



ISSN:1306-3111
e-Journal of New World Sciences Academy
2009, Volume: 4, Number: 2, Article Number: 1C0026

EDUCATION SCIENCES

Received: December 2008

Accepted: March 2009

Series : 1C

ISSN : 1308-7274

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THE OPINIONS OF TEACHERS, WHO TEACH SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES, RELATED TO THEMSELVES AND THEIR STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

This research is to investigate the opinions of teachers, related to themselves and their students, who teach Social Studies course, in the schools. In this study, various question groups were formed, aiming to elicit information about the self-renovation sources of teachers, their relations with students, the social relationships of their students from individual aspect, activities within the classroom, the improvement of creativity. We found that some teachers think that they can't renovate themselves because they can't find time for that. Also teachers related to their relationship with their students good, decent, generally positive and friendly.

Keywords: Social Studies Course, Teachers, Elementary Education, Student, Teaching Experience

SOSYAL BİLGİLER DERSLERİNE GİREN ÖĞRETMENLERİN KENDİLERİNE VE ÖĞRENCİLERİNE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLERİ

ÖZET

Araştırmanın amacı, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı okullarda Sosyal Bilgiler derslerine giren öğretmenlerin kendilerine ve öğrencilerine ilişkin görüşlerinin incelenmesidir. Bu çalışmada Sosyal Bilgiler dersinde öğretmenlerin kendilerine ve öğrencilerine ilişkin görüşlerini incelemek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Öğretmenlerin, kendilerini yenileme yöntem ve kaynaklarına, öğrencileri ile ilişkilerine, öğrencilerinin bireysel bağlamda sosyal ilişkileri ve öğrenme durumlarına, ders içi aktivitelere, yaratıcılığın gelişmesine vb. yönelik sorular şeklinde farklı soru grupları oluşturulmuştur. Bu soru gruplarının yanıtları okunarak tema başlıkları oluşturulmuş ve bu çerçevede düzenlenerek gruplandırılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin, var olan yayınları ve araştırmaları takip etmeye ve uygulamaya çalışarak kendilerini yenilediklerini belirtmelerinin yanı sıra, bu konuda olumlu düşünmeyen ve zamanı olmadığı için kendini yenileyemeyen öğretmenlerin de mevcut olduğu görülmüştür. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin, öğrencileriyle ilişkileri incelendiğinde, çoğunlukla ilişkilerin iyi olduğu, ayrıca, karşılıklı duygu ve düşüncelerin rahatça ifade edilebildiği, sıcak, seviyeli, genelde pozitif ve cana yakın olduğu da saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Bilgiler Dersi, Öğretmenler, İlköğretim, Öğrenci, Öğretmenlik Deneyimi



1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

The developments in education in the recent years put forward Social Studies education for it provides opportunity for students to find the information, and build up the basic concepts themselves, rather than making them memorize loads of information, or presenting these instantly, as it is in other areas. In this sense, it is observed that the views and applications of teachers with respect to training and education has become one of the necessary points to be investigated.

Together with the necessary concepts that education helps individuals to acquire, school and life concepts coincide by increasing the importance of each other. The skills and values that students should acquire must be provided by teachers by enriching them in content. It is aimed that active and self-confident individuals are raised rather than passive ones. The individuals in developed societies can produce new solutions related to new problems. While in many countries the knowledge and ability necessary for lifelong is realized starting from the early childhood training, in Turkey this is tried to be brought in Life Knowledge and Social Studies courses which take place in the elementary education programs.

The Social Studies course that is taught in 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of elementary education, takes into consideration the education regarding solutions for the political, economic, cultural, and environmental problems of societies. So, it provides opportunity for better planning of future time, and helps students solve many matters in their lives. National values, which have gained additional significance together with globalization, as a result of many innovations that, have primarily occurred in the increasing information production and in many other areas have affected Social Studies program within the scope of configuration approach. In this respect, knowledge, skills, and values have been taken into consideration altogether (Safran, 2004).

The general aim of Social Studies is to raise efficient citizens for a democratic and contemporary society. With the Social Studies education, individuals are aimed to have democratic attitude and values, equipped with problem solving and decision making skills, and are productive and participative (Iskender and Altunaysam, 2008).

Among the topics of Social Studies course, which basically focuses on human and society, there is a strong relationship since life is entire, and the child that is in the concrete processing period perceives the all as it is (Sonmez, 2005). Together with events, concepts, and generalizations, teachers are to teach students how and when in real life these can be used (Yazici, 2003).

In order to be successful in raising effective citizens, teachers who teach Social Studies course should do self-assessment, be creative, modernist, good communicators, patient, organised, understanding, fair, amusing, mature, and have high expectations beside being harmonious and cooperative with students, student families, school, and school environment (Tanriogen, 2005).

