

# A remedial course design on teaching teens and young adults in FLTE programmes

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## ABSTRACT

Foreign Language Teacher Education programmes (FLTE) are designed to train teacher candidates to teach at elementary, secondary, and tertiary levels. The case necessitates prospective teachers of English (PTEs) to be equipped to teach all these levels/age groups distinctively. Having a course specifically designed for young learners (YLS), but lacking one focusing on teenagers/young adults, the study intended to draw attention to the need for improvement in the FLTE programme components with the development and implementation of a remedial course design. With this purpose, the study analysed the needs of prospective teachers, investigated possible solutions and presented a course design as a practical suggestion. This qualitative study was conducted with 10 senior ELT students at a state university in 2019-2020, utilising focus-group interviews and two metaphor-based prompts. Based on the preliminary findings, a remedial course was designed with a practicum supplement. Following the implementation of the course design, the effectiveness of the intervention was investigated. Overall findings revealed that the present FLTE program did not sufficiently prepare prospective teachers for teaching teens/young adults, and there was an immediate need of equipping them for teaching teens/young adults and implicated that the programme courses should target at all levels by considering the theory-practice balance and that practicum opportunities be expanded and improved. Moreover, the suggested course was found to contribute to the PTEs' sense of preparedness, awareness and acceptance of target learner characteristics, knowledge of appropriate instructional strategies and techniques, and led to a change in the PTEs' attitudes towards teaching teens/young adults.

**Keywords:** FLTE programme, teacher training, teaching teenagers, teaching young adults, course de

## INTRODUCTION

Without a doubt, one of the most frequently addressed concerns by the Ministry of National Education is the teaching of English as a foreign language, and in line with this concern, foreign language education policy has witnessed several major education reforms- namely the 1997 curriculum innovation, the 2005 reform change, and the 2012 curriculum reform (Kırkgöz, 2017). As a result of these reforms, with the changes made in the education system, the age of teaching English was lowered from secondary school to fourth grade in 1997, and then to the second grade in 2012. Also for the private schools, the age of teaching English has even been lowered to younger ages as 1st grade and kindergarten.

As well as bringing a change in the starting age for learning English, almost each policy reform has also articulated new, various linguistic and non-linguistic learning outcomes such as the adoption and integration of ideas for cultural awareness, appreciation of cultural diversity, critical and creative thinking skills, critical reading skills, integrated language use skills, communicative and collaborative skills, which has continuously challenged the language teacher and attributed different roles and responsibilities to the language teacher.

In addition to the aforementioned updated roles and responsibilities, language teachers are also challenged with the serious age gap among target learner groups. This gap covers a broad age range from very YLS to young adults in their early

twenties. Newly graduate teachers are to be employed to teach at any of these levels without getting specifically- designed training for the age group. These recent changes in foreign language teaching policies, such as a greater focus on teaching English to YLS beginning in the second grade and also a growing movement toward intensive English preparatory programs at the university level, along with a new trend of many FLTE graduates' looking for employment at the SoFLs (School of Foreign Languages) (Akcan, et al., 2016) have added to the pressure to educate highly trained and skilled teachers.

With all these changing demands, prospective teachers need to be fully qualified as a teacher to take the responsibility

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of teaching students of all ages and levels, which might only be possible through a complementary teacher-training programme equipping and preparing prospective teachers for their future students at a very wide age range.

### Background to the Study

Many disciplines such as Maths Education, Science Education, Social Sciences Education, Turkish Language Education are divided into departments- “Elementary Mathematics Education / Elementary Science Education / Elementary Social Sciences/ Turkish Language Education” and “Mathematics Education/ Physics Education/Biology Education/Chemistry Education/Geography Education/ History Education/ Philosophy Education/Turkish Language and Literature Education- prepare their student-teachers separately for different age groups and levels.

In FLTE departments, contrarily, there exists no such separation or design for training prospective teachers for their forthcoming teaching careers; it is aimed to train them to teach in all levels such as primary, secondary, and high schools (Akcan, 2016, p.58), and even for tertiary level. It's not until the prospective teachers graduate and are appointed as teachers when they know which type of students they are going to teach for sure.

Prospective teachers' being in need of all these qualifications and skills to teach a wide range of age groups on one side and the departments' providing a monotone training for all levels and age groups on the other side, necessitates the evaluation of FLTE programmes and investigation of their effectiveness in preparing PTEs to handle different groups of learners. This mismatch between the ideal and the reality might be clearly highlighted when the following FLTE programmes are examined thoroughly.

### FLTE/ELT Curriculum

ELT departments of universities in Turkey had been using the programme ([https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim\\_ogretim\\_dairesi/OgretmenYetistirme/ingilizce\\_ogretmenligi.pdf](https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim_ogretim_dairesi/OgretmenYetistirme/ingilizce_ogretmenligi.pdf)) until the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) updated it in May 2018 ([https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim\\_ogretim\\_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/Ingilizce\\_Ogretmenligi\\_Lisans\\_Programi.pdf](https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim_ogretim_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/Ingilizce_Ogretmenligi_Lisans_Programi.pdf)).

A closer look at the comparative analysis of both programs (see Appendix A) will clearly show and identify the intensive load of departmental courses. In the first year, shortly, both programmes depend on practising and developing the language skills of prospective teachers. Both programmes for the second year lead to a quick introduction to the ELT field, and the third year dominantly focuses on teaching skills. The fourth year, for both programmes again, provides a basis for the forthcoming teaching career.

