

Utopias and Truths: Who is Guilty? We, Online Teachers, or E-Communications

Abstract

This is an action research to investigate and argue the Turkish teachers' experiences on online communications to build a democratic and multicultural knowledge networks. This study utilized both qualitative and quantitative data collected from different sources. This helped the author generate new perspectives and stimulate new directions in the data analysis. Also, this study has taken a grounded theory approach to allow the researcher to explore and discover the Turkish teachers' attitudes toward online communications. This research was conducted during the 2003-2004 school-year in Eskisehir, Turkey. The findings of this study represent the 319 teachers (241 women and 78 men) who work at the K12 schools in Eskisehir.

Introduction

The communicational reforms are gradually evolving in Turkish schools, colleges and universities whereas many teachers are now offering various types of online-based courses, ranging from the simple to the complex, to their learners. Integrating a variety of teaching and learning styles, these online environments bring new communication models and methods for these teachers to share global knowledge easily and deliver educational information electronically. There is no doubt that these classrooms are no longer bound by time and space in the schools. These e-communicational reforms have great significances to emerge in sharing knowledge online, and provoke reflective effects on thinking and practices of teachers, who are interested in understanding more about the theoretical backgrounds of this dramatic revolution. In Turkey, besides, improving the quality of knowledge sharing must need fundamental institutional changes in online communications.

Many higher education institutions throughout Turkey are struggling with difficulties about how best to prepare their teachers to be workers and citizens of the 21st century. As Turkish teacher preparation approach the workplace of tomorrow, they need well-built basic skills in such areas communicating with technology, new communication technologies and online communication milieus that are the major foundations of the workplaces of tomorrow in Turkey. Use of the cutting-edge technologies can promote these teachers' problem-solving and reasoning skills to meeting the technological challenges they can encounter in the 21st century online programs (Ingwerson, 1996) that it must be based on the sound principles of communication theories and human developments. As highlighted by Thomas and Carswell (2000), we, therefore, have to describe and understand the Turkish teachers' real-life experiences toward online communications to enhance strong partnerships among teachers, learners and community. Besides, these reforms must be concerned with the development of the whole corporations within online communication milieus. Although some wonderful things were being done, teachers were working in different directions and very few of them regularly schedule online communications with their learners in Turkey. As a result of this strength of efforts and energies, the programs ranked in the bottom 10% in the country for teacher use of and access to the emerging online technologies (Ozkul, 2004). In short, as online teachers, they are already familiar with new communicational technologies and the importance of integrating them into their curriculum; but powerful, successful and well-organized e-communications were not in Turkish online classrooms.

As highlighted by Yalabık (2005), almost all the evidence in the literature concerning about helping online teachers enhance technology usage. However, they do not indicate anything about how these teachers can empower to build online knowledge networks and take their learners to new communication dimensions of understanding. A considerable amount of these opinions requires that there be more to it than just purchasing software and hardware (Jonassen, 1994; Duffy & Cunningham 1996; Jonassen, 1999; Jonassen, Peck, & Wilson, 1999; Norton & Wiburg 2002; Moore & Kearsley 2005; Neo, 2005). Therefore, online teachers must have not only access but also knowledge to new cutting-edge communication tools to be prepared for the competitive demands of tomorrows. On the other hand, the literature review revealed some criticisms points out that online teachers utilize online programs as correspondence courses (Bastiaens & Martens, 2000; Huerta, Ryan, & Igbaria, 2003; Ozkul, 2004; Kyrish, 2004; Bonk, Dede, 2005; Yalabık, 2005; Kim, & Zeng, 2006). Not to mention that online communications can provide alternative ways to regularly scheduled classes and can deliver the same services as a regular classroom milieus. Today online programs can include computers, modems, DSL technologies, emails, chat rooms, bulletin boards and video streaming as well as electronic books that are radically altering the online communication paradigm. However, a continuous inquiry into the value of cutting edge multi-technological approaches about whether online teachers utilize online communications effectively in this area has yet to be undertaken. This paper, therefore, makes a unique contribution to the accreditation and assessment issues of online teachers to increase public interests for online communications by providing a comprehensive overview on this investigation.

