

Developing Online Teaching Competencies of Educators in Turkey

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Abstract In this study, the training activities in order to teach online teaching competencies to educators at Turkish state universities were investigated. Survey design was used. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Thirty distance education unit administrators or employees from 30 universities participated in the research. According to the results, the training needs of the educators were determined by only 11 universities' distance education units. At 21 universities, the educators stated their training needs without being asked. In a large majority (f=24, 80%) of the universities, the training needs were determined in some way. In addition, almost all (f=27) universities provided training activities related to online teaching competencies. Most of the universities (f=26) provided trainings by their own units. Twenty-one universities preferred face-to-face training. Twelve universities had these trainings obligatory for their educators. Four universities stated that they presented a certificate at the end of the training. Eleven universities presented their trainings via an asynchronous platform. Moreover, 23 universities taught technological subjects in online teaching competency, eight universities taught pedagogical subjects, and only four universities taught both. However, universities need to teach on both subjects. Besides, the theory of andragogy and social, cognitive and teaching presence were not encountered in the contents of the training activities.

Keywords: online teaching competency, online teaching, open and distance education, distance education

Türkiye'deki Eğitimcilerin Çevrimiçi Öğretim Yeterliklerinin Geliştirilmesi

Öz: Bu çalışmada, Türkiye'de devlet üniversitelerinde eğitimciler için çevrimiçi öğretim yeterlikleri kazandırmak için yapılan eğitim etkinlikleri incelenmiştir. Tarama modeli kullanılan araştırmada nicel ve nitel veri toplanmıştır. Otuz üniversitenin 30 uzaktan eğitim birimi yöneticisi veya çalışanı araştırmaya katılmıştır. Araştırmanın bulgularına göre, sadece 11 üniversitenin uzaktan eğitim birimi tarafından eğitimcilerin eğitim gereksinimlerinin belirlendiği görülmüştür. Yirmi bir üniversitede ise eğitimciler, kendilerine sorulmadan eğitim gereksinimlerini belirtmişlerdir. Üniversitelerin çoğunda (f=24, %80) eğitim gereksinimleri bir şekilde belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca üniversitelerin neredeyse tamamı (f=27) çevrimiçi öğretim yeterlikleri konusunda eğitim etkinlikleri düzenlemektedir. Üniversitelerin çoğu (f=26) kendi birimleri aracılığıyla eğitim sunmaktadır. Yirmi bir üniversite eğitimleri yüz yüze olarak vermektedir. On iki üniversite, eğitimciler için bu eğitimi zorunlu tutmaktadır. Dört üniversite eğitim sonunda sertifika verdiğini belirtmiştir. On bir üniversite eğitimlerini asenkron platformlardan vermektedir. Bunların yanı sıra 23 üniversite çevrimiçi öğretim yeterliliği ile ilgili teknik konuda, sekiz üniversite pedagojik konuda ve sadece dört üniversite ise her iki konuda eğitim sunmaktadır. Ancak üniversitelerin her iki konuda eğitim vermesi gerekmektedir. Ayrıca eğitim etkinliklerinin içeriğinde andragoji kuramı ve sosyal, bilişsel ve öğretimsel bulunuşluk konularına rastlanmamıştır.

Anahar kelimeler: çevrimiçi öğretim yeterliği, çevrimiçi öğretim, açık ve uzaktan eğitim, uzaktan eğitim

Introduction

There are various differences between teaching a course from a distance and teaching it face to face. The clearest difference is that the educator cannot know how the student reacts to what s/he has written in an online course and what s/he has said on a live broadcast. Another difference is that distance education is carried out with the help of technology (Moore & Kearsley, 2005). In addition, the educators teaching face-to-face tend to use their learning materials without changing in online environments when they start to teach online (Hogan, McKnight & Legier, 2006; McQuiggan, 2012). Therefore, learning materials which does not contain any interaction and does not prepared for individual learning are used in online learning

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environments. These materials will not make an important contribution to learning in online teaching. Hence, the educators who teach online are expected to have different competencies than those necessary to give a traditional course.