Based on an elective choice of departmental courses more, the updated programme covers ‘how to teach’ focused courses with no single differentiation or choice between YLs, teens or young adults only with an exception of the compulsory course ‘Teaching English to YLs’. Although “Skills Teaching”- as also stated by instructors (Karabağ, 2016, p.336)-, “Material Evaluation, Development& Design”, “Testing” courses cover a content, they do not specifically focus on an age group and mostly the limits and the frames of the courses are so blurred that there exists a need for age-group focused course designs.

Keeping the needs and characteristics of these groups in mind, it is crystal clear that the teachers are left with a challenge of teaching at any level “without a specific training for the age group they will be teaching” (Öztürk & Aydın, 2019, p.191). The fact that FLTE programmes cover a course -Teaching English to YLs-specifically designed for YLs, but lack one especially focusing on teenagers or young adults, makes the prospective teachers feel helpless at this point. Therefore, expecting a course design specifically on how to teach teenagers and young adults would be perceived as reasonable, which ideally highlights the need for the study.

### METHOD

The following sub-headings should be used in this section.

#### Research Design and Research Questions

This study was designed on a qualitative research basis. The qualitative research design was employed within the study since the purpose and scope of the study overlapped with the key features of qualitative research such as involving a *natural setting*, viewing the *researcher as a key instrument*, utilizing *multiple sources of data*, examining *participants' meanings*, and allowing for an *interpretive inquiry* (Creswell, 2007).

Considering the abovementioned problems concerning overall language teacher education in FLTE programmes, the current study aimed to explore PTEs' needs for being able to teach at different levels, investigate possible solutions and present a course design as a practical, remedial suggestion. With these purposes in mind, the researchers attempted to seek answers to the following research questions.

- **RQ1:** Do the prospective teachers of English (PTEs) believe that the FLTE programme effectively prepares them to teach teenagers/young adults?
- **RQ2:** Which components of the FLTE program might need to be changed or improved?
- **RQ3:** How effective do the prospective teachers of English (PTEs) find the proposed course design in equipping them with specific skills for teaching teenagers and young adults?

#### Study Group

The participants of this present research are 10 (5 female+5 male) 4th-year senior students who might well be appreciated as

future teachers. The participants are studying their final years at Necmettin Erbakan University (NEU), English Language Teaching Department. Their ages range between 21-23. They hold a homogeneous background of teacher training, language learning, and proficiency. In the presentation and discussion of the findings, the participants were named S1 (Student 1), ... S10 respectively to keep them anonymous.

Despite its limitation of representativeness, convenience sampling was deemed appropriate to provide valuable insights into answering research questions (Creswell, 2012, pp.145-146). In terms of willingness, availability and practicality concerns, the group was selected on a purposeful basis within convenience sampling (PTEs taking School Experience course given by one of the researchers, available and volunteered to take the implemented course).

### Data Collection Tools

This study employed two qualitative data collection tools- interviews and metaphor prompts. A set of interview questions were formulated by the researchers considering the supposed needs of the PTEs observed through the years and in collaboration with field experts. Then the initially formulated version of the interview questions underwent some revisions based on the views of the field experts, thus some items were deleted or rewritten. The finalised version of the interview was conducted on the participants as a pre and post phase instrument.

Also, two metaphor-based prompts (“Teaching YLs is like ... because...” & “Teaching teenagers/teens is like ... because...” ) were used at the beginning and upon the completion of the course. The word “like” was used to illustrate the resemblance between the “metaphor topic” and the “metaphor vehicle”, and “because” to justify the resemblance to reflect participants’ implicit beliefs explicit (Saban, Kocbeker & Saban, 2007).

### Data Collection

This qualitative study was conducted on 10 senior students at NEU, ELT Department in the 2019-2020 Academic Year. In the pre-study phase, a metaphor creation technique was used to explore how prospective teachers perceive the concept of ‘teaching English to teens or young adults’ and also ‘teaching English to children’, for the fact that metaphors serve as a powerful way of uncovering professional beliefs and thoughts (Cameron & Maslen, 2010). After the implementation of the study, the prospective teachers were again asked to create metaphors regarding ‘teaching English to teens or young adults’ to find out whether there is a change in the PTEs’ conceptualization and perception of teaching teenagers and young adults.

As another qualitative data collection instrument, a focus group interview was held with the prospective teachers

to collect preliminary data to be used in the planning and development of the course design to gain insights into their needs of teaching different learner groups, their sense of preparedness for teaching these various groups, their perceptions of the FLTE program components, and especially their perceptions on the effectiveness of the FLTE program components in preparing them. The participants were interviewed again at the end of the implementation process to check for the effectiveness of the procedure.

### Course Design

A course design was tailored regarding the preliminary data collected through interviews, based on the cycle of instructional design by Graves (1996) in which learner needs were well established first; then the goals and learning objectives of the course were carefully set; and finally, the course content, materials and activities, and assessment instruments were structured and selected (See Appendix B for course outline & contact authors for further details).

The course was put into practice in the 2019-2020 academic year and lasted for an academic term, combining theoretical knowledge with practice in teaching English to teens and young adults with two practicums. Each weekly (theory) session took two hours, during which PTEs were taught by the lecturer/researcher at the ELT department on theoretical knowledge of teaching teens/young adults. The theoretical content of the course was organised based on the required knowledge as proposed with the teacher knowledge framework TPACK (technological, professional, and content knowledge). For the practical phase, the students were given two opportunities for weekly practicum: first, observation and teaching practice on how to teach teenagers at a state middle school affiliated to the MoNE, and secondly another two-hour observation and teaching practice on how to teach young adults by attending intensive English classes at SoFL affiliated to the university. Moreover, as the requirements of the course, PTEs completed observation forms and checklists, and minute papers.

