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Values that Social Studies Textbooks Value: Initial Outcomes

Tijen Aksit[1], Necmi Aksit[1] and Jale Atasalar[2]
[1]Bilkent University, [2]Ozel Bilkent Primary School (Turkey)

Abstract

Turkey has been making changes to its national curriculum, considerably altering its focus, content and delivery. Education systems reflect and reinforce implicit and explicit value positions, and these underpin and shape the curriculum. Curriculum documents often include statements about such values, and textbooks mirror values-in-use. This paper shares the outcomes of the first phase of a multi-phase study: values imparted in the Grade 1 social studies strand of the new primary school curriculum in Turkey. The study used didactic, content and visual analysis to explore development of cognitive skills, character traits, global awareness and gender roles in each teaching unit of new grade one social studies textbook.

Education in Turkey

Turkey has a population of 72 million, estimated to rise to about 82 million by 2015. Education in schools is unified and governed centrally by the Ministry of National Education (MONE). Compulsory basic education in Turkey has lasted eight years since 1997. Secondary education, four years from 2005, is not yet compulsory. There are some 13 million students at the formal primary and secondary education levels. Of these, more than ten million are enrolled in public and private educational institutions (TÜİK, 2007).

Turkey has been making changes to its national curriculum since 2004, altering its focus, content and delivery considerably. In 2005, the ministry launched the new one to five primary education curriculum, and continued to revise grades six to eight curriculum. The ministry is currently making changes to the high school curriculum, which has recently been extended to four years. The MONE (TTK, 2005) states that new curriculum is no longer behaviouristic. It is now constructivist in nature, placing significant emphasis on student-centred teaching. Instructional methods encourage discovery of concepts and principles, and development of higher order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Each grade is built around a number of themes and concepts uniting the curriculum within a grade level. There are also basic core skills that need to reinforced, linking the grades across the curriculum. Among the core skills are critical and creative thinking, inquiry and problem solving skills, and using information technology. To the ministry, the new curriculum also promotes formative assessment of learning, expecting teachers to monitor student progress, and immersing students in learning facts, skills and concepts through performance based activities.

Curriculum and values

There are as many definitions of curriculum as there are values promoted by various educational philosophies. Objectives, content and instruction are major building blocks of a curriculum, and philosophy described in a given formal curriculum indicates the relative emphasis placed on any of these components (Marsh and Willis, 2007; Ornstein and Behar-Ornstein, 1999).

Developing a curriculum is a painstaking process; however, its implementation may be more complex, requiring much more conscientious endeavour. This is mainly because once a formal curriculum document is publicized; it is manifested into different forms (McKernan, 2008; Marsh, 1997; Eisner, 1994):
- Taught curriculum: how teachers teach the curriculum
- Supported curriculum: what educational materials (e.g. textbooks) are prepared
- Learned curriculum: what students learn
- Assessed curriculum: what content and skills are assessed

Aligning these forms with a formally written curriculum is always a major challenge, and it is often the responsibility of key internal stakeholder (such as school principals, department heads, and teachers) to reduce any discrepancy between planned and enacted curriculum.

Purpose

In this multi-phase study the purpose of the first phase is to explore the values embedded in the grade one social studies strand of the new primary school curriculum in Turkey. Education systems reflect and reinforce certain implicit and explicit value positions. Values structure and strengthen the curriculum. Curriculum documents often include espoused statements about values, which teachers are expected to adopt and enshrine as they implement the curriculum. Curriculum documents, including textbooks, are prepared to facilitate the adoption and reinforcement of any such values, and enactment of curriculum mirrors values-in-use.

Methodology

In this study, the following conceptual framework was prepared to examine values in a grade one social studies textbook prepared by the Ministry:
a.   Intended Cognitive Gains
b.   Intended Character Traits
c.   Global Awareness
d.   Gender Roles

The conceptual framework guided the process of data collection and analysis, and various features of the textbook were analysed through quantitative and qualitative means.

To Pingel (1999), there are at least two ways to analyse subject oriented textbooks: content analysis and didactic analysis. While didactic analysis focuses on 'the

methodological approach to the topic, exploring the pedagogy behind the text, content analysis examines the text itself' (p.18). This study used both didactic and content analysis. Didactic analysis was conducted to bring to the fore intended cognitive gains, and to highlight the salient characteristics of the methodology in the textbook through the scrutiny of what the students are expected to do and perform. This process also helped ascertain the extent to which the cognitive dimension of the formal curriculum is materialized in the textbook planned by the MONE. Content analysis was used to examine the amount of explicit and implicit emphasis placed on local and global elements in an increasingly globalised world. Both content and didactic analyses were used to explore intended character traits in the textbook.

