign language has been shifted from 4<sup>th</sup> grade to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. However, at the time of writing this article, the details of the new system have not been refined. Nonetheless, it is foreseeable that ITE, including English language teacher education, will once again undergo some changes. It is well known; that it is difficult for "reforms that seek to by-pass teachers or to be overly prescriptive" to succeed (Kirk & MacDonald, 2001: 552). For this reason, on the brink of another era where new modifications and changes are under way, we need to diagnose and anticipate the potential implementation problems

regarding teacher education. Against this background, therefore, this new study will advance our understanding of the current ELTEP.

### Methodology

The aim of this study was to understand teacher educators' evaluations of the 2006 ELTEP, regarding its content, procedures, and rationale. To this end, a qualitative methodology was employed to investigate the changes in the new program through teacher educators' opinions with no aim at generalization but with the aim of 'reliability' of the findings in the relevant contexts (Stake, 1995). Stake argues that 'petite generalization' and particularization in relation to context-boundness emphasize the unique nature of qualitative studies. Therefore, through 'reliability' useful insights can be drawn concerning similar situations and contexts so that readers who work in similar situations can relate their contexts to the findings of the particular study.

### Data collection and participants

Data was collected through an open-ended questionnaire comprising 6 questions, which was sent to the participants via e-mail (see Appendix 3 for the questionnaire). The questionnaire was sent to 25 ELT teacher educators from 8 different universities with which the researchers had contacts. 18 ELT Department teacher educators from 5 state universities agreed to take part in the study. The profile of the participants is described through questions at the end of the questionnaire, requiring personal and professional information concerning the university that the participant works at, the status of the participant (holding a PhD, working as a lecturer at the department, or teaching at the department as an English instructor), years of service of the participants, experience in teacher education, and gender. Teacher Educators (from TE1 to TE18) and the universities (from 1-5) were coded for anonymity. The details of the participants are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2  
*Demographic information of participants*

Participant Code	University Code	Status	Service Year	Experience in TE	Gender
TE 1	1	PhD	11-15	6-10	Female
TE 2	1	PhD	16 +	6-10	Female
TE3	1	PhD	16 +	11-15	Male
TE4	1	PhD	11-15	6-10	Male
TE5	1	Lecturer	16 +	6-10	Female
TE6	1	Instructor	6-10	6-10	Male
TE7	1	Instructor	6-10	6-10	Male
TE8	1	Instructor	6-10	6-10	Male
TE9	1	Instructor	6-10	1-5	Male
TE10	2	PhD	16 +	16 +	Male
TE11	2	Lecturer	6-10	1-5	Female
TE12	2	Instructor	11-15	1-5	Male
TE13	3	PhD	11-15	1-5	Male
TE14	3	Instructor	11-15	6-10	Female
TE15	3	Instructor	6-10	6-10	Not stated

TE16	4	PhD	6-10	16 +	Male
TE17	4	PhD	11-15	6-10	Male
TE18	5	PhD	16 +	11-15	Female

Table 2 illustrates that 9/18 of the teacher educators hold a PhD, 2/18 of the participants are lecturers, and 7/18 of them are instructors, who normally teach basic English in different departments such as biology and physics, but have been appointed to teach some courses at the ELT department due to staff shortages. 5/18 of the teacher educators have been working at their universities longer than 16 years, 6/18 participants have worked there for 11-15 years, and 7/18 of them have been working at universities for 6-10 years. However, only 2/18 of the participants have been engaged in teacher education for longer than 16 years; similarly 2/18 of them have worked as teacher educators between 11-15 years, 10/18 of the participants have been actively working in the ELT Department between 6-10 years, and 4/18 of the participants have engaged in teacher education between 1-5 years. 6/18 of the teacher educators are female, 11/18 of the participants are male and 1/18 participant did not state his/her gender.