### Data Analysis

Metaphor analysis was carried out in the following way: the participants were asked to complete a metaphor prompt as “Teaching English to YLs is like... because...” and “Teaching English to teens/young adults is like... because...”. Data collected through metaphors were analysed within the steps of (1) naming/labelling, (2) sorting, (3) categorization, and (4) inter-rater reliability (Saban et al., 2007).

Having a very limited group of participants (N=10), the data were transferred into a table under the categories of participants, ‘the topic’ (the subject- “teaching English to YLs/teens/young adults”), ‘the vehicle’ (compared item), and ‘the ground’ (relationship of the two) to identify ‘well-articulated metaphors’ (Saban et al., 2007). Through inductive analysis,

metaphors were studied thoroughly to be coded into categories or themes representing common voices of the participants through negotiations of both researchers. For the inter-rater reliability by Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula, two outside researchers were asked to categorise the metaphors and the final reliability was calculated as 0.97.

The interview data were carefully transcribed and examined through content analysis in which the two researchers acted as coders. Keeping the research questions in mind and reading through the transcribed data, the researchers determined the units of meaning in the data and decided on the initial codes. Next, they examined the data independent from each other, and then they came together to discuss any necessary modifications or revisions in the tentative codes. Finally, the researchers ended up with agreed codes and categories. Through focused coding, the researchers completed the content analysis and ended up with a total of six themes that would help to answer the research questions.

## FINDINGS

### Findings of Metaphor Analysis

The themes were studied and grouped separately for Teaching English to YLs and Teaching English to Teens&Young Adults as pre and post phases of the study.

#### *Teaching English to YLs*

Themes were identified as (see Table 1) "teaching English to YLs as PLEASURE", "teaching English to YLs as CRAFT", "teaching English to YLs as ACCEPTING DIFFERENCES/NEEDS" to reflect the voices of the prospective teachers on teaching English to YLs concept.

Teaching as PLEASURE theme refers to the enjoyment, fun, and taste derived from teaching experience with young

learners. The metaphors mostly pile up under this theme and more than half of the participants constitute the category ( $f=6$ ). Teaching as CRAFT theme reflects a way of understanding "teaching YLs" as something to be artistry and the competence within. Teaching as ACCEPTING DIFFERENCES/NEEDS is simply on being aware of the differences and the needs of the students. Both latter themes represent the same percentage of all the participants ( $f=2$  for each).

#### *Teaching English to teens & young adults Pre-phase*

Themes for the concept of Teaching English to Teens/Young Adults were identified as "Teaching English to teens & young adults as SOURCE of STRESS", "Teaching English to teens & young adults as ACCEPTANCE" (of the needs & differences of the students), "Teaching English to teens & young adults as MIXED BLESSING", "teaching English to teens & young adults as DEVOTION" for the pre-phase of the study (see Table 2).

"Teaching as SOURCE of STRESS" reflects the views of PTEs on teaching teens& young adults as a struggle to face or a situation in which someone is digging oneself in a hole. "Teaching as ACCEPTANCE" (of the needs & differences of the students) indicates an awareness of the needs and the differences of the students. "Teaching as MIXED BLESSING" might seem a bit of a complex structure as it covers a positive and a negative situation or concept within. "Teaching as DEVOTION" reflects teaching experience as a demanding work rather attributed to purposeful effort and labour. The themes range similarly around  $f=2$  for each, which shows an equal distribution, except for teaching as a mixed blessing theme with  $f=4$ , being the most piled up one.

#### *Post-phase*

At the end of the implementation process, for the post phase of the study, the themes were constructed as "Teaching English

**Table 1:** Pre-phase Themes for Teaching English to YLs.

<i>Teaching as PLEASURE</i>	<i>Teaching as CRAFT</i>	<i>Teaching as ACCEPTING DIFFERENCES/NEEDS</i>
Being in a circus (PTE 9)	Cooking (PTE 5)	Living in different universes (PTE 10)
Being at a funfair (PTE 6)	A dough (PTE 4)	Being like a child (PTE 3)
Baklava (PTE 1)		
Reading a book (PTE 7)		
A tasty dinner table (PTE 8)		
A fair (PTE 2)		

**Table 2:** Pre-phase Themes for Teaching Teens and Young Adult Learners.

<i>Teaching as SOURCE of STRESS</i>	<i>Teaching as ACCEPTANCE</i>	<i>Teaching as MIXED BLESSING</i>	<i>Teaching as DEVOTION</i>
Surviving (PTE 10)	Rainbow (PTE 6)	Drinking coffee (PTE 9)	Driving a car (PTE 5)
Preparing for the university exam (PTE 4)	Teeter-totter (PTE 8)	Smartphones (PTE 3)	Being a lion trainer in a circus (PTE 2)
		Drug (PTE 7)	
		Coat (PTE 1)	



to teens & young adults as ACCEPTANCE” (of the needs & differences of the students, “Teaching English to teens & young adults as MIXED BLESSING”), and “Teaching English to teens & young adults as DEVOTION” (see Table 3) through a deductive approach comparing and contrasting the themes of pre-phase metaphor analysis on the concept of “teaching teens and young adults”.