Besides, in this study, the challenge is to understand all concerns and issues clearly why Turkish online teachers are not embracing e-communications and taking advantage of the ease, speed and flexibility of e-communications into their classrooms to teach things in a different way. E-communications hold vast potential to revolutionize Turkish teacher roles. Many obstacles, however, must be dealt with before we see limited utilizations of online communication settings in the classrooms. Our vital question in this case is who is guilty not to widespread and effective use of e-communications? Are Turkish teachers, who are lack interests and knowledge, and have fears about using new communication technologies, and also skepticisms and ignorance of the online communication potentials? or, unlike face-to-face traditional communications, as strongly underlined many of Turkish teachers (Yalabık, 2005), by are e-communications not good enough for their courses to generate effective and sufficient communications among teachers, learners and community?

Purpose

The recent situations in Turkey are unacceptable to align and focus the entire teacher community on generating flexible and diverse solutions to improve effectiveness of online communications Therefore; this study addresses key questions about discussing Turkish teachers' attitudes toward online communications. Besides, this is a research for moving toward more open and flexible and distributed approaches with suggestions and advice presented in a clear conceptual framework to profound effects on e-communications and discussing the Turkish teachers' online experiences in their courses. Based on this main purpose of this research, the key research inquiries are:

1. What extent do online teachers' abilities continue to develop their critical thinking skills to become deeply engaged in e-communications that cover the challenges with fairness, expectations and respects to share power and cultures to help them deeply engage in lifelong learning activities that examine the dynamics of democratic changes in online community by improving reflective practices for greater impact?
2. What kinds of e-communications are associated with their critical thinking developments to build knowledge networks via e-communications that engage their critical civic responsibilities, dynamic academic curriculums and powerful social actions to understand the possibilities and potentials of democratic decision-making and dialogic leadership?
3. What are online teachers' patterns in critical thinking developments to address complex problem solving activities in democratic and multicultural contexts in e-communications that provide unique and diverse perspectives with their own methodological strengths and weaknesses to obtain genuine equal opportunities and democratic participations in building online knowledge networks not characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy and competition, and discuss the philosophical foundations and backgrounds of concepts, insights and skills needed to accelerate democratic transformations? and
4. What are the impacts of these teachers' critical thinking developments on the outcomes of their courses to appreciate e-communications that promote critical activities for their engagements in democratic decision-making to promote authentic and high quality lifelong learning experiences by reconciling the pressures for diversity and difference with the models of dialogic leaderships to plan professional adult-youth engagements in democratic decision-making?

As strongly mentioned by Bowles and Gintis (1993), Turkish teachers can be egalitarian and liberating only when they prepare their learners for fully democratic participation in social life and equal claim on the fruits of economic activity. This paper, therefore, explains that the needs and expectations of these teachers in bringing about democratic decision-making for dialogic leaderships play an important role in affecting deep community change. These are crucial concerns to examine the multifaceted responsibilities of these online teachers in supporting their society actively engaging in building their online knowledge networks that they can become well-rounded knowledge-workers to shape a society based on authentic and participatory decision making. In short, the goal is effective online communication integration where their learners interact with each other instead of face-to-face communications and give all these learners fundamental chances to get their hands on the latest communication technologies.

Theoretical Background of the Study

Over the past few years, in Turkey, online programs have been explosively popular with teachers and learners at the schools (Ozkul, 2004; Yalabik, 2005). These communication milieus have been used to enhance many classes in the Turkish institutions. As a result, these schools are dealing with the enormous growth of the electronic learning environments that open their doors to create online milieus where their teachers and learners can communicate with each other electronically.

Online communications provide increasing numbers of convenient and relatively inexpensive learning environments that the teacher-learner partnerships through constructing virtual communities by sharing knowledge online have become an important issue in Turkey. Essentially, these online communications bring new ways for these partnerships to allow access, delivery, sharing and exchanging knowledge to each other that they must carefully redesign and revolutionize their new roles around the methods, techniques and strategies of online communications in interactive and collaborative virtual communities.