### Findings

In this section, an analysis of the data gathered through the questionnaire will be presented and supported by direct quotations from the participants to reveal teacher educators' evaluations of the 2006 ELTEP. To answer the research question at hand, the data was analyzed according to thematic categories drawn from the initial questions of the questionnaire. Two field experts of English language teacher education categorized the questionnaire data independently to verify interreliability. A cross check of the thematic categories presented a significant degree of similarity (90%).

Three quantifiable questions (see Appendix 3, Questions 1-3) asking whether participants were consulted or not about the 2006 ELTEP, and, if they were consulted, whether their opinions were included in the program, and their opinions about the evaluation of the potential success of the new program were elicited in order to understand the degree of involvement of the teacher educators in the preparation of the program and their overall perceptions about its success. The details of the quantifiable data gathered from questions 1-3 are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3  
*The details of the quantifiable data*

Participant Code	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3
TE 1	Yes	None	41-60
TE 2	No	None	61-80
TE3	Yes	None	61-80
TE4	Yes	Partly	41-60
TE5	Yes	None	61-80
TE6	Yes	None	61-80
TE7	No	None	61-80
TE8	No	None	61-80
TE9	No	None	61-80

TE10	Yes	Partly	61-80
TE11	Yes	Partly	61-80
TE12	No	None	41-60
TE13	No	None	41-60
TE14	No	None	61-80
TE15	Yes	Partly	41-60
TE16	Yes	Partly	81-100
TE17	Yes	Partly	61-80
TE18	Yes	All	61-80

Table 3 above shows that 11/18 participants stated that they were consulted about the 2006 ELTEP while 7/18 participants pointed out that they were not. However, apart from 1/18 participant (TE18), who claimed that all her opinions were taken into account, 11/18 mentioned that their opinions were not included in the program and 6/11 stated that their opinions were partially included in the program. 5/18 participants evaluated the potential success of the new program as 41-60%; 12/18 as 61-80% and 1/18 as 81-100%. The next three open-ended questions in the questionnaire (see Appendix 3, Questions 4-6) revealed three major themes of positive, negative, and general issues in terms of evaluating the content, procedure and process of the 2006 ELTEP. These major themes are presented and discussed in detail below.

***Positive Issues***

The positive issues raised by the participants were grouped under four major categories, namely, the modified and new courses; the convergence of the courses; the content of the courses and the increase in the teaching hours of some courses. Relevant courses are presented as ‘topic’ under the categories. Participant codes are also given in order to relate the teacher educators with the topics and themes. The details of the positive issues are presented in Table 4 below:

Table 4  
*The details of the positive issues*

Themes	Topic	Participant Code
<b>Modified and New Courses</b>	Public Speaking Course	TE1
	Public Service	TE4, TE9
	Approaches and Methods in ELT	TE10, TE11
	Literature and Language Teaching	TE4, TE11
	Contextual Grammar	TE12, TE14
	Effective Communication Skills	TE12, TE13
	Lexicology	TE12
	Teaching Skills	TE12, TE18
	Drama	TE17
<b>Convergence of the courses</b>	Course book analysis and material evaluation	TE3, TE4



<b>Content of the courses</b>	Separating language teaching skills from specific teaching skills	TE10, TE11
<b>Increase in teaching hours</b>	Teaching English to Young Learners	TE3
	Literature and Language Teaching	TE4, TE17

