



REFORM IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES CURRICULUM OF TURKEY: AN EVALUATION IN TERMS OF TEACHING HISTORY*

Ahmet SIMSEK

PhD, Marmara University, Faculty of Ataturk Education, Istanbul, Turkey
ahmet.simsek@marmara.edu.tr

Social Studies course aims not only the socialization of children but also providing them with some vital skills. And it is obvious that such aim can not be achieved only via the transfer of information and values. Taking as basis the USA practice, Social Studies course was started to be taught in primary schools of Turkey in place of history and geography courses in 1968. However, social studies course was based on the heavy transfer of information and values rather than provision of skills until 2005. In this context, as history was taught in a way that was irrelevant with the daily life of children, rote learning turned into an inseparable part of this course. By means of 2005 Social Studies curriculum, textbook-based teaching was replaced by activity-based teaching. The objectives of history course were reviewed and a history teaching approach aimed at providing vital skill was adopted. New curriculum presents a history course that teaches history by taking into consideration the factors such as children and their interests, parents and neighbourhood.

Key Words: social studies curriculum, Turkey, history teaching, historical skills

INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, chronological history subjects are introduced to children within the scope of Social Studies course in 4th grade of primary school. For the children, this course is quite different from the Life Studies course they attended in the previous grades. While the aim of Life Studies course is to provide crucial information and experiences about the society and life as a whole, Social Studies course provide children with the information -mainly about history,

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geography and citizenship- obtained from human and social sciences. In the beginning, this seems confusing to the children who see the life as a whole in Life Studies course to be exposed to various disciplines in the Social Studies course.

Social Studies course integrates the studies on social and human sciences, which aim at improving citizenship competencies of children (NCSS, 1994a). Taking as basis the USA practice, Social Studies course was started to be taught in primary schools of Turkey in place of history and geography courses in 1960's. However, since its philosophy could not be understood well, unlike the USA practice, social studies course in Turkey was designed to "bring up efficient citizens" rather than to "provide children with specific skills". This aim was tried to be achieved by transferring history, geography and citizenship information irrelevant to each other. This approach was pursued in the Social Studies Curriculum in effect in 1998-2005 period. However, Social Studies course given in the USA aimed at providing students with various personal and social skills within the scope of 10 teaching areas (NCSS, 1994b).

In this paper, educational basis of history course delivered within the scope of Social Studies course in the primary schools of Turkey were studied and a comparison was made between 1998 and 2005 Social Studies Curricula in terms of 4th and 5th grades.

History Teaching in Primary Education

According to J. Dewey, the aim of history teaching in primary school is to make children understand the values of social life; make them think about the forces facilitating and encouraging effective cooperation amongst people and have them understand the behavioral patterns that enable or prevent such cooperation. The main point of history teaching should be to make history active and dynamic for the child. It is clear that such type of history teaching will not be the same as the one given in high schools due to many factors, mainly due to the difference in the mental and perceptive improvement of children.

It is observed that chronological history teaching within the framework of Social Studies Course in Turkey targets the children in 10-14 age group. According to many researches, this age range is too early for chronological history teaching. For them, the main obstacle is that children in such age range do not have the required mental maturity and time perception to understand the abstract content of history. Yet it is known that time concept is necessary to understand the history course given in primary education. Because time concepts include such concepts as yesterday, century, era, historical movement,

historical period, the nature of historical transformation, the reasons for historical transformation and historical successiveness (Naylor and Diem, 1987). In addition, history includes the past and historical issues mainly focus on successive events; therefore, children must understand the concept of “time” in order to be able to understand the content of the history and to use it to solve the problems of “today”. However, although the importance of time is recognized in primary education, children rarely understand this concept due to their nature. Their ideas about historical time are either the results of generalizations or tend to be uncertain (Barton, 2002). For this reason, according to many student-centered history lecturers who were focused on age-based mental improvement of children in their studies (Oakden and Sturt, Hunter, Jahoda etc.), it is necessary to wait for children to reach 11 years old for the development and improvement of historical time perception (Jahoda, 1963). However there are some history lectures (K. C. Friedman, Hunter, Hallam etc.) who think that the age of 11 is not enough for children to understand historical time perception entirely and, in turn, to “understand history as adults do”. They indicate that children cannot completely understand the concept of historical time before the age of 16; they can correctly use the time terms (such as century) used by adults when they are 14; and they begin developing abstract historical thoughts when they are 16.2-16.6 (Hodkinson, 2004). Therefore, it is necessary to consider when preparing primary school history curriculum that children cannot reach readiness level for chronological history analysis before the age of 15. Following can be a solution for this problem: First ages -rather than abstract historical subjects- can be taught in a non-detailed and superficial manner to the children fewer than 14 and history of the modern eras can be taught in a more detailed manner when students reach formal operational stage (Safran, 1996).