Having online teaching competencies is important for an educator. The educators who will teach online need to have technological and pedagogical competencies alongside field knowledge (content) (Darabi, Sikorski & Harvey, 2006; Hogan et al., 2006). First of all, the educator who will provide training online is expected to have technical skills (Moodle, Blackboard and so on) in order to use learning management systems and synchronous virtual classroom systems (Adobe Connect and so on). Furthermore, as Bailey and Card (2009) stated, an educator is required to have pedagogical competencies such as developing his/her relations with students (developing empathy with students and so on), engaging students in the course (trying to get answers when discussing questions by using discussing boards and so on), being punctual (giving homework in time and so on), having strong communication skills (sending informing text messages and so on), and clarifying expectations (preparing a detailed syllabus and so on).

There are some technological and pedagogical problems in open and distance education. The organization of online live broadcast courses are based more on educator-centered education than on student-centered education and educators seem to underutilize additional materials to enrich their courses. Additionally, educators do not usually participate in online discussion forums, and do not respond to e-mails on time (Dinçer & Yeşilpınar-Uyar, 2015). In addition to this, due to the fact that educators cannot estimate the period of the homework or application to be done using online platforms, they give short deadlines to students. These problems may discourage students from participating in online courses or even withdraw completely (Bilgiç & Tüzün, 2015; Dinçer & Yeşilpınar-Uyar, 2015; Gillet-Swan, 2017). There is no compulsory attendance for many courses in online education (Moore & Kearsley, 2005), and therefore keeping the student in the system, engaging with the course and motivating applications are needed. And the one who may do that is the educator who has online teaching competencies.

When the educators learn the process, they begin to provide training more efficiently (Hogan, McKnight & Lagier, 2006). Therefore, it would be useful for the educator to be trained before online teaching to be more productive until he/she gains adequate online teaching competency. Hogan, McKnight and Lagier (2006) stated that before an educator teaches online, he/she needs to undergo in-service training about technological and pedagogical subjects. In this context, university administrators are expected to arrange technological and pedagogical education for educators and support them (Bailey & Card, 2009). Technological and pedagogical training activities for educators teaching online have become increasingly common; therefore, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) platforms including Coursera and Udemy have courses such as 'Learning to Teach Online' (Coursera, 2017b). Furthermore, in various universities, in-service trainings about online teaching competencies are held. For example, The University of Illinois (2017) has opened an online course entitled "Overview of Online Instruction".

Darabi et al., (2006) indicated that more studies on the content of training on teaching online for educators are needed. Since, like in the world, online distance education has been spreading out in Turkey, the current situation for training activities on online teaching competencies to educators in Turkish state universities is explored.

Purpose

In this study, the training activities in order to teach online teaching competencies to educators at Turkish state universities were investigated. For this purpose, answers to the questions below were sought:

1. How are the training needs related to the online teaching competencies of the educators determined?

2. How are the online teaching competency trainings provided to educators?

This study is expected to contribute to the existing body of literature on online teaching competency. Furthermore, it is expected that the study will create awareness for distance education unit administrators and educators. The research findings are also expected to help distance education units in preparing training activities about online teaching competencies.

Open and Distance Education in Turkey

Many associate, undergraduate, master programs and certificate programs in Turkey are carried out online. The Council of Higher Education (CHE) has prepared a set of “methods and principles on distance education in higher education institutions” (Council of Higher Education [CHE], 2017a) in order to open and carry out distance education programs at the level of associate, undergraduate and master degrees. Furthermore, it is stated in the methods and principles on distance education of the CHE that 30% of the courses in formal programs can be provided via distance education. To provide distance education at Turkish universities, distance education centers or faculties have been established. These units provide learning management system and synchronous virtual class to distance education programs offered by colleges, graduate school etc. In addition, they provide technical support and arrange training activities for academicians who provide online teaching.

Online Teaching Competencies

Competency is the state of being well qualified when executing a mission or task (Spector & de la Teja, 2001). In this context, online teaching competency can be defined as having the necessary knowledge and skills in order to teach via online platforms. Educators having online teaching competencies stated in the literature may increase the quality of online teaching. The online teaching competencies expected from educators are indicated below.

