

## EFL Teachers' Writing Assessment Literacy, Beliefs, and Training Needs in the Context of Turkey

Mohammadreza Valizadeh\*

*Department of Translation and Interpretation (English), Faculty of Humanities, Cappadocia University, Cappadocia, Turkey*

**Corresponding Author:** Mohammadreza Valizadeh, E-mail: [mrvalizadeh2015@gmail.com](mailto:mrvalizadeh2015@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

Teachers' assessment literacy and beliefs contribute to encouraging or undermining students' learning; therefore, investigating such literacy to fulfill the teachers' training needs is essential. This quantitative survey study investigated the current level of 152 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' writing assessment literacy (WAL) in Turkey and identified their training needs in this area by means of a questionnaire. Further, this research explored the teachers' beliefs about different writing assessment methods, general assessment issues in writing classrooms and then scoring accuracy in writing assessment. Although 80.9% of the teachers stated that they had already received prior training in WAL, a vast majority of the participants (over 90%) stated they need to receive training in all the investigated WAL areas. The training need areas which stood on the highest six ranks included "Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks", "Designing integrated writing tasks", "Giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment", "Designing good writing tasks/tests", "Using the scoring rubrics", "Designing the scoring rubrics", "Using self-assessment", "Using peer-assessment", and "Using assessment portfolio". The detailed findings regarding the teachers' beliefs in the above-mentioned issues are explained and discussed in the paper. To improve the situation, the shortcomings in the language teacher education programs in Turkey should be addressed.

### INTRODUCTION

Teachers' assessment literacy has been defined as the teachers' knowledge of how to assess the students' competence and performance, "how to interpret the results from these assessments, and how to apply these results to improve student learning and program effectiveness." (Webb, 2002, p. 1). Moreover, classroom-based assessment for learning utilizes different types of pedagogical techniques including self and peer assessment, providing continuous descriptive feedback, and establishing assessment criteria to promote learning (Deluca & Klinger, 2010). A highly literate teacher has the theoretical and philosophical knowledge of assessing students' learning, is skilled at selecting appropriate assessment techniques, designing valid assessment tasks, offering feedback to students' performances, and evaluating the process of teaching and learning (Boyles, 2006; Deluca & Klinger, 2010). Recently, Crusan, Plakans, and Gebril (2016) argued that assessment literacy includes not only what and how to assess but also the issues of teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Additionally, the factors affecting teachers' decisions about what to do in the classroom and how to do it "include teaching context, teachers' prior language learning experiences, and teacher learning, both as a practitioner and a student." (Crusan et al., 2016, p. 45). Such literacy is an

essential skill, contributing to encouraging or undermining students' learning (Crusan et al., 2016; Mede & Atay, 2017; Mertler, 2009; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009).

Teachers' lack of assessment knowledge and skill as well as bad assessment practices can have detrimental impact on students' time, motivation, and confidence (Crusan et al., 2016). Given this, though teachers spend considerable amount of their professional time on assessment-related work, they often lack the competence to do it well (Crusan et al., 2016; Fulcher, 2012; Jin, 2010; Lam, 2015; Lan & Fan, 2019; Mertler, 2009; Stiggins, 1999, 2014; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017; White, 2009; Zhu, 2004). As for the writing skill, EFL teachers often neglect the teaching and detailed assessments of writing in their classes because they have not undergone adequate relevant training (Dempsey, Pytlikzillig, & Bruning, 2009). "Good assessment practices are essential to the teaching of second language writing" (Crusan et al., 2016, p. 46), so it is vital to provide the in-service and pre-service EFL teachers with assessment training to enable them to not only monitor student progress but also increase the learning potential of assessment. (Boyles, 2006; Hirvela & Belcher, 2007; Malone, 2013; Taylor, 2009; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Volante & Fazio, 2007; Weigle, 2007; White, 2009).

A few studies have investigated the second language (henceforth, L2) teachers' writing assessment knowledge,

beliefs, and training needs. Crusan et al., (2016) were among the pioneers who studied the mentioned issues with ESL and EFL writing teachers from 41 countries on five continents. A significant difference was found among teachers in terms of their linguistic background and teaching experience, but generally, 26% of the teachers had received little or no training in teaching and assessing writing. The issues, explored by Crusan et al., (2016), have also been investigated in the present research, yet this study only covers the context of Turkey as the subject has not been studied in this country, yet.