The teacher educators stated that the extension of the ‘Approaches and Methods in ELT’ in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and ‘Literature Teaching’ in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year from one term into two terms (autumn and spring) as consecutive courses was beneficial. TE11 pointed out that ‘...*Approaches I and II allow me to teach nearly 25 approaches in more detail in consecutive terms and we have more time for microteaching of the approaches in the classroom*’. Introduction of new courses such as, ‘Effective Communication Skills’ and ‘Lexicology’ in the 1<sup>st</sup>, ‘Public Speaking and Presentation’ in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and ‘Drama’, ‘Teaching Skills’ and ‘Public Service’ in the 3<sup>rd</sup> years were perceived as positive changes. TE1 stated that ‘*Public Speaking and Presentation is a beneficial course because students will have more time and space for self expression and oral presentation; but it would be difficult to teach this course in large classes*’. TE4 pointed out that the ‘*Public Service Course would give students an opportunity to work with different groups of society; however, the content and the procedures and the partnership between the faculty and the other institutions need to be established*’. TE3 and TE4 also pointed out that ‘*the convergence of the ‘Course Book Analysis and Material Evaluation’ in the 4<sup>th</sup> year was a positive decision regarding avoiding overlapping since the material evaluation includes the course book evaluation as the main material in language classes*’. TE10 and TE11 identified separating ‘Language Teaching Skills’ from ‘Specific Teaching Skills’ in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, and TE12 and TE14 perceived converting ‘Grammar I and II’ into ‘Contextual Grammar I and II’ in the 1<sup>st</sup> year as a positive development in terms of the course content.

### ***Negative Issues***

The negative issues were identified as the sequence of the courses; structure of the courses; removed courses; convergence of the courses; credit of the courses and the content of the courses. Relevant courses and suggestions are presented as ‘topic’ under the themes. Participant codes are also given in order to relate the teacher educators with the topics and themes. The details of the negative issues are illustrated in Table 5 below:

Table 5  
*The details of the negative issues*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Participant Code</b>
<b>Sequence of the courses</b>	SLA should be placed before Linguistics & Approaches	TE1, TE2, TE3, TE4
	Translation should start in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year rather than the 2 <sup>nd</sup>	TE4
	Research skills should be in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> year	TE3
	Instructional Technology Course should be in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> year rather than the 2 <sup>nd</sup>	TE9
<b>Structure of the courses</b>	Public Service course	TE1, TE13, TE17
<b>Convergence of the courses</b>	Reading and writing	TE2, TE6, TE8, TE13, TE15, TE16
<b>Credit of the courses</b>	Listening and Pronunciation course	TE2
	Research Skills	TE1

	The credits of the Specific Teaching Skills and Teaching English to Young Learners should be reduced	TE14
<b>Content of the courses</b>	Specific teaching skills have been changed into research skills	TE2, TE3
	Research skills should be a field specific course rather than a culture course	TE1, TE3, TE13
<b>Removal of the courses</b>	School Experience I	TE2
	Advanced Writing Skills	TE3

TE4 pointed out that ‘Translation’ and TE9 mentioned that ‘Instructional Technology’ should be placed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> rather than the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. TE9 stated that ‘...students do not have adequate prior knowledge about how to plan the activities so they have difficulties in selecting and using technology in teaching English’. TE1, TE2, TE3 and TE4 agreed that the ‘Second Language Acquisition’ course in the Spring Term, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, should have been placed before the ‘Linguistics I’ and ‘Approaches and Methods in ELT I’ in the Autumn Term, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, since theories of second language acquisition provide a background for linguistics and approaches and methods in ELT. TE1 and TE4 also stated that the ‘Research Skills’ course should have been allocated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year with 4 credits (2 Theory+2 Practice) rather than in the Spring Term of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year with 2 credits (2 Theory) since ‘students are not cognitively ready for this course in the early stages of their training and this course also requires practical hours to prepare small-scale research designs’. Another criticism concerning this course is about the coding as it is coded as a ‘General Culture’ rather than a ‘Field Knowledge’ course, which suggests that it can be taught by non-ELT experts, but TE1, TE3 and TE13 highlighted the importance of teaching specific jargon and issues in English related to ELT. The content of ‘Specific Teaching Skills’ in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year has been changed into classroom research with 4 credits (2 Theory + 2 Practice) which was not regarded as a positive change by TE2 and TE3.

