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Citizenship Education in the Social Studies Curriculum in Turkey

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Abstract

Approaches to citizenship education vary across countries. Citizenship education in Turkey has been provided in various forms since the establishment of the republic. In 1998, a new Citizenship and Human Rights Education program was included in the Turkish national curriculum; however, this strand was incorporated into the Social Studies Education curriculum in 2009. The main aim of the study is to explore the current approach to citizenship in the Social Studies curriculum with a view to analyzing its constituent components. This study will use a citizenship education framework to analyze the grades four to seven curriculum guides and to bring to the fore what the new social studies curriculum emphasizes to develop essential citizenship skills and values.

Turkey has a population of more than 71 million with an annual growth rate of 13.1%. There are about 19 million people under nineteen years of age, and of these, more than 10 million are enrolled in the primary educational institutions (TÜİK, 2009).

Turkey has been experiencing major changes in its educational landscape the last fifteen years. The highlights of these changes include increasing compulsory primary education from five to eight years in 1997, redesigning the national curriculum starting from 2004, and initiating a constructivist approach to teaching. Many textbooks in the primary education curriculum have been rewritten, some others are in the process of being redesigned, and some being incorporated into some existing curricula.

Approaches to citizenship education vary across countries. Citizenship education in Turkey has been provided in various forms since the establishment of the republic. In 1998, a new Citizenship and Human Rights Education programme (TTK, 2008) was included in the primary school curriculum in Turkey. It was composed of two 36-hour parts, one implemented in grade seven and the other in grade eight (Table 1).

Table 1
Themes-Previous Curriculum (Grades Seven and Eight)

Grade Seven	Grade Eight
Unit 1: Common Heritage of Humanity (11 hours)	Unit 1: State, Democracy, Constitution, Citizenship, and Rights and Responsibilities (8 hours)
Unit 2: Human Rights (6 hours)	Unit 2: Protection of Human Rights (6 hours)
Unit 3: Ethics and Human Rights (10 hours)	

Unit 4: Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (7 hours)	Unit 3: National Security and Elements of National Security (8 hours) Unit 4: Obstacles to Protection of Human Rights (12 hours)
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In 2009, the ministry decided to stop this program with the intention of exposing students to various key concepts long before grade seven or eight. To this end, the ministry merged it with the social studies education curriculum.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the grades four to seven social studies education curriculum guides with a view to describing the scope of the new citizenship and human rights education program in the primary school curriculum.

Methodology

This study used content analysis to examine the learning areas and learning objectives as given in the grades four, five, six and seven curriculum guides. Initially, predetermined categories were used to sift and sort the data (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2008). To this end, the objectives given in each grade level were quantified, using Microsoft Excel, within the framework of Crick's (QCA, 1998) conception: social and moral responsibility, community involvement, and they and political literacy (Figure 1).

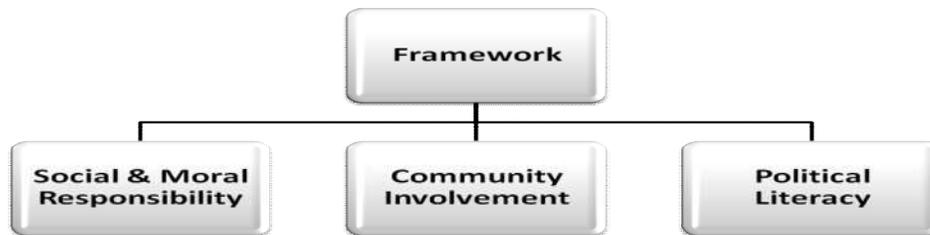


Figure 1. Framework-Level 1

Social responsibility emphasizes “self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behavior ... both towards those in authority and towards each other.” Community involvement mainly focuses on “learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities, including learning through community involvement and service to the community”. Political literacy is concerned with “pupils learning about and how to make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values” (QCA, 1998; Park, 2007).

