

**AN ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC READING AND WRITING NEEDS
OF UNDERGRADUATE ELT STUDENTS**



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**AN ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC READING AND WRITING NEEDS
OF UNDERGRADUATE ELT STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

AN ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC READING AND WRITING NEEDS
OF
UNDERGRADUATE ELT STUDENTS

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The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate one of the language improvement courses (i.e Advanced Reading and Writing) at the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT) of a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. The study also attempts to identify the needs of the students taking this course with regard to five fundamental aspects, namely aims and objectives, course content and materials, course conduct, student assessment, and continuity and coherence among the courses. Twenty eight freshmen students who are currently enrolled in the ELT program and taking ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I Course participated in the study. The data, both qualitative and quantitative, was collected through three different sources namely; questionnaires, open-ended questions and reflective essays. Results suggested that the needs of students were met by the course at a relatively high level, and the implications for the improvement of the course were discussed.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, Course Evaluation, English Language Teaching (ELT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

ÖZ

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ BÖLÜMÜ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN AKADEMİK OKUMA VE YAZMA BECERİLERİNİN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı İstanbul, Türkiye’de bir vakıf üniversitesinin (kar amacı gütmeyen, özel) İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümü, birinci sınıflı programında bulunan bir dil geliştirme dersini (İleri Düzeyde Okuma ve Yazma Becerileri) incelemek ve değerlendirmektir. Çalışma aynı zamanda bu dersi alan öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını, dersin amaçları ve hedefleri; ders içeriği ve kullanılan materyaller; ders yönetimi; öğrencilerin değerlendirilmesi ve diğer derslerle ilişkisi başlıkları altında belirlemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışmaya İngiliz Dili Eğitimi bölümü, birinci sınıfta okumakta olan ve İleri Düzeyde Okuma ve Yazma Becerileri dersini alan 28 öğrenci katılmıştır. Veriler, nitel ve nicel öğrenci ders değerlendirme ve ihtiyaç analizi anketleri; açık uçlu sorular ve yansıtıcı metinler olarak üç farklı kaynak aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Sonuçlar, dersin öğrenci ihtiyaçlarını yüksek oranda karşıladığını göstermiştir ve dersin geliştirilmesi amacıyla bazı çıkarımlar üzerine tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İhtiyaç Analizi, Ders Değerlendirmesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi



To my mother Hatice, my father Bayram and my husband, Ünal

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
NA	Needs Analysis
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences



Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Recent changes in society have affected higher education broadly. Although there has been tremendous growth and pedagogical advances, many challenges emerged as a result of serious attacks on the academy and students within higher education (Heppner & Johnson, 1994; Dilorenzo & Heppner, 1994). Universities have to struggle with many issues, such as; meeting expectations of quality of education and the needs of society; keeping up with the changing technology and changing paradigms in teaching and learning; understanding and studying the value of assessment, and responding to the needs of diverse composition of student populations (Millis, 1994). It seems that all universities are facing increasingly new demands to improve quality in their educational missions; therefore, they are in a search for ways to professionalize the academics and improve the quality of university teaching and learning especially in today's continuously changing higher education sector (Devlin & Samarawickrema 2010; Moeini, 2003). Especially for the last 40 years, faculty development has been an essential part of higher education, as it went through a complete evolution from context and process based programs to programs designed to develop faculty members as teachers and facilitators of learning (Chun, 1999; Millis, 1994). Being aware of the importance of meeting all kinds of needs of their students, many universities nowadays feel the urge to precede others especially by motivating the academics to enhance and develop their programs. Therefore, frequent evaluation and examination of the program, curriculum, or syllabi is of great importance for all departments of universities in order to meet the constant changing demands of the era, in terms of student needs, academic needs, technology, and business trends.

English language today operates as the lingua franca of the modern world (Pitzl, 2012; Jenkins, 2007; Cogo & Dewey, 2006, 2012; Crystal, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2001, 2004; Firth, 1996). English language is accepted as a medium within almost all of the fields regardless of the language being used in the interacting cultures.

Therefore, it has become a necessity for the majority to be competent in English in order to meet the necessities of the modern world society. In order to meet this new demand, more and more people feel the need to learn English, which leads to the emergence of English language related higher education programs. Therefore, numerous English language teaching programs have been introduced recently, and it is obvious that there are more to come.

As the need for being competent in English has proved to be immensely significant, teaching it efficiently has also become a major issue in the field of education. As students' success depends on the success of their teachers; the success of teachers depends on qualified language teacher education programs (Altmisdort, 2016). Pre-service teacher education programs in the field of English language teaching aim to educate effective and competent language teachers (Erozan, 2005). Prospective English language teachers studying at the faculties of education need to take numerous educational and content knowledge classes in order to graduate, and most importantly teach the language effectively.

Language competence and confidence of a language teacher are regarded as important as pedagogical needs (Berry, 1990; Murdoch, 1994) although they are quite neglected on pre-service and in-service training. A language teacher who has a poor command of English is most likely to encounter many different problems both inside and outside the classroom environment, such as giving instructions, asking questions on a text, explaining the meaning of a word or replying to a student's question or remark, as well as possible problems with school supervisors and inspectors, who may be more interested in their language performance rather than their classroom skills (Cullen, 2001). Mitchell (1988) also states that the most important element of a language class is the teacher who has a successful command of English and can address topics of interest to particular individuals, continually adjust his/her speech to an appropriate level of difficulty and solve unpredictable communication problems, or to 'scaffold' the learner's attempts at FL speech.

Considering the issues mentioned above, it can be assumed that education has been in constant change within the last decade, and the faculties have to revise their programs in order to meet the expectations of the changing society. Especially developing and evaluating the language teaching programs have gained more

importance since English was regarded as the lingua franca of the modern world. As these changes have also affected the nature of English Language Teaching programs, and in order to keep up with the needs of society, revising, updating and tailoring these programs is of great importance.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study will be outlined under four categories, namely; components of a language teacher education syllabus, notion of integrated teaching, program evaluation and needs analysis.

1.2.1 Components of a language teacher education syllabus. As Roberts (1998) implicated, a language teacher education syllabus includes the following types or categories of teacher knowledge:

- i. *Content knowledge* is the teacher's knowledge of target language systems, their target language competence and their analytic knowledge.
- ii. *Pedagogic content knowledge* is the knowledge of language which is needed to teach it. It includes adapting content and means of communicating linguistic knowledge according to learners' needs.
- iii. *General pedagogic knowledge* includes principles and strategies for classroom management, repertoire of ELT activities, the use of aids and resources, and formal assessment of learning.
- iv. *Curricular knowledge* refers to the knowledge of the official language curriculum (exams, textbooks) and of resources.
- v. *Contextual knowledge* refers to awareness of the characteristics of learners, schools and the wider system, i.e. community.
- vi. *Process knowledge* consists of a set of skills and attitudes (i.e. ability to relate to learners, peers and parents, study skills, team skills, observational skills, classroom inquiry skills, and language analysis skills) that enable the development of the teacher.

1.2.2 Integrated teaching. Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985, p. 144) define the teaching of integrated skills in the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics as "the teaching of the language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in conjunction with each other as when a lesson involves activities that relate listening

and speaking to reading and writing." In the 1970s, many researchers and methodologists stated that language skills cannot be taught through discrete structural elements (Stern, 1992; Corder, 1971, 1978; Kaplan, 1970;). Authentically, language skills are not used in isolation, e.g., both speaking and listening comprehension are needed in a conversation and, in some contexts, reading or listening and making notes is as common as having a conversation (Hinkel, 2010).

Brown (2001) regards integration as the only credible approach for communicative and interactive teaching and learning. He further attempts to support this idea by suggesting that production and reception are the sides of a coin and cannot be split; interaction means sending and receiving messages; and that one skill reinforces the other. From this perspective, as supported by Hinkel (2010) integrating skills is a good idea since it is usually associated with outgrowths of communicative teaching.