Therefore, these teachers' experiences toward online communications need to be more clearly defined, examined and/or analyzed to integrate and implement these technologies into the curriculum efficiently. This study has taken a grounded theory approach to allow the researcher to explore and discover the Turkish teachers' experiences toward sharing knowledge online. Therefore, there is a threefold consideration in this study:

1. Turkish teachers are increasingly beginning to offer different level courses online that they have to examine real-life experiences in their courses in pedagogical situations that seek to implement collective action for online communications,
2. these teachers must focus on conscious and unconscious barriers and possibilities that online communications can promote the engagements of educational and social justice in their courses, and
3. they have to efficiently describe and analyze online communications to support social justice projects and also examine the real-life experiences of their partnerships to implement collective actions for their courses.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of theoretical and/or empirical researches on these concerns discussed above. Turkish online teachers, therefore, start to realize their roles and responsibilities for providing their learners with powerful online communications. They have to embrace online communications to incorporate the new ways of accessing to global knowledge and information democratically. In short, the experiences toward building online knowledge societies via online communications become an important issue to address problems related to lifelong learning in the schools. Increasingly Turkish academic institutions are beginning to offer online programs. Therefore, this study focuses on investigating and understanding the insider's experiences toward online communication that sharing knowledge online builds a virtual community. In addition, this study is to expound on the research participants' perspectives and interpretations rather than researcher imposed categories. To encourage the Turkish teachers in online communications by highlighting the comprehensive challenges of this radical reform movement, this study is to analyze the research data inductively rather than prove or disprove a hypothesis.

In short, the Turkish teachers must focus on the more pressing social problems of our time, and also understand the achievement challenges and assessment concerns of online communications in their courses. Besides, they have to critically address the diverse questions and concerns to build online knowledge societies via online communications with looking at practices and experiences from the everyday situations. Finally, they have to provide their learners with pedagogical knowledge and design guidelines for online communications in multicultural views that foster multi-generational partnerships and democratic leaderships in the Turkish schools.

Method

This is an action research, which utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data to provide detailed information to the researcher for analysis. The combination of this method helps the researcher to generate new perspectives and stimulate new directions in data analysis. The combination of the methodologies is to strengthen this study design and to provide triangulation. Therefore, the researcher overcomes the intrinsic bias that can come from single methods. This case, also, is chosen for a couple reasons: First, this study is exploratory in order to allow insights to emerge from a recursive data analysis process. The research variables are highly complex and extensive. Additionally, the research data are very dependent on context and needs to be collected in its natural environment without controls and manipulations. Second, this case will examine the phenomena in depth in its natural context by focusing on a specific case.

In addition, this study has taken a grounded theory approach to allow the researcher to explore and discover the Turkish teachers' attitudes toward online communications for two reasons: First, the learners must have a clear understanding of the strategies and principles of online communications to work more effectively in different level courses with diverse populations. Second, these activities can help them expose to different cultures and ways of thinking to build democratic and authentic experiences. Therefore, the main focus in this study is to investigate and understand the insider's views toward communicating online to build knowledge networks; and to expound on the participants' perspectives and interpretations rather than the researcher imposed categories in this study.

Research Design

This is an action research, which aims to investigate and argue the Turkish teachers' experiences on online communications to build a democratic and multicultural knowledge networks. This study, therefore, utilized both qualitative and quantitative data, which were collected from different sources. This helped the author generate new perspectives and stimulate new directions in the data analysis. Besides, the combinations of the data collection provided the researcher with data triangulation to overcome the natural prejudices, which derived from a single data sources. This research presents a structured way to look at practices and experiences from the real-life situations. Besides, this article investigates how these teachers, theoretically and practically, can work with their learners to recreate more dialogical and democratic forms of pedagogy and community engagements.

Participants and Research Setting

This research was conducted during the 2003-2004 school-year in Eskisehir, Turkey. The findings of this study represent the 319 teachers (241 women and 78 men) who work at the K12 schools in the downtown of Eskisehir. They were asked individually to read and sign the informed consents form, which described the research in detail. Therefore, all Turkish teachers participated voluntarily in this research. The comprehensive information about the participants' demographic characteristics is given the *Data Sources* section. All participants were identified for the surveys and interviews according to their willingness to participate the study.

Data Sources

To find out Turkish teachers' attitudes toward online communications, there are four data sources in this research

- 1) an attitude survey,
- 2) individual semi-constructed interviews,
- 3) a semi-constructed focus group interview, and
- 4) informal observations.