If Social Studies teachers do their plans considering the educational needs of their students, and arrange their activities according to this, they may acquire the qualifications of reflective teacher. Additionally, teachers should help students reach the most correct way. Teachers, who are the executives of Social Studies program, ensure that students undertake active roles by creating questioning, judging sense in classroom environment, giving them clues, and teaching their responsibilities and duties in social life (Yazici, 2003).



Beside the fact that Social Studies teachers have to produce science and technology, they are to raise citizens who can accord with social alteration (Ata, 2008). Teachers occupy a huge role in the teaching process both as an information source to be consulted and as people who guide in the way of reaching information (Venc, 2005). In the creation of an effective learning environment it is important that together with teachers, students be equipped, and their learning environment be rich (Yazici, 2003).

Since the institutions where teachers are trained differ, and their aims and applications vary, the sufficiency expected from teachers is not always same. The capabilities and professional improvement of teachers are factors that develop and motivate them professionally. And, the qualifications of schools are related to the qualifications of teachers (Güven, 2005). As the professional knowledge, skills, and manners of teacher candidates affect the success of their lecturing, they also positively influence the improvement of self-confidence and presentation of positive manners (Akpinar&Ayvaci, 2003).

As Lillard (1972) stated, while Montessori underlines the importance of letting students determine themselves about what they want to learn, Dewey stressed the significance of getting the students to discover the information. In this way, positive behaviours such as motivation, and knowing learning can be developed (Acikgöz, 1992).

In training and education that teachers apply in classroom to make students active, efficient, and productive citizens, teachers should take into consideration how and through what means behaviours begin, the occurrence features of prerequisites of one another, from simple to complex, from easy to hard, and the sequence which is followed while helping individuals gain these by keeping on mind the Cognitive field taxonomy of Benjamin Bloom, and Affective field taxonomy of Krathwohl (Karacan, 2008).

In this respect, Yazici stresses that Social Studies teachers should have subject area knowledge, and content in pedagogical sense, the importance of them obeying actuality principle, and the necessity of them to become encouraging model towards participation and discovery who consider learner needs. Moreover he has stated that teachers should benefit from any kind of teaching material, and value field excursions, source persons, and connecting topics with real life. Besides ensuring that students think critically and creatively, together with ideational debates he has underlined that teachers should guide students in learning to learn, and developing citizenship awareness (Yazici, 2003).

In the focus of the teacher there are facts such as teaching approaches, teaching forms, and teaching methods. The selection of teaching approaches is affected by how children learn and develop, the features of the curriculum to be applied, and teacher's choice of organization and teaching strategies (Proctor et. all. 2001). Teachers prefer more group and project works, and debates in Social Studies course. Teacher student interaction is a part of every method that is used in individual or group works. In developed countries, along with activities aiming at realizing self ideas, and improving questioning skills, activities that are problem focused also take place. Especially in Social Studies course asking questions is of great importance (Sondergard, 2007).

In teaching of Social Studies, as it is in many countries, in our country, as well, there are problems related to all components of the teaching program (Iskender and Altunasam, 2008). In this respect, through this research, the opinions of teachers, who teach Social



Studies course, related to themselves, and their students were tried to be investigated.

2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)

The purpose of the research is to investigate the opinions of teachers, related to themselves and their students, who teach Social Studies course, in the schools managed by Ministry of National Education, in 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of elementary school.

"What are the opinions of the teachers, related to themselves and their students, who teach Social Studies courses in 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of elementary school?" is the research question of the study.

The sub-questions of the research are as in the following:

- What are the opinions of teachers related to their teaching experience?
- What are the courses that teachers have taken?
- What are teachers' sources and methods of renovating themselves?
- How is the condition of teachers related to joining any systematic work program for effective teaching?
- How are the relations of teachers with their students?
- How do teachers solve the individual differences of their students in the learning and training process?
- What are the thoughts of teachers related to the social relationships and learning conditions of their students, within individual aspect?
- What are the methods of the teachers in determining the financial and spiritual needs of students related to school?
- What kinds of activities are carried on in classrooms while applying the Social Studies Teaching Program?
- What do teachers do to improve the creativity of the students?
- How do teachers establish the connection between the questions directed to students and creativity?

3. METHOD (YÖNTEM)

The present study is a survey model through which the opinions of the participant teachers about themselves and their students were investigated. The survey model is a research approach aiming to describe a past or present situation as it was or is (Karasar, 2005).

3.1. Participants (Evren ve Örneklem)

The participants of the research are teachers who teach Social Studies course in the elementary schools managed by Ministry of National Education in province of Bursa. And, the sample is totally 50 teachers who teach Social Studies courses in 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th grades of totally six states and private elementary schools in Osmangazi, Yildirim, and Nilüfer districts of Bursa province.