The study also used visual analysis to surface any explicit and implicit gender roles (Kress, 1996; Fairclough, 1995) represented in the textbook.

Results

Intended Cognitive Gains
The study used Benjamin Bloom's widely accepted and applied taxonomy of educational objectives to elicit the range of cognitive gains aimed in the grade one textbook (Bloom, Hastings and Madaus, 1971; Bloom, 1956). The cognitive domain of the taxonomy is composed of six levels: knowledge (recall), comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. To bring forth the cognitive gains in each theme and unit of the textbook, the main objectives of each teaching unit were identified and listed first, and to quantify the qualitative data, they were coded and categorized using a spreadsheet program (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

There are 92 units centred around three themes in the textbook: Theme A focuses on Life at School (38 units) and Theme B concentrates on Life at Home (34 units)*,* and Theme C (20 units) revolves around the concept of Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. The following table shows the intended cognitive level distribution of objectives in each theme (Table 1).

Table 1- Intended Cognitive Gains - Grade One

	Theme A (38 units)	Theme B (34 units)	Theme C (20 units)	Total
K (Recall)	19%	10%	7%	13%
C	28%	52%	48%	42%
A	34%	17%	22%	25%
A	6%	21%	19%	15%
S	9%	0%	4%	5%
E	3%	0%	0%	1%

Cognitive Domain: K: Knowledge, C: Comprehension, A: Application, A: Analysis, S: Synthesis, E: Evaluation

The emphasis of the previous curriculum was on the transmission of knowledge, and the memorization of facts and the repetition of tasks. The new curriculum aims to place more emphasis on constructivist principles, encouraging learners to construct their meaning through active involvement, use of higher-order thinking skills (i.e. analysis, synthesis and evaluation), and reflecting on experiences (Figure 1).
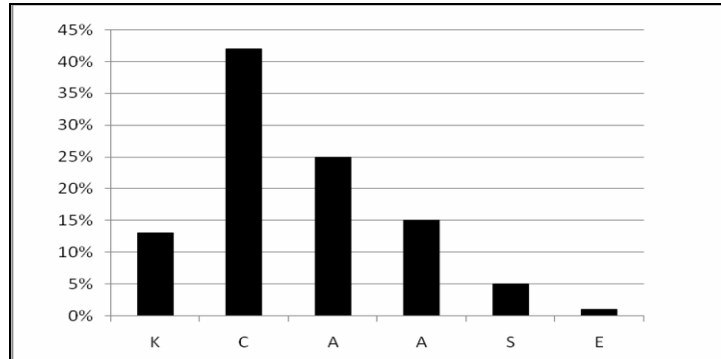
Figure 1 - Cognitive Gains – Grade One
Cognitive Domain: K: Knowledge, C: Comprehension, A: Application, A: Analysis, S: Synthesis, E: Evaluation

Intended Character Traits
Education for virtue is the foundation of democracy, and character traits are believed to 'lead to socially desired outcomes' (Huitt, 2004; Lickona, 1992). The development of good character traits is a desired goal of public education (Lickona, 1992). Social sciences education, in particular, assumes a large responsibility to realise this, especially in the early years of schooling (NCDPI, 2006).

In this study the character traits in the textbook were analyzed at two levels. First each unit was examined and the traits explicitly targeted were listed. Next, the units were analyzed again to surface any traits that were implicitly communicated.

There are 16 character traits that are reinforced in the textbook (Table 2). Some of these traits are introduced explicitly while some both explicitly and implicitly.

Table 2 – Explicit and Implicit Character Traits Imparted

Character Traits		Explicitly Targeted (N)	Implicitly Introduced (N)	TOTAL (N)	TOTAL (%)
1.	self respect	21		21	14.7
2.	self confidence	14	5	19	13.3
3.	socialization	10	8	18	12.6
4.	tolerance	12	2	14	9.8
5.	love	13		13	9.1
6.	respect	11		11	7.7
7.	helpfulness	8	1	9	6.3
8.	patriotism	1	8	9	6.3
9.	openness to change	6		6	4.2
10.	patience	6		6	4.2
11.	peace	5		5	3.5
12.	development of cultural values	3		3	2.1
13.	protection of cultural values	3		3	2.1
14.	honesty	2		2	1.4
15.	justice	2		2	1.4
16.	uprightness	1	1	2	1.4
TOTAL (N)		118 [83%]	25 [17%]	143	

The first five character traits, namely, self-respect, self-confidence, socialisation, tolerance and love, constitute more than 50% of the total traits. It is worth noting that far more emphasis is placed on implicit introduction of patriotism than on any explicit attention given to it. This is mostly done through content about celebrating national days and information about Ataturk, the founder of Turkish Republic.