- **Engaging students and encouraging presence:** The most important general features expected by online educators are to evoke their own presence and to prevent the students from feeling unattended and lonely (Boettcher, 2011; Dincer & Yesilpinar – Uyar, 2016). For this reason, besides synchronous courses in the system, the educator has to motivate the students, make announcements, reply to e-mails and do such activities by writing messages on the discussion forums of asynchronous platforms by entering the system daily (Bailey & Card, 2009; Boettcher, 2011). More particularly, meeting the students’ expectations in due course is regarded as important in terms of students’ attendance (Baily & Card, 2009; Darabi et al., 2006; Kuo, Walker, Belland, Schroder & Kuo, 2014; Sumer, 2016).
- **Developing social, teaching and cognitive presence:** The online teacher should desire to develop social presence, teaching presence and cognitive presence (Boettcher, 2011). Various activities should be held in order to encourage active participation for the students. Establishment of online discussion groups, and social networks and prompting teachers to promote teacher-student, student-student and student-resource interaction is therefore necessary (Boettcher, 2011; Darabi et al., 2006; Moore & Kearsley, 2005).
- **Preparing syllabus and related guidelines:** The online educator has to clearly to state his/her expectations from the students in terms of making contact with the students and how long they have to study weekly (Boettcher, 2011; Gulbahar, 2012; Moore & Kearsley, 2005). In this regard, it is necessary that preparing instructions determining the expected behaviors of the students related to the course period (Darabi et al., 2006) and specifying procedures such as scoring, giving feedback, and using communication channels should be determined and discussed with students (Bailey & Card, 2009; Moore & Kearsley, 2005).

- **Investigating the ideal methods to develop effective communication:** In terms of teachers developing intimate relations with the students and providing more effective learning, he/she has to ask himself or herself the question “How can I assist?” (Bailey & Card, 2009). In this respect, it is expected that the teacher investigates an appropriate manner of interaction and then working on it (Darabi et al., 2006), uses mutual empathy towards the limitations that have been experienced (Bailey & Card, 2009) and struggles to overcome these limitations together with the student (Moore & Kearsley, 2005).
- **Having pedagogical competence:** Course contents and materials (course notes and other resources) have to be prepared in detail and in accordance with the principles of e-learning and multimedia design principles (Moore & Kearsley, 2009). The content prepared has to be organized such that the students could easily reach it via their computers (Boettcher, 2011). The materials which compose the course content should be prepared in an integrated manner and ready for the first lesson (Bailey & Card, 2009; Gulbahar, 2012).
- **Having technical competence:** The technological competencies of the online teachers have to be evaluated pursuant to integrating the new technologies to the course and adapting them to new learning environments beyond the present utilization of technology (Bailey & Card, 2009).
- **To be able to observe individual differences:** Online distance education provides an opportunity to consider individual differences and is suitable for student-centered education. Therefore, the online teacher has to use the appropriate communication and interaction channels with the students by using synchronous and asynchronous course tools (Darabi et al., 2006; Moore & Kearsley, 2005). On the other hand, with the appropriate tools, the development of the students should be monitored and the necessary feedback should be provided on time.

Theory of Andragogy

The pedagogical model that focuses on child learning had difficulties in meeting adult learning needs (Knowles, 1980). Therewith, the theory of andragogy about adult learning was put forward by Knowles (1980). The five assumptions of the theory of andragogy for online learning are the following (Blondy, 2007; Knowles, 1980):

- **Adults are self-directed learners:** In the online learning environment, the course educator should express the learning objectives at the beginning of the course and determine the specific learning objectives of the learners. The course educator should determine the learning activities preferences of learners or offer them a number of learning activities so that they can select the appropriate one from among themselves.
- **Adults participate in the learning environment with their experiences:** The online learning environment should include group activities and interactive discussions that encourage learners to share their experiences.
- **Adults enter the learning environment ready to learn:** Online educators should know that learners attend classes for a specific need. Educators help learners to meet their special needs. For example, in a group activity, educator can gather learners who have same expectations.
- **Adults learn to solve their real life problems:** The online educator should give assignments and group projects that enable learners to combine real life situations with the theoretical concepts of the course.
- **Adults become motivated to learn by internal factors:** The online educator should respect the needs of learners. Educator should improve learners’ self-esteem by telling them their

contributions to the lesson. When the educator benefitted from experience of one of the learners in the discussion environment, the learner feels appreciated.