Introduction of the ‘Public Service’ Course with 2 credits (1 Theory + 2 Practice) in the Spring Term, 3<sup>rd</sup> year received one of the biggest criticisms since the practice of this course requires accommodating students in public or private institutions but the framework of the implementation of this course is not supplied; therefore, both allocating students and the content and procedure of this course remained unaddressed. Moreover, TE17 stated that ‘...Public Service is a fabricated course...does not serve any service, it is a waste of time for both lecturers and students’. Removal of the ‘School Experience I’ and ‘Advanced Writing Skills’ from the 1<sup>st</sup> year and the convergence of ‘Reading’ and ‘Writing’ Skills in the 1<sup>st</sup> year, allocating only 3 credits for the ‘Listening and Pronunciation’ course instead of 4 credits (2 Theory + 2 Practice) in the 2006 program were perceived negatively by the participants because they stated that basic skills courses require more time and space in ELT. TE2 mentioned that ‘School Experience I, which used to be in the Spring Term of the 1st year, prepares students for teaching in the early stages. So it should have stayed in the program’.

### **General Issues**

The general issues were, on the other hand, about the relationship between faculties of education and the Higher Education Council (HEC); program preparation and evaluation; and student proficiency and standardization. Relevant issues are presented as ‘topic’ under the themes. Participant codes are also given in order to relate the teacher educators with the topics and themes. The details of the general issues are illustrated in Table 6 below:

Table 6  
The details of the general issues

Themes	Topic	Participant Code
<b>Faculty &amp; HEC Relationship</b>	Communication gap between HEC and universities	TE7
	Faculties should be free to use their own programs	TE1, TE6
<b>Program</b>	Programs should be bottom-up	TE1, TE3, TE7
	Clear rationale and reasoning for the changes should be given	TE1, TE15
	The content and the coordination of the courses should be restructured	TE3
	'PK' courses in the 4 <sup>th</sup> year should be reduced or removed	TE17
	Primary and secondary ELT should be separated	TE17
<b>Student proficiency and standardization</b>	Students' language proficiency causes problems	TE5, TE6, TE10, TE14
	Preparation year should be restructured and standardized	TE7
	Exemption tests should be standardized for equality between universities	TE7
	Knowledge of English should be emphasized	TE4

Concerning the Education Faculty and HEC Relationship, TE1, TE3, TE6, TE7 and TE15 mentioned that there should be more effective communication as they are stakeholders in teacher education and Faculties should have a degree of freedom to design and use their own programs. A bottom-up approach for program design with clear rationale and reasoning for the changes is also suggested so that the content and the coordination of the courses can be restructured. TE17 also stated that '*general Pedagogic Knowledge courses such as 'Comparative Education' and 'Turkish Educational System and School Management' in the 4th year should be removed or reduced as they do not directly serve for educating ELT teachers*'. TE17 also suggested that '*...primary and secondary ELT Programs should be separated as they serve different age (9-13) and grade (4-8) levels of students with different needs, as a consequence of the compulsory Basic Education*'. Regarding students' English proficiency and standardization of English proficiency requirements, TE5, TE6, TE7, TE10 and TE14 pointed out that students' language proficiency causes problems, therefore, the preparation year prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> year should be restructured and standardized, and that exemption tests, which are taken by the ELT students prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> year at the very beginning of university enrolment, should be standardized to ensure equality between universities. TE4 pointed out that '*the knowledge of English should be emphasized throughout the ELT Program through the focus on basic language skills*'.

### Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed at understanding how teacher educators evaluate the 2006 program change in the English Language Teacher Education Program. Furthermore, it sought to explore the effectiveness of these changes. To start with, the data revealed that the teacher educators regarded certain developments in the program as positive, such as the extension of the 'Approaches and Methods in ELT' to two terms as consecutive courses, the introduction of

new courses such as ‘Public Speaking and Presentation’ and ‘Drama’, the convergence of ‘Course Book Analysis and Material Evaluation’, the separation of ‘Language Teaching Skills’ from ‘Specific Teaching Skills’ and convergence of ‘Grammar I and II’ into ‘Contextual Grammar I and II’, in terms of course content. However, they raised far more serious problems about the new program regarding the sequence (SLA, Linguistics, Approaches and Methods and Research Skills), content (Specific Teaching Skills), structure (Public Service), procedure (Public Service, Research Skills), credits (Research Skills, Listening and Pronunciation), convergence (reading and writing) and removal of courses (School Experience I and Advanced Writing). The sequence, structure, convergence and content of some courses such as ‘Public Service’ and ‘Reading and Writing’ received the highest criticism. These findings are compatible with Coşkun and Daloğlu’s (2010) study in which the instructors interviewed found the placement of the ‘Research Skills’ and ‘Approaches and Methods’ courses in the second year as problematic, since pre-service teachers lack linguistic competence to cope with the demands of these courses. Similarly, in the same study, the instructors also mentioned the inadequacy of the convergence of courses such as Reading and Writing. Thus, the common issues raised by this research and the previous one can be perceived as a result of the lack of clear rationale and reasoning in the preparation of the new program.

Another finding of this study was related to the top-down and centralized program disregarding the opinions, experiences and practices of the direct users of the program, such as teacher educators, teachers and teacher trainees. It can be inferred that participant involvement in the preparation and development of the program did not occur at the desired level. However, it has been stated that “[A]ny attempts to evaluate the new program changes should certainly include teachers who experience these changes in their current conditions and contexts as end-users” (Zehir Topkaya & Küçük, 2010: 52). Thus, for any educational reform to succeed, the HEC and MoNE should accept universities and teacher educators as partners because the ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ strategies could be integrated through partnership and by bringing together “a range of stakeholders who each have an interest in the nature of change in schools” (Kirk and MacDonald, 2001: 553). Indeed, as previous research including pre-service teachers reveals, different stakeholders provide opinions about different aspects of programs (see for example, Coşgun Ögeyik, 2009; Hismanoğlu, 2012). This point emphasizes the importance of including all the voices of users, from designers to students, in program evaluation and change.

However, it should also be noted that many participants evaluated the potential success of the new program positively, which may suggest that the majority of the participants (13/18) either have positive perceptions about the program or they found it too soon to make negative judgments about the outcome of the program. This finding highlights the importance of undertaking ongoing program evaluations for only in this way is it possible for evaluation to become a part of program implementation and thus ensure its effectiveness and consequent teacher quality (Musset, 2010).

In this study, the participants also suggested that a clear rationale and reasoning for the changes should be supplied to the users of the program so that the content and the coordination of the courses can be restructured. Karakaş (2012), in his review, also underlined this issue as one of the weaknesses of the 2006 ELTEP and suggested that the program needs to be updated with the addition of a well-defined philosophy of teacher education. Similarly, Uzunboylu and Hürsen (2008) also suggest that the appropriateness of the program regarding the needs and opinions of the stakeholders, such as teacher educators and teachers, the process

of learning and teaching concerning the implementation of the new program content, and most importantly the evaluation and the critique of the program need to be explicitly addressed. The aims and objectives involving the program documentation and origins and the content of the new courses should also be clearly explained, as they are, as Posner (1995) states, the crucial elements of any program and program evaluation and change (see also Ünsal & Kocaman, 2007). As Peacock (2009) argues, a clearly stated philosophy, to what extent the suggested philosophy is reflected throughout the program, linkage and balance among courses, and which linguistic (content knowledge), pedagogic (how to teach) and managerial (practical issues related to teaching such as classroom management) teacher competences are consequently aspired to, are crucial questions which must be explicitly asked and answered by program designers.