Through the deductive analysis based on the themes of the pre-phase of the study (see Table 2), none of the metaphors was grouped under or linked to “Teaching as SOURCE of STRESS” theme and thus were left out. Although “Teaching as ACCEPTANCE” and “Teaching as MIXED BLESSING” themes were distributed equally ( $f=2$  for each), “Teaching as DEVOTION” theme was the most piled up ( $f=6$ ).

## Findings of Interviews

The PTEs were addressed a pre-set of questions to investigate their perceptions of teacher preparation in terms of these aspects: their perceived needs for future teaching careers, the effectiveness of the present FLTE components such as program courses and practicum opportunities in their training, their preparedness to teach teenagers or young adults, and what was useful to them in the proposed course design.

The interview results are divided into two as the findings drawn from the interview before the study and the findings revealed by the interviews made with the PTEs after the implementation of the course. These two interviews with the PTEs produced relevant findings which can be categorized under six themes listed below (Table 4).

**Table 3:** Post-phase Themes for Teaching Teens and Young Adult Learners.

Teaching as SOURCE of STRESS	Teaching as ACCEPTANCE	Teaching as MIXED BLESSING	Teaching as DEVOTION
	Being a part of a rainbow (PTE 6)	Playing football (PTE 1)	Bodybuilding (PTE 7)
	Pilgrim's journey (PTE 10)	Walking in the rain (PTE 4)	Being a soldier (PTE 9)
			A suicide bomb (PTE 3)
			Exploring (PTE 2)
			Reading a book (PTE 5)
			To be a multi-functional robot (PTE 8)

**Table 4:** Findings of the Interviews.

Interview	Themes	Categories
Pre-study Interview Findings	Inadequacy of practicum opportunities	Not well planned and systematically organized
		Disappointment with instructional practices of mentor teachers
	Not sufficient preparation for teaching teenagers and young adults	Expectancy for earlier and better quality practicum opportunities
		Need for courses on how to teach teenagers and younger adults
Post-study Interview Findings	Feeling more comfortable with teaching YLs rather than teenagers or young adults	Need for practicum opportunities for teaching teens and young adults
	Developing positive attitudes towards teaching teenagers and young adults	
	Enhancing their awareness of learner characteristics and needs of different age groups	
	Achieving a sense of preparedness and confidence in teaching teens and young adults	

The themes and categories outlined above in Table 4 are discussed and further elaborated below along with the selected participant statements.

## DISCUSSION

Embodying the analysis of the metaphor prompts and interviews, the findings of the study are examined and discussed in detail to fully answer the following research questions below.

- *Research question 1:* Do prospective teachers of English (PTEs) believe that the FLTE programme effectively prepares them to teach teenagers/young adults?

Throughout their in-class experiences, the voices of the PTEs implied that they had concerns about and were challenged by teens/young adults more than YLs. To legitimise these voices and experiences with sound and reliable data, as a way of uncovering the participants' abstract representations of reality, metaphors were addressed to the PTEs regarding both age groups (teens/young adults and YLs). When PTEs were first asked to complete the prompt on teaching YLs, the constructed themes (Pleasure, Craft, Accepting differences/needs) (see Table 1) inclined to be in accordance with their positive attitudes and acceptance towards the concept.

In line with their preliminary voices, this finding implies that PTEs have a relative sense of self-confidence in teaching YLs, which might be associated with the fact that they had the theoretical background and practise opportunity on teaching YLs concept within the FLTE programme. Likewise, one of the findings of the pre-study interviews demonstrates that the participants feel more comfortable with teaching YLs rather than teenagers or young adults, as they reported that they were not having difficulty in teaching and managing them in the classroom and felt much more competent on preparing materials for children (see Table 4). The PTE's self-confidence in classroom management and material development might derive from their well-preparedness in teaching YLs through FLTE programme components.

The pre-phase of the study also provided metaphors for teaching teens and young adults reflecting the voices of PTEs on the concept. Unlike the positive attitudes towards YLs, a rather timid and uneasy mindset dominated the themes (Stress/Acceptance/Mixed Blessing/Devotion) (see Table 2). Although some of the PTEs seemed to be accepting the needs and the differences of the age group, and the demanding nature of being a teacher for this level, the same quantity perceived the concept as a threat (source of stress) and the majority might well be attributed as hesitant and unable to correlate the concept either with a positive or a negative metaphor, thus described the concept as something in-between (a mixed blessing).

In line with this, the pre-phase interview also produced findings regarding the PTEs' concerns about teaching teens/

young adults. For instance, one of the PTEs (10) stated that she could teach all levels except for teenagers, and another (PTE 1) expressed his belief that a teacher being able to manage teenagers could deal with all other learners since he considered them as the most problematic. Furthermore, it was also reported by another (PTE 7) that teenager classes were chaotic. All these above-mentioned unfavourably connotated statements and perceptions may be attributed to the lack of and need for the theoretical background and practice opportunity of teaching teens & young adults within the FLTE curriculum/programme.

The theme-insufficient preparation for teaching teenagers/young adults- emerging out of the interview further supports the inference that the teacher candidates are not sufficiently trained at their FLTE programs to teach teen/ young adult learner groups.

From the teacher candidates' following statements of dissatisfaction with the lack of any specific courses and classroom practice examples on how to teach teenagers/young adults, it is obvious that prospective teachers of English (PTEs) do not believe that the FLTE programme effectively prepares them to teach teenagers/young adults.