Educators teaching online should have knowledge about the theory of andragogy since their students will mostly be adults. Therefore, training activities for educators teaching online should contain the theory of andragogy.

Training Activities for Educators Providing Online Teaching

For a qualified online teaching, the educator should be trained in technological (learning management system, etc.) and pedagogical (instructional principles for online education) dimensions before teaching online (Bailey & Card, 2009; Hogan et al., 2006). The training activities should focus on “planning and communication” in order to develop the interaction, and should prepare the educators for “co-operating” with instructional designers and computer programmers in order to arrange accurate and complete course content (Darabi et al., 2006; Pallof & Pratt, 2009; Ragan & Schroeder, 2013).

Universities organize online training activities or courses for the educators to teach them how to teach online. For instance, The University of Illinois (2017) has opened an online course for their academics, entitled “Overview of Online Instruction” in order to obtain the necessary pedagogical and technical skills to teach online successfully. The University of Wisconsin-Madison (2017) presents an online course named “Professional Certificate in Online Education” targeting to develop the knowledge and skills of the educators who teach online. Besides, in Coursera (2017a), which hosts MOOC, the universities or other educational institutions present courses related to the online teaching. In Coursera, one of the courses related to teaching how to teach online is “Learning to Teach Online” (Coursera, 2017b). “Learning to Teach Online” course aims for the educators to implement or develop online or mixed applications.

Method

Research Design

Since in this research, the current situation of equipping educators with online teaching competencies in distance education units at Turkish universities was described, survey design was used in order to answer the research questions. In the survey research, data is collected from a group of participants to describe some of the characteristics of the population of which the group is a constituent part (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

Participants

The participants of this research were 30 distance education unit administrators or employees from 30 Turkish state universities which have distance education units (center or faculty) and taught online courses. One participant from each university participated in the research. The participant selection process was conducted as follows:

- The current information on the numbers, names and web pages of Turkish state universities was accessed from the CHE web site (CHE, 2017b).
- Web pages of Turkish state universities were examined and those who had distance education units (center or faculty) and taught online courses were selected. 82 universities with these characteristics were identified. Therefore, the target population was distance education unit administrators or employees from each of the 82 Turkish state universities.
- The original aim was reaching the entire target population, but only the unit administrators or employees from each of the 30 universities (Appendix 1) volunteered to participate in the research.

Some features of the participants such as university, position, title and distance education experience are given in Table 1.

Table 1.

Features of the participants

University	Position	Title	Distance Education Experience (Year)
U1	Employee	Specialist	5
U2	Vice Director	Assoc.Dr.	3
U3	Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	3
U4	Vice Director	Lecturer	5
U5	Vice Dean	Assoc.Dr.	17
U6	Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	1
U7	Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	1
U8	Vice Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	4
U9	Vice Director	Specialist	5
U10	Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	5
U11	Vice Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	6
U12	Director	Prof.Dr.	6
U13	Vice Director	Specialist	7
U14	Vice Director	Lecturer	1
U15	Vice Director	Lecturer	2
U16	Vice Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	2
U17	Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	3
U18	Vice Director	Specialist	9
U19	Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	1
U20	Director	Prof.Dr.	10
U21	Vice Director	Assoc.Dr.	9
U22	Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	4
U23	Director	Assist.Prof.Dr.	3
U24	Vice Director	Lecturer	2
U25	Vice Director	Lecturer	8
U26	Vice Director	Specialist	7
U27	Vice Director	Lecturer	2
U28	Employee	Specialist	4
U29	Employee	Specialist	3
U30	Vice Director	Lecturer	10

As seen in Table 1, most of the participants worked at a Distance Education Center (f=28) and were administrators (f=27). Besides, 16 of them have PhDs and 11 of them have the Assist.Prof.Dr. title. Their distance education experience ranged from one to 17 years. The number of educators teaching online in these universities ranged from 10 to above 500. Universities provide distance online education in programs such as associate (f=12), undergraduate (f=3), undergraduate completion (f=11) and master's (f=15). Turkish Language, Usage of Basic Information Technology, English, Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution named as CHE common compulsory courses in formal education can be taught online. 25 universities provided these courses online. In addition, 14 universities provided various certificate programs.