Global Awareness

To meet the challenges and the opportunities of an increasingly globalised world, countries need to be committed to increasing international awareness, and education has a critical role to play in this undertaking (Evans, 1987). It is therefore essential that schools focus on values that promote national and international understanding. However, acquiring or adopting values is a process, and may necessitate values clarification which involves recognizing values others hold (Fenton, 1967). Osler and Vincent (as cited in Lapayese, 2003) believe that global education should prepare young generations to 'live together in an independent world' by increasing their understanding of issues such as 'peace, human rights, and democracy.' This role is often assumed by social studies curriculum.

The new curriculum in Turkey is committed to developing personal, national and global values (TTK, 2005) and it intends to achieve this aim mainly through its social studies strand. To weigh the relative emphasis placed on raising international awareness in the first year textbook, all the topics covered in the textbook were categorized under local (internal) and global (external) awareness, and a frequency table was prepared (Table 3).

Table 3 - Local and Global Awareness in the 1ˢᵗ Grade Social Studies Textbook

Local/Internal Topics	N	Global/External Topics	N
family related	9	children of the world	1
interpersonal relations with others	8		
school related	8		
social rules	7		
traffic	7		
health education	6		
physical and emotional self	6		
home related	6		
growing up	4		
Ataturk	4		
self organization	3		
other life skills	3		
national days	3		
childhood	2		
money	2		
leaders/leadership	2		
special days	2		
Turkish flag and national anthem	1		
natural environment	5		
revolving globe	5		
living things	4		
natural disasters	4		
scientific facts re: water	1		
past, present, future	1		
TOTAL N	103		1

Table 3 indicates that the grade one social studies textbook is almost completely focused on local and internal matters. There is only one topic, namely 'children of the world,' that promotes global awareness in the textbook. This topic is introduced to celebrate the Universal Children's Day as recommended by UNICEF in 1954 (UN, 2008).

Gender Roles

Men and women's gender role orientations are highly influenced by the values of the society that they live in (Calvo-Salguero et. al., 2008). According to Hofstede, "every society recognizes many behaviours ... as more suitable for females or more suitable for males." Although societies show some differences in their recognition, both traditional and modern societies share some common trends, like "men are supposed to be more concerned with achievements outside the home ... and women are supposed to be more concerned with taking care of the home" (2003, 80-1). Educational systems help their students to develop and internalize these socially accepted gender roles through their instructional materials (Özdoğru et. al., 2006).

Textbook pictures give explicit and implicit messages to children as to gender roles. Gender representation is analysed in the study to find out extent to which gender representation is equitable within and across grades. To this end, images in the grade one social studies textbook were counted, and it was found that males were pictured 519 (61%) times while the females were only 326 (39%). Following this, the images in the textbook were analyzed further with reference to domestic life, occupations and children free time activities.

Domestic Life

The visual analysis of the textbook about domestic adult roles attributed to genders revealed that females appear 19 times in pictures representing domestic life, whereas males appear only nine times (Table 4). Female characters, for example, place tableware into a cupboard, do the laundry or the washing-up and make toasts, whereas male ones paint the walls and carry shopping bags.

Table 4 – Images in the Textbook: Domestic Life

	Frequency	
	Female	Male
Placing grocery in the kitchen	2	
Placing tableware into a cupboard	1	
Doing the laundry	2	
Placing dishes into a dishwasher	1	
Making toasts	1	
Hanging curtains	1	1
Carrying grocery shopping		2
Doing grocery shopping	3	1
Vacuuming	2	1
Ironing	1	1
Looking after the baby	5	1
Painting the walls		2
SUM	19	9
%	68%	32%

Although female figures (68%) are portrayed as more involved in domestic work than male ones (32%), it is worth noting that some male characters are involved in activities like ironing, vacuuming, and looking after the baby.

Children free time activities
As to the visual analysis of the pictures representing children's free time activities, boys (69 times) appear more than girls (48 times). Table 5 shows various activities boys and girls are involved in. There are, however, some activities depicting only boys' (e.g. flying a kite), and some others girls (e.g. playing hopscotch).