*"We are treated and taught as if we were only going to work in primary school when we graduated. We took a course named teaching young learners, and also courses of drama and material adaptation and development which all target at the teaching of English to younger learner groups rather than providing examples and content for older learner groups."* (PTE 10)

*"We are only taught how to teach other groups (except for young learners) theoretically but we are not shown practically how to teach teenagers and young adults.... in my opinion, no one will want to start working in a middle school since they do not have any knowledge of teaching teenagers."* (PTE 10)

*"We are exposed to too many art craft things which I actually do not find practical and realistic materials for teaching teenagers and young adults."* (PTE 6)

*"Our courses lack examples of classroom practice on how to teach teenagers and younger adults. I think we need more practical ideas and examples to complete our theoretical knowledge."* (PTE 5)

*"We have a course on teaching YLs but no specific lessons on teaching teenagers or younger adults. Thus, I can say I feel prepared for teaching primary school children about teaching but I don't feel ready for other age groups."* (PTE 3)

As seen from the excerpts above, the participants' concern that the FLTE components seem to be focusing mostly on YLs and do not allow much space for teenagers and young adults is also voiced by teacher trainers complaining about the lack

of course content in a study by Karabuğa (2016) who similarly investigated the efficiency of the FLTE program in catering to the needs of their student teachers regardless of the level and institutions in which they would be teaching.

These statements implicate that the prospective teachers have the need to feel more prepared with other groups of learners than young learners before they start teaching, which is only possible with sufficient provision of both theoretical knowledge and practical experience of teaching teenagers and young adults. Otherwise, problems will have to be faced as suggested by Öztürk & Aydın (2019, p.191), unless PTEs are exposed to a balanced training for them to be able to teach at a wide range of levels and age groups. Similarly, the pre-service teachers who seemed to be aware of this shortcoming in the curriculum of the FLTE program and expressed their related concerns reported that they felt incomplete in professional competencies in many ways, and they believed they would have difficulties in addressing these teen and young adult learners, determining their interests and needs, preparing appropriate materials for them and managing them in the classroom. In line with the findings of the present research, many researchers (Kartal & Başol, 2019; Öztürk & Aydın, 2019; Şallı-Çopur, 2008) have also pointed out the lack of and need for training PTEs to be effectively teaching at different age groups.

With an overall view of all the findings and considerations discussed above, it is crystal clear that although the PTEs are not fully content with all the components of the FLTE programme, they seem to feel much more prepared and confident about teaching young learners. However, it is not the case for the other age groups as the PTEs believe the FLTE programme doesn't effectively prepare them to teach teenagers/young adults.

- *Research question 2:* Which components of the FLTE program might need to be changed or improved?

Teaching, being a career based on practice more and supported by the foundations of the theory, it is fair enough to expect theory-practice integrated courses to be dominant all over the curriculum. However, this case doesn't ring true for the FLTE program. Similarly, the students' interview statements showed that the PTEs believed they were also in need of practical components complementing the theoretical content of pedagogy-related courses as such:

*"Unless the theory-based courses are supported by practice, we either fail to make sense out of or forget (what we have learnt)." (PTE 8)*

*"I think we need more practical ideas and examples to complete our theoretical knowledge." (PTE 5)*

Not only PTEs (Karabuğa, 2016; Kartal & Başol, 2019; Seferoğlu, 2006,) but also teacher trainers (Karabuğa, 2016; Kartal & Başol, 2019) and novice teachers (Akcan, 2016) strongly emphasise this lack and need for more chances of practice and micro-teaching within the FLTE programmes.

Some other researchers (Karabuğa, 2016; Şallı-Çopur, 2008) have also pointed out the importance of the fact that FLTE components need to be revised and improved through more practice and micro-teaching experiences. This might be regarded as possible only with the practically enriched theoretical courses within the FLTE curriculum.

Furthermore, the PTEs also shared their perceptions on practicum opportunities and counted them as one of the components to be revised within the FLTE programme asserting that practicum opportunities be carefully planned, well-structured and designed to cater to their professional needs and contribute to their preparedness for the future teaching career. PTEs expressed this deficiency both during the interview and in-class interactions with their trainers. As understood from the interview statements of prospective teachers, the shortcomings within the practicum are given as follows:

*"Practicum opportunities are not equal for everyone. Some students (student- teachers) might have practicum at different school levels while some go to the same level (repeatedly) for teaching practice." (PTE 6)*

*"Mentor teachers are not cooperating with ELT lecturers (who are the supervisors of teacher candidates at the department). Mentor teachers leave us alone in the classrooms and there is no cooperation between us and the mentor teachers on how to teach the students. (PTE 5)*

*"Practicum at MoNE is time consuming most of the time." (PTE 8)*

*"I do not find our present practicum useful since it does not contribute to my development." (PTE 6)*

*"Mentor teachers do not employ modern instructional techniques; they tend to use traditional ways of teaching such as grammar-translation method." (PTE 8)*

*"Mentor teachers, might not be good models in showing us how to teach effectively since they usually teach for exams." (PTE 9)*

*"Mentor teachers do not seem prepared and planned for lessons." (PTE 4)*

As it is clear from the participants' statements above, practicum opportunities do not seem to be carefully planned and systematically organized because of the mismatch between the components of the FLTE program and the real school experiences (Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Kartal & Çağlar, 2019). The PTEs experienced dissatisfaction with their practicum and disappointment with the instructional practices of mentor teachers. As Çapan and Bedir (2019) assert, practicum in teaching provides valuable hands-on experience for the student teachers and thus the practicum opportunities must be sufficiently resourced and carefully structured. However, the participants in this study stated that their

practicum experiences did not meet their expectations, and even though they reported that they needed such opportunities of observing real classrooms and having actual teaching experiences, they felt that they did not have any benefits and pleasure from them.

