

Analysis of Primary School Students' Creative Thinking Tendencies towards Social Studies

Tugba KAFADAR
Erciyes University

Abstract: In the study it was aimed to examine primary school students' creative thinking tendencies towards social studies. The research was designed according to phenomenology design form, which is one of the qualitative research design forms. The participants of the study were determined according to the criterion sampling, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The participants of the study are the 4th graders where the social studies course is given. Research data are gathered through the interview method. An open-ended interview form was used while collecting research data. In the interview form, students were asked to form metaphors in one question and to answer the questions by drawing a picture in the other questions. Data obtained within the scope of the research were analyzed with the content analysis technique. The results obtained according to the outcome of the research are as follows: Life, right, experience, life science, friendship, communication, children's rights, knowledge lesson, responsibility, box full of information, physical science, scholar, smart board, entertainment, information garden, culture, scientists, machinery, history, technology, justice, geography have been the metaphors obtained. When asked about their dream social studies course, they drew pictures illustrating activities where they actively took part. As for their dream social studies teacher; The illustrations of mostly more well-groomed, modern, smiling, more caring, polite behaving teachers and mostly the female teachers as a social studies teacher are among the pictures they drew. Regarding the question of what would you like to learn more from the social studies course, they mostly drew pictures illustrating subjects focused on social activities, sensitivity, child rights, subjects related to Ataturk and with themes of information related to the natural environment, protecting the natural environment, traffic rules they might use in their daily life, information on their personal identity and family, science and technology.

Keywords: Social studies, Creative thinking, Elementary school students

Introduction

Creative thinking is an important skill for an individual to be successful in life. It is very important for individuals to have creative thinking skills starting from an early age. Educational environment plays an important role in this process. According to Ersoy & Başer (2014), the most important function of education is to raise self-confident, curious, creative, innovative individuals who can understand differences at the same time. How students with these characteristics will be noticed is an important issue in that all students can think about the source of the problem and what the solution should be. Creative thinking, one of the thinking skills, includes a number of skills; it facilitates learning by imagination, provides an opportunity to think, to express ideas easily, and to obtain new information. In the education process, according to Eragamreddy (2013), teaching creative thinking skills plays an important role in both teaching and learning and building a better society. Therefore, it is very important for individuals to acquire creative thinking skills starting from an early age. Identifying the perceptions of the individual regarding social studies, which is one of the important scientific fields in the educational life, by using creative thinking skills is an important method to better learn what the younger age groups think. For this reason, the question of what are the primary school students' creative thinking tendencies in social studies constitutes the problem of this research. When the studies in the literature are examined, there are many studies on social studies (Shaver, 1979; Weiss, 1978; Van Kessel & Crowley, 2017; Grant, Swan & Lee, 2017; Edinyang, 2016). As for creative thinking, there are many studies such as (Zubaidah, Fuad, Mahanal & Suarsini, 2017; Ritter, & Mostert, 2017; Siburian, Corebima, & Saptasari, 2019; Rahardjanto, 2019). However, there are no studies examining primary school students' creative thinking

- This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

- Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the Conference

tendencies in social studies in the relevant literature. The current study is expected to fill an important gap in the related literature in this aspect.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine primary school students' creative thinking tendencies in social studies.

Method

Research Model

This research has a qualitative research design. Qualitative research can be defined as “*research aimed at revealing perceptions and events realistically and holistically in the natural environment*” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011, p. 39). The study was designed according to phenomenology, one of the qualitative research designs. Phenomenology “*focuses on phenomena that we are aware of; however, we do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding about. Phenomena may appear in various forms such as events, experiences, perceptions, orientations, concepts, and situations. Phenomenology provides a suitable research ground for studies that aim to investigate phenomena that are not completely alien to us, but that we do not fully understand*” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011, p.72).

Study Group

Study group of the research was determined through criterion sampling which is among purposive sampling methods. 69 4th grade students took part in the research. According to Patton (1987), purposive sampling method “*enables in-depth study of situations that are thought to possess rich information*” (cited in Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011, p. 107).

