

Chapter 10

The e-Learning Puzzle in Turkey: Déjà Vu?

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter aims to share Turkey's ICT integration experiences from a country-wide perspective rather than a school or classroom case. Many experiences in different countries indicate that successful ICT integration requires interlocking components, such as purchasing hardware, in-service training for principals and teachers, curriculum integration, financial resources for maintenance, technical, and pedagogical support, and an adequate amount and quality of digital learning material. Lack of one of the components may cause the failure of the whole integration process. The employment of ICT in education is a complex process comprising intricate components, much like the pieces of a puzzle. Sharing the experiences gained from national initiatives is especially important for developing countries, which should make an effort to learn from the experiences of other countries because loans granted by foreign sources make up a majority of the e-learning investment.

BACKGROUND

You can import a Ferrari into any country in the world as long as you have money; however, this purchase does not guarantee the Ferrari's performance in that country. Simply importing a Ferrari is not enough unless you have drivers skilled in driving fast cars, high quality fuel, maintenance services, and smooth highways accessible across

the country. Similarly, it has been demonstrated through a number of practices around the world that e-learning, or information and communication technologies (ICT) in education, is not just about purchasing the required hardware or supplying internet connections to schools.

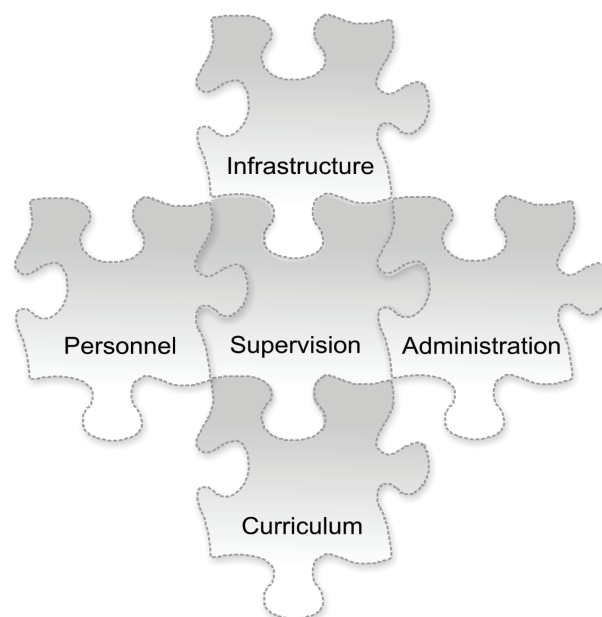
Technology does not deliver educational success on its own. It only becomes of value in education if learners and teachers can adopt it to a useful end. According to an OECD report (2001), in spite of the USD 16 billion spent in 1999 in

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OECD countries, the expectations for ICT use in education were mostly left unfulfilled, and ICT investments made by the public sector did not result in improved performance, quality, or access to a better education. The lessons learnt from these attempts in OECD member countries led researchers to focus on the concerns over the return on ICT investment. Many experiences in different countries indicate that successful ICT integration requires interlocking components, such as purchasing hardware, in-service training for principals and teachers, curriculum integration, financial resources for maintenance, technical, and pedagogical support, and an adequate amount and quality of digital learning material. Lack of one of the components may cause the failure of the whole integration process. The employment of ICT in education is a complex process comprising intricate components, much like the pieces of a puzzle. Each piece should fit the others well in order to form an ideal picture. Otherwise:

- Even though you buy the best hardware, if your teachers are not ready for ICT use in classroom;
- Even though you buy the best hardware and provide in-service training to teachers on how to use ICT in education, if you do not realize ICT integration in the curriculum;
- Even though you invest in the best hardware, provide in-service training to teachers on ICT in education, and integrate ICT into the curriculum, if you cannot reserve financial resources for maintenance;
- Even though you buy the best hardware, provide in-service training to teachers on how to use ICT in education, integrate ICT into the curriculum, and reserve financial resources for maintenance, if you cannot supply an adequate amount and quality of digital education material and educational software, the integration of ICT in the educational process will be incomplete and will not bring about the anticipated results.

Figure 1. The intricate components of ICT integration in education



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