Iranian ELT Experts' Perceptions of a Technology-Laden Critical Pedagogy (CP)-based EFL Teacher Preparation Program

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Abstract

Using Critical Digital Pedagogy (CDP) acknowledges the recent advancements in technology in the field of education. As teachers should effectively deal with the needs of students with the help of educational technologies to increase their critical awareness, the level of digital literacy of Iranian teachers is not desirable and naturally teacher training in Iran should be in line with the latest changes in the world, this qualitative study aimed to find out how ELT experts perceive the CP technology-based EFL teacher preparation program in the Iranian context as part of a basic interpretative project. Thirty ELT experts with a Ph.D. in TEFL were selected through convenience sampling among experienced university professors who had relevant research expertise in the field. Consulting the related literature, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview in approximately three open-ended questions. The results analyzed by MAXQDA showed that perceptions of ELT experts were consistent with CP assumptions and the use of technology in education. The interpretation of the findings indicates a reconciliation between CP principles and technology. Participants perceived the valuable concepts of CP in light of technology used to shape a technology-based CP curriculum. Findings have implications for EFL teacher education administrators, curriculum planners, and educators.

Keywords: Critical Digital Pedagogy (CDP); Teacher Education Program; Technology- laden curriculum; ELT experts; Educational Technologies

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1. Introduction

One of the most important factors in successful language learning has been attributed to effective teaching. Teacher effectiveness and students' learning are closely tied to each other. Knowingly, teacher effectiveness and teacher education cannot be imagined as separate from each other. That is, we cannot expect teachers to reach teacher effectiveness in the absence of effective teacher education programs. Accordingly, teacher education should be probed in depth in various studies so that it is made in line with the recent changes in educational systems of the World, among which the emergence of CDP can be mentioned. This necessity is more felt knowing that students in the classroom are from diverse socio-political and cultural backgrounds. Accordingly, each student comes to the classroom with different learning expectations (Keesing-Styles, 2003). To teach students effectively, their needs and voices should be taken into account. This is a main component of CP.

Furthermore, in today's World, students are growing up in a technology-laden World, and they expect to see the presence of technology in all the environments they experience, be educational or not (Gao et al., 2019). In such conditions, the lifestyle of almost all students is heavily influenced by diverse technological advancements, even long before they enter school. With a view to this, teachers should deal with students' needs effectively with the help of educational technologies (Hu et al., 2021) so that the critical consciousness of students is also increased as an attempt toward applying CDP (Morris & Stommel, 2018).

As verbally expressed in informal teacher circles, teachers are seriously anxious about the increased load of possibilities on them with the use of online teaching. Some part of this anxiety could be attributed to teachers' digital illiteracy (Chambers, 2013). Related to this, Whyte (2011) suggests that teacher training programs should, among other things, aim at raising teachers' digital literacy so that they can benefit from a variety of technological tools and practices in the classrooms.

More importantly, still banking system of education is the umbrella paradigm in EFL teacher education in Iran (Fatehi & Jalali, 2021), which is vastly far from CP and CDP principles. This is while, as mentioned above, CP and technological educational innovations have encompassed different aspects of the World educational systems. Furthermore, although teacher education has been the topic of some studies (e.g., Demiroz & Yesilyurt, 2015; Sezer, et al., 2019; Shahvand & Rezvani, 2016; Zamani & Ahangari, 2016), EFL teacher education has been neglected by the researchers from the CDP viewpoint (Zohrabi et al., 2019). It is worth noting that within the last two years, as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak, some forms of synchronous and asynchronous teaching procedures have been applied in educational settings

(Gao et al., 2019). But it does not mean the use of CP principles and the full replacement of traditional teaching methods with online ones. This is while, as mentioned above, CP and technological educational innovations have encompassed different aspects of the world's educational systems.

Taking all the above issues into account, it seems that using CDP in the realm of teacher education in the context of Iran is not without its advantages. With a view to this, this study aimed to uncover ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program for the context of Iran through the following research question:

What are Iranian ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1 The Origin of Critical Pedagogy

The origins of CP date back to the late 1960s and early 1970s when, along with other scholars and philosophers, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970) proposed the idea of liberating education in his seminal book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Based on the ideas and concepts of Critical Society Theory (aka Critical Theory) used by the Frankfurt School, CP was proposed to sensitize individuals to oppressive conditions and to reject violence and discrimination against people (Keesing-Styles, 2003). Such critical theories deal with the critique and transformation of society through critical engagement with literacy such as reading and writing toward social change (Luke & Freebody, 1997).