According to findings of researches performed on the basis of the cognitive development models of Piaget, it is known that although history teaching should be started at later ages (minimum at 16.5 years old), history courses in primary schools can not be dropped from the curriculum due to the “citizenship programs” of modern states. For this reason, history teaching is included within the scope of Social Studies Curriculum in the USA and of primary school curriculum in England via concretization, within the framework of the separation between abstract and concrete information (Ata, 1999).

There are a number of objections to the idea that “it is necessary to wait for children to reach mental maturity in order to teach history in primary schools”. The most important one of them is the discipline-based approach of Bruner, who made great contributions to the formation of history teaching in primary education in England. According to Bruner, children can be taught a subject of

any particular area by providing them with the way of thinking specific to the said area. In other words; when teaching history to the students, teachers should primarily try to teach them how to think as a historian although knowing that they are not going to be historians in the future (Bruner, 1991). This approach is exaggerated by some circles who think that it can eliminate all the obstacles encountered in history teaching in primary education. However, researches carried out in recent years point out the “possibility” rather than “limitedness” of primary school children to think about past. Researchers such as Stow and Haydn (2000) expressed that it is a huge mistake to think that children who are successful in chronological skills are the ones who have mental competency for the perception of past. Even they put forward that “contrary to common thought, there is no relationship between historical time teaching and developmental maturity” (Hodkinson, 2003). According to them, “maturation is a factor that refers to dependence on material and taught context or content and being in interaction with other children. It is not necessary to wait for children to grow up old enough to overcome time-related ideas since it is increasingly assumed that teacher’s approach towards teaching time influences the children’s level of understanding” (Stow and Haydn, 2000).

Amongst these researchers, Levstik and Pappas stated that children enjoyed talking about past rather than talking about history and they had more difficulty in ordering historical events on a chart than reading historical texts (Vukelich and Thorndon, 1990). For this reason, the relationship between the experiences of primary school children and their introduction to the “past” was focused on (Lebsack, 2002). On the other hand Dewey (1956) stated that if the aim of teaching history in primary schools is to teach children what is social life and its historical development, then children should deal with things that are spiritually close -not distant- to them. Dewey emphasized that the difficulties children can face in learning the life in Babel and Egypt, which can be considered far in temporal terms, does not result from the temporal distance but from the difference between the needs and interests of the social life of those days and today. In parallel to this idea, it was expressed that children begin to make progress in their chronological skills by ordering the events in a story which they can associate with their own lives (Chapman, 1993). In the light of these findings, Levstik and Ravitch suggested that history teaching should start in the first grade of primary school (Lebsack, 2002).

According to the researches listed above, followers of student-centered approaches oppose those of subject-centered approaches about the development of historical time concept and, in turn, the formation of historical thought. However, there is an important point not be ignored: while the followers of student-centered teaching approaches (age-dependent development) deal with

the “history” as understood by adults, followers of subject-centered teaching approaches focus on the concept of “the past”, therefore, suggest that children can be taught in their early ages the concept of “past” which is told via narrations instead of the concept of “history”.

For this reason, suggestion of literary works rather than history textbooks by Levstik can be understood as he (1995) stated that a good narration can enable children to create a world of past in their minds.

Bearing these facts in mind, it is observed that in the developed countries, such as the USA and England, history teaching aims perceptive development of children as well as providing them with some contemporary skills. For example, expected outcomes of the history teaching falling in the scope of Social Studies in the USA are chronological thinking, historical understanding, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research and making decisions about historical subjects (Saunders, 1996).

The main skills related with history teaching in USA are listed as acquiring basic chronological information about the history of the USA; reading, interpreting and completing time lines, tables, cards and diagrams; organizing the events in the right chronological order; realizing the cause and effect relation; and converting dates into centuries (Saunders, 1996).