More recently, Soltanpour and Valizadeh (2019) gauged the level of Iranian EFL teachers' writing assessment literacy, and identified their training needs. The teachers' beliefs in scoring accuracy in writing assessment, general assessment issues in writing classrooms, and different writing assessment methods were also explored. The present study also investigated the mentioned issues, albeit in the context of Turkey.

The issues of Turkish EFL teachers' writing assessment literacy (henceforth, WAL), beliefs, and training needs deserve attention because understanding about what Turkish EFL teachers currently know and believe as well as what writing assessment training needs they have could pave the way of providing support for further learning on this topic. Further, to the best knowledge of the researcher of this study, no research has been published, which systematically explored the mentioned issues in Turkey.

### Review of Literature

In Turkey, the already done research has been into general assessment literacy, not specifically WAL. For example, Öz (2014) explored 120 Turkish EFL teachers' preferences of common assessment methods and practices. It was found that "most Turkish EFL teachers rely on conventional methods of assessment rather than formative assessment processes" (p. 775). Further, there existed significant differences among teachers in their assessments "according to years of teaching experience, gender, and private vs. public schools variables" (p. 775). Öz concluded that teachers need to develop assessment for learning (AFL) strategies and feedback procedures. They also "need support from different sources to recognize the effect of their previous perspectives on their practices and weigh them against the insights offered by the new assessment culture" (p. 775).

In another study, Han and Kaya (2014) explored the assessment practices as well as preferences and views of 95 Turkish EFL teachers about assessment. It was revealed that listening and writing skills were considered as less important for the teachers whereas speaking was "the most challenging skill to assess" (p. 77). Additionally, even if the teachers underwent pre- or in-service assessment training, they did not alter their personal assessment preferences and they most often depended on them.

Recently, Mede and Atay (2017) investigated the assessment literacy of Turkish English teachers working at the preparatory programs offered by state and private universities in Turkey. A majority of the Turkish EFL teachers lacked training and were in need for more advanced training in preparing

classroom test, using ready-made tests, providing feedback on assessment, and applying self- or peer-assessment. Like Mede and Atay (2017), the present study investigated the Turkish EFL teachers' previously received assessment training courses, their perceived needs for training in this field as well as their attitudes towards the testing/assessment practices in language programs; however, the focus of the present research was not the general domain of language testing and assessment, but the testing and assessment in L2 writing.

In brief, given the literature, a special need was felt to investigate the Turkish EFL teachers' writing assessment literacy, beliefs, and training needs in order to enlighten the authorities, scholars and teacher educators in Turkey.

### Research Questions

The following research questions have been addressed. The first and second main questions have sub-questions, too.

- 1) In what ways have Turkish EFL teachers obtained WAL? What level of training in areas of WAL do Turkish EFL teachers report?
- 2) Do Turkish EFL teachers consider themselves as proficient writing instructors? To what extent do Turkish EFL teachers perceive a need for in-service training in different fields of WAL?
- 3) What do Turkish EFL teachers believe about scoring accuracy in writing assessment?
- 4) What do Turkish EFL teachers believe about general assessment issues in writing classrooms?
- 5) What do Turkish EFL teachers believe about different writing assessment methods?

### METHOD

#### Instrument and Procedure

Quantitative data were collected by means of a questionnaire incorporating the adapted items which had already been developed by Vogt and Tsagari (2014) as well as Crusan et al., (2016). Before administering the compiled questionnaire, it was piloted with 114 Turkish EFL teachers. Reliability of the questionnaire, estimated via Cronbach Alpha, was .78, indicating an acceptable level of internal consistency, (Pallant, 2013).

The questionnaire included three sections. The first section provided biodata about the teachers' gender, age, education, and teaching experience. The second section contained questions regarding the teachers' prior WAL training and ways of obtaining it. Moreover, 12 areas of WAL were provided in a Likert-type scale and asked first whether the teachers had already received training in them by selecting options: 'Not at all', 'a little', and 'advanced'. Next, the teachers were asked to mention whether they perceived any need to receive more WAL training by selecting 'None', 'Yes. Basic training', or 'Yes. More advanced training'. The third section contained 21 items on Likert scale ('Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Not Sure', 'Disagree', and 'Strongly Disagree') asking about the teachers' beliefs about scoring accuracy in writing assessment, general assessment issues in writing classrooms, and different writing assessment methods.

