

WCLTA 2010

Current events in 4th and 5th grade primary education social studies program

Omur Gurdogan Bayır^a *

^aAnadolu University, Faculty of Education Department of Primary Education, Eskisehir 26470, Turkey

Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate Social Studies program in terms of current events. This study is a qualitative study in which survey model and document analysis technique were employed. A control list consisting objectives was created by the researcher and used in this study. It was revealed that objectives related to the current events adequately take place in the program and mostly in Global Connections and Global Groups, Institutions and Organizations learning areas. Moreover, it was seen that those objectives were mostly linked with Human Rights and Citizenship and Science and Technology courses.

Keywords: Primary Education, Social Studies Education Program, current events;

1. Introduction

Social Studies course which has an important role on realizing the objectives of primary education aims to cause students gain various knowledge and skills. It is also an important lesson in terms of its content that contributes a lot to students' knowledge and life style. Social Studies Course due to its structure makes students intertwined with life.

There are many different definitions about Social Studies according to varied point of views of authorities. Social Studies, which aim to train modern citizens endowed with democratic value, belief, knowledge and thinking skill about life, is an interdisciplinary field by evaluating the individual's interactions between social and physical environment in terms of time dimension benefitting from the method and the content of social sciences (Doganay, 2004). According to National Ministry of Education, Social Studies is a primary education course, reflecting social sciences and citizenship topics like history, geography, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, economy, politics and law, including learning areas as a unit or a theme, examining the individual's interactions between physical and social environment in the context of past, present and future (MEB, 2004).

Social Studies course aims to prepare student to social life by being related to many of other disciplines (Erden, No date). The most important goal of Social Studies course is to cause students gain social personality. The most important property of social personality is being citizens conscious about duties, responsibilities and events in the society (Sozer, 2008). Training students equipped with efficient citizenship, observation, problem solving, critical and reflective thinking skills, aware of their identity and sensitive to the events affecting their society is the universal goals of the Social Studies course.

* Omur Gurdogan Bayır. Tel.: +90 5065424081; fax: +90 222 3350573.
E-mail address: ogurdogan@anadolu.edu.tr .

Primary Education Social Studies Program, aiming to cause students gain various objectives both in national and universal level, includes skills, concepts, values and general goals components in its structure. Program contains several skills as critical thinking, inquiry, problem solving, fluent and accurate Turkish speaking, several concepts as transportation, management, secularism, media and several values as peace, being scientific, independence, fairness, hospitality (MEB, 2004). In order to cause students to gain all these dimensions taking place in the program selecting and organizing the topics in the content in such a fulfilling way have very important role. However, concepts and principles in the content of Social Studies course and generalizations cause this course to seen as based on memorization. Therefore, it is necessary to use different approaches, methods, techniques, equipments and sources. One of the different sources is current events.

Current events are social sources which provide students to follow current events and developments in their region and country and apply acquired knowledge to the real life problems. Students can connect the knowledge they learn at school to real life through current events (Erden, No date). Some developments in social and cultural area and science and technology and the effects of these developments on people's lives, migration of people frequently, gaining independence of some regions, and changes in political area make necessary the usage of current events in courses (Paykoc, 1989).

Using current events in courses has a wide range of goals such as arousing interest via social facts and phenomena, making students read daily articles, associating facts and phenomena with reasons about past, improving students' thinking skills, and being aware of values (Barth and Demirtas, 1997). Using current events in courses provide some opportunities like training lifelong news readers, making students comprehend the importance of the people and the issues at the news, cooperative learning, classroom discussions, meaningful article completion, making students search cause effect relationship in the events, facilitation of updating the sources, and overcoming the problem of updating books (Yasar, 2008; Binbasioğlu, 2004; Erden, No date; Kaltsounis, 1987).

In order to make teachers use current events in Social Studies course and orient them, objectives, learning areas, content and sub discipline and textbooks of the program should facilitate the usage of current events. Since, teachers use program as base while processing the course. Kincheloe (1991) handles the problems about Social Studies teaching as not being interested in different teaching and assessment methods, learning sources and education researches and the disallowing structure of the American Social Studies program to understand past's, present's and future's social world (Ozturk and Baysal, No date). Since the program is main basis it is very important to have explanation about different methods, techniques and social sources. In this respect, the main purpose of this study is to evaluate Social Studies program in terms of current events. Towards this purpose answer these questions were seek:

- Which objectives taking place in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies Program are suitable for the usage of current events?
- How is the distribution of the objectives, suitable for the usage of current events, in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies program according to learning areas?
- What are the sub disciplines and courses associated with the objectives, suitable for the usage of current events, in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies program and?