Table 1. Metaphors regarding the concept of social studies

Grade Level	Metaphors	f
4th grade	Life	12
	Equity	11
	Experience	5
	Life science	5
	Friendship	4
	Communication	2
	Children's rights	2
	Knowledge lesson	2
	Responsibility	2
	Information-filled box	2
	Physical sciences	2
	Scholar	2
	Smart board	1
	Entertainment	1
	Knowledge garden	1
	Culture	1
	Scientists	1
	machine	1
	history	1
	technology	1
justice	1	
geography	1	

Data Collection and Analysis

The data of the research were collected through survey method. A standardized open-ended interview form was used in data collection. In the interview form, students were asked to provide a metaphor in one question and to

answer the questions by drawing a picture in the other questions. The obtained data were analyzed via the content analysis technique. Codes were extracted from the obtained data within research questions and then these codes were collected under categories. The codes collected under the categories are listed according to their frequency densities and the findings are specified

Findings

According to Table 1, primary school students formed the following metaphors regarding social studies: Life (f12), equity (f11), experience (f5), life science (f5), friendship (f4), communication (f2), children's rights (f2), knowledge lesson (f2), responsibility (f2), information-filled box (f2), science (f2), scholar (f2), smart board (f1), entertainment (f1), knowledge garden (f1), culture (f1), scientists (f1), machine (f1), history (f1), technology (f1), justice (f1), and geography (f1).

According to Table 2, 4th grade students drew activity-based (f45) pictures related to the social studies of their imagination.

Table 2. Social studies in 4th grade students' imagination

Grade level	Themes of the pictures	f
4th grade	Activity based	45

According to Table 3, 4th grade students drew presentable (f32), modern (f25), cheerful (f22), paying more attention to them (f11), kinder to them (f4), and female social studies teacher (f2) pictures in the pictures they drew about the social studies teacher in their imagination.

Table 3. Social studies teacher in 4th grade students' imagination

Grade level	The social studies teacher in their imagination	f
4th grade	Presentable	32
	Modern	25
	Cheerful	22
	Paying more attention to them	11
	Kinder to them	4
	Female social studies teacher	2

When Table 4 is examined, the following themes were reached in the pictures 4th grade primary school students drew indicating what they want to learn in social studies class: Social activity-based subjects (f25), information about the natural environment (f19), issues themed protecting the natural environment (f7), sensitivity (f5), traffic rules that they can use in their daily lives (f4), Atatürk-related issues (f4), information about their own identity and family (f3), children's rights issues (f1) and science and technology themed topics (f1).

Table 4. Pictures that 4th grade students drew indicating what they want to learn in social studies lessons

Grade level	What they want to learn in social studies class	f
4th grade	Social activity-based subjects	25
	Information about the natural environment	19
	Issues themed protecting the natural environment	7
	Sensitivity-themed	5
	Traffic rules that they can use in their daily lives	4
	Ataturk-related issues	4
	Information about their own identity and family	3
	Children's rights issues	1
Science and technology themed topics	1	

Results and Discussion

The following results were reached in the study, which examined the creative thinking tendencies of 4th grade primary school students in social studies: The metaphors students created for the concept of social studies are mostly: Life, equity, experience, life science, friendship, communication, children's rights, knowledge lesson, responsibility, information-filled box, science, scholar, smart board, entertainment, information garden, culture,

scientists, machine, history, technology, justice, and geography. According to Yaman & Yalçın (2005), creative thinking is a dynamic activity that takes place consciously and subconsciously and includes mental processes. In this context, students have produced various metaphors for social studies.