Table 5 – Images in the Textbook: Children Free Time Activities

Children free time activities	Frequency	
	Girls	**Boys**
Horseback riding		1
Skating		1
Flying a kite		6
Cycling		6
Feeding birds		1
Running		4
Playing the guitar		1
Playing basketball	2	
Examining bugs (with a magnifier)	1	
Playing hopscotch	2	
Swinging	2	
Making the bed	2	
Playing with a dog	1	
Skipping rope	9	2
Playing with a ball	3	17
Watering plants	1	1
Watching TV	1	1
Dancing	3	2
Talking on the phone	1	1
Drawing pictures	7	4
Reading a book	1	4
Playing with toys	6	11
Studying	3	2
Helping parents	1	2
Picnicking	1	1
Making model houses	1	1
SUM	**48**	**69**
%	**41%**	**59%**

In total, boys are represented more (59%) than girls (41%) in those pictures about children free time activities. Some representations are in line with traditional gender roles as expected in the society. For example, boys are depicted as playing with a ball (17 times) much more than girls (three times), and girls skip rope (nine times) more than boys (twice).

Occupations
There are 21 occupations represented in the textbook. Females are shown performing eight of these, whereas males 18 (Figure 2). The occupations that are only performed by females are secretaries, chemists, and textile workers (14%). On the other hand, school

principals, cleaners, 'bread roll' sellers, workers, IT specialists, wardens, pilots, announcers, grocers, stallholders, shoe repairers and farmers were the occupations that are only performed by males (62%). There are five occupations which are represented by both males and females (24%): teachers, doctors, dentists, stall assistants, and traffic police.
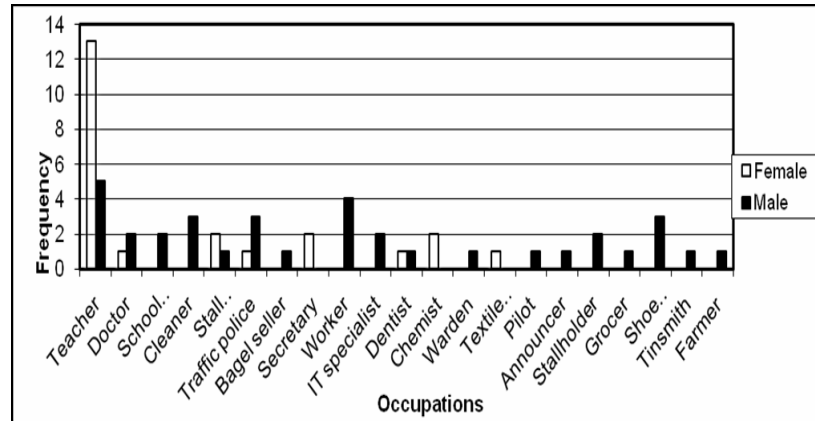

Figure 2 – Gender Representations and Occupations

Conclusions

The study analysed a grade one social studies textbook prepared by the MONE after launching the new primary education curriculum in Turkey. The major focus of the first phase of this multi-phase study was to explore various values promoted throughout the textbook. To this end, the framework used guided the study to examine intended cognitive gains, character traits, global awareness, and gender roles:

To begin with, the outcomes in relation to intended cognitive gains indicate that there is much less emphasis on memorization and a lot more focus on comprehension and application in the new curriculum. However, there is still room for practising higher order thinking skills. Although, random analysis of various units in teacher's book revealed that teachers are instructed to function as a facilitator and involve students in activities, the total distribution of cognitive objectives reflect that only about 21% of the objectives are developing higher order thinking skills.

As to character traits, the new curriculum has a strand which aims to develop traits that promote values such as respect for self and others, tolerance, and honesty. There are 16 character traits in grade one textbook, some of which are introduced both explicitly and implicitly. The textbook is also full of activities helping teachers implement core traits in class. Through such activities, students are encouraged to reflect on core values, and share and apply them in everyday interactions. Still, only five of the traits receive major emphasis, whereas remaining eleven traits need to be focused on more to provide a better balance.

As for global awareness, it is clear that the grade one social studies textbook is almost completely concentrated on local and internal matters. It does not place emphasis on

global matters. Accordingly, values clarification is stressed a little bit at personal level but there is no room for that for global understanding. Values clarification necessitates identifying and talking about one's own values, and recognizing and respecting others' values both at local and global level (Fenton, 1967).

Educational institutions play a significant role in shaping and reshaping male and female roles (Arnot, 2004). As regard gender roles represented in the textbook, the grade one social studies textbook presents a strong male gender bias. In general, the representation of genders in the textbook pictures promotes traditional gender roles. The pictures mostly reflect the societal beliefs about what the gender roles should be (Bland, 2005). However, there are also a few pictures in the textbook where males and females are depicted in some non-traditional gender roles (i.e. men ironing, vacuuming, looking after the baby at home, girls making model homes and women in the police force).

To conclude, the grade one social studies textbook analyzed to communicates values spawned in the new formal curriculum to a considerable degree. However, the textbook is recommended to adopt a more balanced approach to developing cognitive skills, character traits, global awareness, and gender roles to better implement the espoused values introduced in the new national curriculum.

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