PTEs also provided valuable suggestions into the planning and implementation of more effective and useful practicum opportunities for them. First, they reported that they needed early field experience and thus to be introduced with practicum opportunities at earlier years of their education as they could not focus on improving their teaching skills at their final years because they were concerned about the exam (KPSS). Another suggestion by the PTEs is the implementation of video-assisted content analysis of real teaching experiences to further equip them with teaching competencies, practices, and constructive feedback. The suggestions of the PTEs have also been voiced by the researchers in the field as the need for the provision of better quality practicum opportunities (Akan, 2016; Kartal & Başol, 2019; Şallı-Çopur, 2008).

Another aspect might be counted as the lack of a course for teaching teens/young adults. PTEs are trained for young learners through a course within the FLTE program, but the case's being not the same for teaching teenagers and young adults arouses anxiety and helplessness on their side. On their micro sessions throughout their training and especially within the practicum process, prospective teachers are left alone to handle the problem themselves, and they express their feeling as "inexperienced" "without any background theory or practice" stating the case is 'unfair' as they did not have any kind of courses related to 'teaching teenagers or young adults'.

From the experts' view on the field, throughout the observation of prospective teachers for years, the researchers have a grasp of the challenge with similar voices of the PTEs on micro-sessions such as *"How am I supposed to design my micro-teaching for teens?"*, *"What kind of materials can I use for teens and young adults?"*, *"I can't use the same materials as I do in my presentation with young learners!"*; and practicum as *"It's not fair that some students are going to primary schools for practicum and we are going to high schools!"*, *"I don't have any idea on how to handle teaching teenager/adult learners!"* make the need obvious. These concerns were similarly reported within the interviews as such:

*"I have no experience of teaching practice with teenagers or younger adults, so I have no idea about teaching these learner groups."* (PTEs 7 and 9)

*"One who can manage teenagers can deal with all other learner groups since they are the most challenging group we need the most knowledge for but we don't have any experience for this."* (PTE 1)

*"I can say I feel prepared for teaching primary school children about teaching but I don't feel ready for other age groups."* (PTE 3)

Along with the above-mentioned findings, from the PTEs' perspective, the needs for more chances of practice and micro-teaching (Karabuğa, 2016; Seferoğlu, 2006), experience with different levels, age groups and environments (Karabuğa, 2016; Kartal & Başol, 2019; Seferoğlu, 2006), early field experience and practicum (Karabuğa, 2016; Kartal&Başol, 2019), focus on classroom management and how to deal with students (Kartal&Başol, 2019) have been reported as the shortcomings of the FLTE programme through the review of the literature.

Overall findings implicate that FLTE programs - unlike other teacher education programs that train prospective teachers according to different age groups- should be optimized more quantitatively and qualitatively to prepare their teacher candidates who will meet the demands of different institutions including primary, secondary and tertiary levels as also suggested by Şallı-Çopur (2008). On the other side of the coin, although TYL (Teaching YLs) course is one of the compulsory courses, there isn't one for "Teaching Teens & Young Adults", not even provided within the list of elective ones (CoHE). Among many other factors affecting a successful foreign language teacher education (FLTE) curriculum, the needs of the students emerge as a highly important determinant in designing courses within the curriculum. Therefore, considering all the above, a course design format might be implicated and suggested for a change within the programme. Henceforth, "Teaching English to Teens & Young Adults Course Design" was put forward trying to meet the needs of the prospective teachers and providing practical solutions to some problems followed.

- *Research question 3:* How effective do the prospective teachers of English find the proposed course design in equipping them with specific skills for teaching teenagers and young adults?

The metaphors and interviews provided insights and data to answer the third research question investigating the effectiveness of the proposed course design from the PTEs' perspectives. Through the implementation, as well as the regular practicum provided by MoNe and the faculty co-ordinately, these senior students received a theoretically enriched methodological course on teaching teens/young adults and a practical supplement to observe a group of young adults in the school of foreign languages affiliated to the university in which the prospective teachers were studying.

In the pre-phase of the study, the concept of teaching teens/ young adults was associated with various metaphors by the PTEs, which produced themes ranging from negatively connotated perceptions towards relatively more positive ones- namely, stress-acceptance-mixed blessing- devotion.

On the completion of the implementation, within the post-phase of the study, through the deductive analysis based on the same themes in the pre-phase, none of the PTEs preferred to name or associate the concept with stress.



The participants (PTEs 4 and 10) who used to link the concept with stress, changed their way of perception into acceptance (PTE 10) or mixed-blessing (PTE 4). This can be interpreted as a perceptual change that might be read as positive. This change might be represented through the statement of PTE 4 as in *“Teaching teens/young adult learners is like preparing for the university exam because it is as stressful as this preparation.”* in the pre-phase and switching to *“Teaching teens/young adult learners is like walking in the rain because it is both peaceful and challenging.”* in the post phase. The idea of teaching this age group as a source of stress or challenge altered itself into acceptance and mixed-blessing (PTEs 4 and 10), and from acceptance into devotion (PTE 8), and from mixed-blessing to devotion (PTEs 3, 7, and 9), which might be regarded as a shift towards relatively positive perspectives.