2. Method

2.1. Research model

As it is intended to evaluate 4th and 5th Grade Primary Education Social Studies Program in terms of current events survey model was employed in this study. Survey models are research models that describe past or present situations (Karasar, 2006). Qualitative research model was used in the study and document analysis technique (Yıldırım and Simsek, 2005) was employed in evaluating the program.

2.2. Data and Data Collection

In order to collect data 4th and 5th Grade Primary Education Social Studies Program of Ministry of Education was examined. Data were collected according to the control list created by the researcher and consisting objectives.

Control list was created after handling objectives by the researcher and another authority separately and discussing their ideas together. Education program was evaluated considering this control list.

2.3. Data Analysis

Document analysis technique was used in examining 4th and 5th Grade Primary Education Social Studies Program in terms of usage of current events. Objectives, learning areas, the relationship between sub disciplines and other courses components of the program were considered while examining the program. These components of the program were evaluated independently by the researcher and another field authority in the context of control list. By being together agreement was made by the researcher and the authority. Data of the research were analyzed by giving percentage (%) and frequency (f) and by using research questions as base; examples from the program were given and interpreted.

3. Findings and interpretation

In this section findings of the research were given in three topics according to research questions.

3.1. Objectives suitable for the usage of current events taking place in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies Program

The ratio of objectives suitable for the usage of current events taking place in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies Program to the total number of objectives of Social Studies program is given in Table 1.

Table 1. The ratio of objectives suitable for the usage of current event to the total number of objectives of Social Studies Program

Class grade	Total objective (F)	Number of objectives suitable for the usage of current event (f)	Percentage (%)
4 th grade	46	22	47.82
5 th grade	47	26	55.31
Total	93	48	51.61

As seen in Table 1 in 47.82% of objectives in 4th grade Social Studies program and 55.31% of objectives in 5th grade Social Studies program current events can be used. The objective of 4th grade program “Students are able to express their emotions and ideas about different situations” and the objective of 5th grade program “Students are able to realize economic activities in their region” can be given as example of usage of current events. Whenever 4th and 5th grade Social Studies program is considered generally, in 51.61% of objectives current events can be used. It can be said that 4th and 5th grade primary education Social Studies program is adequate in terms of usage of current events. However, it can be useful to make directions regarding to usage of current events in the program.

3.2. The distribution of the objectives, suitable for the usage of the current events, in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies program in learning areas

In Social Studies education topics were arranged as learning areas and units were placed under learning areas. The distribution of the objectives, suitable for the usage of the current events, in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies program in learning areas is given in Table 2.

Table 2. The distribution of the objectives suitable for the usage of the current events in the learning areas in Social Studies Program

Learning areas	Total number of objectives (F)	Number of objectives suitable for the usage of current event (f)	Percentage (%)	Class grade
Individual and Society	6	4	66.66	4 th grade
	4	-	-	5 th grade
Culture and Heritage	6	2	33.33	4 th grade
	6	4	66.66	5 th grade
People, Places and Environment	8	2	25.0	4 th grade
	8	4	50.0	5 th grade
Production, Consumption and Distribution	7	2	28.57	4 th grade

	7	2	28.57	5 th grade
Science, Technology & Society	6	3	50.0	4 th grade
	6	3	50.0	5 th grade
Groups, Institutions and Social Organizations	5	3	60.0	4 th grade
	5	4	80.0	5 th grade
Power, Management & Society	4	2	50.0	4 th grade
	5	3	60.0	5 th grade
Global Connections	4	4	100.0	4 th grade
	6	6	100.0	5 th grade

As seen in Table 2 objectives suitable for the usage of the current events are mostly in Global Connections and Groups, Institutions and Social Organization learning areas. 100% of the objectives in both 4th and 5th grade in Global Connections learning area are suitable for the usage of current events while it is 60% in 4th grade, 80% in 5th grade in Groups, Institution and Social Organizations. The 4th grade objective “Students are able to realize that there are different countries in the world” and the 5th grade objective “Students are able to realize common direction and interests of world children” are associated with Global Connections learning area. The 4th grade objective “Students are able to realize social organizations, civil institutions and groups constituted for a common goal” and 5th grade objective “Students are able to have idea about the role of institutions in people lives” are associated with Groups, Institutions and Social Organizations. It is seen that there is not any objective suitable for the usage of current events in 5th grade Individual and Society learning area.