2.2 The Fundamental Principles of CDP

To use technology for critical purposes and develop critical awareness in online environments, it is necessary to understand the nature and impact of the technology used (Stommel, 2014). More importantly, users of educational technology should prioritize busy people, rather than over-emphasizing tech tools. "Eventually, information may be digitized, but learning itself is still a very human thing" (Gao et al., 2019, p. 177). Morris and Stommel (2018) defined the CDP as a channel through which teachers and students are socio-politically and emotionally connected. They have suggested increased student interaction and involvement in light of CP and technological advances (Buss & Wolf, 2021). The CDP aims is to offer students and teachers the opportunity to actively participate, create, reflect, and enter into dialogue (Morris & Stommel, 2018). Stommel (2014) lists the core principles of CDP as follows: CDP (a) bases its practice on collaboration; (b) they must accept differing opinions and be inventive in redefining how collaboration and communication evolve across cultural and political boundaries; and (c) cannot be defined by a single vote, but must evoke a cacophony of votes; (d) must be used and applied outside of traditional educational methods. When used critically, educational technologies

(e.g. social media platforms), especially for online courses, can contribute to critical reflection and meaningful interpersonal dialogue (Morris & Stommel, 2018). However, educational technologies can simultaneously reveal and conceal certain power structures (Waddell & Clariza, 2018). Therefore, using CDP with cultural and political sensitivity is paramount. According to Waddell and Clariza (2018), the CDP is closely related to the information literacy framework for higher education. They describe the three main frameworks of the CDP as follows: (a) Authority is constructed and contextual: This framework helps students critically examine the properties and context of digital objects and ask questions about their provenance; (b) The creation of information is a process: the creation of digital objects involves a single process; (c) Information has value: Students should be asked to think about the value that digital information objects have in the information landscape.

2.3 Related Studies

Larson (2014) has examined the theoretical background and motivation for the use of personal computers and suggested some first steps that teachers should take when implementing critical pedagogy in English classes. Rahimi et al. (2015), have proposed some ideas for material designers based on the assumptions of critical pedagogy. Taylor et al. (2015), surveyed prospective teachers on their perceptions of critical literacy and teaching culturally and linguistically underrepresented students and found that the majority of prospective teachers disagreed with the need to include critical literacy in teacher education programs. When it comes to teaching linguistically and culturally different students. Roohani et al. (2016), developed and validated a questionnaire called "Teacher Critical Pedagogy" to measure the amount of critical pedagogy used in the classroom by English teachers in Iran. Childs (2017) reviewed the history of critical education in the United States and concluded that given the inevitable shift in student demographics, critical insights should be incorporated into areas such as future curriculum planning, teacher training, etc. Enyew and Melesse (2018) examined the extent to which the question of critical principles is being introduced into the Ethiopian academic context and found that the question of criticality is being introduced into academic curricula. Waddell and Clariza (2018) provide two examples from the University of Hawaii's Mānoa Library where CDP was integrated into a science and humanities course using infographics and digital storytelling. Parker (2019) noted the ELC's value of critical education and post-secondary teacher education and recommended that stakeholders use these as starting points for reconceptualizing their teaching principles and methods. Tabatabaei (under press) aimed to develop a development ladder for critical pedagogy-based EFL materials, and some key themes were identified as the main themes for the development of CP-based EFL materials.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study benefited from a basic interpretive design. For this study, a simple interpretive design was the best choice, as this approach is best suited to studying people's perceptions. In the basic interpretive project, the researcher attempts to understand the meaning that the people involved construct for the phenomenon or situation (Dörnyei, 2007).

3.2 Participants

Thirty ELT practitioners and female TEFL Ph.D. students were interviewed to explore their perceptions of the CP technology-based EFL teacher preparation program. These experts were selected from among experienced university professors who had relevant research expertise in the field. These participants were not randomly selected using a convenience sampling technique.