1.2.3 Program evaluation. The term 'program' applies to any organized educational activity offered on continuing basis (Kiely & Rea-Dickens, 2005). Brown (1989, p. 223) defines evaluation as 'the systemic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitude within a context of particular institutions involved'. Evaluation in ELT includes a broad range of purposes and activities, so it embraces both individual language programs, training courses and even wider range of ELT related operations at one or more locations within a single country (Weir & Roberts, 1994).

1.2.4 Needs analysis. Needs analysis is "a systematic process of collection and analysis as inputs into resource allocation decisions with a view to discovering and identifying goods and services the community is lacking in relation to the generally accepted standards, and for which there exists some consensus as to the community's responsibility for their provision" (Reviere, 1996, p. 6). Berwick and Johnson (1989) define a need as a gap or disparity between the current state and the expected future state. He further defines the gap as the inconsistency between the target situation and the present situation, and he claims that the aim of any needs assessment process is to determine the learners' needs to achieve the desired target situation.

There have been many distinct approaches to needs analysis since the 1980's. Munby's *Communicative Syllabus Design* in 1978 provided a detailed profile of the students' language needs and it is a good example to target situation analysis. Chambers (1980) introduced the term Target Situation Analysis based on Munby's work.

Songhori (2008) listed several other terms that have also been introduced, such as; Present Situation Analysis, Pedagogic Needs Analysis, Deficiency Analysis, Strategy Analysis or Learning Needs Analysis, Means Analysis, Register Analysis, Discourse Analysis, and Genre Analysis which will be described in the following section briefly.

To begin with, while Hutchinson and Waters (1987) define target situation analysis as what the learner needs to know in order to function effectively in the target situation, Present Situation Analysis seeks to identify what they are like at the beginning of it (Songhori, 2008). West (1997) used the term Pedagogic Needs Analysis as an umbrella term to describe Deficiency Analysis, Strategy Analysis or Learning Needs Analysis, and Means Analysis. He claimed that shortcomings of target needs analysis should be compensated for by collecting data about the learner and the learning environment. Songhori (2008) claims that Deficiency Analysis takes learners' present needs and wants into consideration, and Strategy Analysis or Learning Needs Analysis includes subjective, felt and process-oriented needs. Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998, p. 125) claim that Means Analysis gives us "information about the environment in which the course will be run" and thus attempts to adapt to ESP course to the cultural environment of the target language. Register Analysis focuses on grammar and vocabulary of the text, as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) stated certain grammatical and lexical forms are used much more frequently while the grammar of scientific and technical writing is not different as it is in general English. Discourse Analysis investigates how sentences form the discourse. According to West (1998), this approach tended to concentrate on how sentences are used in the performance of acts of communication and to generate materials based on functions. Finally, Genre Analysis deals with the patterns of structure that distinguishes one text type from another as Bhatia (1991), who is one of the researchers in the field of genre analysis, defines genre analysis as the study of linguistic behavior in institutionalized academic or professional setting.

In brief, the literature implicates a variety of needs analysis types. It could be stated that the current study applied a combination of Target and Present Situation Analysis. The data that was obtained through a Likert-like questionnaire aimed to carry out Present Situation Needs Analysis whereas the Open-ended Questionnaires and reflective essays aimed to investigate the target needs.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Low-proficiency level in English is often an issue among students who are in pre-service or in-service teaching programs. Especially in EFL contexts, language improvement is regarded as a priority since the access to target language and native speakers of the language is limited (Cullen, 2001). Language improvement is also the main training requirement of English teachers around the world, yet it is often neglected in pre-service or in-service courses (Erozan, 2005). Therefore, the language improvement element in language teacher education programs should be evaluated comprehensively in order to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the existing practice, identify the language development needs and expectations of the student teachers enrolled in these programs and by this way, improve the current program.

Evaluation in language education is an indispensable part of program development to achieve quality and effectiveness. As the main goal of the English language teacher education programs is to train and guide future teachers to have successful language learners (Altmisdort, 2016), evaluation should constitute a great part of language teaching programs. Carrying out systematic needs analysis in language teaching programs is the most important way of keeping the programs up to date since needs analysis triggers students' interest and motivation in learning the foreign language as it takes into account their attitudes and needs (Taylor, 1997; Berwick & Johnson, 1989; Nunan, 1988; Allwright, 1983).

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluate one of the language improvement courses (i.e Advanced Reading and Writing) at the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT) of a foundation (non-profit, private) university in Istanbul, Turkey. The study also attempts to identify the needs of the students taking

this course with regard to five fundamental aspects, namely aims and objectives, course content and materials, course conduct, student assessment, and continuity and coherence among the courses.

1.5 Research Questions

1. Which reading strategies do the freshmen ELT students experience most and least difficulty with the advanced reading and writing course?

2. Which writing strategies do the freshmen ELT students experience most and least difficulty with the advanced reading and writing course?

3. Does the advanced reading and writing course meet the expectations of the ELT freshmen students with regard to the following aspects:

- a. content and materials
- b. activities and methods
- c. assessment
- d. relationship with other courses

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this course? How can the course be improved in the future?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study attempts to examine and evaluate a language development lesson, Advanced Reading and Writing, in an English language teaching department (ELT) of a private university. Student needs of the relevant lesson are aimed to be identified in order to provide the designers of the program with an insight of the possible alterations, or existing problems on the syllabus, if any. In addition, the students might find the data collection procedure helpful in that it might give them a chance to reflect on their level of language competence regarding their reading and writing skills. Last but not least, the component of language improvement in English language teaching programs hasn't been studied extensively, so this research might contribute to the existing study results, or might be a new perspective for those who would like to study in this area.

1.7 Operational Definitions of Terms

English as a foreign language (EFL). It is defined as the learning of a language of those whom the English language does not have an internal function in their L1 country (Jenkins, 2000).

English language teaching (ELT). It refers to the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (Cambridge Dictionary, 2016)

Integrated teaching. As defined in the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, teaching of integrated skills refers to the teaching of the language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking in conjunction with each other as when a lesson involves activities that relate listening and speaking to reading and writing (Richards, Platt & Weber, 1985, p. 144)

Evaluation. Evaluation is the “systematic assessment of an object’s merit, worth, probity, feasibility, safety, significance, and/or equity” (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007, p. 13).

Needs analysis. Needs analysis refers to the procedures to collect information about learners and about communication tasks to be used throughout the course of a syllabus design (Nunan, 1988).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In the literature review section of this study, mainly, different definitions of evaluation, its role in teacher education programs and course evaluation, needs analysis and its role in teaching and learning will be discussed.

2.1.1 Definitions of evaluation. There are many different definitions and approaches to evaluation in the field of education. Worthen and Sanders (1973, p. 19) define evaluation as “the determination of the worth of a thing”. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield (2007, p. 13) specify the definition as “the systematic assessment of an object’s merit, worth, probity, feasibility, safety, significance, and/or equity.” Similarly, Brown (1989, p. 223) defines evaluation as ‘the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants’ attitudes within a context of particular institutions involved’. Owen (2007) and Weir & Roberts (1994) approach the notion of evaluation similar to Brown (1989) by defining it as a means of deciding the value of a program with the help of organized knowledge that comes from systematic enquiries, which in turn assists authorities to decide to alter, scaffold, or remove the existing plan. Program evaluation, further is defined by Posavac and Carey (1989, p.3) as “a collection of methods, skills, and sensitivities necessary to determine whether a human service is needed and likely to be used, whether it is sufficiently intense to meet the needs identified, whether the service is offered as planned, and whether the human service actually does help people in need without undesirable side effects.”

As shown in the previous paragraph, many definitions of evaluation refer to the notions “worth” and being “systematic” one way or another. From the educational perspective, these notions are of great importance when evaluation is considered within a program. Based on these definitions, it can be inferred that without evaluation improvement cannot be achieved in educational programs and that it should be carried out systematically in short intervals.

2.1.2 Teacher preparation program evaluation. Evaluation plays an essential role in teaching and learning and its role in our field has been growing (Ayers, Gephart, & Clark, 1989; Alderson & Baretta, 1992; Kırkgöz, 2009; Peacock, 2009) and it can provide useful information for teachers in terms of implementing future classroom practices, planning, and for managing tasks to be used (Rea-Dickens & Germaine, 1993).