In terms of series of skills, creative thinking is different from analytical and practical thinking (Birgili, 2015). One of the thinking skills required for students to have a more meaningful learning experience and to develop their thinking skills in solving daily problems is creative thinking. (Tohir, Abidin, Dafik & Hobri, 2018). The students mostly drew pictures in which there are activities and they are more active for the question of social studies class in their imagination. As the social studies teacher in their imagination, they generally drew a presentable, modern, cheerful, more interested, kinder, and female teacher. Regarding the question of what would you like to learn at the social studies class, they mostly drew pictures that include social activities, information about the natural environment, the theme of protecting the natural environment, sensitivity, traffic rules that they can use in their daily lives, Atatürk-related issues, information about their own identity and family, children's right issues, science and technology. When these results are evaluated in general, the wide inner worlds of students regarding social studies emerge when the social studies perceptions of primary school students are revealed through creative thinking activities. According to Özerbaş (2011), creativity is breaking the existing patterns, being open to the lives of others, going beyond the usual, exploring new ways, looking at life from different perspectives, wondering about and acting upon the unknown, breaking the imposed line of thought and introducing a new line of thought, finding alternative solutions to the problem, getting off the path of others, finding something new that leads to other things, establishing a new relationship or relating to existing thoughts, coming up with a new idea, inventing a new technique or method or making additions to the existing ones. Encouraging children to be creative is a very important goal of the learning process. Teachers need to make sufficient efforts to achieve this goal. Creativity plays an important role in the development of a society. In this context, it is very important for children to acquire creative thinking skills from an early age for an effective education.

Recommendations

In the research, the creative thinking tendencies of 4th grade primary school students in social studies were examined. In further studies, creative thinking tendencies of students in different courses can be examined. Teachers can make students engage in activities that will improve their creative thinking skills in the classes. Contributions can be made to the improvement of students' high-level thinking skills in this way.

References

- Birgili, B. (2015). Creative and critical thinking skills in problem-based learning environments. *Journal of Gifted Education and Creativity*, 2(2), 71-80.
- Edinyang, S. D. (2016). The significance of social learning theories in the teaching of social studies education. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research*, 2(1), 40-45.
- Eragamreddy, N. (2013). Teaching creative thinking skills. *International Journal of english language & translation studies*, 1(2), 124-145.
- Ersoy, E. & Başer, N. (2014). The effects of problem-based learning method in higher education on creative thinking. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116, 3494-3498.
- Grant, S. G., Swan, K., & Lee, J. (2017). *Inquiry-based practice in social studies education: Understanding the inquiry design model*. Taylor & Francis.
- Özerbaş, M. A. (2011). Yaratıcı Düşünme Öğrenme Ortamının Akademik Başarı ve Bilgilerin Kalıcılığına Etkisi. *Gazi University Journal of Gazi Educational Faculty (GUJGEF)*, 31(3), 675-705.
- Shaver, J. P. (1979). The status of social studies education: Impressions from three NSF studies. *Social Education*, 43(2), 150-53.
- Siburian, J., Corebima, A. D., & Saptasari, M. (2019). The correlation between critical and creative thinking skills on cognitive learning results. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 19(81), 99-114.
- Rahardjanto, A. (2019). Hybrid-PjBL: Learning Outcomes, Creative Thinking Skills, and Learning Motivation of Preservice Teacher. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(2), 179-192.
- Ritter, S. M., & Mostert, N. (2017). Enhancement of creative thinking skills using a cognitive-based creativity training. *Journal of Cognitive Enhancement*, 1(3), 243-253.
- Tohir, M., Abidin, Z., Dafik, D., & Hobri, H. (2018). Students creative thinking skills in solving two dimensional arithmetic series through research-based learning. *IOP Conf. Series: Journal of Physics: Conf. Series* 1008 (2018) 012072.

- Yaman, S., & Yalçın, N. (2005). Fen bilgisi öğretiminde probleme dayalı öğrenme yaklaşımının yaratıcı düşünme becerisine etkisi. *Elementary Education Online*, 4(1), 42-52.
- Van Kessel, C., & Crowley, R. M. (2017). Villainification and evil in social studies education. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 45(4), 427-455.
- Weiss, I. R. (1978). *Report of the 1977 national survey of science, mathematics, and social studies education*. Center for Educational Research and Evaluation.
- Zubaidah, S., Fuad, N. M., Mahanal, S., & Suarsini, E. (2017). Improving creative thinking skills of students through differentiated science inquiry integrated with mind map. *Journal of Turkish Science Education*, 14(4), 77-91.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2011). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri* (8th ed.). Ankara: Seçkin Publishing.

Author Information

Tuğba Kafadar

Erciyes University
Erciyes University, Faculty of Education, Kayseri, Turkey
Contact e-mail: tugbakafadar@gmail.com