Data Collection

An online questionnaire was developed to determine the training activities on online teaching competencies for educators by distance education units at Turkish state universities. The questionnaire had open-ended and close-ended questions. After developing the questionnaire, a pilot application was conducted and the questionnaire was finalized. The questionnaire had two parts. The first part included demographics such as university, distance education unit, position in the unit, title, distance education

experience, and the number of educators teaching online at university and distance education programs. The second part had questions to answer the research questions. One such example is: *“What is the content of the course/activity regarding teaching how to teach online to educators?”*

Researchers tried to reach all target participants. Therefore, an online questionnaire link was sent to the e-mail accounts of units, directors, vice directors, deans and vice deans in all the 82 universities. There was very little participation. Two weeks later, a second e-mail was sent. After that, the units were dialed by phone until reaching someone in the unit. After all these attempts, 30 universities answered the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected using a questionnaire. Frequency and percentage were used for the quantitative data analysis. To analyze the qualitative data, the content analysis technique was used (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2008). Two researchers analyzed data independently and reached categories and codes. When they had a disagreement, they discussed and reached a consensus. While reporting, code names were used for the participants. Code names were their university codes which were randomly assigned to every university (U1, U2, U3 and so on).

Findings

Determining Training Needs related to the Online Teaching Competencies of the Educators Teaching Online

The training needs related to the online teaching competencies of the educators teaching online were determined in two ways. In the first method, the training needs of the educators were determined by the distance education units of the universities. In the second method, the educators stated their training needs without being asked.

In the first method, only 11 universities carried out studies on determining needs related to the online teaching competencies of the educators to teach online. Nineteen universities (2/3) did not perform any needs assessment. The universities which determined the needs stated that they determined the educators' needs by means of interview (f=7), observation of their online classes (f=2), survey (f=2), and workshops (f=1). U5 stated that: *“We determine the needs by pre-interviewing”*, and U12 stated their method of determining the needs as *“We have determined the expectations and issues associated with the needs analysis via workshops.”*

In the second method, at 21 universities, the educators to teach online stated their needs related to the online teaching competencies. Besides, in 9 of these universities, the educators did not state any needs. In most of these universities, the educators informed their training needs to the distance education units via some methods. The educators stated their needs via interview (f=8), meeting (f=4) and online forms (f=1). U4 mentioned that the educators stated their training needs as: *“Yes, they (educators) have stated (training needs) via interviews and meetings held”*. On the other hand, some participants (f=10) mentioned that the educators stated their training needs; however, they did not mention the method they conveyed. For instance, U6 affirmed that a training was requested with the explanation *“Yes”*; however, he did not indicate the method of stating the needs.

In Figure 1, the two methods of determining the training needs are shown together. In a large majority (f=24) of these institutions, it was reported that the training needs were determined in some way. Some units conducted needs analysis only on their own (f=3). Some units conducted their need analysis only according to the demands from the educators (f=13). Some institutions planned (f=8) their training by using both methods (the unit determining + the demand by educators).