After this first level categorization, the researcher further divided the categories into other meaningful units. Dey (1993, p 97) considers this a typical feature of the data management

process as “even with a relatively structured technique... [all processed data] cannot be assigned to categories in advance for ... [analysis]”. Once the researcher became more familiar with the data, he developed some more emergent categories, and formed a framework (Figure 2) to analyze the data and to demonstrate the salient strands of the social studies curriculum (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

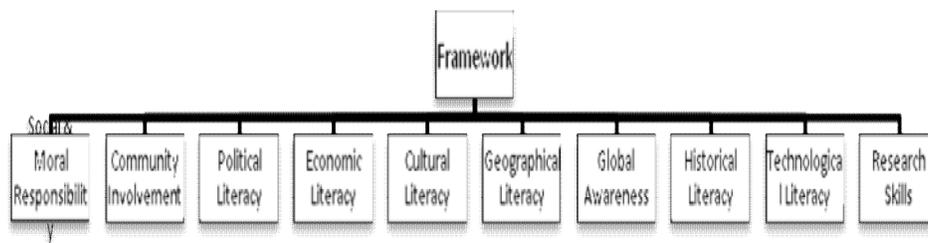


Figure 2. Framework-Level 2

Results

Grade 4

There are eight learning areas and units in the grade four social studies curriculum, and a total of 108 hours is allocated to implement them in 36 weeks (Table 2).

Table 2
Grade 4

Learning Areas	Units	Number of Objectives	Percentage of Objectives	Number of Hours
1. Individual and society	I'm learning about myself	6	13	12
2. Culture and heritage:	I'm learning about my past	6	13	15
3. Human beings, places and	Where we live	8	17	15
4. Production, distribution and consumption	From production to consumption	7	15	15
5. Science, technology and society	Lucky to have it	6	13	12

6.Groups, institutions, and social organizations	Altogether	5	11	12
7.Power, management and society	Human beings and management	4	9	15
8.Global connections	Long distance friends	4	9	12
	Total	46	100	108

The grade four curriculum guide includes forty-six objectives, and the framework shown in Figure 2 was used to categorize and quantify them (Figure 3).

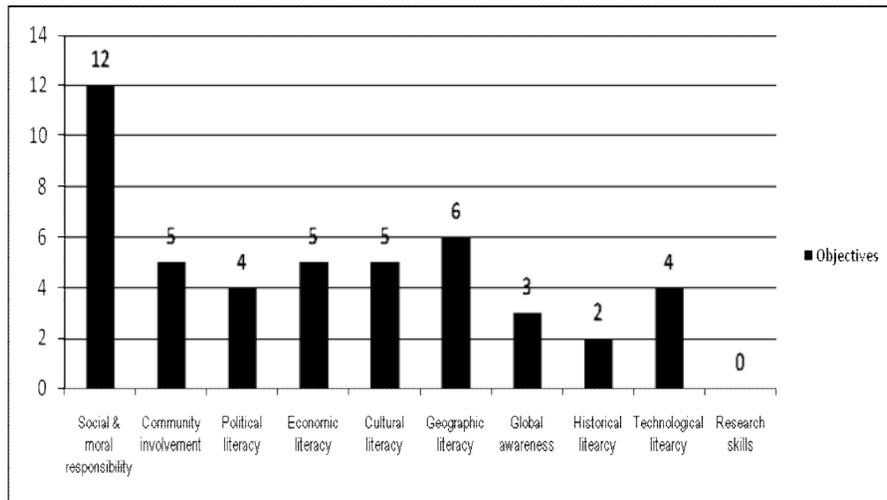


Figure 3. Objectives and strands –Grade 4

A total of 21 objectives (46%) directly falls into the Crick's strands: within the framework of Crick's conception, of these 21 objectives, twelve of them are related to social and moral responsibility, drawing student attention to such topics as personal development, being aware of individual differences, and needs and wants. Five objectives fall into the category of community involvement, and they mainly focus on local organisations. As for political literacy, there are four objectives, and they mainly focus on municipal authorities and the parliament, officially called the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.

Grade 5

There are also eight learning areas and units in the grade five social studies curriculum, and a total of 108 is allocated to implement the units in 36 weeks (Table 3).