The questionnaire was distributed to 217 Turkish EFL teachers via e-mail, personal contact as well as WhatsApp Messenger. The teachers' participation was voluntary, so by completing and returning the questionnaire, they would consent to participate in the study. The teachers were also assured that their responses would remain strictly confidential and would be used only for research purposes.

### Participants

A total number of 152 Turkish EFL teachers completed the questionnaire anonymously and returned them. Table 1 includes detailed information about the participants.

**Table 1.** Teachers' background information (percentages in parentheses)

Age	Mean	33.72
	SD	7.13
Years of teaching experience	Mean	10.71
	SD	6.61
Gender	Female	66 (43.4)
	Male	86 (56.6)
Highest degree completed	Associates Degree	4 (2.6)
	B.A/B.S	52 (34.2)
	M.A/M.S	86 (56.6)
	PhD	10 (6.6)
Teaching levels	Beginner	42 (27.6)
	Low-Intermediate	83 (54.6)
	Intermediate	113 (74.3)
	High-Intermediate	102 (67.1)
	Advanced	74 (48.7)
	IELTS	2 (1.3)
Teaching age groups	TOEFL	2 (1.3)
	Children	35 (23.0)
	Teenagers	115 (75.7)
	Adult	117 (77.0)

## FINDINGS

### Teachers' Ways of Obtaining WAL

The first research question, first explored the ways through which the Turkish EFL teachers obtained WAL. Out of 152 respondents, 123 teachers (80.9%) had already received prior training in WAL. Among these 123 teachers, 42 teachers (27.6%) had already undergone WAL training at professional conferences; 88 of them (57.9%) had received the training in in-service workshops; and 75 teachers (49.3%) had received the WAL training as part of a course.

The question also investigated what level of prior training in WAL areas Turkish EFL teachers report. Table 2 indicates the information.

As Table 2 shows, the top three areas in which the teachers had already received a level of training included "Giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment", "Using the scoring rubrics", and "Using peer-assessment", with frequencies and percentages of 118 (77.6%), 114 (75%), and 104 (68.4%), respectively. The item of "Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks" (47.4%) stood on the lowest rank. The other areas shared percentages from 50% to 60%.

### Teachers' Proficiency in Teaching Writing

The second research question, first investigated whether the Turkish EFL teachers consider themselves as proficient writing instructors. Out of 152 participants, 74 teachers (48.7%) considered themselves as proficient writing instructors; 40 teachers (26.3%) were not confident about their proficiency as writing instructors; and 38 teachers (25.0%) did not believe that they were proficient for teaching writing skills.

The question, then explored to what extent the Turkish EFL teachers perceive a need for in-service training in different fields of WAL. Table 3 illustrates the information.

As Table 3 reveals, a vast majority of the teachers (above 90%) expressed their great need for receiving training in all the mentioned WAL areas. The areas which stood on the

**Table 2.** Prior received training levels in WAL areas (percentages in parentheses)

Areas of WAL training	Not at all	A little	Advanced	Mean	SD
Designing good writing tasks/tests	58 (38.2)	79 (52.0)	15 (9.9)	1.72	.635
Using self-assessment	68 (44.7)	64 (42.1)	20 (13.2)	1.68	.695
Using peer-assessment	48 (31.6)	80 (52.6)	24 (15.8)	1.84	.672
Using assessment portfolio	64 (42.1)	69 (45.4)	19 (12.5)	1.70	.679
Designing integrated writing tasks	70 (46.1)	68 (44.7)	14 (9.2)	1.63	.648
Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks	80 (52.6)	58 (38.2)	14 (9.2)	1.57	.658
Designing the scoring rubrics	58 (38.2)	74 (48.7)	20 (13.2)	1.75	.674
Using the scoring rubrics	38 (25.0)	87 (57.2)	27 (17.8)	1.93	.652
Establishing reliability of tests/assessment	58 (38.2)	85 (55.9)	9 (5.9)	1.68	.582
Establishing validity of tests/assessment	64 (42.1)	77 (50.7)	11 (7.2)	1.65	.612
Using statistics to study the quality of tests/assessment	70 (46.1)	72 (47.4)	10 (6.6)	1.61	.611
Giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment	34 (22.4)	93 (61.2)	25 (16.4)	1.94	.622