Also, the researcher kept journals regularly to understand these participants' attitudes toward online communications to find out achievement challenges about the discourse and the investment in building democratic and multicultural knowledge networks.

Data Collection

The participants in this study were asked individually to read and sign the informed consents form, which described the research in detail. After signing the informed consent forms, the researcher handed out a survey to the research participants. This survey has three main sections: 1) the ten demographic questions; 2) a five-point Likert type scale with twenty questions and 3) five open-ended questions.

The main instrument of data collection in this research was the interview protocols. Therefore, the open-ended interview questions are designed to collect and analyze data on the Turkish teachers' attitudes toward online communications. Each interview questions was developed and modified according to investigating the focus of this study. The individual and focus group interviews were held with randomly selected twelve participants. Each individual and focus group interview lasted approximately 30 minutes in length. Although all interviews were type-recorded, the researcher wrote notes that summarized the major points of each session, and also she has been following a careful data management process to ensure high-quality accessible data and documentation of data collected. For these reasons, the researcher regularly recorded and systematically stored qualitative data on computers and videocassettes. The data has been indexed for easy and consistent retrieval. Finally, the researcher observed the participants during the data collection procedures. Therefore, the researcher gathered information in detail about participant online communications experiences in their courses and daily lives.

Data Analysis

The analysis began at the end of the Fall 2003 semester and will continue through the final written report. The data analysis process in this study was analytic and recursive to inform further decisions on data being collected. It also was restructured, flexible and open to the discussions with the stakeholders and reviews of related literature. During the data analysis procedure, the researchers briefly followed these steps given in a logical order:

1. negotiated with two other people to analyze the qualitative and quantitative research data that prompted the research credibility and transferability,
2. listened each tape cassette two times,
3. transcribed these tape cassettes,
4. wrote the field notes,
5. identified patterns from the field notes,

6. analyzed the contents of the interviews,
7. analyzed the contents of the observations,
8. analyzed the qualitative data from the attitude survey by using frequency distribution,
9. collaborated with other two researcher to triangulate all quantitative and qualitative data,
10. conducted the content analysis to identify, code and categorize the primary patterns and themes in the data collected from the data sources,
11. interpreting and summarizing the collected data that integrated the broader areas of the main research inquiries,
12. reported the research results in using a descriptive and narrative form, and
13. wrote the research report.

The researcher analyzed and triangulated the collected data. It took totally one year to complete the data analysis and triangulation steps perfectly; because the collected data from the different sources were very rich and dense. However, the multiple outcomes were tracked over time which included the Turkish teachers' attitudes, the patterns and experiences of online communications, the pedagogical requirements of designing online communications and also the existing opportunities for online communications in their classes. Moreover, the researcher focused on the ethics and values of online societies to design online communications for diverse learner groups, especially those from underserved communities. Furthermore, the researchers defined and analyzed the communicational activities among the participants in this study to learn about how to build diverse democratic and multicultural communities. Also, she tried to expose the design strategies and principles of online communications in a constructivist setting to highlight the diverse cognitive abilities of the research participants that increased their understandings toward online communications in the public arena.

To provide the credibility in this action research, the researcher adopted a stance of neutrality with regard to the research phenomenon under study (Patton, 1990). In other words, she did not try to prove a specific perspective and manipulate the data from the different sources. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods in this study was to examine more complementary and different aspects of the complex phenomenon (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989), *who is guilty not to build effective virtual knowledge communities that they are online teachers and/or online communications*. The combination of this method helped the researcher to generate new perspectives and stimulate new directions in data analysis. A combination of the qualitative and quantitative methodologies provided *data triangulation* from a variety of data sources and *method triangulation* from the consistency of different data sources (Patton, 1990). Therefore, the researcher overcame the intrinsic bias that could come from single methods. Finally, the researcher was a center of the analytic process and had a very crucial role on the credibility issues of this study. Also, she closely followed the design and methods of qualitative research by collaborating with her peers and colleagues, and also the experts from the related fields, educational technology, communication technologies and research methodology. Finally, this is an action research. First and foremost, this study allowed the researcher to focus on the research phenomena that existed and happened in its natural environment. The researcher did not control or manipulate any patterns and themes in this study. As a result, generalization may not be possible whereas transferability could be doable.