According to Kırkgöz (2009, p.680), teacher education programs at university level should be “revised and updated”. All systematic program evaluations have an internal or an external aim although they are named differently by different scholars. Gaies (1992) suggested that the internal aim focuses on using the data on student learning, while the external aim is about the assessment of the accountability of an institution and of the programs within an institution.

Besides, Weir and Roberts (1994) name the purposes of evaluation as for accountability and for development. Accountability oriented evaluation focuses on how much the staff meets the contractual or professional requirements and it is summative. On the other hand, development oriented evaluation intends to improve the program or the project that is being researched. It is formative, and ‘regards the program as fluid and seeks ways to better it’ (Cronbach 1982, p.12).

As this study aims for the development of a program and does not aim to confirm or explain the various uses of the program elements, accountability is not considered as the purpose of evaluation.

2.1.3 Course evaluation. The literature suggests that when evaluating programs, it is crucial to assess student experience in order to develop effective improvement plans (Bradley, Kish, Krudwig, Williams, & Wooden, 2002; Simpson, Stahl, & Francis, 2004). Van Auken (2013) states that, student interventions require both students and teachers to be engaged in being learner-centered instruction and have the necessary skills for reflection. Specifically, it requires students to give time and effort, be interested in the material, actively participate in class activities, be intellectually excited about a project, and take responsibility for their own learning. However, in the course level, these constructs are not evaluated enough for the purpose of improvement. The only types of course-level data that are collected by most developmental education innovative attempts are through student grades and

pass rates. Despite the potential to behold a great amount of useful information about student experience, course evaluation is generally used for summative evaluation purposes or for accreditation, and they are administered too late in the semester (Rehak & McKinney, 2015). According to Bahr (2008), early intervention is critical for students who perform poorly. Similarly, from the perspective of course development, early intervention can be the key to amendments or alterations for problematic issues, as well as holding the potential to pose as a warning sign or early feedback for future classroom applications or syllabus designs.

To summarize, this study aimed to provide constructive feedback for the development of the course that was evaluated, and eventually help with improving the quality of various aspects regarding course aims and objectives, content and materials, activities and methods and assessment techniques.

2.2 Definitions of Needs Analysis

The notion of needs analysis has been studied by many different scholars, and there is a considerable amount of definitions in the literature. According to Nunan (1988), needs analysis refers to the procedures to collect information about learners and about communication tasks to be used in syllabus design. A similar definition by Ellis and Johnson (1994) refer to needs analysis as a method of obtaining a detailed description of learner needs. Bachman and Palmer (1996, p. 102) argued, “needs analysis or needs assessment, involves the systematic gathering of specific information about the language needs of learners and the analysis of this information for purposes of language syllabus design”. According to Iwai et al. (1999, p. 6), needs analysis refer to the activities that assist collecting information to be the grounds for developing a curriculum that will serve for the needs and wants of a group of students. Graves (2000) further highlighted the systematicity and continuity of collecting information about students’ needs and preferences. Then the information has to be interpreted to make decisions on a course based on student needs and wants.

In brief, the definitions mentioned above all emphasize that needs analysis is a means which helps to collect necessary information that can be further used to find out learners’ needs and wants.

2.2.1 Needs analysis in language teaching. A language course which is designed properly and targets at improving students' learning and boosting their interest and motivation should first take into account their attitudes and needs. (Allwright, 1983; Berwick & Johnson, 1989; Nunan, 1988; Taylor, 1997). More specifically, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) argue that needs analysis should be the main concern of all language courses. According to Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), needs analysis focuses on how a course should be. In brief, needs analysis plays an essential role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course.

According to Richards, (1984) the first step of learner-centered instruction is needs analysis. Needs analysis helps the teacher to understand why and how his students are learning the foreign language. The learners' motivation and success in language learning will come automatically, as they their expectations are met. Richards, Platt and Platt (1992, p. 242-243) suggested "needs analysis seeks to obtain information on the situation in which a language will be used including whom it will be used with, the objectives and purposes for which the language is needed, the type of communication that will be used, and the level of proficiency that will be required". Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998) stress the following three aspects of needs analysis in language teaching. The first aspect is regarding learners as people and language learners. The second is enhancing language and skills learning of the target group. Finally, the last one is knowing the environment in order to interpret the data properly.

2.3 Studies on Needs Analysis

There is a wide range of studies in the literature that aim to find out the expectations and needs of the students, teachers and even administrations. The studies in the body of literature regarding needs analysis suggest a change in the program, in the curriculum or in the course. (Bagherzadeh, Bigdeli, Hatami, & Hosseini, 2010; Cai, 2013; Chostelidoua, 2010; Gözüyeşil, 2013; Erozan, 2005; Kazar & Mede, 2014; Ozek & Akyel, 2010)

The study conducted by Cai (2003) investigated the academic writing needs of 50 ESP students in China, and aimed to identify target needs and difficulties students have in academic writing skills in general, besides focusing on perceptions and

attitudes towards their previous academic writing courses and prospective new courses. The data was collected through questionnaires and focus group interviews. The study indicated that the most difficult general academic writing skills were reviewing and critiquing, and the most difficult language-related problems are using proper academic phrases and style.

Erozan (2005) evaluated the language improvement courses in the undergraduate curriculum of the ELT at a foundation university in Northern Cyprus. Six instructors and students enrolled in the courses participated in the study. The data was obtained through course evaluation questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and examination of relevant written documents. The results of the study showed that the language improvement courses were effective. However, some suggestions and changes were offered for the purpose of improvement of the courses that were evaluated.

In a study by Chostelidoua (2010), the prospective professional and language skills needs, deficiencies, suggestions and preferences of 395 students in Technological Educational Institutions (T.E.I.) in Greece were investigated through questionnaires and interviews (structured and semi-structured). The results indicated that there is a need to set up a language course with a clear focus on ESP in addition to changes in the curriculum regarding the content. Lastly, the findings showed that the present situation was not in line with the identified needs.

In an attempt to revise the present syllabi of ESP postgraduate courses, a needs analysis was conducted by Bagherzadeh et al., (2010) at the Faculty of Management and Medical Information, at Iran University of Medical Sciences. Seventy five participants consisting of 56 postgraduate students, 10 graduates, four heads of departments, four ESP instructors and one executive manager contributed to the data. Questionnaires and interviews were the main sources of data in this study. The results obtained revealed a discrepancy between what the students expressed as their needs and what is actually in the syllabus.

The study conducted by Ozek and Akyel (2010) aimed to examine the university students' needs for the innovation of the ELT curriculum in a preparatory school in Turkey. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, from 2328 students from different grades and departments as well as

125 lecturers. The results suggested that there is a need for encouragement of the students to use effective learning strategies, professional development activities for the instructors in the Prep School to implement strategy training component of the program. Finally, it was agreed that a portfolio system could be established especially for active involvement of students in the learning process.

Gözüyeşil (2013), on the other hand, investigated which skills and tasks had the priority for ESP students. The data was collected from 379 students from preparatory school and engineering departments as well as 11 academicians. The findings revealed that engineering students regard speaking skill as the priority. It was recommended that the current curriculum should be revised and updated in accordance with the needs of students and the expectations of academicians.

A study conducted at a private university in Turkey, Kazar and Mede (2014), aimed to identify the target needs of the students engaged in an ESP program. 84 students participated in the study. Data were collected through a pre-needs analysis questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study revealed that the program should focus on the effective use of language strategies.

Based on these overviews, it can be implied that the studies carried out on needs analysis both in Turkey and around the world mainly reveal a requirement for a change in many aspects of language programs, including curriculum, syllabus, content, practices, or instruction. This shows that needs analysis is an indispensable part of language education programs in order to keep up with the changing demands and needs of learners. The present study, therefore, attempts to investigate the reading and writing needs of Turkish EFL students at a foundation university in Turkey and come up with suggestions to improve the course which is investigated.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter describes the methodology of the study and provides information on the research questions, research design, participants, setting, data collection instruments and data analysis, limitations and delimitations of the study.