highest six ranks included “Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks” (96%), “Designing integrated writing tasks” (94.8%), “Giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment” (94.8%), “Designing good writing tasks/tests” (94.1%), “Using the scoring rubrics” (94.1%), “Designing the scoring rubrics” (93.4%), “Using self-assessment” (92.8%), “Using peer-assessment” (92.1%), and “Using assessment portfolio” (92.1%).

### Teachers’ Beliefs about Scoring Accuracy in Writing Assessment

The third research question investigated the Turkish EFL teachers’ beliefs about scoring accuracy in writing assessment. Table 4 contains the information about their beliefs.

As Table 4 indicates, about half of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the mentioned beliefs, except for the two statements: “Rater training is NOT helpful for writing teachers.” and “Scoring of writing is always inaccurate.” However, about one third of the respondents were not sure about what they believed in.

### Teachers’ Beliefs about General Assessment Issues in Writing Classrooms

The fourth research question explored what the Turkish EFL teachers believe about general assessment issues in writing classrooms. Table 5 contains the information about their beliefs.

As Table 5 shows, over half of the participants reported their agreements on the stated beliefs, except for two statements: A little under 40% of the teachers stated that their students usually do poorly on writing exams. Nearly the same percentage of the teachers believed that teacher-made writing tests are better than large-scale standardized writing exams. However, regarding the latter, a little under half of the teachers were not sure whether teacher-made writing tests are better than large-scale standardized writing exams.

### Teachers’ Beliefs about Different Writing Assessment Methods

The fifth research question investigated what the Turkish EFL teachers believe about different writing assessment methods. Table 6 contains the information about their beliefs.

**Table 3.** Need levels perception for receiving training in WAL areas (percentages in parentheses)

Areas of WAL training	None	Basic	Advanced	Mean	SD
Designing good writing tasks/tests	9 (5.9)	65 (42.8)	78 (51.3)	2.45	.607
Using self-assessment	11 (7.2)	67 (44.1)	74 (48.7)	2.41	.624
Using peer-assessment	12 (7.9)	53 (34.9)	87 (57.2)	2.49	.641
Using assessment portfolio	12 (7.9)	55 (36.2)	85 (55.9)	2.48	.640
Designing integrated writing tasks	8 (5.3)	58 (38.2)	86 (56.6)	2.51	.598
Using pre-designed integrated writing tasks	6 (3.9)	68 (44.7)	78 (51.3)	2.47	.575
Designing the scoring rubrics	10 (6.6)	61 (40.1)	81 (53.3)	2.47	.619
Using the scoring rubrics	9 (5.9)	45 (29.6)	98 (64.5)	2.59	.603
Establishing reliability of tests/assessment	13 (8.6)	60 (39.5)	79 (52.0)	2.43	.648
Establishing validity of tests/assessment	15 (9.9)	64 (42.1)	73 (48.0)	2.38	.660
Using statistics to study the quality of tests/assessment	15 (9.9)	60 (39.5)	77 (50.7)	2.41	.665
Giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment	8 (5.3)	43 (28.3)	101 (66.4)	2.61	.587

**Table 4.** Teachers’ beliefs about scoring accuracy in writing assessment (percentages in parentheses)

Beliefs	Strongly agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Scoring of writing is always inaccurate.	16 (10.5)	26 (17.1)	36 (23.7)	58 (38.2)	16 (10.5)
Scoring of writing is subjective.	28 (18.4)	54 (35.5)	34 (22.4)	24 (15.8)	12 (7.9)
It is difficult to achieve high rater agreement in writing assessment.	22 (14.5)	46 (30.3)	48 (31.6)	32 (21.1)	4 (2.6)
In general, writing (essay) exams provides a good estimate of writing ability.	28 (18.4)	52 (34.2)	50 (32.9)	18 (11.8)	4 (2.6)
Rater training is NOT helpful for writing teachers.	8 (5.3)	22 (14.5)	52 (34.2)	40 (26.3)	30 (19.7)
When scoring writing, I believe content should receive more weight than accuracy (grammar).	20 (13.2)	54 (35.5)	38 (25.0)	24 (15.8)	16 (10.5)
Self-assessment provides an accurate picture of student writing ability.	20 (13.2)	52 (34.2)	50 (32.9)	26 (17.1)	4 (2.6)
It is difficult to work with other colleagues during scoring of writing exams.	26 (17.1)	46 (30.3)	44 (28.9)	30 (19.7)	6 (3.9)