3.3 Instrument

To examine participants' perceptions of the CP technology-based EFL teacher preparation program, the researcher designed a semi-structured interview with about three open-ended questions. In developing the interview questions, the researcher consulted relevant literature (e.g., Larson, 2014; Taylor et al., 2015). To ensure the clarity of the interview questions, the developed interview was tested on a small representative sample (from the target group). To address the restrictions, the interview was conducted and recorded virtually on WhatsApp and Telegram in English with no time limit. To ensure credibility and dependability of interview data, statistically speaking, low inference descriptors and member checking were used. That is, a quotation was presented along with the extracted themes when presenting the results of thematic analysis. Moreover, the researcher checked some random parts of the results with the interviewees to ensure that the extracted themes are compatible with the intended meaning of the interviewees.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

First, with research ethics in mind, a total of thirty ELT professionals were selected and interviewed to explore their perceptions of the CP and technology-based EFL teacher preparation program. The interviews were tape-recorded to facilitate the data collection process. The researcher then transcribed the recorded audio data verbatim for further analysis. The transcribed data was then entered into MAXQDA along with qualitative statistics for more accurate and precise results. To increase the credibility of the interview data, a citation with the selected topics was provided when presenting the results of the thematic

analysis. In addition, the researcher cross-checked random snippets of the results with respondents to ensure that the threads extracted matched the interlocutors' intended meaning. More specifically, the qualitative data were exposed to open, axial, and selective coding stages using constant comparative method of analysis. In the open coding step, transcripts were broken down into units of analysis including key terms, phrases, and sentences so that similar concepts could be clustered into categories based on their thematic content. In the axial coding, the connection and interrelationships between the categories and their sub-categories were determined. Within the selective coding step, a core category was derived from the already classified categories as an explanatory whole. In this way, the perceptions of ELT experts of a technology-laden CP-based EFL teacher preparation program were extracted.

4. Results

To answer the research question 'What are Iranian ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?' the following themes were extracted by the MAXQDA related to the first interview question 'what are your opinions about pedagogical issues in a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?'

1. Teaching teachers to   ge priority to students' needs using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be taught to pay heed to the needs of students via technology. The following quotation shows this:

EFL teachers should be trained to use technology to identify students' needs and consider these needs as important in the quality of teaching. To this end, they can have chats in virtual space with students, or follow students' posts in social networks. (Expert 5)

2. Teaching teachers to be aware of students' aims in learning English using technology

As expressed by this theme, teachers should be instructed to be informed of the English learning goals of students through technology. The following quotation confirms this:

Teacher preparation programs are suggested to teach teachers to use various technological techniques to reach the students' aims in English learning. For instance, teachers can send clips showing different situations wherein English can be used by the students and see their reactions to them. (Expert 2)

3. Teaching teachers to be attentive to students and build a good relationship with them using technology

This theme says that teachers should be taught to pay attention to forming good communications with students utilizing technology. This is documented by the following quotation:

Teachers should be instructed to benefit from different e-platforms to show their attention to students and make a friendly relationships with students through such acts as sending positive messages or picture messages to them, greeting them on social networks, and so on. (Expert 10)

4. Teaching teachers to recognize the limited learning capacities of some students using technology

As expressed by this theme, teachers should be educated to use technology to identify constrained capacities of some students in English learning. This is confirmed by the following quotation:

Obviously, students' learning abilities are not the same. Some students suffer from learning problems. Teacher trainers should teach future teachers about this issue. They should understand that technology can help them in this regard. One tool available to them is to ask students with indications of dyslexia to read a piece of text, audio-record their voice, and sent it to the teacher for further documentation. (Expert 19)

5. Teaching teachers to present instruction to students in the most simply way using technology

As put with this theme, teachers are to be instructed to teach in the simplest way by the help of technology:

Technology is here to make things simpler. Teacher education programs can teach simple technology-based teaching to teachers. Using effective writing models through asynchronous e-learning is an instance of this. (Expert 25)

6. Teaching teachers to plan dynamic lessons to improve student's learning using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be taught to develop lessons dynamically through the channel of technology. This is implied in the following quotation:

Teachers should learn to develop dynamic lessons reflective of different aspects through the use of technology. As a suggestion, flipped lessons can support teachers to reach this goal. (Expert 27)

7. Teaching teachers to make classes student-centered using technology

As stated by this theme, teachers should be trained to benefit from technology to make English classes learner-centered. This is evident in the following quotation:

The time has reached for teacher educators to incorporate lessons of student-centeredness in their curricula. Teachers should recognize that teacher-centeredness has come to an end. To build student-centered classes, they can resort to the technological doors which have different manifestations including assigning tasks to students which can just be prepared and presented through technological methods. (Expert 30)

8. Teaching teachers to clearly state the purpose of every teaching activity or method in classes using technology

As demonstrated by this theme, teachers should be educated to use technology in explaining the purposes of class teaching activities or methods. The following quotation supports this:

Students have the right to know for what reason that activity or this strategy is used. Teacher education programs should put teachers' consciousness- making in this regard on their agenda. Teachers should be prepared to do this through technological methods. A strategy to do this can be involving students in virtual lecturing to make them aware of the teacher's emphasis on speaking skills in the class. (Expert 29)

9. Teaching teachers to use dynamic evaluation methods using technology

As put by this theme, teachers should be trained to evaluate students dynamically using technology. This is understood from the following quotation:

Teacher training courses are required to teach teachers to benefit from technology to assess student's learning dynamically. For example, teachers can be taught to ask students to build videos about their past in terms of educational achievements or the imaginations of their academic future. (Expert 18)

10. Teaching teachers to use cooperative teaching methods using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be made prepared to use technology to teach English cooperatively. The following quotation shows this:

Teacher educators have important duties including preparing teachers to use technology-based teaching methods which are built upon cooperation between students and teachers or among students. In this regard, teaching them how to use e-learning in combination with self-blended learning can be a useful option. (Expert 3)

11. Teaching teachers to be facilitators of learning rather than blockers using technology

As expressed by this theme, teachers should be trained to facilitate students' learning with the help of technology. The following quotation confirms this:

Teacher education administrators should make teachers facilitators of students' learning by utilizing technological advancements in education. Teachers should be taught not to block students from achieving their aims. As a technique for this, they can be trained to support students' by motivating electronic stories which depict success in despite of hard times. (Expert 7)

Moreover, the following themes were extracted by the MAXQDA related to the second interview question 'what are your opinions about socio-cultural issues in a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?'

1. Teaching teachers to try to find solutions for social problems using technology

As verbalized in this theme, teachers are to be taught to use technology to solve various social problems. This is corroborated by the following quotation:

Teacher training courses must prepare teachers to take advantage of educational technologies like communicative networks which contain comments of people at different social or cultural classes to solve social problems. (Expert 14)

2. Teaching teachers to teach life skills to students using technology

As put forth by this theme, teachers should be instructed to take technology at the service of teaching life skills to students. Evidence of this is the following quotation:

Teaching life skills to students through using technology should be taught to student teachers. Technological advancements provide good opportunities for this purpose. (Expert 1)

3. Teaching teachers to help students seek change and social transformation using technology

According to this theme, teachers should be taught to ask for the help of technology to empower students to seek social transformation and revolution. The following quotation indicates this:

If teachers learn to educate students to try to change the society via technological tools, teacher preparation programs can claim that they are technology-based and CP-based. (Expert 15)

4. Teaching teachers to identify cultural barriers to the way of students learn using technology

This theme shows the need to teach teachers to take advantage of technology in recognizing cultural blocks on the path of students' learning. This is evident in the following quotation:

Teachers are to be trained for recognition of those cultural blocks which prevent students from learning by the help of technology. They can do virtual interviews with students and parents. (Expert 12)

5. Teaching teachers to make parents conscious of the social problems using technology

As implied in this theme, teachers must be taught to use technology in making students' parents aware of social problems. This is confirmed by the following quotation:

During pre-service education, teacher educators should make bold the importance of parents' awareness of social problems. This is a mission of teachers to do this through technological means among which social networks can be mentioned. (Expert 17)

6. Teaching teachers to put emphasize on students' communicative ability in classes using technology

As meant by this theme, teachers should be taught to give priority to learners' communication ability with the help of technology. The following theme shows this:

Teacher education programs should equip student teachers with the knowledge of significance of the enhancing students' English communication through technology. To do this, they can build virtual groups wherein students can discuss and negotiate meaning in English without fear of being judged or scored. (Expert 11)

Furthermore, the following themes were extracted by the MAXQDA related to the third interview question 'what are your opinions about criticality-related issues in a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?'

1. Teaching teachers to help students learn question- asking skills using technology

As understood from this theme, teachers should be trained to teach question-asking ability to students utilizing technology. This is corroborated by the following theme:

Teacher trainers should not neglect the key role of teachers' tolerance of students' questions. They should teach teachers to enhance their tolerance and convey this to students that they can ask any question from their teacher without limitation. Technology is an appropriate ground for this. The personal response system is a good example. (Expert 13)

2. Teaching teachers to be ready for critical events in class using technology

This theme says that teachers should be taught to be prepared to confront critical issues utilizing technology. The following quotation supports this:

Teachers must be educated to predict critical class incidences through diverse technological channels. For example, there exist several samples of such events on YouTube which can be really helpful for teachers. (Expert 20)