Apart from accepting the needs and the characteristics of the age group, which might be regarded as a kind of awareness on the concept, within the *Devotion* theme representing the potential and power to teach teens and young adults effectively, the majority of the PTEs had the grasp of the idea that teaching teens/young adults is even possible through effort. This effort is illustrated by the PTE statement (7) for the justification of his metaphor *“Teaching teens/young adult learners is like bodybuilding because if you want to have a powerful body, firstly you should believe in yourself and never give up then work hard, otherwise you cannot be successful”* for the post-phase. Rather than a threat or acceptance, the concept of *“teaching teens/young adults”* became something more accessible and achievable, which go in line with the voices of the PTEs in the interviews.

In a similar vein, the content analysis of the interview data provided three themes revealing the effectiveness of the course- developing positive attitudes towards teaching teens/young adults, enhancing awareness on learner characteristics and needs of different age groups, and achieving a sense of preparedness and confidence in teaching teens/young adults.

First, the prospective teachers relatively changed their perceptions of and developed positive attitudes towards teaching teenagers and young adults. The PTEs made the following statements.

*“I was prejudiced against teaching teens and adults, but after the course, my prejudice was broken.”* (PTE 9)

*“Although working with young learners was my preference, the course also steered me up to work with teens/young adults.”* (PTE 8)

*“I thought this learner group was chaotic and noisy. I was thinking this situation was common with these learner groups because of their developmental behaviours. But now, after the implementation, I realized that an inefficient teacher could create such a chaotic environment, not because of the learners, just because of the teacher behaviours.”* (PTE 7)

*“Teen groups are challenging, and they have to be dealt with. But this allows us to both teach and learn.”* (PTE 4)

At the beginning of the study, PTE 7 who viewed the learner group of teenagers as chaotic and PTE 1 who considered teenagers as the most challenging learner group altered their beliefs into the fact that they were yet manageable. Furthermore, PTE 4, in line with her metaphor prompts, changed her perception of teaching teens from a source of stress into a bitter-sweet which can be taken as an opportunity for professional development.

Another favourable finding revealed by the statements below indicates that the PTEs enjoyed the novelty in the classes of young adults at the school of foreign languages.

*“I had no previous experience of teaching young adult learners; I found it quite enjoyable to teach a group of students close to our age with this implemented course.”* (PTE 1)

*“We found ourselves in an environment that we had never experienced at all, and there were foreign students in the classroom we observed. It was enjoyable.”* (PTE 7)

Taking all into consideration, this might be inferred that the PTEs seemed to have made the most of the implementation, have broken their prejudice, diverged from their previous negatively connotated perceptions and developed positive attitudes towards the concept of *“teaching teenagers and young adults”*.

The course also proved to be beneficial in enhancing the PTEs' awareness of learner characteristics and needs. Based on their statements below, as the PTEs benefitted from the opportunities to observe the target age group, they seem to have become more aware of the learning characteristics and needs of teens/young adults.

*“I had no idea about the teen group, but the course increased my awareness on the target students and their learning characteristics.”* (PTE 5)

*“This lesson was useful in getting to know this group of students.”* (PTE 8)

*“With the help of the course, I was able to compare different student groups and understand different learner characteristics.”* (PTE 4)

As outlined among the goals of the course design, the study aimed to make the PTEs more aware of learner characteristics and needs of teens/young adults, and gain more theoretical and practical knowledge of and insights into the concept under scrutiny. From the findings of the metaphor analysis and interviews, it is clear that these objectives have been achieved.

This course also provided the PTEs with a chance to observe the practical applications of the theory-based implications suggested through the components of the FLTE programme, which enabled them to have a sense of preparedness as they reported below.

*"But in these learning environments, we can see the examples of theories and the application of integrated teaching." (PTE 3)*

*"It allowed seeing examples of methods and techniques that work well in teenage and adult groups." (PTE 10)*

*"Such a course on teaching teens and adults will be a useful guide for us when we start to work." (PTE 4)*

*"I got tips and ideas about classroom management." (PTE 3)*

*"I found that this group of students could be addressed and taught with the right techniques and strategies, lesson preparation and practice." (PTE 4)*

The PTEs seem to have gained self-confidence before their in-service experiences when they face the need to teach different groups of learners in real teaching environments. Sharing a personal incident in which one newly-grad was overwhelmed with stress and difficulty in teaching teens, PTE 7 who expressed his fear of teaching learners at high schools at the beginning of the study, stated that he gained more confidence through the course, as presented below.

*"I had a fear of teaching teens/young adults in the beginning since we had no previous experience with this group, but now with the implementation of this course, I developed confidence and found out this group was also teachable." (PTE 7)*

Along with the findings of the metaphors and interviews seen above, the course turned out to be effective in terms of preparing the PTEs for teaching teens/ young adults. The prospective teachers' all aforementioned statements support the conviction that such a course must be integral to the FLTE programme. Moreover, this remedial course which was implemented through this study to meet the previously reported need for age-tailored language teaching training might be optimized considering the following suggestions.

## CONCLUSION

The study can be explained in a nutshell as follows. The overall results imply that the components of the present FLTE programme do not sufficiently address the needs of the PTEs in terms of teaching teens/young adults. Considering the mismatch between the teacher qualifications indicated by MoNE (to teach teens/young adults) and the outputs of the FLTE programme components, there appears to be a need voiced by the PTEs for a course design especially constructed to train PTEs on how to teach teens/young adults. Proven to be effective by the statements, interviews, metaphors, and voices of the PTEs in the present study, the implemented course was found to contribute to the PTEs' sense of preparedness, awareness and acceptance of target learner characteristics, knowledge of appropriate instructional strategies and techniques, and led to a change in the attitude towards teaching

teens/young adults by equipping them with theoretical and practical insights into and hands-on practice on teaching teenagers and young adults in the classroom.