3.3. The relationship between the objectives suitable for the usage of current events in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies program and sub disciplines and other courses

Some objectives taking place in Social Sciences program are associated with specific objectives of some sub disciplines and courses. The relationship between the objectives suitable for the usage of current events in 4th and 5th grade Primary Education Social Studies program and sub disciplines and other courses is given in Table 3.

Table 3. The distribution of the objectives suitable for the usage of the current events for sub disciplines and other courses

Sub Disciplines	4 th Grade	5 th Grade	Total
Protection of Natural Disasters and Living Safe	1	1	2
Entrepreneurship	2	1	3
Human Rights and Citizenship	8	8	16
Career Conscious	4	-	4
Psychological Counseling and Guidance	4	-	4
Health Culture	3	-	3
Other Courses	4 th Grade	5 th Grade	Total
Turkish	2	2	4
Science and Technology	5	1	6
Mathematics	2	2	4

As seen in Table 3 objectives suitable for the usage of current events in Social Sciences are mostly associated with Human Rights and Citizenship sub discipline. On the other hand 4th grade objectives directed to current events are associated with all sub disciplines while there is not any association with Career Conscious, Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Health Culture in 5th grade. In this respect it can be said that there are a few associations in 5th grade Social Sciences program. Some examples to the objectives, suitable for the usage of the current events, associated with sub disciplines are: “Students are able to recognize local government of their living place” in 4th grade Power, Management and Society learning area and “Students are able to recognize the units of local governments of their living place” in Human Rights and Citizenship sub discipline. In 5th grade “Students are able to make discussion about inventions and technologic development” is associated with “Students are able to respect science studies and scientists” in the same sub discipline. Whenever the association between the objectives suitable for the usage of the current events and the other courses is examined Turkish, Science and Technology and Mathematics are seen as associated courses. This association is mostly seen with Science and Technology course in 4th grade when it is seen at least in 5th grade. The objective “Students are able to make illustrated graphics by observing meteorological events in their environment” suitable for the usage of current events in Social Studies

program is associated with the objective “Students are able to explain how they realize the weight of air” in Matter and Change of State learning area in Science and Technology course. The objective “Students are able to evaluate the economical activities of their region in the country economy” in 5th grades associated with the objectives “Students are able to construct line graphics” and “Students are able to make comments about line graphics”.

4. Results, discussion and suggestions

According to the results it can be said that Social Studies Education Program contains adequate Objectives suitable for the usage of the current events. Also another research made by Demirkaya Gedik (2008) showed that Social Studies textbook includes current events adequately. In this respect it can be said that it is considered important to use current events in both Social Studies textbooks and Social Studies program. However a few studies related to current events is seen in literature. The studies made are the effects of the usage of current events on academic success (Arın, 2006), the effect of the usage of the current events on critical thinking skill (Gurdoğan Bayır, 2010), the treatment of current events by the teachers (Gurkan, 2009) and the opinion of teachers about current events (Deveci, 2007; Haas and Laughlin, 2000).

Global Connections and Groups, Institutions and Social Organizations learning areas have the most objectives suitable for the usage of current events in the study. In 5th grade Society learning area does not have any objective about current events. There is not enough objective suitable for the usage of the current events in both grade in Production, Distribution and Consumption learning area.

Human Rights and Citizenship sub discipline has the most objectives suitable for the usage of the current events. The most probable reason is Social Studies approach as transmission of citizenship is the oldest and the common approach in instruction of the course (Safran, 2008; Ozturk, 2006). In addition to this, the study revealed that objectives suitable for the usage of the current events are associated with Turkish, Mathematics and Science and Technology courses. These associations are mostly with Science and Technology course in 4th grade while the associations are at least with the same course in 5th grade.

These suggestions can be given according to the results of the study:

- Some explanations about the usage of current events can be given in Social Studies Program.
- The association between the objectives suitable for the usage of current events and sun disciplines can be increased.
- Current events can be searched in other areas.