In England, on the other hand, history and geography teaching is planned as two separate courses as of primary education. For this reason, the skills and concepts about the areas of history and geography are addressed separately. According to the English National History Curriculum applied as of the first grade of primary education, the following main aims are set in parallel with the aims of history teaching in the USA ([http: 1](http://www.dfe.gov.uk)):

1. Chronology skill
2. Interpretation of history
3. Questioning of history
4. Organization and communication
5. Knowing and understanding the events, persons and changes in the past.

Although both countries pursue different policies in teaching history in primary education, it is very important that common aims are defined for history teaching and that chronology skill is listed on top of the list. This can be explained by the fact that the history planners in the USA and England are

aware that the history cannot be learnt without learning historical time concept and the chronology skills related it.

History Course in 1998 Primary Social Studies Curriculum of Turkey

In Turkey, Social Studies course instructed in the 4th and 5th grades of primary education since 1968 also started to be instructed in the 6th and 7th grades in 1997. Although the course started to be taught in 1997, the curriculum of the course was published and sent to schools one year later (in 1998).

1998 Primary Social Studies Curriculum was developed in accordance with Taba-Tyler curriculum development model, based on inductive method, and behaviorist teaching styles. Examining the general aims of 1998 Social Studies Curriculum, it can be suggested that they are similar to the general aims established in 1968 Curriculum. This indicates that 1998 curriculum is not a new one and is developed by including 6th and 7th grades in the content of the Social Studies Curriculum including only the 4th and 5th grades and applied since 1968. However, the subjects of history, geography and citizenship are structured in such an irrelevant way that there is an understanding as if there are still two separate courses called history and geography in primary schools. For this reason, the principles of interdisciplinary and mass teaching -two requirements of Social Studies education which universally and mainly aims at “bringing up efficient citizens”- were violated. It seems that what is understood in this curriculum from “interdisciplinary” is including history, geography and citizenship subjects in an irrelevant manner and from “cumulative” is cumulating these subjects again in an irrelevant manner. In this context, although 1998 Social Studies Curriculum is not very different from the USA example in respect of philosophical grounds, there is a tendency in the former to convey to students a great deal of unnecessary information not complying with those principles (Ozturk and Dilek, 2002). As a result, either irrelevant information is taught to students or they are forced to memorize the subjects. Yet the content, developed in accordance with interdisciplinary approach, has the potential for saving students from traditional rote teaching applications (Ozturk and Dilek, 2002).

The general aims of 1998 Social Studies Curriculum, which are planned to be achieved by means of history subjects, are addressed not only under this heading; some of the aims planned to be achieved by teaching some history subjects are also listed under the section “explanations about the

implementation of the curriculum”¹. Therefore, it can be concluded that although the “aims” to be achieved by teaching the subjects of history are set in the introduction part of the curriculum, no guiding plan showing how to achieve these aims is given in the content.

When the content of 1998 Curriculum is examined, it is understood that chronological history starts to be taught in the 4th grade of primary education. As mentioned previously, this is an implementation not appropriate for this age group (10- 11 ages). It is observed that such history teaching forces students to memorize the subject due to the fact that the students in the 4th and 5th grades are in concrete operational stage and that the concept of calendar time develops in the minds of students in formal operational stage (Dilek and Bozcan, 2002). In 1998 Curriculum, history teaching starts with the introduction of the subject “History, Anatolian History, Turks and Islam” in the 4th grade. Such approach

¹ Curriculum aims planned to be achieved through history teaching are as follows: “To ensure that the student comprehends the importance of the Turkish nation for the history of the world, its honorable past and present role in the family of the nations... (Article 2)”, “To ensure that the student learns about the important Turkish figures who served our nation and humanity and understands the foresight, high perception, courage, sacrifice and bravery of the people who shaped the history (Article 7)”, “To ensure that the student understands that modern civilization is the product of a long history; comprehend the role of the Turkish nation in this civilization; raises the awareness of doing all favors to ‘elevate national culture to the level of modern civilizations’ in accordance with Atatürk’s instructions (Article 10)”, “To ensure that the student develops the skills of thinking, searching and commenting by making comparisons between the causes and results of social, economic and political events occurred in the past in order to understand today better (Article 11)”. In addition to these, following aims are addressed in the section “explanations about the implementation of the curriculum” to make contribution to general objectives throughout history subjects: *To ensure that the student comprehends “that social life always changes and develops, people also change and improve in accordance with the time and environment they live in (Article 13)”*; *“that the ancient works and monuments of the civilizations in Anatolia are the evidences of history (Article 15)”*; *“that the country was backward, was on the brink of collapse in the last years of Ottoman Empire, and Turkish Republic was founded under the leadership of Atatürk under those conditions (Article 19)”* and; *“the foresight, high perception, courage, sacrifice and bravery of the people who shaped the history (Article 21)”*.