Findings

This section reports the findings and embraces various insights that answer the research inquires emerged during the data analysis. These data collected from the different sources reflect exactly the research participants' ideas, opinions and beliefs. These helped the researcher present the authentic findings of this study in depth. The findings of the study provide exhaustively descriptive analysis and discussions of four main areas. According to the data analysis, the findings of this study related to the Teachers' attitudes toward online communications to build a democratic and multicultural knowledge networks are summarized the below:

1. Turkish online teachers' abilities continue to develop their critical thinking skills must be deeply engaged in e-communications that cover the challenges with fairness, expectations and respects. Sharing power and cultures must help these teachers deeply engage in online communication activities that examine the dynamics of democratic changes in online community by improving reflective practices for greater impacts.
2. The e-communications must be associated with these teachers' critical thinking developments to build knowledge networks via e-communications that engage the Turkish teachers' critical civic responsibilities, dynamic academic curriculums and powerful social actions to understand the possibilities and potentials of democratic decision-making and dialogic leadership.
3. These teachers' patterns in critical thinking developments must be addressed complex problem solving activities in democratic and multicultural contexts in e-communications. To provide unique and diverse perspectives with their own communicational strengths and weaknesses, obtaining genuine equal opportunities and democratic participations in building online knowledge networks must not be characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy and competition, and discuss the philosophical foundations and backgrounds of concepts, insights and skills needed to accelerate democratic transformations.
4. The impacts of these teachers' critical thinking developments on the outcomes of their courses must appreciate e-communications. Promoting critical activities for their engagements in democratic decision-making empower authentic and high quality lifelong learning experiences by reconciling the pressures with the models of dialogic leaderships to plan professional engagements in democratic decision-making via online communications.

The participants' online communication patterns, impacts and communicational outcomes in their classes are extremely important topics of how these teachers are generating new communication skills to construct new meanings beyond what is directly given (Paul, 1995; Fosnot, 1996; Halpern, 1996; Levy, 1997; Patel & Kinshuk, 1997; Norton & Wiburg, 1998; Anderson & Garrison, 1998; Bonk & Cunningham, 1998; Clark, 1998; Palloff & Pratt, 2000; Bowers, 2000; Berg, 2000; Cecez-Kecmanovic & Webb, 2000; Kemery, 2000; Picciano, 2001; Resta, 2002; Moore & Tait, 2002; Nichols, 2003; Cristea, 2003; Hong & Kinshuk, 2004). Theoretically, online communications in these academic settings must guide online teachers to apply analysis to recognize relationships that they can develop their cognitive models and high-level abstract knowledge efficiently.

The findings to answer the first research question pointed out that the Turkish teachers' abilities continue must develop their critical thinking skills that can be deeply engaged in e-communications.

Of 319 teachers in this study,

1. the majority of them (91,2%) would like to teach online classrooms and communicate via online; because utilizing cutting-edge technologies were very popular among the teachers. However, all of these majority group indicated strongly that their courses were not suitable for designing via these new communication technologies due to their complex and intense contexts,
2. the majority of them (93,1%) believe strongly that they were not only unique masters, but also condense knowledge sources in their courses whereas their learners had to follow their course outline strictly,
3. the 255 of them (79,9%) emphasized that using online communications in their classrooms could make a very real difference in their learners lives but none of them underlined that they had to come up with a flexible and open lesson plan,
4. the 157 of them (49,2%) pointed out that they wanted to enhance and affect the training and work environments to improve their and their learners core online communication skills,
5. the 129 of them (40,3%) pointed out that they had very limited online communication skills when interacting with their learners, resources and themselves; therefore, they preferred to communicate with the others in the face-to-face environments,
6. the 76 of them (23,8%) mentioned that their and learners' responsibilities and roles were changing in online communication milieus that allow them to challenge and reward their students and also themselves,
7. the 31 of them (9,71%) realized that their basic communication skills toward building online knowledge networks were very important to generate democratic and multicultural communities, the rest of them (90,3%) had no idea about their roles this interaction processes,
8. the 27 of them (8,5%) mentioned that they would like to show their learners the world through online classrooms that enrich their communicational activities democratically and enhance the value of virtual knowledge networks as teaching tools,
9. only few of them (1,9%) emphasized that they had to critically understand diverse needs, expectations and attitudes as well as value and ethics among learners, them and community in their online classes, and
10. none of them realized that online communications had to concentrate on intradisciplinary and reflective thinking skills with sharing power and culture that established the dynamics of democratic changes in virtual knowledge networks.