References

- Arın, D. (2006). *Sosyal bilgiler dersinde guncel olayların kullanımının öğrencilerin başarılarına ve hatırdı tutma düzeylerine etkisi*. Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi. Anadolu Üniversitesi, Eskişehir.
- Barth, J. L. ve Demirtas, A. (1997). *İlköğretim sosyal bilgiler öğretimi*. Ankara: YOK/Dünya Bankası Milli Eğitimi Geliştirme Projesi Hizmetöncesi Öğretmen Eğitimi.
- Binbaşoğlu, C. (2004). Eğitimde günlük olaylar ve öğretimi. *Çagdas Eğitim Dergisi*, 315.
- Demirkaya Gedik, H. (2008). *Sosyal bilgiler eğitiminde guncel olaylar*. Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi. Gazi Üniversitesi, Ankara.
- Deveci, H. (2007). Sosyal bilgiler dersinde guncel olayların öğretimine ilişkin öğretmen görüşleri. *Kuram ve Uygulamada Eğitim Bilimleri*, 7(1), 417-451.
- Doganay, A. (2004). Sosyal bilgiler öğretimi. C. Ozturk ve D. Dilek (Ed.), *Hayat bilgisi ve sosyal bilgiler öğretimi*. (4. Baskı). Ankara: PegemA Yayıncılık.
- Erden, M. (No date). *Sosyal bilgiler öğretimi*. Ankara, Alkim Yayınevi.
- Gurdoğan Bayır, O. (2010). *Sosyal bilgiler dersinde guncel olaylardan yararlanmanın öğrencilerin eleştirel düşünme becerilerine etkisi*. Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi. Anadolu Üniversitesi, Eskişehir.
- Gurkan, B. (2009). *Sosyal bilgiler eğitiminde guncel olaylar: ilköğretim dördüncü ve besinci sınıf öğretmenlerinin sosyal bilgiler eğitiminde guncel olayları ele alıs biçimlerinin değerlendirilmesi*. Yayınlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi. Cukurova Üniversitesi, Adana.
- Haas, M.E. ve Laughlin, M.A. (2000). *Teaching current events: its status in social studies today*. Retrived December 11, 2008 from ERIC. (ED440899).
- Kaltsounis, T. (1987). *Teaching social studies in the elementary school the basics for citizenship*. (Second Edition). New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs.
- Karasar, N. (2006). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemi* (16. Baskı). Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dagitım.
- MEB. (2004). *Sosyal bilgiler 4.-5. sınıf programı*. Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı. Retrived December 25, 2008 from http://ttkb.meb.gov.tr/ogretmen/modules.php?name=Downloads&d_op=viewdownload&cid=74&min=20&orderby=titleA&show=10.

- Ozturk, C. (2006). Sosyal bilgiler: toplumsal yasama disiplinlerarası bir bakis. C. Ozturk (Ed.), *Hayat bilgisi ve sosyal bilgiler ogretimi yapilandirmaci bir yaklasim*. (2. Baski). Ankara: Pegem A Yayıncılık.
- Ozturk, C. ve Baysal, N. (No date). *Ilkogretim 4-5. sinif ogrencilerinin sosyal bilgiler dersine yonelik tutumu*. pau.egitimdergi.pau.edu.tr/DergiPdfDetay.aspx?ID=127
- Paykoc, F. (1989). Guncel olaylarla belirli gun ve haftaların ogretimi. *Ozel ogretim yontemleri sosyal bilgiler ogretimi*. Eskisehir: Acikogretim Fakultesi Yayınları.
- Safran, M. (2008). Sosyal bilgiler ogretimine bakis. Ozel ogretim yontemleriyle sosyal bilgiler ogretimi. B. Tay ve A. Ocal (Ed.), *Ozel ogretim yontemleriyle sosyal bilgiler ogretimi*. Ankara: PegemA Yayıncılık.
- Sozer, E. (2008). Sosyal bilgiler dersinin tanimi, kapsamı ve ilkogretim programındaki yeri. S. Yasar (Ed.), *Hayat bilgisi ve sosyal bilgiler ogretimi*, Eskisehir: Acikogretim Fakultesi Yayınları.
- Yasar, S. (2008). Sosyal bilgiler ogretiminde kullanılan arac gereçler. S. Yasar, (Ed.), *Hayat bilgisi ve sosyal bilgiler ogretimi*. Eskisehir: Acikogretim Fakultesi Yayınları.