3.2 Research Design

In this study, mixed method research was adopted in order to utilize both methods' strengths while diminishing the weaknesses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Mixed method research designs are procedures for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). According to Creswell (2014), using a mixed method enables the researchers to come up with alternative perspectives in a study by providing an in-depth understanding of the issue. Combining both qualitative and quantitative data enables the researcher to achieve a more complex picture of social phenomenon. (Miles & Huberman 1994; Green & Caracelli, 1997) In brief, in order to gain more in-depth and specific information mixed method research is a good alternative.

According to Creswell (2014), mixed method strategies are classified into the six main categories as convergent, explanatory sequential, exploratory sequential, and embedded, transformative and multiphase designs. The convergent design deals with the simultaneous collection and combining, and making use of both quantitative and qualitative data in order to understand the research problem. In the explanatory sequential design, quantitative and qualitative data are collected sequentially with the purpose of one data collection following and informing the other. Different from the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory design deals with collecting first qualitative data, followed by quantitative data in order to clarify relationships between each other. Similar to both convergent and sequential design, in the embedded design, quantitative and qualitative data are both collected regardless of

the order, for the purpose of serving a supportive role to the other form of data. Transformative design aims to employ one of the four designs mentioned above, but to encase the design within a transformative framework. Finally, multiphase design examines a problem or topic through a series of phases or separate studies.

The present study employed convergent design. The overall design of the study had two focuses; first, needs analysis, second course evaluation. The quantitative data were obtained from questionnaires while qualitative data were provided through open-ended questions and reflective essays.

3.3 Target Population and Participants

This study was carried out to evaluate one of the departmental courses (Advanced Reading and Writing) of the ELT program, at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, at a foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey. The overall aim of the program is to raise teachers with an advanced level of English proficiency and a high level of understanding of the knowledge and skills required for the language education field. Students are provided with a solid foundation in the English language and literacy, methodology, first and second language acquisition, educational sciences and linguistics as well as the teaching practice opportunities.

In the present study, data were collected from 28 freshmen students who are currently enrolled in the ELT program and taking ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I Course. 18 female and 10 male students participated in the study. Their age range was 18 to 31 years old. All students were of Turkish nationality.

3.4 Procedures

The following section gives information about the sources of data, the types of sampling used for the quantitative and qualitative data collection and the data collection instruments employed in the present study.

3.4.1 Sources of data. Types of sampling, data collection instruments and procedures, data analysis procedures, reliability and validity of the study as well as limitations and delimitations are presented in this section of the study.

3.4.2 Data Collection Procedures. In this section, types of sampling and data collection instruments will be presented.

3.4.2.1 Types of sampling. Sample is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for the purpose of making generalizations about the target population (Creswell, 2014, p. 11). Depending on the purpose of a study, a variety of sampling techniques could be utilized. The decision to utilize a type of sampling depends on the nature of the study, as being qualitative or quantitative.

This study includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures, and random sampling was used in both procedures. For the quantitative section of the study, data was collected through questionnaires. As for the qualitative part, open-ended questionnaires and reflective essays were utilized. All the volunteer students took the questionnaires and wrote reflective essays.

3.4.2.2 Data collection instruments. In the present study, data were obtained through three different sources, namely, questionnaires, open-ended questions and reflective essays. The quantitative section included questionnaires while open-ended questions and reflective essays were the sources of qualitative data.

3.4.2.2.1 Questionnaires. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from Erozan's (2005) dissertation which evaluated the ELT program syllabus of a foundation university in Cyprus. The purpose of using this questionnaire was to find out the student needs, and to investigate if the course met their expectations. The questionnaire had two sections. In the first section, the participants were asked to rate the given sub-skills items on reading and writing on a Likert type scale ranging from 1 (not difficult) to 3 (very difficult). In the second section, 28 participants rated to which extent the course met their expectations as: 1 (no), 2 (neutral) and 3 (yes). This questionnaire was utilized to help the researcher to compare student needs and course objectives; and how much they comply with each other.

3.4.2.2.2 Open-ended questions. Open-ended question allow participants to create options for responding (Creswell, 2014). This data collection tool aimed to investigate the issues above from a more detailed perspective and to provide more insight into the issue. For the purposes of this study, 28 participants were asked 4 questions with the aim of finding out their perceptions regarding course content and

materials, activities and methods, assessment, and relationship with other courses. The first question aimed to explore students' expectations from ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course in terms of course content and materials. The second question focused on the activities and methods students thought should be used in ELT1011 course. The third question asked students' opinions about the assessment techniques that were employed in the course. The last question aimed to find out whether there was a need for relationship, overlap or continuity among other courses and ELT1011.

3.4.2.2.3 *Reflective essays.* Reflective essays aim to bring different perspectives into focus by shedding light on the affective impact on the pragmatic intervention (Glaser, 2014). For the purposes of obtaining a broader insight, ideas or themes from the participants, 11 volunteer students were asked to write reflective essays. Students were asked to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the course and to give suggestions to improve it.

The following table provides an overview of the research questions and the corresponding procedures:

Table 1

Overview of Research Questions and Corresponding Procedures

Research Questions	Data Collection Tool	Data Analysis
1. Which reading strategies do the freshmen ELT students experience most and least difficulty with the advanced reading and writing course?	3 items Likert Scale Questionnaire	SPSS Descriptive Analysis
2. Which writing strategies do the freshmen ELT students experience most and least difficulty with the advanced reading and writing course?	Likert Scale Questionnaire	SPSS Descriptive Analysis

<p>3. Does the advanced reading and writing course meet the expectations of the ELT freshmen students with regard to the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. content and materials b. activities and methods c. assessment d. relationship with other courses 	Open-ended Questions	Pattern Coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994)
<p>4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this course? How can the course be improved in the future?</p>	Reflective Essays	Pattern Coding (Miles and Huberman, 1994)

3.4.3 Data analysis procedures. For the purposes of the present study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. The quantitative data were collected through questionnaires and the percentages were estimated using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) in order to illustrate the needs of the freshmen ELT students' reading and writing skills, and to find out the extent to which the course met their expectations.

The qualitative data consisted of open-ended questions and reflective essays. The answers to open ended questions and the reflective essays were analyzed to come up with patterns on specific concepts and categories regarding course content and materials, activities and methods, assessment, and relationship with other courses as well as strengths and weaknesses and suggestions for improving the course. Reflective essays were analyzed qualitatively through content analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data was coded by hand and the process began with the open coding of the data followed by deducing categories and sub-categories from these codes. The codes then were gathered under the aspects of strengths and weaknesses of the course and the suggestions to improve it.

To establish inter-rater reliability, two experts in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) identified themes from the codes. It emerged that the raters achieved close agreement on the general themes.

3.4.4 Trustworthiness. During the procedure of data collection and analysis, it is crucial for the researcher to ensure that their findings and interpretations confirm credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Guba & Lincoln 1985).

Credibility addresses to the confidence in the correctness of the findings. In this study, the data triangulation was maintained through utilizing various data sources. Many researchers have referred to the idea of validation through triangulation (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Therefore, three different tools were used in order to get more detailed and balanced results.

Transferability refers to the applicability of the findings in other contexts. In this study transferability plays an important role because although there are many studies regarding needs analysis and course evaluations, little research is done as a formative combination of the two.

The consistency of the findings shows the dependability of a research, and it is ensured when the results can be repeated. Data collection and analysis information from different instruments and resources was represented clearly and in detail to ensure consistency.

Conformability is enabled when the findings are shaped by the participants free from the bias or the interest of the researcher. Triangulation here again is the key issue as it eliminates any biases of the researcher. In addition, the researcher did not get involved in the data collection process because of the distance of the setting, so bias was avoided.