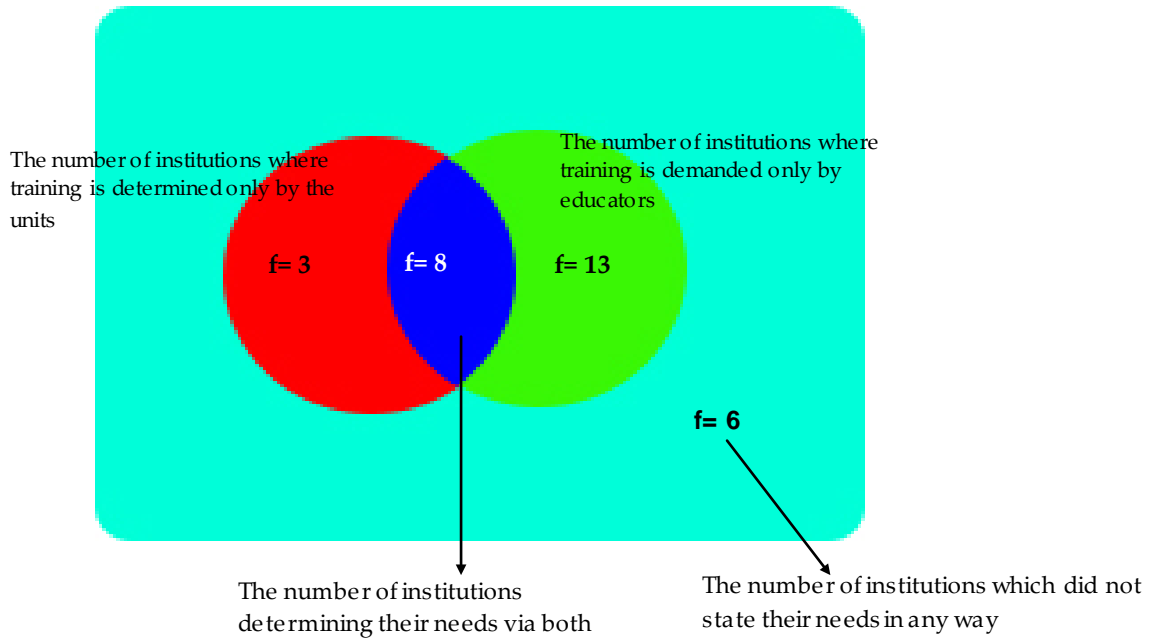


Figure 1. The state of determining the training needs within the online teaching competences

Training Activities provided for the Educators to Equip them with Online Teaching Competencies

It was determined that almost all ($f=27$) universities provided training activities related to online teaching competencies. Only three institutions did not provide training activities. The reasons for the units to provide training activities are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2.

The reason for providing training activities

Theme	Frequency
Lack of technical skills observed	10
Improvement of quality and success in education	6
Gaining online teaching experience	4
Enabling the educator to be more efficient	4
The educator having demands	3
The necessity of having skills different from formal education	1

Note. More than one reason for providing training activities was stated. Some universities did not state any reasons.

As can be seen in Table 2, the participants stated the reasons of training as lack of observed technical skills ($f=10$), improvement of quality and success in education ($f=6$), gaining online teaching experience ($f=4$), enabling the educator to be more efficient ($f=4$), the educator having demands ($f=3$) and the necessity of having skills different from formal education ($f=1$). U9 stated "There are clear deficiencies regarding to the utilization of LMS (learning management system)". He mentioned about the lack of technical skills monitored. As U11 stated, the ultimate aim of education provided was the improvement of success, he also

expressed his opinion as “In order to reach the aimed quality in education...” Some universities stated that they were in need of trainings in order to enable the educators to gain experience. In this respect, U5 stated that “The academicians who are experienced in face to face training have to have distance teaching experience. In this sense, the educators assigned (to online teaching) have to be trained.” U26, one of the three institutions which did not provide training explained the reason as “Institutional problems such as the problem of planning training”. U6 expressed it as “lack of equipment”.

It was stated that the online teaching competency trainings provided by the universities showed differences with respect to some variables. These variables were provider of the training, the type of training provided, the state of participation to the training, the state of providing certificate and the state of providing asynchronous training. Table 3 summarizes the state of these variables of the online teaching competency trainings.

Table 3.

Providing online teaching competency training

Category	Sub-category	Frequency
Provider	Own Unit	26
	Another University	1
Type of training provided	Face to Face	21
	Online	2
State of participation	Mixed	4
	Obligatory	12
State of providing certificate	Optional	15
	Yes	4
State of providing asynchronous training (As course package)	No	23
	Yes	11
	No	16

Note. In some questions, more than one option was selected.