3.2. Instruments (Veri Toplama Aracı)

In this research the questionnaire that was prepared by the researchers has been used as data collection tool. Accordingly with the sub-questions, 11 open ended questions, which were prepared by the help of some studies from Turkey and abroad, were directed to teachers in written form. The draft was developed by asking for the opinions of those specialized in the field during the process of forming the items of the questionnaire. The draft was administered to 30 teacher candidates, and following the interviews held with these candidates, the ambiguous items of the questionnaire were omitted, some of them



were modified, and the final draft was obtained. The participant teachers were inquired about their teaching experience, if they had attended any courses, if they make use of any methods and resources to improve themselves, if they had attended a systematic working program for effective teaching, their relationships with their students, how they resolve students' individual differences, their opinions regarding students' social relationships and learning abilities, their methods of determining spiritual and material needs of students regarding school, the types of activities they include while implementing the program, the things they do to develop students' creativeness, and the way they relate the questions they ask in the lesson to the creativeness.

Additionally, face to face interview was conducted. The questionnaire was prepared aiming to investigate the opinions of teachers, related to themselves and their students, in Social Studies course. Various question groups were formed, aiming to elicit information about the self-renovation sources of teachers, their relations with students, the social relationships of their students from individual aspect and their learning conditions, the activities within the classroom, the improvement of creativity, and so on. The responses to these question groups were read, and topic titles were formed, and within this frame they were arranged and grouped. Responses of the teachers were separately grouped for each question group, alterations and differentiations were tabulated as a result of which frequencies and percentages were investigated.

4. CONCLUSIONS (SONUÇLAR)

In the research the frequency analysis and percentage tables of 11 open ended questions, which contained the opinions of the teachers who teach Social Studies course in the school where data was collected have been presented.

First, in the research, the opinions of teachers related to the sub-question "How do you find your teaching experience?" have been stated in Table 1.

Table 1. The frequencies and percentage dispersions of the opinions of teachers related to their teaching experience
(Tablo 1. Öğretmenlerin öğretmenlik deneyimleri ile ilgili görüşlerinin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
I believe that it is sufficient.	34	68
I see it as insufficient.	9	18
I see myself as an experienced teacher. I need time and gains.	3	6
I believe that I become more experienced compared to each passing year.	3	6
I do never have problems with my students, I know that I take them always forward.	1	2
Total	50	100

When responses given to "How do you find your teaching experience?" question by teachers is considered; it has been found that it is seen mostly seen as it is at sufficient level (f=34, %=68). Nonetheless, it is seen that also there are teachers who reported their teaching experience as insufficient (f=9, %=18). And, there are also responses such as "I see myself as an experienced teacher. I need time and gains.", "I believe that I become more experienced compared



to each passing year.", "I do never have problems with my students, I know that I take them always forward."

In the research, another matter that gains importance together with the teaching experience of teachers is about the courses that teachers have taken. The views of teachers related also to this topic have been presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The frequency and percentage dispersions of the opinions of teachers related to the courses they have taken
(Tablo 2. Öğretmenlerin katıldığı kurslara ilişkin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
Computing	24	48
Guidance Activities Education	10	20
Total Quality Management and School Improvement Model Education	10	20
Effective Teaching Education	6	12
Total	50	100

As it is seen in Table II, when it is looked at the responses given to "What are the courses that you have taken?" question, it has been detected that a big part of the teachers (f=24, %=48) has taken Computing course, and seen that the number and percentage of participation in Guidance Activities Education, and Total Quality Management and School Improvement Model Education is same (f=10, %=20). It is attention taking that the participation to courses related to Effective Teaching Education is low (f=6, %=12).

In the research, together with professional experience and the courses they have taken, the sub-question about what their methods and sources of renewing themselves are gains importance. Teachers' opinions about that have been stated in Table 3.

Table 3. The Percentage and Frequency Dispersions about the Renovating Methods and Sources of Teachers
(Tablo 3. Öğretmenlerin Kendilerini Yenileme Yöntemleri ve Kaynaklarına İlişkin Yüzde ve Frekans Dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
I try to follow and implement the available source publications and studies. I follow the innovations.	21	42
I do this by reading, researching, and joining seminar works.	14	28
I have a lot of shortages in this way, but I am diligent and try to improve my computing skills.	5	10
I realize this by being open to alterations.	5	10
I renovate myself by closely following the technological developments, and using them in a way I should during the courses, and by having complete domination over the technology.	2	4
I try to renovate myself by using (CD, the Internet, magazines) which are the modernization tools of the day.	2	4
I can't renovate myself much since I don't have time.	1	2
Total	50	100

According to Table 3, when teachers' responses to the renovating methods and sources are observed, it was determined that beside the teachers (f=21, %=42) who approached the question like "I try to



follow and implement the available source publications and studies. I follow the innovations." there were also teachers (f=1, %=2) who responded as "I can't renovate myself much since I don't have time." Teachers who realize that by reading, researching, and joining seminar works (f=14, %=28) are in the second place. And, the percentages and numbers of those who manage to do it by being open to alterations, and the ones who renovate themselves by being diligent are same (f=5, %=10). And, 8% of the teachers are renovating themselves by following the technological developments.