Table 3
Grade 5

Learning Areas	Units	Number of Objectives	Percentage of Objectives (%)	Number of Hours
1. Individual and society	I'm learning about my rights	4	9	12
2.Culture and heritage:	Step by step Anatolia	6	13	15
3.Human beings, places and environment	Let's learn about our region	7	17	15
4.Production, distribution and consumption	What we produce	7	15	15
5.Science, technology and society	Dreams that came true	6	13	12
6.Groups, institutions, and social Organizations	Those who work for the society	5	11	12
7.Power, management and society	One country one flag	5	11	15
8.Global connections	It is our world	6	13	12
	Total	46	100	108

The grade five curriculum guide includes forty-six objectives, and the framework shown in Figure 2 was used to categorize and quantify them (Figure 4).

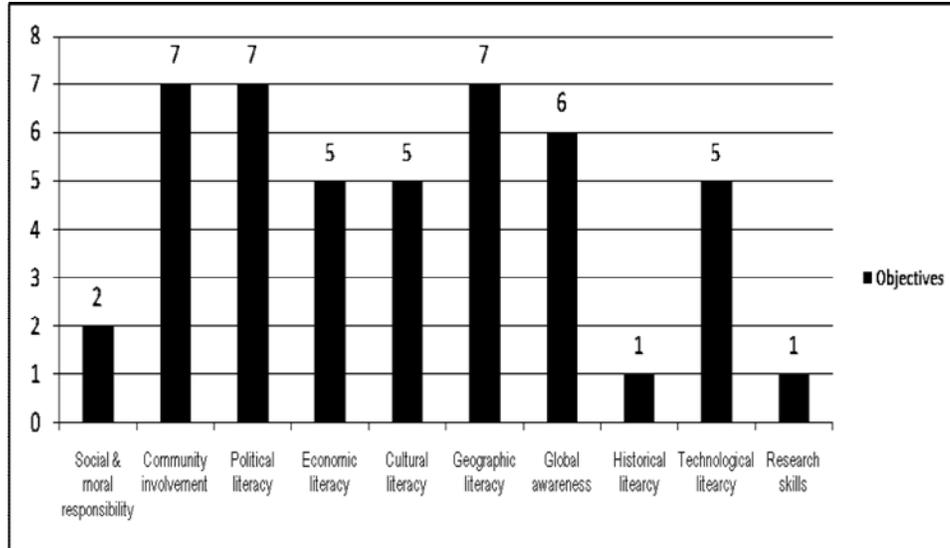


Figure 4. Objectives and strands –Grade 5

There are 16 objectives (35%) related to the Crick's strands. Of these 16 objectives, two of them are related to social and moral responsibility, focusing on cooperation and production. Seven objectives fall into the category of community involvement, and they mainly concentrate on basic needs of society, and roles of individuals and non-governmental organisations. As for political literacy, there are also seven objectives, and they place emphasis on local governance.

Grade 6

There are seven learning areas and units in the grade six social studies curriculum, and a total of 108 hours is allocated for implementation in 36 weeks (Table 4).

Table 4
Grade 6

Learning Areas	Units	Number of Objectives	Percentage of Objectives (%)	Number of Hours
1. Individual and society	I'm learning social science	6	14	12
2. Human beings, places and environment	Life on Earth	7	16	18

3. Culture and heritage:	Silk road and Turks	9	21	18
4. Production, distribution and consumption	Turkey's Resources	6	14	21
5. Global connections	Our country and the World	5	12	12
6. Power, management and society	Adventures of Democracy	5	12	15
7. Science, technology and society	Electronic century	5	12	12
	Total	43	100	108

The grade six curriculum guide includes forty-three objectives, and the framework shown in Figure 2 was used to categorize and quantify them (Figure 5).