**Table 5.** Teachers' beliefs about general assessment issues in writing classrooms (percentages in parentheses)

Beliefs	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Essay exams are best when it comes to assessing writing skill.	22 (14.5)	60 (39.5)	44 (28.9)	24 (15.8)	2 (1.3)
Writing assessment provides good feedback for writing instruction.	48 (31.6)	76 (50.0)	12 (7.9)	16 (10.5)	0
Writing assessment is time consuming.	48 (31.6)	42 (27.6)	12 (7.9)	36 (23.7)	14 (9.2)
Assessment plays an important role in writing classes.	50 (32.9)	54 (35.5)	32 (21.1)	14 (9.2)	2 (1.3)
My students usually do poorly on writing exams.	10 (6.6)	50 (32.9)	38 (25.0)	40 (26.3)	14 (9.2)
Assessment is an important capability that writing teachers should master.	60 (39.5)	44 (28.9)	32 (21.1)	12 (7.9)	4 (2.6)
Teacher-made writing tests are better than large-scale standardized writing exams.	16 (10.5)	42 (27.6)	72 (47.4)	12 (7.9)	10 (6.6)

**Table 6.** Teachers' beliefs about different writing assessment methods (percentages in parentheses)

Beliefs	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Using scoring rubrics is necessary when grading essays.	52 (34.2)	46 (30.3)	24 (15.8)	18 (11.8)	12 (7.9)
Writing can be assessed indirectly through multiple-choice questions.	4 (2.6)	42 (27.6)	56 (36.8)	30 (19.7)	20 (13.2)
Writing is best assessed when integrated with other skills like reading and listening.	32 (21.1)	44 (28.9)	50 (32.9)	22 (14.5)	4 (2.6)
Self-assessment can be a good technique for assessing writing.	22 (14.5)	38 (25.0)	64 (42.1)	26 (17.1)	2 (1.3)
A portfolio is a good tool for assessing writing.	34 (22.4)	38 (25.0)	62 (40.8)	14 (9.2)	4 (2.6)
Using computer technology in writing assessment is helpful.	32 (21.1)	62 (40.8)	32 (21.1)	20 (13.2)	6 (3.9)

As Table 6 shows, over 60% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed on two statements: "Using scoring rubrics is necessary when grading essays." and "Using computer technology in writing assessment is helpful." About half of the teachers believed that "Writing is best assessed when integrated with other skills like reading and listening." and also "A portfolio is a good tool for assessing writing." whereas less than a half (40.8%) were not sure about the latter statement. As for the belief that "Writing can be assessed indirectly through multiple-choice questions.", about one third of the teachers (30.3%) agreed or strongly agreed while one third of them (36.8%) were not certain and about another one third (32.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. Regarding the belief that "Self-assessment can be a good technique for assessing writing.", although above one third of the teachers (39.5%) agreed or disagreed, more numbers of teachers (42.1%) were not sure.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In terms of 'giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment', a few instructors (22.4%) stated that they had not had any training at all; however, like what Mede and Atay (2017) found, an enormous number (94.7%) of the respondents in the current study remarked that they require either 'basic' or 'advanced' training. Due to the fact that offering feedback is an important element to the process of learning and in L2 writing classes (Ferris, 2014; Hyland, 2009) in order to develop L2 writing skills and enhance learners' motivation (Hyland & Hyland, 2006), giving the teachers their required training is a wise action.

Using self-assessment is an advantageous technique for foreign learners' writing skill (see e.g., Bing, 2016; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Javaherbakhsh, 2010; Diab, 2016). Nevertheless, nearly half of the participants were not confident about the effectiveness of using self-assessment in writing. Further, almost half of the teachers had not received any training in it, and about half of the rest had undergone only 'a little' training. Like the teachers in Mede and Atay's (2017) study, the majority of the teachers in this study (92.8%) stated that they need to get either 'basic' or 'advanced' training in using self-assessment.