In the research, the opinions of teachers about the sub-question "How is the condition of teachers related to joining any systematic work program for effective teaching?" have been tabulated.

Table 4. The percentage and frequency dispersions about the condition of teachers related to joining any systematic work program for effective teaching

(Tablo 4. Öğretmenlerin etkili öğretmenlik için herhangi bir sistemli çalışma programına katılma durumlarına ilişkin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
I haven't joined any.	18	36
Computing	10	20
Effective Teaching Education	9	18
Studies related to his/her own investigations.	6	12
Internal training programs, seminars, Social Sciences Education programs	3	6
Efficient learning and teaching, effective speaking educations	2	4
Field Teaching Masters (with no Thesis) Program	1	2
Masters in Guidance and teaching History	1	2
Total	50	100

When it is looked at the condition of teachers related to joining any systematic work program for effective teaching, it is seen that the ones (f=18 %=36) who haven't joined any are the majority. It was determined that the majority of the teachers haven't joined any systematic work program for effective teaching. As it is known, the internal training programs, which are held for teachers to improve themselves, help them to become more qualified teachers, and thus, the participation of teachers is very important. From the starting point that teachers need to do something, it was detected that they have joined programs such as their own investigations (f=6, %=12), internal training programs, seminars, Social Studies education programs (f=3 %=6), field teaching Masters (without thesis) program (f=1, %=2), Masters in the fields of guidance and history (f=1, %=2).

In the research, teachers' opinions about the sub-question "How are the relations of teachers with their students?" have been presented in Table 5.



Table 5. The percentage and frequency dispersions of the opinions of the teachers related to their relations with their students
 (Tablo 5. Öğretmenlerin öğrencileriyle ilişkileri hakkındaki düşüncelerine ilişkin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
I am happy to have established a communication with my students which is based on respect.	12	24
I think that I am generally positive and friendly.	9	18
I establish the communication by being warm, and decent.	9	18
I think that it is generally good.	6	12
Relations are not limited with only training and education level, but can be also towards dealing with problems, solving them, advising solutions, helping students comprehend the solution paths.	5	10
We can mutually express our feelings and thoughts comfortably.	2	4
I can't provide sufficient guidance to my students.	1	2
I make them feel special by asking each student how s/he is in the first lessons.	1	2
We can communicate by establishing mutual confidence environment.	1	2
In a school where education is done full day I try not to bore them much with the lessons, and make it more entertaining. I approach positively.	1	2
I can't establish the communication I want with some students.	1	2
I try to be fair.	1	2
I try to make my students love their classroom, school, teacher, and enjoy learning.	1	2
Total	50	100

According to the table, when the opinions of teachers related to their communications with their students are investigated, it is observed that mostly their relationship is good; and additionally, mutually the feelings and thoughts can be expressed comfortably; and that it is warm, decent, generally positive, and friendly. Beside this, it is seen that there are teachers who cannot provide sufficient guidance for that students (f=1, %=2). It was also determined that some teachers (f=5, %=10) do not limit the relationship with just training and education level, but also value the communication matters such as dealing with problems, solving them, advising solutions, helping students comprehend the solution paths.

In Social Studies course another matter that is effective in the learning environment is individual differences. Education and training environment can be prepared according to the interests and needs when teachers solve individual differences. So, they can effectively use their learning and teaching strategies.

In the research, the opinions of teachers related to the sub-question "How do teachers solve the individual differences of their students in the learning and training process?" have been tabulated.



Table 6. The percentage and frequency dispersions of teachers related to their ways of solving individual differences in the learning and training process

(Tablo 6. Öğretmenlerin, öğrenme ve eğitim sürecinde öğrencilerinin bireysel farklılıklarını çözümüleme şekillerine ilişkin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
I try to solve this by establishing a communication with the students who need private explanation, and observing their motivation with consolidators.	15	30
I carry on works appropriate to their level considering the individual differences.	10	20
I try to do this by talking, and establishing cooperation with guide teachers, and speaking with families.	8	16
I try to do this by group levels.	5	10
I try to apply the different learning methods of multiple intelligence system.	4	8
I can't pay much attention to this because of the lack of interest of the parents, and time shortage.	2	4
I try to do that by observations, and information of exam results.	1	2
I try to do it by the followed methods.	1	2
I explain the topics by simplifying them. I show interest individually if possible.	1	2
I take into consideration individual differences, and get the ones who comprehend quickly to solve questions while repeating the topic for the others.	1	2
I try to solve individual differences by combining them with one another.	1	2
I try to solve individual differences with the help of questionnaires and observations.	1	2
Total	50	100