In this case, the Turkish teachers were not sure to utilize online communications for the latest technologies that could open new dimensions to the imaginative minds in their classes. The above concerns and issues, therefore, affected all levels of communicational interactions and collaborations that began radical reforms to implement technology-based classroom and school designs in Turkey. Moreover, the growing utilization of new communication technologies did not affect teaching and learning that neither led to fundamental changes in communication styles nor generated novel models of online communications in Turkish schools.

The findings to answer second research question showed that the e-communications must be associated with the Turkish teachers' critical thinking developments to build knowledge networks via e-communications

Of 319 teachers in this study,

1. the 241 of them (75,5%) pointed out that they had to develop appropriate online communication skills to make connections between what they already knew and new information whereas the 16 of these 241 teachers emphasized that staff development training programs were continuously needed as long-term solutions to cope with growing complexity of online communication tools,
2. the 228 of them (71,5%) mentioned that they did not want to spend more time working with other teachers on curriculum and technology planning and integration,
3. the 211 of them (66,1%) reflected that the technology reforms could impact on their classrooms becoming more learner-centered and learner-directed whereas the majority of these 211 teachers (94,3%) believed strongly that learner-centered milieus did not provide their learners with well-designed teaching opportunities,
4. the 103 of them (32.3%) pointed out powerfully that their school had to demand strong online management tools and staff, and also fair distribution across classes and the teachers,
5. the 87 teachers (27.3%) expressed that their online classrooms can help them prepare their learners in new communication ways with accepting risks and unknowns,
6. the 63 of them (19,7%) highlighted that they did not want to become more a highly competitive teammate in their schools due to the new communication technology integration,
7. the 44 of them (13,8%) accepted that they wanted to find themselves more often in the role of coach and mentor, and less often in the role of direct instructor,
8. the 36 of them (11,3%) indicated that they could revise their works to better serve their learners in online knowledge networks,
9. the 11 of them (3,4%) pointed out that they would like to voluntary involve in every level of the communication reforms and restructuring processes in their schools,
10. only five of them (1,6%) indicated that they would like to give their learners more responsibility for their own learning process and engage them in active online communication experiences, and
11. only two of them (0,6%) mentioned that reducing the direct lecturer method and increasing online communications could result in greater interactions among learners, teachers and community.

The Turkish teachers did not realized that online communications could help them engage critical civic responsibilities, dynamic academic curriculums and powerful social actions to understand the possibilities and potentials of democratic decision-making and dialogic leadership in their classrooms. Although online communications can bring new flexibility, openness and mobility to the teachers and their learners, the Turkish teachers did not want to find diverse resources and take real-life projects outside of their class time doing extra works for technology integration and developing up-dated technology plans to build online knowledge networks.

The findings to answer the third research question indicated that these online teachers' patterns in critical thinking developments must be addressed complex problem solving activities in democratic and multicultural contexts in generating powerful e-communications.

Of 319 teachers in this study,

1. the 298 of them (93,4%) pointed out that they would like to develop appropriate online communication skills to generate powerful connections that made effective decisions within timely teaching schedules whereas the 259 of these 298 teachers (86,9%) mentioned that they did not have efficient time for all these activities,
2. the 276 of them (27.3%) indicated that they could not provide their learners with diverse viewpoints without their biases and stereotypes to construct potential solutions to societal problems via online communications via online communications,
3. the 197 learners (61,7%) expressed that collaborative learning could not engage their learners in collective online communication processes that enhanced cognitive and social learning in their classes,
4. the 135 of them (42,3%) articulated that online communications had the deeper processing of virtual contents and the critical developments of decision making skills and also strategies,
5. the 108 of them (33.9%) reflected that they could share with their colleagues and other teachers their electronic works to develop online work samples around their class-related issues,
6. the 94 of them (29.5%) accepted that they did not want to collaborate in groups as technology coordinator to make the best use of time and course-related discussions,
7. the 58 of them (18,2%) stated that they did not consider to develop the conceptual framework that the large number of their learners could involve in generating democratic online communications,
8. the 33 of them (10,3%) highlighted that their learners could develop a series of additional critical questions and crucial problem-solve potential solutions that were based on real-life problems and also dilemmas via online communications in their classrooms, and
9. the 19 of them (6%) pointed out that online communications could help their learners would be responsible for the in-depth explorations of the nature and dimensions of knowledge networks in their classes.