As can be seen in Table 3, most of the universities provided online teaching competency trainings by their own units ($f=26$). One of the participants, U3, stated that another university incorporated all their educators into this certificate program training that they prepared. The vast majority of the units preferred face-to-face training ($f=21$). However, some universities ($f=4$) stated that they provided mixed delivery of instruction (face-to-face and online). While 12 of these universities had these trainings obligatory for their educators, 15 of them provided training optionally. While four of these universities stated that they presented a certificate at the end of the training, 23 of them stated that they did not present certificates. 11 of these universities stated that they presented their trainings via an asynchronous platform, which the educators could access anytime.

The content of online teaching competency trainings was generally technological and pedagogical. The content of the online teaching competency training in universities was indicated in Table 4.

Table 4.*The content of online teaching competency training*

Category	Subtopics	Frequency
Technological	Learning Management System	21
	Virtual Class Systems	11
	Developing Content of Education and Multimedia Activities	8
	Graphic Design	3
Pedagogical	Basis of E-learning	5
	Teaching Methods and Techniques, Interactive Communication	5
	E-Assessment	4
	Instructional Design and E-Course Syllabus	3
	Social Software and Developing Technologies	3
	Quality in e-Learning	1
Other	Copyrights and Ethics in E-Learning Process	3

Note. The titles were defined according to the two categories (technological or pedagogical). Many of the universities trained more than one subtopic.

As can be seen on Table 4, the institutions which carried out training on online teaching competencies provided training on educational contents under technological, pedagogical and other categories. Many of the institutions ($f=21$) provided training in the utilization of learning management systems under the technological category. 11 institutions were found to train the usage of virtual classroom systems under the technological category. It was found that eight institutions trained technological issues, such as developing materials via specific software (for instance, preparing PowerPoint presentations). On the other hand, in pedagogical category, the basis of e-learning training was taught ($f=5$). Apart from that, "teaching methods and techniques, and interactive communication" ($f=5$) and "e-assessment" ($f=4$) subjects partaking on pedagogical category were trained as well. Furthermore, in other category, there was a training subject named "copyrights and ethics in e-learning process" ($f=3$).

The number of universities which provided training in the technological, pedagogical, both technological and pedagogical and other categories was indicated on Table 5.

Table 5.*The number of universities which trained in the technological, pedagogical, both technological and pedagogical and other categories*

Category	Frequency
Technological	23
Pedagogical	8
Technological and Pedagogical	4
Other	3

As can be seen in Table 5, 23 universities provided training in technological subjects in online teaching competency training, 8 universities provided training in pedagogical subjects and 4 universities provided training in subjects in both categories. Many of the 27 universities ($f=23$) provided training in technological subjects.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the training activities carried out by the distance education units at universities in Turkey in order to teach online teaching competencies to educators who will teach online was examined. First of all, the needs of training containing the online teaching competencies of the educators who will teach online were revealed. According to the research findings, the training needs of the educators were determined by the distance education unit and/or they were specified by the educators.

The planning of education activities for online teaching competency is a process of instructional design. The general process of instructional design comprises the stages of analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation. The first step of instructional design is analysis (Simsek, 2016). This step can be named as the most important step in defining and planning a healthy teaching process (Loughner & Moller, 1998; March & Lee, 2016; Rhode & Krishnamurthi, 2016). The first step of this research is the analysis of needs. 11 out of 30 universities participated in the research analyzed the training needs. In most universities, the compulsory trainings about online teaching competency caused universities not to perform any training needs analyses. U11, one of the universities which did not analyze the needs and kept training compulsory, expressed the situation as “in the beginning of each term, the trainings mentioned above are being given to all academicians who will teach online even if it is requested or not.” Even if the training is compulsory, in order to upgrade or develop the education content, a need assessment should be carried out. Our findings indicate that the demand for training in 21 universities came from the educators. As a result, in the analysis step, the needs were expressed by educators rather than distance education units. Although the instructors themselves demanded the training needs, it can be said that the training needs should be determined by the institutions. Considering that not all educators demanded training, the training needs of non-demanding educators would be ignored.

Almost all of the universities participated in the research ($f=27$, 80%) trained their educators to increase their online teaching competencies. Most of the universities ($f=26$) provided trainings by their own units. Twelve universities had these trainings obligatory for their educators. Eleven universities presented their trainings via an asynchronous platform. In an online asynchronous environment, the educator can reach learning materials whenever they want.