The teacher educators in this study also raised the issue of standardization of language proficiency through centralized exemption tests, rather than centralized programs in order to assure the quality and equality in language teacher education. They underlined the importance of basic skills and field specific courses such as ‘Advanced Writing’, ‘Second Language Acquisition’ and ‘Linguistics’. This finding emphasizes that having content knowledge would mean that when language teachers master the target language, they can competently use the knowledge. As Valencia (2009) argues, content knowledge is crucial for language teachers since they are expected to teach language skills. According to Teddick and Walker (1995) EFL teacher education needs to focus on English language skills, grammar, syntax and lexicon of the language because without this content knowledge, it is not possible for language teachers to perceive themselves as competent. Consequently, the relation between teacher knowledge, competencies and teaching skills and the English language teacher education program needs to be further researched with regard to the content, procedures and teaching competencies of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) as outcomes of the ELTEP, which could also be divided and redesigned according to the different needs of primary and secondary students in basic education. Within ELT departments, on the other hand, collaboration between teacher educators should also be maintained to avoid duplication of the related courses; and strengths (i.e. the number of PhD holders and field experts) and weaknesses (i.e. staff shortage and large numbers of students) of the departments should also be taken into consideration.

Another point raised by the participants was the communication gap between the education faculties, the HEC and the MoNE. They work independently of each other, although Education Faculties, under the administration of the HEC, educate teachers to work for the MoNE, which runs mainstream schooling programs and curricula (Yavuz, 2007). However, this common interest is not handled very effectively either in the teacher education programs introduced by the HEC or in MoNE curricula. Therefore, for example, teacher competencies regarding knowledge, skills and attitudes are defined differently by these two institutions, although the teachers who will work for the MoNE are trained through the programs developed by the HEC (see MEB, 2008; YÖK, 2011). The basic criticism here was with regard to top-down programs that were handed to faculties of education to be implemented disregarding the voices of its major stakeholders, i.e. teacher educators and teachers at schools (see YÖK, 2007). When this problem is coupled with insufficient course descriptions which leave the decision of what will be taught and how it will be taught to the priorities of course lecturers, successful implementation of programs is also put into danger (see YÖK, 2007). The solution to this complex problem lies in cooperation and coordination among these institutions.

Fullan (1993) argues that, whether imposed or desired, it is certain that the process of change is uncontrollably complex, and generally unknowable. He identifies important lessons of the paradigm of change. The most important ones are as follows; that change has a dynamic complexity in which problems and uncertainty are inevitable; that both top-down and bottom-up strategies are necessary; that connection with the wider environment is critical for success; that every person is a change agent and that one cannot mandate what matters. For successful change, these lessons should be seriously taken into account. Otherwise, the result would be a failure in time, if teachers and teacher educators are forcefully entered into partnership programs and presented with program changes. According to Fullan (1991), at the heart of change, for most teachers and teacher educators, are the issues of practicality, soundness and purposefulness, so ownership of change among end users is crucially important for long term, successful educational change.

With reference to the success of educational change in Turkey, Yavuz (2007: p. 20) argues that '*...the roots of the ongoing problems are in the perceived communication gap between MoNE and HEC...namely the gap between theory and practice ... is fundamental to the policy makers' thinking about improving the effectiveness of teachers*'. In respect to this, schools and faculties need to learn and respect each other's strengths and needs, to build a shared commitment in order to explore alternatives and embrace change. This also requires clarifying principles and purposes, and understanding the social and political contexts. Partnership enhances this kind of mutual understanding and collaboration, which still is a neglected area within schools in Turkey at present and could be encouraged through seminars, tutor-groups, workshops and a well-defined mentorship system (Tarman, 2010). These programs will also bring teachers into contact with a different group of people, namely those working in university teaching departments. In the light of the discussion above, it becomes clear that collaboration between the HEC, the MoNE and universities should be re-established or extended to involve all stakeholders in program development with a clear rationale, content, process and procedure.