To provide unique and diverse perspectives with their own communicational strengths and weaknesses, the Turkish teachers did not pointed out that they had to obtain genuine equal opportunities and democratic participations in building online knowledge networks not characterized by power, dominance, hierarchy and competition. Besides, they did not discuss the philosophical foundations and backgrounds of concepts, insights and skills needed to accelerate democratic transformations via online knowledge networks that could promote discussions, reflections, strategic plans and critical decision making process. On the other hand, the Turkish teachers could *not* help themselves fell comfortable in virtual knowledge networks, and also expression their ideas through online communications. Therefore, their teaching efforts in their online classrooms could not promote their learners' critical thinking skills and reflective responses.

The findings to answer the third research question emphasized that the impacts of the Turkish teachers' critical thinking developments on the outcomes of their courses must appreciate e-communications.

Of 319 teachers in this study,

1. the 218 of them (68,3%) articulated that they did not know how to discover new ways to communicate with the world by constructing knowledge networks online,
2. the 167 of them (52,4%) pointed out that they did not need to explain diverse cultures in terms of their learners from all different backgrounds in online communication milieus,
3. the 144 of these teachers (45,1%) expressed that they did not have knowledge and skills about how to access online information and resources on any teaching subjects to help with updating their lesson plans,
4. the 129 of them (40.4%) indicated that incorporating the online vast resources was one of the major challenges into their classes that they could not effectively integrate these resources into regular online communication activities,
5. the 96 of them (30,1%) stated that they had to understand the fundamentals of online communications could decide to take the next step courageously that they and their learners could find more time for exploration and discovery in their classrooms,
6. the 77 of them (24.1%) accepted that they strongly believed in providing critical real-life solutions based on their learner needs, and quality training at any level of online communications in their classes; but none of them highlighted that they talked with their collogues, learners and administrators about these concerns before,
7. the 43 of these teachers (13,5%) emphasized that they did not challenge build their own technology skills, share their expertise with their learners in the daily teaching process and make their online classroom technologies available to all their learners in the classes,
8. the 25 of them (7,8%) pointed out that they had a technology vision of the future that exchange ideas with their collogues and learn how to integrate new communication technologies into their curriculum,
9. the 12 of these teachers (3,8%) mentioned that online communications made teaching easier for them to concrete on how they could do best-teaching in their classes,
10. the 8 of these teachers (2,5%) articulated that they needed to attend workshops and in-service trainings at their local schools that they could understand various aspects of online technologies, and
11. the 7 of these teachers (2,2%) expressed that online communications could extend their classrooms and also provide enhanced and collaborative online communication opportunities for everyone from the world, and
12. only one of these 319 teachers (0,3%) mentioned that she would like to connect her two and/or more online classes at the same time.

The Turkish teacher did not believe that promoting critical online communication activities for their learners' engagements in democratic decision-making process could empower authentic and high quality lifelong learning experiences by reconciling the pressures with the models of dialogic leaderships to plan professional engagements in democratic decision-making in their classrooms.

Overall Findings

The researcher gained the information in detail that the overall findings and discussions of this research showed that the Turkish teachers had a lack of the online communication skills. Therefore, they tended *not* to integrate new communication technologies into their curriculum, develop strategic technology plans to utilize online communications in their class, empower their technology skills, dealt with issues such improving a broad range of new communication abilities and place a strong emphasis on strengthening online communications in their classrooms. Therefore, the Turkish teachers were not volunteers to have actually designed their classrooms and hence have real-live and first-hand experiences to build upon that it will take time for these participants to adopt positive experiences toward living in a virtual community. Today, these teachers must improve their online openness, flexibility and convenience to design, deliver and evaluate online communications powerfully.