Relevant to the issue of the self-assessment is using portfolio assessment, which is also a beneficial tool for the improvement of L2 writing ability (see e.g., Chen, 2006; Hemmati & Soltanpour, 2012; Khodadady & Khodabakhshzade, 2012; Lam & Lee, 2010; Nezakatgoo, 2011; Oscarson, 2009; Romova & Andrew, 2011; Taki & Heidari, 2011). Nonetheless, 40.8% of the teachers were not confident about the usefulness of portfolio assessment. Although Kirkgoz (2007) stated that portfolios, based on the European Language Portfolio, are implemented in language teaching courses in state primary schools in Turkey, and Karakaş (2012) mentioned the same point for student teachers (i.e., European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL)), a little over 40% of the teachers had not undergone any training in using assessment portfolio, and a large number (92.1%) of the teachers pinpointed that they need either 'basic' or 'advanced' training in it.

Regarding the issue of 'using peer assessment', like Mede and Atay's (2017) finding, a vast number (92.1%)

of the participants in this study expressed that they need to receive either ‘basic’ or ‘advanced’ training. Providing the teachers with such training is essential because incorporating peer-assessment/feedback has been emphasized as a helpful technique in writing classes provided that students master the peer review skills before they undertake it; otherwise, peer-assessment/feedback might not be reliable and helpful (Berg, 1999; Best, Jones-Katz, Smolarek, Stolzenburg, & Williamson, 2015; K. Cho & MacArthur, 2011; Y. H. Cho & Cho, 2011; Hu, 2005; Hu & Lam, 2010; Lam, 2010; Lee, 2015; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Min, 2016, 2005, 2006; Mok, 2011; Rahimi, 2013; Rollinson, 2005; Tang & Tithecott, 1999; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Wang, 2014; Zhao, 2010); thus, teachers need to “select, adapt, and design appropriate peer review training activities pertaining to their writing classes” (Min, 2016, p. 44). Moreover, because the complex process of peer assessment/feedback can be affected by various personal, educational, social, historical and cultural factors, teachers must consider these factors when they incorporate peer-assessment into their classes in order to ensure the students’ success (Allen & Katayama, 2016; Chong, 2017; Ferris, 2006; Nelson & Carson, 2006; Villamil & De Guerrero, 2006; Yu & Hu, 2017).

Additionally, it is crucial to enhance the Turkish EFL instructors’ skills in incorporating self-, peer-, and portfolio assessment into their classes because as Hawe and Dixon (2014) correctly argued, based on contemporary notions of feedback, if students are engaged in authentic opportunities of self-monitoring and assessment as well as offering peer feedback, not only their learning will be promoted as a result of taking responsibility but also their degree of autonomy in learning will increase.

As for the issue of ‘using the scoring rubrics’, a quarter of teachers had not received any training at all; above half of them had undergone ‘a little’ training; nonetheless, the majority of them (94.1%) pinpointed that they need either ‘basic’ or ‘advanced’ training; additionally, a large number of them (64.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that using scoring rubrics is necessary when grading essays and above half of them believed that scoring of writing is subjective. It would be good idea to train Turkish EFL teachers in using the scoring rubrics appropriately because it is argued that grading rubrics provide both teachers and students with consistent and formative criteria to evaluate the written texts (Diab & Balaa, 2011; Ene & Kosobucki, 2016) and can be considered as a type of feedback (Hyland, 2003). Further, factors such as gender, topic, and educational level can be moderating variables for the formative effects of rubrics (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013).

In terms of ‘designing integrated writing tasks’, promising results have been found (see e.g., Plakans, 2008; Plakans & Gebril, 2012; Zhang, 2017). In this study, one third of the teachers were not sure about the efficacy of the integrated writing tasks/tests. As for the item of ‘designing integrated writing tasks’, 46.1%, and for ‘using pre-designed integrated writing tasks’, a little over half of the teachers had not already received any training. Regarding the former item, 94.8%, and for the latter one, 96.0% of the teachers

stated that they need either ‘basic’ or ‘advanced’ training. Because in many real-world circumstances, people write in response to a text which they have read, students need to develop both reading and writing skills simultaneously (Gebril, 2009; Plakans & Gebril, 2012; Weigle, 2004); an effective technique can be the writing activities integrated with the reading ones (Plakans & Gebril, 2012). Consequently, teachers should be trained in designing and using integrated writing tasks.