According to the results, Iranian ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program were as follows: Teaching teachers to give priority to students' needs using technology; teaching teachers to be aware of students' aims in learning English using technology; teaching teachers to be attentive to students and build a good relationship with them using technology; teaching teachers to try to find solutions for social problems using technology; teaching teachers to teach life skills to students using technology; teaching teachers to help students seek change and social transformation using technology; teaching teachers to identify cultural barriers on the way of students' learning using technology; teaching teachers to make parents conscious of the social problems using technology; teaching teachers to recognize limited learning capacities of some students using technology; teaching teachers to present instruction to students in the simplest way using technology; teaching teachers to be ready for critical events in class using technology; teaching teachers to plan dynamic lessons to improve students' learning using technology; teaching teachers to make classes student-centered using technology; teaching teachers to put emphasis on students' communicative ability in classes using technology; teaching teachers to help students learn question asking skills using technology; teaching teachers to clearly state the purpose of every teaching activity or method in classes using technology; teaching teachers to use dynamic evaluation methods using technology; teaching teachers to use cooperative teaching methods using

technology; and teaching teachers to be facilitators of learning rather than blockers using technology. The results organized and reported in Table 1.

ELT Experts' Perceptions
Teaching teachers to give priority to students' needs using technology
Teaching teachers to be aware of students' aims in learning English using technology
Teaching teachers to be attentive to students and build a good relationship with them using technology
Teaching teachers to try to find solutions for social problems using technology
Teaching teachers to teach life skills to students using technology
Teaching teachers to help students seek change and social transformation using technology
Teaching teachers to identify cultural barriers on the way of students' learning using technology
Teaching teachers to make parents conscious of the social problems using technology
Teaching teachers to recognize limited learning capacities of some students using technology
Teaching teachers to present instruction to students in the simplest way using technology
Teaching teachers to be ready for critical events in class using technology
Teaching teachers to plan dynamic lessons to improve students' learning using technology
Teaching teachers to make classes student-centered using technology
Teaching teachers to put emphasis on students' communicative ability in classes using technology
Teaching teachers to help students learn question asking skills using technology
Teaching teachers to clearly state the purpose of every teaching activity or method in classes using technology
Teaching teachers to use dynamic evaluation methods using technology
Teaching teachers to use cooperative teaching methods using technology
Teaching teachers to be facilitators of learning rather than blockers using technology

5. Discussion

The current study aimed to answer this research questions 'What are Iranian ELT experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program?', the following themes were extracted: Teaching teachers to give priority to students' needs using technology, to be aware of students' aims in learning English using technology, to be attentive to students and build a good relationship with them using technology, to try to find solutions for social problems using technology, to teach life skills to students using technology, to help students seek change and social transformation using technology, to identify cultural barriers on the way of students' learning using technology, to make parents conscious of the social problems using technology, to recognize limited learning capacities of some students using technology, to present instruction to students in the simplest way using technology, to be ready for critical events in class using technology, to plan dynamic lessons to improve students' learning using technology, to make classes student-centered using technology, to put emphasis on students' communicative ability in classes using technology, to help students learn question asking skills using technology, to clearly state the purpose of every teaching activity or method in classes using technology, to use dynamic evaluation methods using technology, to use cooperative teaching methods using technology, and to be facilitators of learning rather than blockers using technology.

The extracted themes have been reported in some previous studies by some scholars including Ahmadi and Sadeghi (2016), Colombo (2013), Daryai-Hansen et al. (2015), and Sadeghi (2012). The findings are also similar to the results of some other related studies (e.g., Colombo, 2013; Honneth, 1992; Taylor, 1994). Further, the results are consistent with the study by Adams (2005), Unterhalter and Aikman (2007), Gollnick and Chinn (2009), Mohammadi et al. (2016), Mostafazadeh et al. (2015), Sadeghi (2012), Subrahmanian (2005), UNESCO (2003), Unterhalter (2007), and Wilson (2004).

To interpret the findings, the perceptions extracted in the present study are reflective of the reconciliation of the use of CP principles and technology. Indeed, such issues as attention to students' needs, awareness-raising of students regarding the aims of different teaching strategies, rapport in the classroom, social problem-solving, change, and transformation are among the main tenets of CP (Colombo, 2013). Further, corroborating life skills, recognition of students' capacities, making the load of learning as light as possible, incorporating diversity and dynamicity into teaching and evaluation procedures, and putting teacher-centeredness aside are deeply emphasized in CP (Ahmadi & Sadeghi, 2016). Additionally, heed to the communication abilities of students, teaching question- posing skills, the facilitative role of teachers, and equal

discrimination-free learning opportunities are proposed in CP (Gollnick & Chinn, 2009).