Online communications are complex processes that emphasize group and collaborative efforts among these teachers, whose virtual partnerships can able to cover active participations and interactions. Therefore, there is much more to online communications than emerging technologies that the Turkish teachers rethink how they develop policies and procedures more conducive to online communications; and know how to utilize these novel tools in their classrooms. Besides, not only must schools make major changes to their communication models, but also these teachers have to conduct online classes properly. Many of these teachers believe strongly that online communications miss the social interactions that take place in traditional classrooms. Many face-to-face classrooms, however, involve very little social interactions among learners in Turkey. Online communications provide learners with a lot more social interactions than face-to-face classrooms. Besides, more structured collaborations can generate effective online communications that allow for plenty of virtual social interactions.

Transition from traditional face-to-face classes to online milieus is the increasing popularity of virtual classrooms, as online knowledge networks (Ozkul, 2004). Although the Turkish teachers believe that online communications can help them design interactive classrooms, the face-to-face feature of traditional classrooms is a major and indispensable issue for them to communicate with their learners. In this context, due to their negative attitudes, blaming online communication milieus is easy for these teachers not to integrate new communication technologies into their curriculum. To help the Turkish teachers develop more positive attitudes, new communication technologies in the schools have to expand their capabilities to present richer environments in the classrooms. Therefore, these teachers can reduce their teaching times and labor costs with online knowledge networks that support new applications for their learners. In short, the emerging technologies can make it possible to someday extend to online communications in Turkey. Therefore, the Turkish teachers must be emotionally ready to successfully implement these technologies into their class that they can improve school-based communications. In short, the Turkish teachers were not eager to powerfully utilize online communication facilities in their classrooms due to a lack of computer-based knowledge and technology skills. Besides, they did not want to involve in training activities and services to learn how to integrate new communication technologies, because they did not work any school-related works after their classes.

Conclusions

The main focus of this study is to find out the Turkish teachers' attitudes toward online communications. In this case, besides, online communications have weakness and limitations to build powerful interactions and collaborations; but the Turkish online teachers had a lack of critical thinking and decision making skills to

- discover new communication technologies and their relationships to conduct online communications to societal and educational change,
- focus on working collaboratively with each other regularly to promote excellence through continuous process improvement and the creative pursuit of new ideas and systems in online communications,
- build global knowledge networks and authentic learning milieus to bring democratic changes in their communities by implementing collective action to investigate real-life experiences in pedagogical situations,
- understand critical communicational possibilities and potentials about educational and social justice issues for lifelong learning to recreate dialogical and democratic forms of pedagogy and community engagement,
- explore powerful democratic communicational practices by providing specific ideas to promote dialogues between them, and augmenting cognitive learning skills to generate motivations for multi-generational partnerships,
- engage their partnerships in lifelong learning projects designed to be realistic, intriguing and relevant to real life experiences in their courses that promote online communications about how theory translate into practice in virtual classrooms,
- integrate authentic partnerships by clearly stating the pedagogical guidelines to build online societies in their classes that encourage them to take ownership and responsibility for online communications,
- become cognitive coaches to build online knowledge societies from a pedagogical perspective in their courses that improve independent communication strategies and principles by utilizing virtual collaborations successfully in their courses,
- plan, manage and lead effectively in the professional developments and lifelong learning endeavors of online communications to construct knowledge networks, and
- work in project-based teams to investigate the relationship between online communications and critical thinking developments to build democratic and multicultural knowledge networks.

In addition, as highlighted by Wills and Becht (1997), to take advantages of online communications is that these teachers must be regularly encouraged and motivated to insure effective utilization to build virtual communities. Besides, starting with explicit definitions of their roles and responsibilities is an important step in sharing knowledge online in their courses. Moreover, they must be trained how to instigate and contribute as online participants in a virtual community to acquire good online communication skills and knowledge before taking an online course. Based on the data analyzes, the researcher pointed out that the Turkish teachers could not effectively and efficiently use and manage online communications. In short, whatever their goals, the Turkish teachers have to work with their learners and community to gradually design and implement online communication strategies and models that suit their curriculum and expectations.

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