Uysal (2012) pinpointed that in-service education programs “(INSETs) in Turkey lack systematic planning and scientific research on training needs of teachers due to the non-functional organizational structure and under qualified personnel of the Ministry of Education’s in-service training department.” (p. 19). Recently, Ülgü and Er (2016) remarked that “for the last three decades [in Turkey], it is clear that there is a planning problem in terms of education which in turn influences language teacher education” (p. 684). Moreover, Mahalingappa and Polat (2016) argued that ELTE programs in Turkey suffer from a noticeable shortcoming, which is an absence of “a comprehensive, current, and consistent conceptual framework that is informed by current L2 learning and teaching as well as teacher education research ... Second, there seems to be a lack of focus on a background in linguistics and SLA” (p. 8) Furthermore, the programs do not support the teachers by any feedback or evaluation system (Bayrakçı, 2009; Özer, 2004; Uysal, 2012). These issues can be the chief obstacles in the path of providing teachers with effective training which they require.

Another weaknesses remarked by the Turkish EFL trainee-teachers and teacher trainers in previously done studies was the limited hours allocated to practically oriented courses, such as teaching practice in the current ELTEP in Turkey (Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Sanli, 2009; Seferoğlu, 2006). The program does not follow a holistic and an experiential approach, in which a variety of methods and techniques are applied (Bayrakçı, 2009; Karakaş, 2012). It does not include “a reflective practice component”, either (Karakaş, 2012, p. 10) despite the fact that one of the critical aspects of teacher learning and development is reflective practice because it can help teachers achieve an integration between theory and practice (Farrell, 2007, 2018) through taking responsibility for their development as well as systematically exploring their beliefs and practices (Farrel, 2015a, as cited in Farrell, 2019). Lack of enough time apportioned to practical issues and the traditional transmission-based linear approach can be the reasons that the participating Turkish EFL teachers in this study felt great need for receiving training in various elements of writing assessment.

The other shortcoming of the current ELTEP is that “the program does not have a clear-cut philosophy of teacher education” (Karakaş, 2012, p. 8). This problem was also remarked by other Turkish researchers in this field in Turkey (Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Nergis, 2011). This study, consistent with the previous ones, requires the ELT program designers in Turkey to “re-examine the philosophy of teacher education and clearly state this in the” ELTEP (Karakaş, 2012, p. 8), so that the type of professional training which teachers receive will be systematic and of high quality.

In this study, nearly half of the participants stated that it is difficult to achieve high rater agreement in writing assessment. A little under half of the instructors reported that it is difficult to work with other colleagues during scoring of writing exams. Very few of them (23.6%) disagreed with collaborating with other teachers during scoring of writing exams. The existence of an atmosphere of collaborative reflection among teachers is recommended in ELT programs (Ellis, 2010; Fernandez-Balboa & Marshall, 1994; John & Gravani, 2005; Uysal, 2012). Despite this, previous studies conducted in Turkey have revealed that ELTEP and INSETs implement transmission methods, which do not permit teachers to reflect on their experiences, participate in their learning, and collaborate with their colleagues (Bayrakçı, 2009; Cimer, Çakır, & Çimer, 2010; Özer, 2004; Uysal, 2012). The result of such shortcoming is apparent in teachers' voices in this study.

In brief, writing instruction and assessment must not be neglected in teacher training and education courses in Turkey. Nevertheless, more research is needed to know how to improve the quality of writing instruction in EFL classroom in this country.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study had a survey design, so it surely includes some problems (Gu, 2016). For example, some respondents might report what they should believe in lieu of what they really believe. Additionally, this study is not exempt from the problems of small-scale research; the study included 152 EFL teachers, thereby is not a representative sample of all Turkish EFL teachers, which limits the generalizability of the results. Consequently, the findings of this study should be considered with great caution. Further research is suggested to be done, using both quantitative and qualitative data via observations of teachers' practices as well as interviews with them to find more reliable and convincing evidence in order to help the teachers pave their way of professional development and satisfaction.

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