does not take into consideration the mental development and interest areas of children and seems as if prepared only to encourage a teaching method based on content transfer. It is observed that curriculum makes no concrete suggestion other than the teaching method of narration-transfer and the questioning strategy measuring classical information. On the other hand, a number of history lecturers emphasize that history should be introduced to the child by starting with the historicity of her/his own life, her/his family and her/his neighborhood.

Even in the “First Schools Regulation” adopted in 1929 -although quite an old document- it is indicated *that history courses in primary school should have connection with the natural and social environment* (Article 43) and underlined that *no information other than the important dates and names should be memorized* (Sakaoglu, 1996). Although these ideas -which are deemed universally important in history teaching in terms of setting the borders of contemporary education- were expressed 76 years ago, they are not reflected in 1998 Social Studies Curriculum, which is an important weakness of the curriculum.

On the other hand, there are some inconsistencies between the history subjects taught chronologically in the scope of 1998 Curriculum. For example, while the historical content of the “Social Studies” course taught in the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th grades and of the “History of Turkish Revolution and Kemalism” course taught in the 8th grade is organized as a whole, “How Was the Republic Established?” subject is included in the Social Studies course of 5th grade, which violates the chronological order. In fact, “establishment of the republic” is explained in a more detailed way within the scope of History of Turkish Revolution and Kemalism course given to 8th grade students. A similar mistake is made in the subject called “Conquest of Istanbul and Afterwards” in Social Studies course in the 7th grade. Sudden shift from the chronological history teaching to thematic history teaching with this subject leads to confusion among children.

Taking into consideration the aims planned to be achieved via history teaching in primary education in the USA and England, 1998 Primary Social Studies Curriculum falls considerably behind the expectations. For example, within the scope of the aim of “explaining the concept of historical time”, only some attention is paid to “the concept of historical time” in “History, Central Asia-Our First Land” subject taught in the 4th grade; however, it is not understood that this aim is too difficult to be achieved only in one unit or subject. Nevertheless, it is known that the chronological skills of children take a long time to develop.

2005 Social Studies Curriculum of Turkey in Terms of History Teaching in Primary Education

2005 Social Studies Curriculum has revolutionized curriculum preparation process in Turkey and behaviorist curriculum approach has been replaced by constructivist curriculum approach. This curriculum has set the main aim of the Social Studies Curriculum in Turkey as “to provide an opportunity and appropriate environment for individuals to understand and make contributions to themselves, the society in which they live on the basis of their own demands and skills, within the framework of the General Aims of Turkish National Education” (Safran, 2005). In this scope, special attention has been given to ensure that Social Studies course is not only content but also skill-based (Nelson, 1987).

2005 Social Studies Curriculum was prepared with a constructivist education approach unlike 1998 Curriculum. Parallel to USA example, in this curriculum the content is separated into nine categories addressing all the aspects of social life. Each of these categories is called “learning field”.² The “achievements”, which concrete the content of these learning fields, are comprised of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which the students are expected to obtain/ develop in learning process via planned and organized experiences. The structure of those achievements reflects the essentials of constructivist education approach and it is ensured that each achievement includes “skills, knowledge and values”. While 1998 Curriculum addressed knowledge, skills and values as separate categories with a behaviorist approach, 2005 Curriculum adopts a constructivist approach and integrates these factors into a meaningful unity (Safran, 2005). It is aimed make such achievements via the activities suggested and necessary explanations. With regard to the evaluation aspect of the curriculum; evaluation process includes classical measurement-assessment methods and is carried out on the basis of “process” assessment understanding. Therefore, “assessment” in the 2005 Social Studies Curriculum is a process

² Learning fields are the patterns that address the inter-related skills, themes, concept and values as a whole and that organize the activity of learning. The learning fields in 2005 Social Studies Curriculum have been determined by reviewing the learning literature in the world: “Individual and Identity”; “Culture and Heritage”; “People, Places and Environments”; “Production, Distribution and Consumption”; “Science, Technology and Society”; “Groups, Institutions and Social Organizations”; “Authority, Management and Society”; and “Global Connections” (Safran, 2004).

which deals with what the students know rather than what they do not know (Safran, 2005).