When it is looked at the responses of teachers given to the question "How do you solve individual differences in the learning and education process of children?" it is seen that mostly this is realized by establishing one to one communication with the students who need private explanation, and observing their motivation with the consolidators (f=15, %=30). And, while a part of the teachers (f=10, %=20) approach this by saying "I carry on works suitable to their level considering the individual differences." The existence of the ones (f=8, %=16) who establish cooperation with guide teachers, and speak with families catch attention. Besides the teachers who do this by group levels (f=5, %=10), and considering multiple intelligence areas (f=4, %=8); the existence of the ones who can't pay much attention to this because of the lack of interest of the parents, and time shortage (f=2 %=4) rises as a big problem.

Together with the individual differences it is needed to attain information about the social relations of the students and their learning conditions. In the research the opinions of teachers related to "What are the thoughts of teachers related to the social relationships and learning conditions of their students, within individual aspect?" sub question have been tabulated.



Table 7. The percentage and frequency dispersions of teachers related to their opinions about the social relationships and learning conditions of their students, within individual aspect
(Tablo 7. Öğretmenlerin, bireysel bağlamda, öğrencilerinin sosyal ilişkileri ve öğrenme durumlarına ilişkin düşüncelerinin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
Students who are keen on questioning and researching, and saying their thought right away are majority.	13	26
Their social relations are good, friendship relationships are developed.	10	20
I haven't observed extreme disorder and inconsistency in their social relations.	7	14
The students who are in disagreement with their friends, easily bored and continuously moving students are majority.	3	6
There are students in the classroom among who the level difference is very significant. The structure of the family is very important.	2	4
The students who suffer comprehension difficulty are majority. It is needed to push students a lot, and repetition. They are intermediate level and the best ones are not many.	2	4
There are calm, extremely sensitive ones whose learning level is very good, as well as, ones whose level is bad. Generally, intermediate and upper level students are majority.	2	4
Some of them easily manage full learning in this environment, but they are not very social.	2	4
Their learning condition is 100% when they are motivated, but there are also some problems rising from lack attention distraction and lack of aim.	1	2
They prefer to follow the lesson in the classroom and learn more.	1	2
I think their communication is good.	1	2
Teachers are incapable since their reading habit is not developed.	1	2
Their feeling of responsibility is not developed.	1	2
Social life is financially bad, and this is reflected in the behaviours of the students.	1	2
There is sex conflict. There is formation of groups. There is not enough interest for learning.	1	2
Their comprehension level is quite good.	1	2
However, in their friendship relations they think of themselves most.	1	2
Total	50	100

When Table 7 is examined, and the responses of teachers given to that question are looked, it is seen that students who are keen on questioning and researching, and saying away their thoughts immediately are majority, with the same percentage and number (f=13, %=26), and additionally, it is seen that there are students whose social relations are good and friendship relationships are developed. Against the response "I haven't observed extreme disorder and inconsistency in their social relations; at least I don't have students who need to take warming education." (f=7, %=14), it is seen



that the percentage of "The students who are in disagreement with their friends, easily bored and continuously moving students are majority." response is close (f=3, %=6). In this sense, it was determined that teachers who think negatively match in the points that there is level difference in the classroom (f=2, %=4), students are unsocial (f=2, %=4), there is gender conflict (f=1, %=2), they think of themselves most in their friendship relations (f=1, %=2). It can be thought that there is a connection between the socioeconomic status and this kind of behaviours.

Together with the individual differences it is necessary that teachers determine about the financial and spiritual needs of the students related to their social relations and learning conditions. In the research the opinions of the teachers about the "What are the methods of the teachers in determining the financial and spiritual needs of students related to school?" sub-question have been tabulated.

Table 8. The percentage and frequency dispersions of teachers related to their methods of determining the financial and spiritual needs of students related to school

(Tablo 8. Öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerin okula ilişkin maddi, manevi ihtiyaçlarını belirleme yöntemlerine ilişkin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
By observing, controlling, and basing on observation form.	19	38
By continuously carrying on one to one meetings since children expect more care and love from school as a result of their parents being working and not allocating much time for them although as a result of interviews with the parents it was stated that they don't have any financial needs.	15	30
By parent meetings and student observations.	7	14
Survey questions.	6	12
I can administer survey, family meetings.	1	2
By establishing communication with their closest friends.	1	2
Total	50	100

When it is looked at the responses of teachers given to "What are the methods of the teachers in determining the financial and spiritual needs of students related to school?" sub-question, generally it was determined that they did it "By observing, controlling, and basing on observation form" (f=19, %=38), and additionally, "By continuously carrying on one to one meetings since children expect more care and love from school as a result of their parents being working and not allocating much time for them although as a result of interviews with the parents it was stated that they don't have any financial needs" (f=15, %=30). It was determined that the percentage and number of teachers who think that they can obtain a good result by evaluating the results related to parent meetings and student observations (f=7, %=14), and the ones who determine this with the help of survey questions (f=6, %=12) is almost same. It was determined that only one teacher think that s/he can be successful in that matter by establishing communication with their closest friends.