3.5 Limitations. The present study has some limitations to be taken into consideration. The first and main limitation of the study is the number of participants. Since the students taking the ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I course are limited within a single classroom, it is difficult to conduct the study within a larger group. Including more participants in the study if it was possible could improve the reliability of findings. The researcher attempted to minimize this

limitation by using triangulation in data collection instruments. Second, the fact that the data was collected by the course provider might be an issue since this might have limited the data that was provided by the students. Finally, since the study was conducted in a very specific context and focuses on a single course, generalizing the findings in a different context is not an issue. Therefore, the findings of this study should be taken as suggestive rather than definitive.

3.5 Delimitations. There are a few delimitations to the present study. First of all, collecting data from the instructor of the course and the administration would provide a broader picture for the needs analysis. However, the researcher preferred to conduct the needs analysis only with the students who were enrolled with the course due to time restraints. Secondly, other forms of data collection tools such as class observations could provide a greater insight regarding student needs. Nevertheless, logistical issues prevented this.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the results of qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Firstly, results of the questionnaires regarding the use of reading and writing strategy needs of students, and the extent to which the ELT1011 course meets their expectations are presented. Then, results of open-ended questions on student perceptions of the course in terms of course content and materials, activities and methods, assessment and relationship with other courses were presented. Lastly, common themes from the reflective essays on the strengths and weaknesses of the course with students' suggestion on the improvement of the course were presented. The following section presents the results related to each research question addressed in the study.

4.2 The Reading Strategies that Students Experience the most and the least Difficulty

In response to the first question which aimed to explore the reading and writing strategies with which the students have most and least difficulty, the modified questionnaire was addressed. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part included the most used 18 reading strategies and the second part; the most used 19 writing strategies. The students were asked to self evaluate themselves on the difficulty of performing the reading and writing strategies and to identify to what extent the course met their expectations.

Out of the 18 items of the reading strategies, the 5 items that were identified as being the most difficult were respectively; identifying figurative language (e.g. metaphors) in a text, guessing the meaning of unknown words in a text by using the context, inferring the deep meaning in a text, paraphrasing sentences, and discussing a text they have read. The table below shows the average difficulty rating of the highest rated 5 items by 28 students in the scale from 1 to 3:

Table 2

The Average Difficulty Rating of the Highest Rated 5 Reading Strategies

Five Highest Rated Reading Strategies	Average Difficulty Rating
Identifying figurative language (e.g. metaphors) in a text	1.22
Guessing the meaning of unknown words in a text by using the context	1.22
Inferring the deep meaning in a text	1.14
Paraphrasing sentences	1.0
Discussing a text they have read	0.96

It was inferred from the data on the course expectation level that 42.85% of the students claimed that the course did not meet their expectations on identifying figurative language in a text. The course did not meet the needs of 28.57% of the students regarding the strategy of paraphrasing sentences. Twenty five percent of the students stated that their expectations were not met in terms of guessing the meaning of unknown words in a text by using the context and inferring the deep meaning in a text. Finally 21.42% students stated that the course failed to meet their expectations on discussing a text they have read.

Out of the 19 items of the reading strategies, the 5 items that were identified as being the least difficult were respectively; understanding the writer's point of view; using a dictionary; identifying the difference between facts and opinions in a text; identifying the difference between main ideas and examples in a text; and scanning a text to locate specific information.

The table below shows the average difficulty rating of the lowest rated 5 items by 28 students in the scale from 1 to 3:

Table 3

The Average Difficulty Rating of the Lowest Rated 5 Reading Strategies

Five Lowest Rated Reading Strategies	Average Difficulty Rating
Understanding the writer's point of view	0.67
Using a dictionary	0.6
Identifying the difference between facts and opinions in a text	0.38
Identifying the difference between main ideas and examples in a text	0.3
Scanning a text to locate specific information	0.2

A considerable number of students (42.85%) claimed that their needs of using the strategy of identifying the difference between main ideas and examples in a text was not met in the current course. In addition, the course failed to meet students' expectations on using scanning skills according to 28.57% students. The data suggested that the strategy of understanding a writer's point of view was not met by the course according to 17.85% students. Similarly, 17.85% students suggested that the course did not help them develop their skills on using dictionary. The strategy of identifying the difference between facts and opinions in a text was not found to be met by 14.28% of the students.

The minimum total score in the questionnaire was 18, and the maximum 54. Taking this into consideration, the results were divided into three different difficulty levels as 1 not difficult (scores 0-18), 2 difficult (scores 19-36) and 3 very difficult (37-54). The table below indicates the total number of students that marked the reading strategies according to their difficulty level.

Table 4

Total Number of Students that Marked the Reading Strategies according to their Difficulty Level

Scores	n
Not difficult (0-18)	3
Difficult (19-36)	23
Very difficult (37-54)	2

According to results, the number of students who regarded all the reading strategies given as not difficult is 3.25 out of 28 students who marked the given reading strategies from difficult to very difficult. Overall, 25 students assumed that the strategies were difficult for them to perform while only 3 of them found those as not difficult.

4.3 The Writing Strategies with which Students Experience the most and the least Difficulty

In order to address the first question which aimed to explore the reading and writing strategies with which the students have most and least difficulty, the modified questionnaire was given. As mentioned before, the questionnaire consisted of two parts. The second section in the questionnaire focused on the most used 19 writing strategies. Similar to the first section, the students were asked to self evaluate themselves on the difficulty of performing writing strategies and they were asked to identify to what extent the course met their expectations.

Out of the 19 items of the writing strategies, the five items that were identified by the students as the most difficult were writing in different genres respectively; narrative and classification essays; research papers; argumentative essays; and finally writing a thesis statement.

The table below shows the average difficulty rating of the highest rated 5 items by 28 students in the scale from 1 to 3:

Table 5

The Average Difficulty Rating of the Highest Rated 5 Writing Strategies

Five Highest Rated Writing Strategies	Average Difficulty Rating
Writing a narrative essay	1,32
Writing a classification essay	1,32
Writing a research paper	1,25
Writing an argumentative essay	1,14
Writing a thesis statement	1,1

The data showed that 39.28% of the students suggested that the course did not meet their expectation regarding the skills on writing a research paper. A considerable number of students (35.71%) claimed that their expectations that are necessary for writing a classification essay and thesis statement were not met by the course. Twenty eight point fifty seven percent of the students said the course failed to meet their expectations on forming an argumentative essay. Finally, 21.42% of them stated that the course lacked the skills that are necessary to write a narrative essay.

Table 6

The Average Difficulty Rating of the Lowest Rated 5 Writing Strategies

Five Lowest Rated Writing Strategies	Average Difficulty Rating
Write an introduction paragraph	0,79
Use punctuation marks correctly	0,73

Write a concluding paragraph	0,73
Make an outline of an essay	0,6
Spell words correctly	0,6

The data regarding the level of student expectations indicated that 28.57% of the students claimed their expectations on using punctuation marks correctly were not met, and 25% of them stated the course did not meet their expectations on writing an introductory paragraph. A small number of students (14.28%) believed that the skill of spelling the words correctly was not met by the course. Another percentage of 10.71 students claimed that making an outline failed to be met. Finally, only 7.14% students stated that their expectations on writing a concluding paragraph were not met by the course.

The minimum total score in the questionnaire was 19, and the maximum 57. As was in the reading section, the results were divided into three different difficulty levels as 1 not difficult (scores 0-19), 2 difficult (scores 20-38) and 3 very difficult (39-57). The table below indicates the total number of students that marked the writing strategies according to their difficulty level.

Table 7

Total Number of Students that Marked the Writing Strategies according to their Difficulty Level

Scores	n
Not difficult (0-18)	3
Difficult (19-36)	23
Very difficult (37-54)	2

According to the results, the number of students who regarded all the writing strategies given as not difficult is 3. 25 out of 28 students marked the given writing strategies from difficult to very difficult. Overall, 25 students assumed that the

strategies were difficult for them to perform while only 3 of them found those as not difficult.

4.4 Student Expectations on ELT 1011 with regard to Course Content and Materials, Activities and Methods, Assessment and Relationship with Other Courses

In an attempt to answer the third research question of this study, data were collected through open-ended questions. Through the questions, students expressed their expectations of this course in terms of course content and materials, activities and methods, assessment and relationship with other courses and offered some suggestions for improvement.