Four of the general objectives of 2005 Social Studies Curriculum are -tough indirect- in relation with history teaching.³ The achievements and activities suggested for achieving these general aims can be considered an important contribution made by the new curriculum since this improvement has replaced textbook-based teaching with activity-based teaching. “Explanations” part in the new curriculum provides the outline for how to address which achievements and activities and lists the values and skills to accompany them in teaching-learning process. Additionally, it puts forward the courses with which cooperation should be ensured so as to get the best results from these achievements or activities. For example, the achievement “It should be ensured the student learns the main measurement tools and setting methods used world-wide” in “Useful Tools” subject taught in the Social Studies course of 4th grades can be achieved in the best way by establishing relation with the subject “I Learn My Past” which is under “time measurement” sub-learning field and which is about the time measurement devices and setting methods. In the “Explanations” part; the skill to be directly taught with the help of this subject is decided as “making comparisons” and the value as “being scientific”, with an integrative approach.

³ The aim “*To ensure that the student recognizes the necessity of protecting and developing the cultural heritage which raises national awareness by seizing the main components and processes establishing Turkish culture and history*” refers to the contribution of history teaching in national awareness. The aim “*To ensure that student determines the similarities and differences between people, objects, incidents and phenomena by questioning historical evidence of different periods and places*” refers to history teaching as a tool that facilitates understanding of change and continuity by the student. The aim “*To ensure that the student organizes her/his life according to the rules of democracy by understanding the influences of the concepts of human rights, national independence, democracy, secularism, republic on the historical processes and modern Turkey*” refers to history teaching as a dimension of historical past which helps student in understanding the meanings of these concepts from a democratic point of view. Finally, the aim “*To ensure that the student analyzes the social, cultural and economic interactions between various periods and societies*” refers to history teaching as a source providing the necessary information to make analysis about continuously changing relationships between societies”.

Examining the 2005 Social Studies Curriculum generally, it is observed that history is not addressed within the framework of separate subjects or topics –as the case in 1998 Curriculum- but of recognized learning fields, achievements, activities selected to realize such achievements and the skills planned to be taught with these activities. In other words, history is not treated as a discipline in the new curriculum; instead, it is an instrument facilitating the solution of the problems related to social life.

It is stated that the 2005 Curriculum is designed on the basis of skills. According to this, it is observed that the curriculum aims at providing students with 14 different skills; “Perception of Time and Chronology” and “Perception of Change and Continuity” skills among these 14 skills are directly related to chronology teaching. On the other hand, there are some connections with remaining skills, which can be addressed within the scope of history course. Accordingly; it is planned to realize the steps of using evidence, determining cause effect relationships, making comparisons, detecting stereotype judgments and making conclusions under “*critical thinking*” skill; using imagination under “*creative thinking*” skill; understanding –within the framework of the conditions of that time- the ideas, aims and feelings of the people to have lived in the past under “*communication and empathy*” skill (historical empathy); distinguishing phenomena from ideas, understanding propaganda, understanding the idea of the writer under “*research*” skill; and explaining the reasons and results of the events occurring around under “*observation*” skill. As a matter of fact, although such skill-based approach seems to have been inspired by the Social Studies structure in USA, the new curriculum also bears the traces of “new history” understanding of English origin.