Finally, it should be noted that this study is limited to 18 teacher educators' evaluations and perceptions and the results of this study cannot be generalized for all ELT contexts. Another limitation for this study may appear due to the data collection method, as qualitative studies are 'perspectival' and 'context-bound'; triangulation through multi-method (interview and questionnaire) or multi-perspective (teacher educators and teacher trainees' evaluations) could have uncovered richer and more heterogeneous data (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In Erozan's (2005), Seferoglu's (2006) and Salli-Copur's (2008) studies, for example, the limited number of practice teaching activities and micro-teaching, irrelevant courses, the lack of observations and practical components of courses, such as classroom management, variety of assessment and instruction types, were emphasized by teacher trainees rather than the rationale and reasoning of the program, linguistic competence, or the sequence and removal of the courses. Obviously, teacher trainees have different priorities and, therefore, all the end users of the program need to be consulted, not only for further studies but also for better understanding of program evaluation, development and change.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 1998 ELTEP

#### FIRST YEAR

I. Term					II. Term				
CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C	CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C
	English Grammar I	3	0	3		English Grammar II	3	0	3
	Speaking Skills I	3	0	3		Speaking Skills II	3	0	3
	Reading Skills I	3	0	3		Reading Skills II	3	0	3
	Writing Skills I	3	0	3		Writing Skills II	3	0	3
	Turkish I: Writing Skills	2	0	2		Turkish II: Speaking Skills	2	0	2
	Turkish History I	2	0	0		Turkish History II	2	0	0
	Introduction to Teaching	3	0	3		School Experience I	1	4	3
						Elective Course I	2	0	2
Credit	17				Credit	19			

#### SECOND YEAR

III. Term					IV. Term				
CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C	CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C
	Advanced Reading Skills	3	0	3		Advanced Writing Skills	3	0	3
	Introduction to English Literature I	3	0	3		Introduction to English Literature II	3	0	3
	Language Acquisition	3	0	3		Approaches to Language Teaching	3	0	3
	Computer	2	2	3		Introduction to Linguistics I	3	0	3
	Turkish Phonetics and Stylistics	3	0	3		Turkish Sentence Structure and Semantics	3	0	3
	Development and Learning	3	0	3		Planning and Evaluation in Education	3	2	4
Credit	18				Credit	19			

#### THIRD YEAR

V. Term					VI. Term				
CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C	CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C
	Introduction to Linguistics II	3	0	3		Research Skills	3	0	3
	Short Story Analysis and Teaching	3	0	3		Teaching English to Children	3	0	3
	English-Turkish Translation	3	0	3		Novel Analysis and Teaching	3	0	3
	Special Teaching Techniques I	2	2	3		Classroom Management	2	2	3
	Educational Technologies and Material Development	2	2	3		Special Teaching Methods II	2	2	3
	Elective Course II	3	0	3		Elective Course IV	3	0	3
	Elective Course III	2	0	2					

Credit	20					Credit	18				
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**FOURTH YEAR**

VII. Term					VIII. Term				
CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C	CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C
	Preparing Examination in English and Assessment	3	0	3		Turkish-English Translation	3	0	3
	Drama (Play) Analysis and Teaching	3	0	3		Poetry Analysis and Teaching	3	0	3
	Material Development and Application	3	0	3		Guidance and Counseling	3	0	3
	Course Books Analysis	2	2	3		Teaching Practice	2	6	5
	School Experience II	1	4	3					
	Elective Course V	3	0	3					
Credit	18				Credit	14			
<b>Total Credit</b>	143								
T	Theoretical Course Hour per Week								
P	Practice Hour per Week.								
C	<b>Course Credit</b>								