4.4.1 Course content and materials. Student comments regarding the content and materials of the course indicate that most students are satisfied with what the ELT 1011 course offers in terms of content and the materials. The findings, however, also suggest that the level of satisfaction regarding the content of the course is greater than that of materials.

Despite the high level of satisfaction regarding content and materials, common suggestions from students regarding course content and materials include having more interesting texts; more practice for essay writing and requiring a course book. A few students suggested that they need more essay examples with the following statements:

[...] I expect more practice for writing all kinds of essays, for example argumentative, persuasive, etc. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

A number of students stated that they needed a wider range of text genres.

[...] I am happy with the course content. There should be more interesting texts (fantasy, fiction) as it would be great. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] We need to read everything. Horror stories can be fun. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Sometimes I do not understand newspaper texts. We can learn how to read the news. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

Furthermore, some students stated that having a course book would be better for them to access more examples of reading texts and essays.

[...] A book that includes different types of essays would be good. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Text books would be better for us to read more texts. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

Other suggestions included more emphasis on vocabulary and punctuation, in addition to texts being clearer and easier.

[...] I expect punctuation to be taught and we should learn more words. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Texts shouldn't be this much detailed. They should be clear because they should be understood by students easily to understand main points. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

In brief, it was revealed from the results that the students are generally satisfied regarding the course content and materials. However their suggestions revealed some alteration regarding reading and writing genres and practice, in addition to expectations for emphasis on vocabulary and punctuation.

4.4.2 Activities and methods. According to the syllabus, discussions cover a considerable amount of the course, and the majority of the students expressed their satisfaction in taking part in class discussions. They highlighted the importance of discussions in the following excerpts:

[...] Through discussions we can exchange ideas and knowledge. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Discussions and lectures should be used in this course because those are the most efficient ways to improve students' skills. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

A number of students find this course effective in terms of visuals that are used, such as videos and slides.

[...] Videos catch our attention. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Discussions and videos... These activities help us to build confidence. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

Although the students find the materials effective in general, they suggested that there should be more games and fun activities included in the course.

[...] Games would be good to learn vocabulary and participate in discussions. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

Other suggestions regarding activities and methods are more peer activities, homework, and watching movies:

[...] Peer feedback is a good way to do it. I think it is really effective. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] We need more practice and homework in order to be better at writing. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Watching movies and speaking English only would be a good idea to have fun in the classroom. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

To summarize, the overall results regarding activities and materials suggested a high level of satisfaction among students, especially for discussions and visuals, besides having some suggestions for more fun and interactive activities and more homework.

4.4.3 Assessment. In ELT1011, portfolios make up 30% of the assessment and the students reported to be generally satisfied with them. Most of the students expressed their satisfaction on having portfolios as part of their assessment. The following statements by students emphasize the role of portfolio in their course:

[...] Portfolio is the best way to assess our reading and writing skill. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] We actively participate during portfolios. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

In general, students expressed their overall satisfaction with the assessment techniques. The other assessment techniques that are being used in the course are exams and peer feedbacks. The students stated that the techniques that are currently used are adequate and therefore they did not make any further recommendations.

4.4.4. Relationship with other courses. The majority of student answers indicated that there is already a relationship with ELT1013 Oral Communication Skills and that there should not be a relationship with any other course. The following excerpts support this issue:

[...] There is already a relationship. We wrote essays to present in oral communication class (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] I think ELT1011 has a relationship with oral communication ELT1013. Because the two of them work together in order to have better understanding of essays. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

On the other hand, some students suggested that there is no need to have a relationship with other courses since reading and writing are integrated. They further supported their ideas with the following statements:

[...] We should learn reading and writing together but no need for other courses. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] No. Advanced reading and writing is completely different from other courses. (Open-ended questions, 24th Nov., 2016)

To sum up, while some students highlighted the existing relationship between ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing and ELT1013 Oral Communication Skills, others expressed that having a relationship with another course is not necessary.

4.5 Students' Comments and Suggestions on the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Course

For the purpose of answering the fourth and last research question which asked the strengths and the weaknesses of the course as well as further suggestions to

improve it, 11 volunteer students were asked to write reflective essays. The reflective essays showed that the strengths of this course as suggested by students are mainly about content, activities, and materials as well as instruction.

To begin with, one of the mentioned strengths of the course was the course content. The answers of many students revealed that the content of the course was rich and adequate. The following statements support this issue:

[...] Learning to write academic essays will be useful for my studies next year. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Learning APA is very useful. First I thought learning it is too much and unnecessary, but then I realized we have to learn it eventually. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] The course presents a variety of essay genres so content of the course is very detailed. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

Another strength of the course suggested by the reflective essays was the activities and materials that were used. The students mentioned different types of activities and their effectiveness on the following excerpts:

[...] Peer feedback is useful because it improves our critical thinking and analyzing skills. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Discussions make the subject to be understood better. That way we can participate more and feel more confident. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] During the class, we have many different activities, such as, watching, discussing, etc. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

Besides, teacher instruction was another mentioned strength of the course as was revealed in the reflective essays:

[...] The instructor teaches the class in a fun and informative way. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

On the other hand, while the content and the materials of the course were considered the strengths of the course by the majority of students, some others considered them as weaknesses, and they gave some suggestions for improving the course regarding course content, materials and activities:

[...] The course should have book. It would be easier both for the teacher and the students. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] The course book would provide more sources, but we do not have one. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

Although the students did not see it as a weakness, it could be inferred that not having a course book was a weakness of the course.

Other suggestions included having different activities and more interactive exercises in class in addition to assessment.

[...] For improving this class schedule, we can do more activities and we can have more homework for essays. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

[...] Having more interactive exercises would make the course more interesting. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

Finally, few students highlighted the mandatory student attendance. They thought this class should be optional for students who are above average.

[...] This is an easy class so the attendance should not be mandatory. Studying at our own convenience would be better and easier. (Reflective essays, 24th Nov., 2016)

In brief, since the students mentioned more strengths than weaknesses, reflective essays on the strengths and weaknesses of the course illustrated that the students were generally satisfied with the course. Although they were not stated as weaknesses, some suggestions also emerged from the answers for the improvement of the course which were mainly about including a wider range of activities, having a course book and mandatory attendance.

4.6 The Summary of Findings Regarding the Suggestions for the Improvement of the Course

The suggestions regarding the improvement of the course are compiled from the questionnaires, open-ended questions and reflective essays. The findings indicated that the suggestions were mainly under three categories. The table below shows the summary of the points that need to be improved in terms of course aims and objectives, course content and materials, and activities and methods that are used in the class.

Table 8

General Suggestions for the Improvement of the Course

Course aims and objectives	Course content and materials	Activities and methods
A focus on the higher order thinking skills in reading, such as interpreting and evaluating	A need for a course book	More interaction
A focus on writing in different genres	More variety regarding text genres	More homework
	More examples of essays	More visuals
	More emphasis on vocabulary and punctuation	

To summarize, although the overall findings of the study indicated that the ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course meets the expectations of the students at a relatively high level, they also suggested that there is a need for an improvement on some aspects of the course.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings for Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine and evaluate one of the language improvement courses (i.e. Advanced Reading and Writing) through needs analysis at the Department of English Language Teaching (ELT) of a foundation university in Istanbul, Turkey. The needs of the students taking this course were examined with regard to five fundamental aspects, namely aims and objectives, course content and materials, course conduct, student assessment, and continuity and coherence among the courses for the purposes of providing constructive feedback for the betterment of the course. In this mixed method study, data were collected both qualitatively and quantitatively. This chapter discusses the results of this study referring to each research question and offers recommendations for further research and practice.

5.1.1 Discussion about which of the reading strategies the freshmen ELT students experience most and least difficulty with the reading and writing course. The first research question of this study attempted to investigate the reading strategies with which the freshmen ELT students experience the most and the least difficulty in ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course.