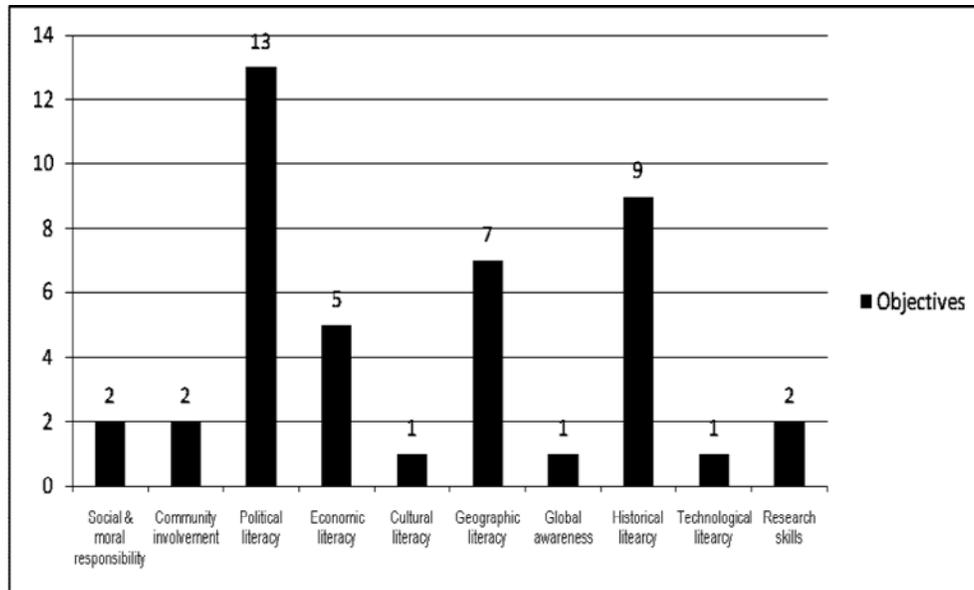


Figure 5. Objectives and strands –Grade 6

17 objectives, constituting 40% of the objectives, are connected to the Crick's strands. Of these 17 objectives, two of them are related to social and moral responsibility, focusing on the need to protect natural resources. Two objectives fall into the category of community involvement, and they mainly concentrate on solidarity. As for political literacy, there are seven objectives, and they place emphasis on rights, responsibilities, freedoms and democracy.

Grade 7

There are also seven learning areas and units in the grade seven social studies curriculum, and a total of 108 hours is allocated for implementation in 36 weeks (Table 5).

Table 5
Grade 7

Learning Areas	Units	Number of Objectives	Percentage of Objectives	Number of Hours
1. Individual and	Communication	6	15	12
2. Human beings, places and environment	Population in Turkey	5	13	12
3. Culture and heritage:	Journey in Turkish History	8	21	27
4. Science, technology and society	Science in Time	5	13	12
5. Production, distribution and consumption	Economy and Social Life	6	15	18
6. Power, management and society	Living Democracy	5	13	12
7. Global connections	Bridges between countries	4	10	15
	Total	39	100	108

The grade seven curriculum guide includes thirty-nine objectives, and the framework shown in Figure 2 was used to categorize and quantify them (Figure 6).