**Appendix 2  
2006 ELTEP**

**FIRST YEAR**

I. Term					II. Term				
CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C	CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C
FK	Contextual English Grammar I	3	0	3	FK	Contextual English Grammar II	3	0	3
FK	Advanced Reading and Writing I	3	0	3	FK	Advanced Reading and Writing II	3	0	3
FK	Listening and Pronunciation I	3	0	3	FK	Listening and Pronunciation II	3	0	3
FK	Oral Communication Skills I	3	0	3	FK	Oral Communication Skills II	3	0	3
GC	Introduction Educational Sciences	3	0	3	FK	Lexicology	3	0	3
GC	Computer I	2	2	3	PK	Educational Psychology	3	0	3
GC	Effective Communication Skills	3	0	3	GC	Computer II	2	2	3
PK	Turkish I: Written Expression	2	0	2	GC	Turkish II: Oral Expression	2	0	2
Credit	23				Credit	23			

**SECOND YEAR**

III. Term					IV. Term				
CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C	CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C
FK	English Literature I	3	0	3	FK	English Literature II	3	0	3
FK	Linguistics I	3	0	3	FK	Linguistics II	3	0	3
FK	Approaches to Language Teaching I	3	0	3	FK	Approaches to Language Teaching II	3	0	3
FK	Translation: English to Turkish	3	0	3	FK	Language Acquisition	3	0	3

FK	Public Speaking and Presentation	3	0	3	GC	Research Skills	2	0	2
GC	Turkish Educational History	2	0	2	PK	Specific Teaching Methodology I	2	2	3
PK	Principles and Methodology of Teaching	3	0	3	PK	Instructional Technology and Material Design	2	2	3
Credit	20				Credit	20			

<b>THIRD YEAR</b>
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**V. Term****VI. Term**

CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C	CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C
FK	Teaching English to Young Learners I	2	2	3	FK	Teaching English to Young Learners II	2	2	3
FK	Specific Teaching Methodology II	2	2	3	FK	Teaching Language Skills II	2	2	3
FK	Teaching Language Skills I	2	2	3	FK	Literature and Language Teaching II	3	0	3
FK	Literature and Language Teaching I	3	0	3	FK	Second Foreign Language II	2	0	2
FK	Second Foreign Language I	2	0	2	FK	Translation: Turkish to English	3	0	3
GC	Drama	2	2	3	GC	Public Service	1	2	2
PK	Classroom Management	2	0	2	PK	Testing and Evaluation	3	0	3
Credit	19				Credit	19			

<b>FOURTH YEAR</b>
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**VII. Term****VIII. Term**

CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C	CODE	COURSE TITLE	T	P	C
FK	Material Analysis and Adaptation in Foreign Language Teaching	3	0	3	FK	Testing and Evaluation in Foreign Language Teaching	3	0	3
FK	Second Foreign Language III	2	0	2	GC	Turkish History II	2	0	2
GC	Turkish History I	2	0	2	PK	Comparative Education	2	0	2
PK	School Experience	1	4	3	PK	Turkish Educational System and School Management	2	0	2
PK	Counseling	3	0	3	PK	Teaching Practice	2	6	5
PK	Special Needs Education	2	0	2	FK	Elective Course II	2	0	2
FK	Elective Course I	2	0	2	FK	Elective Course III	2	0	2
Credit	17				Credit	18			
<b>Total Credit</b>	159								
T	Theoretical Course Hour per Week								
P	Practice Hour per Week.								
C	<b>Course Credit</b>								

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Data Collection Tool: The open-ended Questionnaire**

- 1** Were you consulted about the 2006 ELTEP initiated by the Higher Education Council (YÖK)?  
Yes ( )      No ( )
- 2** If your answer to the first question is 'yes', were your opinions included in the program?  
Yes completely ( )      Yes partially ( )      Not at all ( )
- 3** How would you evaluate the potential success of the 2006 ELTEP in teacher education?  
0 - 20 % ( )      21% - 40 %      41% - 60 %      61% - 80 %      81%-100 %
- 4** How would you evaluate the changes in the 2006 ELTEP (convergence, removal and new courses)?
- 5** Which courses are you teaching in the autumn and spring terms? What do you think about the place, content and procedures of these courses in the 2006 ELTEP?
- 6** Please mention if you want to raise other issues below.