As mentioned earlier, the students were given a questionnaire and were asked to rate the difficulty of the given strategies on a scale of 1 (not difficult) to 3 (very difficult). The overall results indicated that students taking ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course did not have a remarkable difficulty implementing the general reading strategies. According to results, out of the 18 items of the reading strategies, the five items that were identified as being the most difficult were respectively; identifying figurative language (e.g. metaphors) in a text, guessing the meaning of unknown words in a text by using the context, inferring the deep meaning in a text, paraphrasing sentences, and discussing about a text they have read. Only 3 items out of 18 were rated above 1 (not difficult), though the ratings were not very distinguishing. The top rated three items were identifying figurative language (e.g. metaphors) in a text (difficulty rating: 1.22); guessing the meaning of

unknown words in a text by using the context (difficulty rating: 1.22); and inferring the deep meaning in a text (difficulty rating: 1.14). Other items were paraphrasing sentences, and discussing a text they have read with an average difficulty rating of 1 and 0.96 respectively. Although the difficulty ratings do not seem to be fairly high, the results still indicate that highest rated reading strategies are the ones which require higher order thinking skills such as evaluating, interpreting or reacting. The results of the present study showed similarities with Al-Zahrani (2013), and Margaret's (2000) studies regarding the student needs on higher order thinking skills such as having difficulties in interpreting the texts, responding critically to the text, or understanding a writer's attitude and purpose.

Data on the course expectation level, on the other hand, suggested that 42.85% students stated their expectations were not met on identifying figurative language (e.g. metaphors) in a text, which was one of the highest rated items. About one quarter of students also stated their expectations on guessing the meaning of unknown words in a text by using the context, inferring the deep meaning in a text, paraphrasing sentences, and discussing a text they have read were not met.

In brief, the overall results gathered on student needs of reading strategies and how much the course met their expectations indicate a general degree of satisfaction. Yet, it is of great importance to note that students find some interpretation and evaluation strategies difficult at some level, and a considerable number of students claim the course does not meet their expectations. Therefore, it might be suggested that students need to be taught some reading strategies which require higher order thinking skills, such as interpretation and evaluation strategies on a more extensive level.

5.1.2 Discussion about which of the writing strategies the freshmen ELT students experience most and least difficulty with the reading and writing course. The second research question of this study attempted to investigate the writing strategies that the freshmen ELT students experience the most and the least difficulty in the ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course.

After the self-evaluation of the reading strategies, the students were asked to rate the difficulty level of performing the given writing strategies and indicate how much the course met their expectations for each strategy. The overall writing strategy

results were in line with those of reading strategies, and they indicated that students taking ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course did not have a remarkable difficulty implementing the general writing strategies. According to results, out of the 19 items of the writing strategies, the five items that were identified as being the most difficult were respectively; narrative and classification essays; research papers; argumentative essays; and finally writing a thesis statement. The difficulty ratings have shown that the top rated 5 writing strategies were all above 1, which meant difficult at some level. Writing a narrative and classification essay were equally difficult at average, with a rating of 1.32. Writing a research paper was seen as difficult at an average rating of 1.25, and argumentative essay at 1.14. Lastly, writing a thesis statement was seen as difficult at an average rating of 1.1. Although the difficulty ratings were not remarkably high, the results still indicate that the students find it difficult to write complete essays in different genres, as well as having difficulties in composing a thesis statement. Similarly, the results of a study conducted by Cai (2003) revealed that in-class guided analysis of authentic genre examples could meet student needs regarding the different genres. Presenting students with a variety of genres through in-class analysis might help them develop a strategy for independent learning of different genres in academic writing in the future.

Regarding the course expectations, almost 40% of students claimed that their expectations on writing a research paper and about 35% on writing a classification essay and a thesis statement were not met properly. Almost 29% of students also claimed that the course failed to meet their expectations on writing an argumentative essay. Finally about %21 of them found the course inadequate in terms of meeting the expectations of writing a narrative essay.

According to the results of this study, it can be stated that the course met the student expectations in general regarding its efficiency in teaching the general writing strategies. Nevertheless, there are still some issues to consider. Although the average difficulty ratings were not high, some genres such as argumentative, classification, narrative, and research paper were seen as difficult at some level, and there are some students who think that the course does not meet their expectations on writing these essay types. The result on the expectation levels should be expected as the data was collected in the middle of the semester, and it is possible that some

genres were not covered thoroughly yet. Still, the results regarding writing a thesis statement might be an issue to consider as it is a significant element of an essay, and it is generally taught early in the semester. Yet, it seems that a considerable number of students indicate a need for writing a thesis statement, which is in line with the results of student expectations.

5.1.3 Discussion about the expectations of the ELT freshmen students from the course ELT1011 (Advanced Reading and Writing) with regard to content and materials; activities and methods; assessment; and relationship with other courses. As stated earlier, for the purposes of answering the third research question of this study, data were collected through open-ended questions and students expressed their expectations of this course in terms of course content and materials, activities and methods, assessment and relationship with other courses. The overall results suggested students were satisfied with the content and materials of the course, though they had some suggestions and requests.

According to the data, although the general population was happy with the content, some students mentioned the downsides of not having a course book. Another group of students also mentioned that they needed a wider range of text types and writing genres. Lastly, some students expected more vocabulary be taught, and punctuation be emphasized. The fact that the course is delivered through compiled materials such as photocopied materials and slides might be the key to the issues that the students referred. Assuming that the students were used to having course books in their previous English language courses (as the high school education in Turkey requires), it is possible to suggest that course materials be offered in booklets or compact weekly packs. This might help students form a holistic view towards the ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course. Another issue brought by students was requesting a wider range of text types and writing genres. It might be possible to meet this demand by enriching the course content through a combination of different materials; such as authentic texts, short stories, scientific articles or even examples from novels. Lastly, in order to meet the expectations of students who claimed that they need more vocabulary to be covered and punctuation be taught, more explicit teaching of vocabulary and punctuation exercises can be recommended.

Student answers regarding activities and methods were mainly on the strengths of the course. Most students pointed out the discussions they held during the lesson, and noted they were valuable. Visuals such as slides and videos were also stated to be effective. Nevertheless, some students recommended having more fun and interactive activities. Varying the activities, such as including more peer and group work and gamifying the activities might address the student needs regarding activities and methods. Requesting for more homework was another issue stated. Recommending some extra work to do at home might be a thing to consider for those students who demand homework.

According to results for assessment, almost all participants pointed out their satisfaction on having portfolios. The data showed that students taking ELT1011 understand the value of this assessment tool, and expect this application continue. According to Johnson and Rose (1997), through portfolios, students form responses while completing complex tasks, activate their schemata, and apply relevant skills to solve problems. One participant who stated they “actively participate during portfolios” seem to support this issue from a student perspective.

The answers on the last item of the open-ended questionnaire, which was about the relationship with other courses revealed that students do not want any further relationships. Some students stated that there is already a relationship with the Oral Communication Skills course since they present discussions on relevant topics. Other students argued that there should not be a relationship with any other courses, because reading and writing skills need to be taught together but separate from other courses. Although skills integration is valued in the literature, student perspectives are different regarding this issue. If any changes on the curriculum are to be made regarding integration of skills, these data from student perspectives can be taken into account for the purposes of involving student needs and wants in the designing process.

Student beliefs in the current study showed similarities with Erozan’s (2005) study with respect to the need for vocabulary development, materials including different types of texts, variety in terms of activities and interaction. Additionally, in both of the studies students were contented with being evaluated through non-exam

ways like portfolios, homework or projects. Participants from both studies suggested that there was integrity and continuation between the courses in the program.

In brief, expectations of the ELT freshmen students from the course ELT1011 (Advanced Reading and Writing) with regard to content and materials, activities and methods, assessment, and relationship with other courses were gathered and findings suggested that student expectations were met overall, though with some implications for the betterment of the course.

5.1.4 Discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of this course and how it can be improved in the future. In order to answer the last research question which asked the strengths and the weaknesses of the course as well as further suggestions to improve it, reflective essays by 11 volunteer students provided the data. The reflective essays indicated that the strengths of this course are mainly about content, activities, and materials as well as instruction.