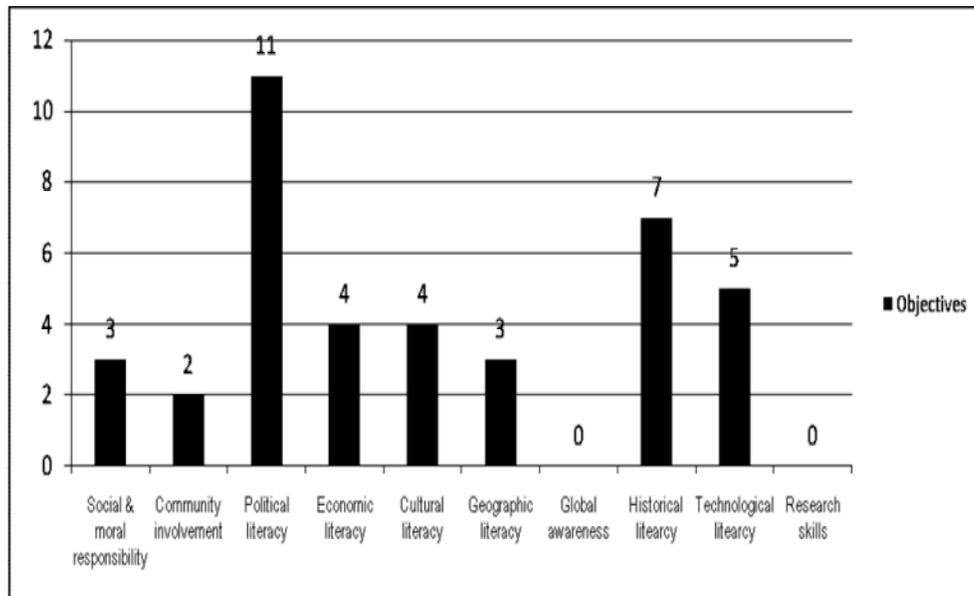


Figure 6. Objectives and strands –Grade 7

A total of 16 objectives (41%) directly falls into the Crick's strands. Of these 16 objectives, three of them are related to social and moral responsibility, mainly focusing on communication. Two objectives fall into the category of community involvement, and they mainly concentrate on different types institutions. As for political literacy, there are seven objectives, and they place emphasis on the constitution of Turkey and political parties.

Conclusions

In the social studies education curriculum (re: grades four, five, six and seven), there is a total of 174 objectives. Of these, 70 objectives are related to the three strands in the Crick Report (Figure 7): 19 objectives focus on social and moral responsibility; 16 objectives enhance community involvement; and 35 objectives emphasize political literacy.

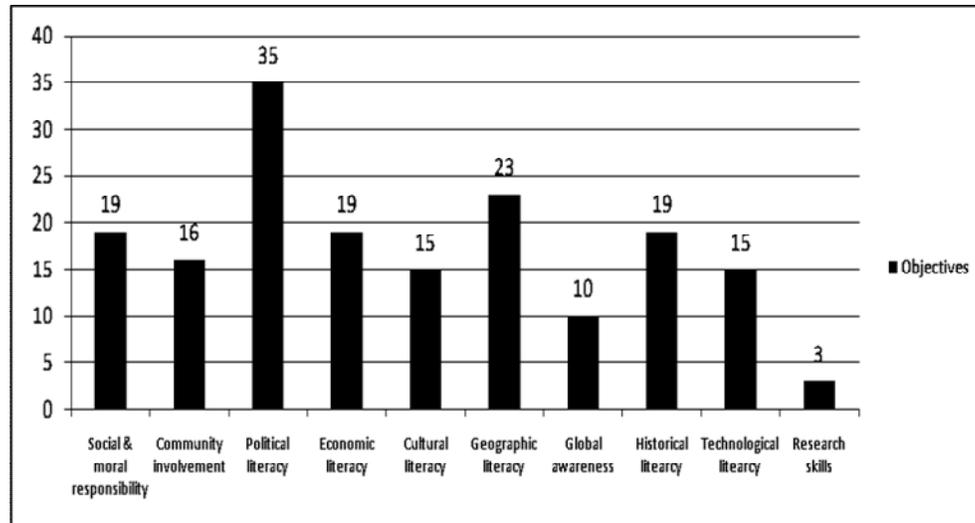


Figure 7. Objectives and strands –Overall

The rest of the objectives (60%) focus on a wide range of areas from economy to research skills; and one would argue that some of them may also, directly or indirectly, be related to citizenship and human rights education.

Economic literacy includes topics such as entrepreneurship, local area economy, investment, marketing, production and consumptions. Cultural literacy mainly focuses on cultural heritage: traditions, ceremonies and works of art in different part of the country. Geographic literacy focuses on geographic awareness at local and national levels. Global awareness includes such topics as common cultural heritage of humanity, comparing life styles. Historical literacy makes references to some wars during the Ottoman Empire, war of independence and reforms following the establishment of the republic. Technological literacy introduces various products, their uses, and how they affect society. Finally, research skills draws students' attention to citing sources.