In the research the opinions of teachers about the "What kinds of activities are carried on in classrooms while applying the Social Studies Teaching Program?" sub-question have been tabulated.

Table 9. The percentage and frequency dispersions of teachers related to their activities in social studies course
(Tablo 9. Öğretmenlerin sosyal bilgiler dersindeki aktivitelerine ilişkin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
Drama	16	32
Research	7	14
Excursion and investigation, discussion	4	8
Mind map, map reading, and filling in mute map...	4	8
Set work	3	6
Singing a song appropriate to the topic, drawing picture	3	6
Group work	3	6
Question-answer	3	6
Sample event	2	4
Observation	2	4
Project works of the topics.	1	2
Benefiting from atlas	1	2
Story or event telling about places, persons, or events	1	2
Total	50	100

When it is looked at the responses of teachers given to "What kinds of activities do you do in classrooms while Social Studies Teaching Program is applied?" sub-question, it is seen that drama (f=16, %=32), research (f=7, %=14), excursion, investigation, discussion (f=4, %=8), mind map, map reading, and filling in mute map (f=4, %=8) methods are the preferred most often. Set works, singing a song appropriate to the topic, drawing picture, group work, question-answer methods are used with the same proportion (f=3, %=6). Activities towards observation (f=2, %=4), exposition (f=1, %=2), and sample event (f=2, %=4) take less place.

Teacher opinions about the "What do teachers do to improve the creativity of their students?" sub-question have been presented in Table 10.



Table 10. The percentage and frequency dispersions related to the activities done by teachers to improve the creativity of the students (Tablo 10. Öğretmenler tarafından öğrencilerin yaratıcılığının gelişmesine yönelik yapılan çalışmalara ilişkin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
Research work, Project works, give them research homework in accordance with their interests, and exhibit them.	17	34
I ask questions and give tips.	9	18
I congratulate them for their ideas or the things they do. Show them as an example to their friends.	6	12
I spend time on painting, music, exposition, and leadership appropriate to multiple intelligence area.	4	8
I get them to make presentations. I try to make them think and comment.	4	8
Get them to do projects and homework, reflect the lesson that they learn from history in their daily lives, mind maps, etc.	4	8
I frequently use visual and audio tools. Value learning activities which are through doing-living. I use brainstorming.	2	4
Guide them towards the field they show success, and encourage them in that sense.	1	2
I improve participation by appointing duties and collaboration within topics.	1	2
I make this with such activities that require expressing ideas about opinions, and critical thinking in solving a problem.	1	2
I try to support original opinions and ideas.	1	2
Total	50	100

When it is looked at the responses of teachers given to "What do you do to ensure that creativity is improved?" sub-question, teachers have said that they congratulate them for their ideas or the things they do. Show them as an example to their friends (f=6, %=12), get students to do studies like projects and homework (f=17, %=34). Also, it has been stated that they ask questions and give tips (f=9, %=18), do activities in accordance with interests and skills in order to improve creativity. It was determined that teachers encourage creativity by considering methods, techniques, student interest, student necessities, and individual differences.

In the research, the opinions of teachers about the "How do teachers establish the connection between the questions directed to students and creativity?" sub-question have been presented in Table 11.

Table 11. The percentage and frequency dispersions of teachers related to the form of establishing creativity through forwarded questions (Tablo 11. Öğretmenlerin öğrencilere yöneltilen sorular ile yaratıcılık ilişkisini kurma şekillerine ilişkin yüzde ve frekans dağılımları)

Responses	(f)	%
By asking questions which will help students think, and require them to present new ideas while solving the problems.	16	32
With the help of different questions.	10	20
By the help of question like In your opinion what would happen if "..."?	7	14
By directing them to research.	4	8
By giving them tips while they answer the questions.	3	6
By establishing the connection between history and today through questions.	3	6
By getting students to prepare questions related to the topics.	2	4
By illustrating, and creating opportunities in topics with respect to the dominating intelligence group.	1	2
By asking questions with examples from daily life.	1	2
By asking questions about the reason-result relationships.	1	2
With the help of brainstorming method.	1	2
By the help of questions about synthesizing, analyzing, and concentrating on the connections among principles.	1	2
Total	50	100

When it is looked at the responses of teachers given to "How do you establish the connection between the questions directed to students and creativity?" sub-question, they have stated that they encourage students' creativity mostly (f=16, %=32) by asking questions which will help students think, and require them to present new ideas while solving the problems, and also by forwarding different questions to students (f=10, %=20), and by the help of questions such as "In your opinion what would happen if "..."? (f=7, %=14). It was also determined that teachers accomplish that also through the actuality principle by establishing the connection between reason-result, and by taking on more importance to multiple intelligence applications.

5. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS (TARTIŞMA VE ÖNERİLER)

When teachers' opinions related to their teaching experiences are considered, while it was determined that they mostly find themselves sufficient, it was seen that there were also teachers who found themselves insufficient in this matter. It is attention catching that although the majority of the teachers who were taken in the scope of the study found their teaching experience sufficient, the percentage and number of teachers who found themselves insufficient was not small. It can be thought that teachers' long years of working might have been effective in finding their teaching experience sufficient. Additionally, it shouldn't be forgotten that teachers tend to follow the innovations, try to apply the contemporary methods, and self-asses themselves. It is necessary to have some knowledge and



skills in order to realize an effective and professional education in the classroom.

Beside that teachers mostly have stated that they renovate themselves by following the available publications and trying to apply them, it was seen that there were teachers who didn't think positively about this matter, and couldn't renovate themselves due to time shortage.

Today, the Internet is seen as the most important research source. The importance of this tool (the Internet) rapidly increases since teachers use it to research about students, multi environments to prepare the curriculum, and because of its high information capacity the Internet. Scott and O'Sullivan (2000) have stated that while on the one hand they were impressed by the multi dimensional power of technology and the capacity to reach information; on the other hand they mentioned about their doubt of the potential of technology to corrupt the roles of individuals in life, make them insensitive, estrange and change them. It has been revealed that the courses that teachers have joined were mostly related to computing, guidance activities education, and total quality management. However, due to the fact that the participation in courses for effective teaching training was less than expected; this shows that it is necessary to take urgent precaution in this matter.

While it was determined that teachers haven't participated in any program for effective teaching, they have carried out studies related to their own research, joined Internal training programs, seminars, Social Studies education programs, and efficient learning and teaching, effective teaching education, taken field teaching Masters (with no Thesis) program, and been enrolled in Masters program in Guidance and teaching History; this situation shows that teachers are in need of doing something.

The negativity observed in the behaviours of students towards the school and the teacher makes it a must for teachers to use different approaches. While in some situations, it is possible to stop the negative behaviours of a student such as disturbing the person sitting next to him/her by talking, making noise, not following the lesson by just making eye contact; the teacher can also orally warn the student who behaves negatively. During warning the teacher should pronounce the behaviour that s/he is seeing like "I see that you talk to your friend" and so on. This kind of expressions can make the student act appropriately. The teacher can also ask questions to get more detail about the negative behaviours of the student. For instance, questions like "Why don't you do your homework? Why do you talk to your friend?" wouldn't be perceived as punishment by the student. If there is a problem reveal it, and the behaviour might be corrected. Also, the teacher may tell the student who behave badly through guiding clauses, and in classroom discussions the teacher can be a good model by showing good behaviours instead of warning the students who behave negatively. Beside this, teachers can praise the ones who behave positively, and neglect the ones who act negatively, and make them gradually show positive behaviours instead of warning them (Ipsir, 2002).

When the results of some studies, which investigated the effect of families who joined the learning process over the performance of the student, are examined it is seen that the effect rate of the home and family over the performance of the student is 49%. That the interest of families for their children at school is at intermediate or lower level is in fact also seen as the problem of the school (Ozmen and Kolay, 2004). For effective teaching it is also necessary to take into consideration the relationship of teachers with their



students. Communication, especially in elementary school age, stresses the importance of face to face communication, and empathy.

When the thoughts of teachers related to their relationship with their students is investigated, it was determined that it is mostly good, that mutual feelings and thoughts are expressed comfortably, and it is warm, decent, generally positive and friendly. Beside this, it is seen that there are teachers who do not provide their students with guidance as much as they should. It was also stated by the teachers that the communication with students should not be limited with just education and training level but matters such as dealing with problems, solving them, advising solutions, and helping students comprehend the solution paths.

Most of the teachers stated that students are individuals who are eager to question and research, saying their thoughts right away, having good social relations with their friends, and developed friendship relationship. In this sense, the teachers who negatively think about this matter stated that this negativity rises from the level and gender difference in the classroom, being unable to be social, and thinking themselves most in their friendship relations. It can also be thought that there is connection between the socioeconomic status and this kind of behaviours.