To begin with, many students noted that the content of the course is rich and that the course would provide them with insight for their future studies. They stated that learning to write academic essays would be useful for them for their studies next year. In addition, learning APA was also another strength mentioned. Data provided in open-ended questionnaires support the findings in reflective essays regarding student satisfaction level on course content. Therefore, it can be stated that the students are aware of their needs, and it seems that their needs were met by the course regarding course content.

Another strong aspect of the course, as suggested by students in the reflective essays, was on activities and materials. Students mentioned the value of peer feedback and discussions and listed many benefits of those activities such as improving their critical thinking and analyzing skills, helping a subject to be understood better, and improving their self-confidence. Student essays supported the findings of open-ended questionnaires, as the issues stated above were mentioned valuable in student answers. In brief, students regarded discussions that were held in the lesson as invaluable, so increasing the amount of discussions may help them increase their motivation further.

Last, the instruction was also an item that was valued in reflective essays. It was stated that the course was taught in a fun and informative way. Considering other answers on the satisfaction level on activities and methods, instruction might be held accountable as it is the instructor who decides on the activities and methods that are used in the classroom.

The participants who wrote the reflective essays did not mention any weaknesses overtly, though they had some suggestions regarding activities and materials in order to improve the course. The item which was mentioned most was about having a course book. Other suggestions were assigning more homework; varying the activities for everyone to attend; having more interactive exercises; and including different genres of texts. Including the answers on the open-ended questionnaire, a considerable number of students argued that they should have a course book. This issue might be important to consider since student answers both on reflective essays and open-ended questionnaires suggested some disadvantages which can be linked to the issue. For example, a course book might provide solutions to the issues stated by students such as, varying the activities (since the book comes with extra materials such as CDs, photocopiable materials, workbooks); having more examples both as essay and text genres; resources for homework; and more interactive activities.

To summarize, reflective essays supported the answers given on the open-ended questionnaires, and the findings of the last research question provided a deeper insight about the strengths and weaknesses of the ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course and suggestions to improve it were compiled.

5.2 Conclusions

The results of this study indicated that the needs of the participants who are taking the ELT1011 Advanced Reading and Writing course were met at a relatively high level, though some implications to improve the course emerged. As suggested by Brown (2009), a needs analysis research can reveal the discrepancies between requirements of the students' academic program and the students' language preparation skills. Although this study was conducted on a course level, it is hoped that the conclusions will help program developers to improve it if any modifications are necessary. It is concluded by some researchers (Akyel and Özek, 2010; Brown,

1995) that the application of a needs analysis is crucial for effective curriculum development in order to determine the real needs of the students (Richards, 2001).

To conclude, the purpose of this thesis was to analyze the needs of students taking an Advanced Reading and Writing course, and to find implications regarding the improvement of the course. Results suggested that the needs of students were met by the course at a relatively high level, and the implications for the improvement of the course were discussed.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has several important recommendations for further research. First of all, future research could be conducted with more students, specifically with the ones who are taking other language improvement courses such as oral communication and listening skills. Such a study could provide a detailed analysis of student needs and course evaluation, and therefore be a rich resource for the improvement of the curriculum of the institution.

Second, the findings of the present research could provide course designers and teachers an insight to investigate student needs regarding course content, materials, assessment techniques and instruction. The research could be extended by gathering data from the students, the instructors and the administration. By comparing the results which are obtained from different stakeholders, the researcher could reach a highly extensive evaluation.

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APPENDICES

A. LIKERT-LIKE QUESTIONNAIRE SAMPLE

Evaluating ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I Course

Dear Students,

This questionnaire has been designed to collect your opinions about ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I Course for the purpose of evaluation and needs analysis. This course will be evaluated in regards to several components such as; course objectives, course content and materials, assessment and the course's relationship with other courses. It is vital that you assess your opinions as realistically and honestly as possible. The data obtained from your responses will be of great value to the improvement of ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I course at this university. Your identity and individual responses will be kept strictly confidential, with the results of the questionnaire being used only for research purposes.

Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation.

İlknur Elma

I. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Please read the following questions/statements and put an X as appropriate.

1. Your age: _____ years old.
2. Your sex: Male Female
3. Your mother tongue: Turkish English Other

(please specify)_____

4. How would you rate your reading and writing skills?

<i>skills</i>	weak	average	good	excellent
Reading				
Writing				

II. EVALUATION OF GENERAL READING AND WRITING STRATEGIES

1. In the first column, you are kindly asked to rate given items as 1 NOT DIFFICULT, 2 DIFFICULT – 3 VERY DIFFICULT. Please circle the number that represents the difficulty of the sub-skill given below.
2. In the second column, please indicate if this course meets your expectations.

READING STRATEGIES	HOW DIFFICULT IS IT FOR YOU TO PERFORM THE FOLLOWING READING STRATEGIES?	DOES THE COURSE MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?
read (skim) a text quickly to obtain the main idea(s).	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
scan (look through) a text to locate specific information such as names, dates, etc.	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
read a text carefully to get the details.	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
guess the meaning of unknown words in a text by using the context.	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
read a text and summarize it.	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
infer the deep meaning in a text.	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No

make written comments on a text we've read.	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
discuss about a text we've read.	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
identify figurative language (e.g. metaphors) in a text	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
write something about the reading texts we've read.	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
paraphrase sentences.	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
identify whether a word is a noun, adjective, verb or an adverb.	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
learn new vocabulary.	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
think critically.	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
identify the difference between facts and opinions in a text.	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
identify the difference between main ideas and examples in a text	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
understand the writer's point of view	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
use a dictionary	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No
Other (please specify) _____ _____ _____ _____	1	2	3	Yes	Neutral	No

WRITING STRATEGIES	HOW DIFFICULT IS IT FOR YOU TO PERFORM THE FOLLOWING WRITING STRATEGIES?	DOES THE COURSE MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS?
spell words correctly	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
use punctuation marks correctly	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
form grammatically correct sentences	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
understand coherence and unity in an essay	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
narrow down a general topic through brainstorming	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
analyze an essay in terms of unity, coherence and support	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
sentence skills	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write an introduction paragraph	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write a thesis statement	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write supporting points for a thesis statement	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write a concluding paragraph	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
make an outline of an essay	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write a descriptive essay	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write a narrative essay	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write a comparison and contrast essay	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write a classification essay	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write a cause and effect essay	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write an argumentative essay	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No
write a research paper	1 2 3	Yes Neutral No

B. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

Please read and answer the following questions.

1. What are your expectations from ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I course in terms of **course content and materials**? (What kind of materials should be used, what type of texts and genres should be taught, etc.) Why, briefly explain.
2. Which **activities and methods** do you think should be used in ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I course? (discussions, lectures, videos, games, etc.) Why, briefly explain.
3. How do you think your reading and writing skills should be **assessed**? (exams, portfolios, quizzes, etc.) Why, briefly explain.
4. Should there be a **relationship** among other courses and ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I? If yes, which courses and why? Briefly explain.

C. REFLECTIVE ESSAY TEMPLATE

Write a reflection paper about ELT 1011 Advanced Reading Writing I course focusing on the following concepts;

1. **Strengths** and **weaknesses** of this course
2. **Suggestions** for the improvement of this course

While writing please focus on the course content, materials, activities, method, assessment and relationship of this course with other courses.



CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Elma, İlknur

Nationality: Turkish (TC)

Date and Place of Birth: 4 June 1987, İzmir

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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	Bahçeşehir University	2017
BS	Eastern Meditterreanean University	2009

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2009-2011	Yöneliş College, İzmir	English Teacher
2011-2016	A Foundation University in İzmir	English Instructor

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

CERTIFICATES

Pilgrims Teacher Training Course, 'Creative Methodology for the Classroom'
(2013)

PUBLICATIONS

Kurtulmus, I. & Onal, C. (2015). *Vocabulary Teaching Through Readers: Close your dictionaries, open your minds*. In Dikilitas, K., Smith, R. & Trotman, W. (Eds.), *Teacher-Researchers in Action* (pp. 297-314). IATEFL, Faversham, Kent.

HOBBIES

Movies, Literature, Music, Traveling