All in all, within the framework of the Crick Report (QCA, 1998), political literacy is ranked first among the ten strands, and it includes 20% of the total number of objectives given in the social studies education curriculum. Social and moral responsibility is ranked third, and it includes about 11% of the objectives. Finally, community involvement is ranked sixth, and it covers about 9% of the objectives. All of them together constitute just about 40% of the objectives (Figure 8).

The following figure (Figure 7) depicts both the ranked emphasis, and the grade by grade progression of each strand. While focus on political literacy relatively increases from one

grade level to another, that on social and moral responsibility, and community involvement decreases.

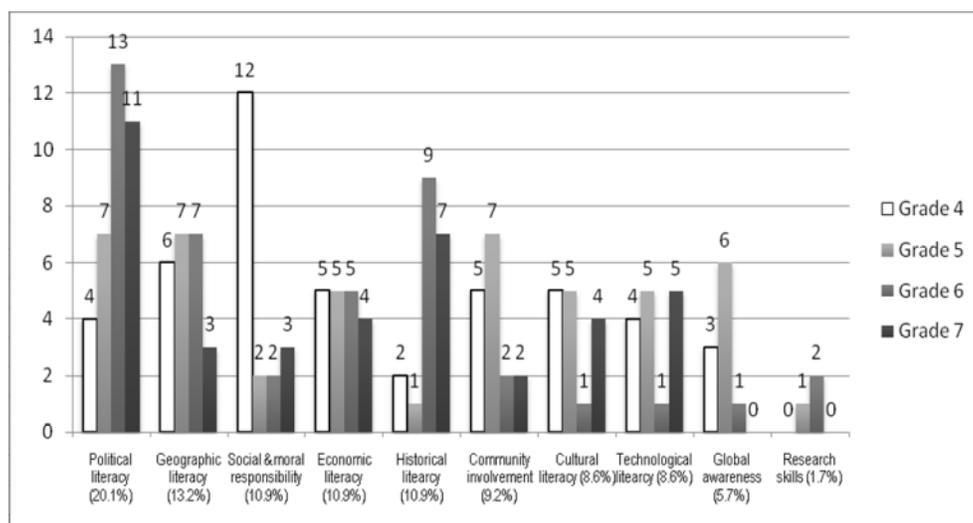


Figure 8. Strands and grade by grade progression

As for the other strands, geographic literacy is ranked 2nd, and it includes 13% of the objectives; historical literacy is ranked 5th, and it covers 11% of the objectives. Cultural literacy and technical literacy each form about 9%, global awareness 6% and research skills 2% of the remaining objectives.

Previous and current approaches

When analyzed within the framework of the strands in the Crick Report, it is apparent that the main emphasis of previously implemented Citizenship and Human Rights Education was on political literacy. About 72% of the lesson hours focused on topics included in the political literacy, about 16% on common heritage of humanity, and 12% national security.

**Table 6
Themes and Percentage Allocation-Previous Curriculum (Grades 7 and 8)**

Grade 7	Grade 8
Unit 1: Common Heritage of Humanity (11 hours) – 16%	Unit 1: State, Democracy, Constitution, Citizenship, and Rights and Responsibilities (8 hours) - 12%
Unit 2: Human Rights (6 hours) – 9%	Unit 2: Protection of Human Rights (6 hours)- 9%
Unit 3: Ethics and Human Rights (10 hours) -15%	Unit 3: National Security and Elements of National Security (8 hours) – 12%
Unit 4: Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (7 hours) – 10%	

	Unit 4: Obstacles to Protection of Human Rights (12 hours)- 18%
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Although the current approach has a wider focus as shown in Figure 8, and includes objectives focusing on all three strands covered in the Crick's Report, it could further be enhanced by placing more emphasis on community involvement (e.g. service learning) (Potter, 2002), and social and moral responsibility, by including the concept of diversity in the cultural literacy strand (Lapayese, 2003) and by including elements of transformative citizenship (Banks, 2008, p 129), which aim to "actualize values and moral principles and ideals beyond those of existing laws and conventions".

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