New history understanding does not refer only to social and financial approaches, minorities and the history of women -as it is understood in Turkey-, it is also based on the fundamental concepts such as child-focus, history, improving history-related skills, inquiry, interpretation and analysis of evidence, causality, change and empathy (Ata, 1999). In this context, it is observed that the 2005 Curriculum is a skill-based curriculum. For example, “time, continuity, change” -which is one of the learning fields- serves for the student as an introduction to chronology which is the main body of history and which will be taught in the upcoming years. This is of utmost important as the chronology is commonly recognized by historians as the frame of history (Diem, 1982). For this reason, following explanation is made for the learning field of “time, continuity, change”: “*It meets the need of the students to understand their roots and helps them in making connection between past-today and future. The students understand who they are, the events in the past, how to make connection with the past, the changing world and its position in the*

future. They try to explain the emotional connections of people with the past and their roles in whether history from the perspective of chronology, change and continuity". Learning field of "time, continuity and change" relates human history to all other learning fields as it includes time, place and chronology. "Perception of time and chronology" and "perception of change and continuity" skills fall in the scope of this learning field. According to this, the perception of time and chronology includes following:

1. Obtaining calendar knowledge,
2. Distinguishing time dimensions (Past-today-future),
3. Using time statements correctly,
4. Making chronological order,
5. Interpreting the data in the time line,
6. Establishing time line.

The following are the aims of "perception of change and continuity" skill:

1. Finding similarities and differences,
2. Perceiving continuity and changes occurring through time,
3. Understanding the problems of the past on the basis of cause and effect relationship,
4. Becoming aware that today's contemporary civilization is founded on the experiences of a long history.

It is observed that there are some concepts which are specific to the area of history and are planned to be taught in the 2005 Social Studies Curriculum. These concepts are the main concepts of history teaching. Among these concepts, only the concept of "*similarities and differences*" is included in the 4th grade curriculum (this concept is planned to be strengthened by re-emphasizing in the following years), which is important for children's mental and perceptive competencies. In the 5th grade, the concepts of *chronology, change and continuity, cause, nation, and leadership* are addressed, which is found to be in compliance with the skills of "perception of change and continuity" and "perception of time and chronology". It is also determined that in the new curriculum 18 different values are planned to be taught in accordance with the learning fields, achievements and activities; and that –within the scope of history teaching- the value of "*Respect for important Turkish figures and*

Patriotism” is addressed in the learning field of “Culture and Heritage” and the value of *independence* in the learning field of “Power, Management and Society” in the 4th grade and the value of *sensitivity towards historical heritage*” in the learning field of “Global Connections” in the 5th grade. Such approach is deemed an indicator of the fact that targeted achievements comply with the content.

On the other hand, examining how 2005 Primary Social Studies Curriculum addresses the information, skills and values belonging to history teaching; it is seen that history-oriented activities are not planned only to teach historical content, as the case in 1998 Curriculum; rather, they also serve as a facilitating tool for the realization of achievements related with other subjects. In other words, an achievement under history teaching is tried to be realized via an activity planned on the basis of historical methods. For instance; the achievement of “*It should be ensured that the student creates family history by using narrative historical methods and on the basis of objects*” in “I Am Learning About My Past” unit taught in the 4th grade is tried to be realized with “Family History Study” (Texts about family history are written by using the objects belonging to the family and the information collected from different sources). Moreover, a non-historical achievement is tried to be realized via an activity(ies) planned on the basis of historical methods. For instance; the achievement of “*It should be ensured that the student makes conclusions about her/his personal identity by analyzing the data on the identity cards s/he has*” in “I Learn About Myself” unit is tried to be realized with the activity of “My family tree”. This supports our above-mentioned hypothesis that 2005 Social Studies Curriculum is affected by “new history understanding” and that history is addressed in primary school from the perspective of social aims.

Examining the historical content taught in the 2005 Social Studies curriculum for the 4th grade, it is observed that importance is given to the subjects such as the student her/himself (for example, the achievement of “*It should be ensured that the student orders some important events of her/his life chronologically*” and the activity of “Time lines of some parts of my life”); her/his family (for example, the achievement of “It should be ensured that the student becomes aware of the elements reflecting national culture in her/his family and neighborhood” and the activities of “Family tree” and “Family history study”); her/his neighborhood (for example, the achievement of “*It should be ensured that the student describes her/his neighborhood and Turkey in the course of National Struggle, on the basis of the events occurred and visual materials*” and the activities of “They were children once, too”, “Those days” and “Let’s make a journey”); Ataturk (for example, the achievement of “*It should be ensured that the student recognizes the role of Ataturk in the winning of National*