The trainings were mostly performed face to face ($f=21$). However, educators who are students of online environment gain experience and understand the needs of students in this environment in a better way (Adnan, Kalelioğlu & Gülbahar, 2017; Benson & Ward, 2013; Karaman, Yıldırım, & Gülsoy, 2010). An educator who does not take part in an online course as a student cannot be expected to understand what kind of learning environment the students are exposed to (developing empathy). Hence, it would be useful for the educators who will teach online to take online courses. This is why it is important for educators to learn online teaching in an “online course”.

Most of the universities ($f=23$) in this study did not award a certificate upon completing the online teaching competency training, but 4 institutions awarding certificates (e.g. Gülbahar & Karataş, 2016) stated they used a certification program.

Twenty-three universities taught technological subjects in online teaching competency, 8 universities trained pedagogical subjects and 4 universities trained both. In many of the universities, technological subjects such as learning management systems and virtual classroom systems were trained. The statement of ten universities about the deficiency of technological skills observed in the needs analysis can be shown as a reason of training technological subjects more. Darabi et al. (2006) and Hogan et al. (2006) indicated

that the educators teaching online need to have both technological and pedagogical competencies. Therefore, universities need to train on both subjects (March & Lee, 2016). Moreover, Bailey and Card (2009) pointed out that university administrators should arrange not only technological training but also pedagogical training. Furthermore, educators will have difficulty in integrating pedagogical applications when new technological tools are introduced. Therefore, the content of in-service training activities needs to be reviewed and upgraded, as well. However, it was found that only 2 out of 27 training institutions evaluated and upgraded their training programs.

Even if the educators have sufficient technological knowledge and skills for online teaching, they may lack pedagogical knowledge and skills. It is known that educators who are not experts in the education field do not take professional teaching courses named as “pedagogical formation”. Therefore, educators who do not work in the education field do not have the professional knowledge and skills to adapt to online environments. Bawane and Spector (2009) assert that the key role of online educators is pedagogical. Within this context, the trainings of online educators should focus primarily on pedagogical knowledge.

When the courses’/educational activities’ contents aiming at providing online teaching competencies in the distance education units were examined in detail, it was seen that a great majority of these courses/activities did not completely include the online teaching competencies. These courses/activities did not include community of inquiry and the theory of andragogy. Having content such as community of inquiry including social, cognitive and teaching presence (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2000) will increase the level of quality. Moreover, Boettcher (2011) indicated that the online educator should aim to develop social, cognitive and teaching presence. Besides, the theory of andragogy (Knowles, 1980) was not encountered in the contents of the training activities. All training programs must be based on the relevant theory like andragogy (Meyer, 2013). As online learners are usually adults, it is useful to consider the theory of andragogy that focuses on adult learning.

Further research can be designed to reveal the training activities on teaching how to teach online in other countries. Interviews can be held in order to gather more in-depth data. Considering the results of this research, the higher education institutions as the leading practitioners of the open and distance education were aware of the importance of the educators’ online teaching competencies, however, the trainings provided were generally put a heavy emphasis on using technology. However, the content of such trainings has to cover both technological and pedagogical dimensions. Based on the results of this research, workshops can be organized to discuss and decide all aspects of training activities organized by distance education units to increase their educators’ online teaching competencies.

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Appendix 1

Universities Participated in the Research

1. Abant İzzet Baysal University
2. Adıyaman University
3. Akdeniz University
4. Anadolu University
5. Ankara University
6. Atatürk University
7. Bartın University
8. Bingöl University
9. Bülent Ecevit University
10. Cumhuriyet University
11. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University
12. Dicle University
13. Erciyes University

14. Eskişehir Osmangazi University
15. Fırat University
16. Gazi University
17. Gaziosmanpaşa University
18. Karadeniz Teknik University
19. Kırklareli University
20. Mersin University
21. Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University
22. Mustafa Kemal University
23. Namık Kemal University
24. Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University
25. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University
26. Sakarya University
27. Selçuk University
28. Süleyman Demirel University
29. Trakya University
30. Yıldız Teknik University