## SUGGESTION

Although the findings of the study might be considered limited to only one context, the results still provide insights into the problem concerned as being the voices of prospective teachers. Below can be found several recommendations for potential research and practice that will help better understand how to train prospective teachers appropriately and efficiently.

First of all, as planned earlier but not implemented due to the pandemic, the course design might be applied for two terms including a teaching opportunity within the practicum supplement. Moreover, the course design might be piloted to larger groups first in collaboration with ELT field experts, programme developers and policy designers working in affiliation to CoHE, and ultimately included within the list of elective courses first as an immediate remedial, and then a compulsory course afterwards. With the changing trends and decisions by the MoNE, CoHE, and the educational policy of the country, FLTE programme developers and practitioners should keep in mind that the course design needs to be flexible in terms of covering up-to-date concepts and concerns as suggested and also integrated within the present course design.

To optimize this course design, the PTEs need to be provided with further opportunities for practicum with different age groups. In line with this, the researchers suggest that education faculties should also collaborate with SoFLs affiliated with the university to improve practicum opportunities and provide teaching environments with a different age range of students so that PTEs will be able to observe young adult learners and teach them in real educational settings, gain valuable authentic experience, and also contribute to their professional development by benefiting from the observation of instructors.

## LIMITATION

The participants were assumed to have responded frankly and willingly on a purposeful voluntary basis, and in a way representing their own/genuine ideas. To assure this, the students were made to feel free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Another limitation concerns the duration. The course was primarily planned to be providing a two-term practice but was only possible to be implemented for the first term due to the pandemic.

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A.

#### FLTE Curriculum

<b>First Year</b>	
<i>FLTE Programme Departmental Courses</i>	<i>FLTE Programme (Updated) Departmental Courses</i>
<b>First Semester</b>	
Contextual Grammar I	Reading Skills 1
Advanced Reading & Writing I	Writing Skills 1
Listening & Pronunciation I	Listening & Pronunciation 1
Oral Communication Skills I	Oral Communication Skills 1
<b>Second Semester</b>	
Contextual Grammar II	Reading Skills 2
Advanced Reading & Writing II	Writing Skills 2
Listening & Pronunciation II	Listening & Pronunciation 2
Oral Communication Skills II	Oral Communication Skills 2
	Structure of English
<b>Second Year</b>	
<b>Third Semester</b>	
<i>FLTE Programme Departmental Courses</i>	<i>FLTE Programme (Updated) Departmental Courses</i>
English Literature I	Elective*
Linguistics I	Approaches to English Learning and Teaching
Approaches in Teaching English I	English Literature 1
Translation (E-T)	Linguistics I
Conversational Skills	Critical Reading and Writing
<b>Fourth Semester</b>	
English Literature II	Elective*
Linguistics II	English Language Teaching Curricular
Approaches in Teaching English II	English Literature 2
Language Acquisition	Linguistics 2
	Language Acquisition



**Third Year****Fifth Semester**

<i>FLTE Programme Departmental Courses</i>	<i>FLTE Programme (Updated) Departmental Courses</i>
Teaching English to Young Learners I	Elective*
Special Teaching Techniques II	Teaching English to Young Learners 1
Teaching Language Skills I	Teaching English Language Skills 1
Literature and Language Teaching I	Literature and Language Teaching 1
Second Foreign Language I	

**Sixth Semester**

Teaching English to Young Learners II	Elective*
Translation (T-E)	Teaching English to Young Learners 2
Teaching Language Skills II	Teaching English Language Skills 2
Literature and Language Teaching II	Literature and Language Teaching 2
Second Foreign Language II	

**Fourth Year****Seventh Semester**

<i>FLTE Programme Departmental Courses</i>	<i>FLTE Programme (Updated) Departmental Courses</i>
Material Evaluation and Development in Language Teaching	Elective*
Second Foreign Language III	Syllabus Design in ELT
Elective *	Translation

**Eighth Semester**

Testing and Evaluation in Foreign Language Teaching	Elective *
Elective *	Preparing Exams in ELT
Elective *	

## Appendix B.

### Course Design Outline

Course Outline: Teaching English to Teens & Young Adults		
Course Goals:	Content:	Duration:
To make PTEs	-Learner differences	- 2 hour- <b>theory</b> on teaching
- be aware of teenager/young adult language learners' characteristics,	-TPACK	teens/ young adults (by the
	- 21st-century teaching skills	lecturer/researcher at ELT
	- ICT&IT	department)
- comprehend the differences among young/ teenager/ young adult language learners,	-Appropriate teaching methods and techniques	- 2 hour- <b>practice</b> on teaching
	- Material design & development	teens& young adults ( <u>at the</u>
	- Planning the lesson	<u>SoFL</u> )
	- Teaching skills	
- have a theory on how to teach teenager/ young adult language learners,	- Classroom management	- Regular 4 hour- practicum
	<b>Weekly Tasks:</b>	(MoNE)
	- Minute papers	
- have practice on how to teach teenager/ young adult language learners.	- Observation forms and Checklists (about what they've learned on the theory session that week and observe the issue in concern both at Practicum school& SoFL)	