Struggle and the foundation of the Republic” and the activities of “Turkish People in National Struggle”, “A letter to My Hero”); the technology used in daily life (for example, the achievement of “*It should be ensured that the student makes comparisons between the past and today by considering the changes of technological products in our lives and surrounding*” and the activity of “a time line in which the devices and vehicles used in daily life are listed according to their invention dates”). In addition to these, it is very beneficial for history teaching in primary education to suggest use of visual materials such as historical remains, pictures and photographs; the works of child literature such as biographies, fables, epics and stories; some moving teaching materials such as historical films. It is seen that such applications and suggestions are also valid for the 5th grade as well as the 4th grade by this curriculum. It is noteworthy that all of these are of great importance for the child’s mental and perceptive development.

CONCLUSION

History teaching in primary education is considered an abstract learning field due to the mental and perceptive development of the target group it addresses. This leads to some discussions on whether history should take place in primary education or not. However, states cannot give up the efficient role of history as an instrument for value transfer on raising a “culturing” or “citizenship” awareness, efforts have been exerted to overcome such education obstacles. The most important effort is to ensure maximum relation between the history content to be taught in primary education and the life of students. While the USA tries to achieve it within the context of Social Studies course, England tries to teach history course by concretizing it.

In Turkey, on the other hand, chronological history was used to be taught as of 4th grade in primary schools within the scope of the curriculums prepared without considering such education concerns until 1997. A new educational curriculum was not developed although compulsory primary education was extended to 8 years in 1997. Instead, the subjects to be taught in the 6th and 7th grades were added to the present Social Studies Curriculum prepared for the 4th and 5th grades of primary education. Consequently, the 1998 Social Studies Curriculum was published, but the wrong implementation of teaching chronological history, which has no relationship with the own lives of students, to 10 year old students continued. Instead of the real past of their own, the students entered history education with the memory knowledge of the past era which caused pedagogic problems to emerge (Şimşek, 2006). It can be said that, one of these problems is that the child cannot realize the past as a historical reality (as a reality lived). In this context, it can be said that the 1998

Curriculum has a number of contradictions and shortcomings in terms of not only contemporary Social Studies education but also chronological history education.

With the introduction of the 2005 Social Studies Curriculum, the chronological history teaching in the 4th and 5th grades ended and chronological history has gained functionality. Historical subjects have been re-considered with a skill-based social curriculum. It is given importance to the acquisition that are aimed to be acquired rather than the content that is constructed with main themes. It is decided that these acquisitions to be acquired to the students with activities appropriate to the constructivist learning approach. For this reason, the new curriculum of social studies became an activity based curriculum.

One of the main themes of the new curriculum of social studies is “change and continuity”. This theme does not occur with an independent content as it is the case for the others. In a relationship with the other themes, the perceptions of change and continuity and the perceptions of time and chronology aimed to be acquired. It is planned in a concrete way, for the first time. In the new curriculum, history is addressed within the scope of the child her/himself, her/his family, her/his neighborhood, and her/his interests in order to provide children with several social themes, skills and values through some achievements and activities. The aim of this curriculum is to pave the way for chronological history education to be given in the following years, to offer an introduction to history on the basis of the past related with the students and to enable the students to like and enjoy the subject of history. It can be said that this is an important educational progress for the students in primary education.

Besides intellectual skills like historical imagination, historical empathy, analysis of evidence, it is aimed to develop perceptions of time and chronology by history education in the new curriculum of social studies. In addition to that, it was given place to the function of culturalization in respect to value education of history education. It is not only for generalizing the common culture, but also for supporting the education of citizenship with cultural acquisitions.

On the other hand, it is observed that a close relationship is constructed with the new curriculum of social studies which seems to be realized the life as a whole and science studies from acquisitions to activity examples. It is also another research topic that the aim of teaching the history of science, scientists and their discoveries proves this situation.

As a conclusion, besides the new curriculum of social studies has many pedagogical positive novelties, it has also great differentiations for history education. It can be said that, with the new curriculum of social studies, the

standards of history education in Turkey reaches the condition to be compared with the standards of countries like USA and England. It can be considered as a satisfactory development for Public Education of Turkey. All of these novelties can be considered as reasonably appropriate to primary school history education in Turkey.

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