Another factor that is effective in the learning environment in Social Studies courses is individual differences. Once teachers analyse individual differences, they will be able to prepare an education and training environment according to the interests and needs of the students. So, they can effectively use the learning and teaching strategies. Among the things that teachers should do in classroom "observation" is first (Voogd, 1998). The teacher not only has to observe and listen but also interpret the seen and heard thing. Bennett et al. (1984) discovered that during their dialogs with children, teachers didn't show tendency of making sufficient identifications. In order to observe children, and find out how they think it is necessary to question carefully. Askew et al. (1995) discovered that knowledgeable teachers question and listen to the answers of their students in the process of problem solving; nevertheless, less knowledgeable teachers either explain the problem solving process to the students or just observe their problems. It is important to make systematic observation. Systematic observation includes the use of systematic observation tests, and control lists (Dean, 2000). In the scope of the quality of learning outputs, and elements of classroom system, teachers can consider that friendships, in physical environment, psychological environment, and social environment, and individual differences also can be effective in the learning ability of children. These elements are in interaction within themselves (Proctor et.all. 2001).

As a teacher, it is necessary to listen to the children, in order to be able to fit the learning program to individual needs. Teachers cannot always become successful in this matter. When teachers don't carry out a detailed study, they can't discover the accordance degree between the success of children and their homework, and this can be counted among the reasons of being unsuccessful (Dean, 2000). Matters such as individual differences, a part of the planning, how the homework will be assessed should also be regarded by teachers. Computer, which is equipment that can set the learning speed of the student, is very effective in individual learning (Barth and Demirtas, 1998). Together with the individual differences it is also necessary to obtain information about the social relations, and learning conditions of the students.



In this research, it has been revealed that in order to analyse the individual differences in the learning and education process of the children, teachers consider individual differences by establishing a communication with the students who need private explanation, and observing their motivation with consolidators, and beside by carrying on studies appropriate to their level, by cooperating with guide teachers, and speaking with families. Together with individual differences, it was also determined that in the evaluations of the social relations and learning conditions of the students, the financial and spiritual needs of the students must be also determined by the teacher.

It was determined that teachers determine the financial and spiritual needs of the students by observing, controlling, and basing on observation form, additionally by continuously carrying on one to one meetings since children expect more care and love from school as a result of their parents being working and not allocating much time for them although as a result of interviews with the parents it was stated that they don't have any financial needs.

When it is looked at what kind of activities teachers do while applying the Social Studies Education Program, the fact that they prefer drama more than other activities is seen as a result of attaching importance to creativity, and critical thinking skills; research, excursion investigation, discussion, mind map, map reading, and mute map filling methods were also used. In this way students can be get to think divergent. Students can be get to learn for lifelong, and be involved in the fields that they are interested by doing and living. Students sometimes need guidance and explanation during the activities in classroom. It is possible to see teachers who adopt different approaches related to this matter. It was determined that teachers encourage creativity by regarding methods, techniques, student interest, student need, and individual differences.

Creativity is a process that should be supported from birth. Young children learn better with materials and devices. The family can help the child to use the materials that are at home and around, and create new products. It is possible to improve the creativity of children with the help of activities like excursion, observation, material, collection, etc. When the child gets interested in the content to be learned and is motivated, and knows the target to be reached, s/he learns more effectively (Demirel, 2003). In this sense, it was determined that in order to improve creativity teachers congratulate students for their ideas or the studies they carry on, and present them as model to their friends, and get them to make projects, homework, and alike studies.

While teachers establish the connection between the question forwarded to students and creativity, it was determined that mostly they prefer questions that will help students to think, and raise new ideas, and also direct them to research, and thus, encourage their creativity.

When the findings of the study are combined and evaluated, it is possible to make some inferences. In this study the opinions and applications of the teachers, who teach Social Studies course, related to themselves and their students have been taken into consideration.

The suggestions at the end of this study can be summarized as follows:

In order to increase the teaching experience of teachers in a short time, courses can be arranged with the Ministry of National Education within associate cooperation. Enthusiasm for effective teaching education should be raised among teachers, and their participation should be encouraged by school managements.



Some teachers think that they can't renovate themselves because they can't find time for that. For this reason, they should be provided with convenient conditions to follow the publications and studies. There are also conditions that teachers can't provide their students with sufficient guidance. These conditions should be determined and seminars related to the importance of guiding students should be held.

Teachers should establish communication with the students who need one to one explanation in their learning and education process in analysing the individual differences, and should also apply works that regard individual differences and student levels, and meanwhile, they should determine this by cooperating with guide teachers, and talking with families.

Teachers must show special attention to the matters related to students' social relations and their learning conditions such as the level difference in classroom, gender conflict, and the fact that they think of themselves most in their friendship relations since these create negativity. Also, methods that provide opportunity to let each student speak should be preferred.

Teachers should provide more room for activities towards observation in classrooms, exposition, and sample event. Teachers should show that students are valued for their ideas and the works they do, in order to improve creativity. They should get students to make studies like individual projects and homework. Additionally, teachers should create a confidential environment, and be fair to each student, and give importance to guidance activities related to dealing with problems, solving them, and advising solutions.

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