Consistent with this study, Mostafazadeh et al. (2015) identified the main dimensions of transformative education and showed that a transformative curriculum revolves around several dimensions, including anti-racist pedagogy, utilizing diversity and multiculturalism, pedagogical and social justice, diversity in teaching methods, plurality of assessment processes, acceptance of diversity rather than uniformity, support for minority languages, and promotion of multicultural and intercultural communication.

The study results are also consistent with recent work by Morris and Stommel (2018) on CDP, with a central aspect of the CDP being its focus on "community and collaborative practice". Specifically, Morris and Stommel argued that CDP fosters new perspectives on how teachers and students are socially, politically, and emotionally connected in an online learning environment. Additionally, they suggested that high levels of engagement and interaction are the foundation for successful outcomes in online and hybrid environments. Taken together, these statements were consistent with our thoughtful and planned efforts to build and sustain online communities.

The view of the participants of the present study showed that they believe that educators who use technology in education are too focused on effectiveness. Buss and Wolf (2021), suggested that by reviewing the human and interactive aspects of learner learning should be prioritized. This study supports CDP as an open learning environment focused on dialogue.

Teacher preparation programs that are compatible with the recent advancements of the field in ELT, student curiosity enhancement, student information synthesis ability, reason seeking, and critical thinking are CP-based in reality (Wilson, 2004). Going beyond here and now, being involved with students' self-esteem and self-confidence, and attention to democracy and peace are also among the ideologies which can give CP orientations to teacher preparation programs (Adams, 2005). As perceived by the participants of the study, it is just in the light of using technology that a technology-based CP-laden teaching preparation program takes form, however, Baroud and Dharamshi (2020) believed that by using self-directed research methods and ongoing course reflections and assessments to highlight "critical" aspects of CDP by collecting data from notes and reflections shared online and recorded during weekly meetings, they co planned and designed learning opportunities that consciously addressed social, cultural and ethical issues related to digital learning. They argued that this work should not be left to teacher educators alone; rather, teacher education programs need to play a greater role in preparing and supporting teacher educators with both technical and pedagogical skills to design and meaningfully integrate critical digital practices into their classrooms.

However, as perceived by the participants of the study, it is just in the light of using technology that a technology-based CP-laden teaching preparation program takes form.

6. Conclusion and Implications

The study results suggest that the mission of teacher educators to adapt English teacher education programs to technological advances and CP doctrines is multifaceted. Without adequate resources focused on the nature of classroom relationships, student needs, goal clarification, social issues, and problem-solving, the success of the CP technology-based EFL teacher preparation program cannot be expected. In addition, teacher educators should go beyond simply teaching English skills and seriously remind teachers to emphasize students' life skills and emotional attributes such as confidence and self-esteem in the classroom. Eliminating discrimination and cultural barriers in learning, as well as promoting peace, and tranquility, facilitating student learning and striving for student centering should be incorporated into the principles of teacher preparation to make the system compatible with CP, albeit in harsher ones Form light of technology. And finally, at the heart of EFL's CP technology is to teach students excellent communication and thinking skills through the use of a variety of teaching and assessment processes interspersed with diversity and peer engagement, satisfying student curiosity and equality create learning opportunities. The basis for the teacher preparation curriculum.

Contrary to the fact that CP literature is replete with studies conducted in traditional face- to- face settings, the present study is oriented toward online settings. Moreover, the field of teacher education is among the less-explored research areas connected to CP in the context of Iran. This is while the teacher education system of Iran should be oriented toward CP if we want the ELT system to become CP-based. Furthermore, this research is of significance since it tries to make the traditional teacher education system of Iran more familiar with the sweet taste of technology applications. Also, probing EFL teachers' and experts' perceptions of a technology-laden critical pedagogy (CP)-based EFL teacher preparation program is important since they have useful points to deliver regarding the applicability of such a program. Moreover, teacher educators can benefit from the results of the present study to make the ground for the use of educational technologies within the framework of CP in their teacher training courses and materials. In this way, they can make future teachers more informed of the merits of taking a critical technological approach on online teaching. The results of this study can also be enlightening for researchers in that they can use the design as a guide and the research questions as food for thought to carry out their context-specific projects. Researchers who find critical matters of education interesting can capitalize on the instruments and the data collection

procedure suggested in this dissertation, to devise novel approaches to studying CDP and its application in online EFL contexts.

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