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## The elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum from the perspectives of social sciences faculty members

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the perspectives of social sciences faculty members on the development of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum for eighth-grade education in Turkey. The study was carried out via the Qualitative Research Method. The study participants consisted of 15 faculty members from eight different universities in Turkey. The Purposive Sampling Method was used in the selection process of the research participants. A semi-structured interview protocol developed by the researcher based on expert opinions was used to collect research data. The Descriptive Analysis Method was employed to analyse the obtained data. The study results showed that according to the faculty members, the curriculum under scrutiny should be developed through a learner-centred approach, the name of the curriculum should be changed, the time allocated for the units should be adjusted, the content of the curriculum should form a link between the past and the present, and the curriculum should make more emphasis on the economic, social and cultural developments by incorporating different perspectives. The faculty members stated that the course objectives should be developed by taking the nation's recent past into account, emphasizing a sense of unity and solidarity, homeland-nation consciousness, and the struggles of the Turkish Republic in gaining its independence. The faculty members suggested that the learning outcomes of the curriculum should be simplified by reducing the number of standards, ensuring the balance between the time allocated for teaching and learning outcomes. From the perspectives of the participants, the curriculum should be redesigned under the principles of the Constructivist Learning Theory or learner-centred education so that students can gain a deep understanding of the subject and develop their higher-level thinking skills.

**Keywords:** social sciences faculty members, Republic of Turkey, history of revolution and Kemalism curriculum, elementary education, curriculum development

## **Introduction**

When the Republic of Turkey was founded, the perspective on education was substantially changed from a religious one to a secular one. This change, along with the changes in learning theories affected the goals, content, instructional process, and evaluation methods of the History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum in Turkey. The most important changes in the goals and content of the “History of Revolution Curriculum” took place with the coup of September 12, 1980, and accordingly, the emphasis on Kemalism came to the fore. The curriculum was implemented under different names in the historical process. In 1982, the course which has been mandatory in higher education under the name “Ataturk’s Principles and the History of Revolution” has become mandatory in elementary education under the name “Turkish Republic History of the Revolution and Kemalism.” This course has been mandatorily taught at universities under the name of “Atatürk’s Principles and the Revolution History” since 1981 (Aslan, 2015; Dođaner, 2005; İnan, 2012). The elementary education curriculum was fundamentally revised according to the Constructivist Learning Theory in 2006, and some revisions were made in 2018.

In the previous research conducted on the goals of the curricula of the History of Revolution and Kemalism, and all the other names across several education levels the course was given under, it was found that there were problems in realizing the curriculum goals (Aslan, 2004; Akgün, 2005; Dođaner, 2005). The failure in reaching the curriculum goals was attributed to the teaching styles of the teachers, the content and teaching materials of the course, the negative attitudes of the students towards the course, and political concerns (Akbaba, 2009; Dönmez, 2006; Eraslan and Kaşkaya, 2011). It was suggested that the curriculum goals be reframed, and the problems associated with its application be eliminated in order to improve students’ cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor skills and to help them gain national values (Akgün, 2005; Dönmez, 2006; Emirođlu, 2005; Eraslan and Kaşkaya, 2011; Safran, 2006a).

The contents of the courses were taught under different names in elementary, secondary, and higher education in the past years. This fact suggests that the content of the course should also be reconsidered and reevaluated (Güneş, 2004; Şimşek, 2002; Yalçın, 2004). In the literature, scholars are critical of the course content, the chronological boundaries of the course from primary education to higher education levels, the connection between the past and the present, the intensity of the content, the scope of the topics, and the way the topics are discussed. It is argued that the content of the Turkish Republic’s History of Revolution and Kemalism is not discussed in line with the understanding of yesterday, today, and tomorrow, and the connection between the past and the present experience is not established (Arslan, 2005; Eraslan and Kaşkaya, 2011). It is suggested that how the developments in the final period of the Ottoman Empire affected the Republic Period be taken into consideration when determining the content of the curriculum (Arslan, 2005; Delen, 2007; Demirel, 2005; Kılıç and Şam, 2012; Yılmaz, 2004). In the previous studies, it is also emphasized that the developments experienced during and after World War II, which shaped today’s world, and the political, social, and

economic developments experienced in Turkey and in the world be included in the content of the curriculum (Aybars, 2004; Aslan, 2004; Arslan, 2005; Akbaba, 2009; Baydur, 1997; Doğaner, 2005; Demirel 2005; Öztürk, 2005; Pamuk, 2004; Saray, 2005; Toprak, 1997). Likewise, some scholars contended that in order to comprehend the Turkish Republic, the political, social, and economic conditions of the early Republic period should be handled in the curriculum (Aybars, 1985; Tokgöz, 2004; Dönmez and Yazıcı, 2008). Some studies draw attention to the fact that Atatürk is at the center of the curriculum content and is depicted as an inaccessible character or an angel whereas enough attention is not given to other historical characters both from different regions of Turkey and from different groups who played an important role in the War of Independence and in the establishment of the Republic (Arslan, 2005; Alperen, 2008; Saray, 2005). Another important problem regarding the curriculum is the intensity of the topics (Öner and Öner, 2014; Sertkaya, 2005; Şimşek and Güler, 2013), so, it is suggested that the time allocated to the lesson be increased or the intensity of the subjects be reduced (Demirel, 2005; Eraslan and Kaşkaya, 2011; Saray, 2005; Tangülü, Tosun and Kocabıyık, 2014).

The design or development of the curriculum of the Turkish Republic's History of Revolution and Kemalism has changed over time. The curriculum was developed in line with the Behaviourist Learning Theory or what is called the teacher-centered approach until 2006. After that, it has been prepared based on the Constructivist Learning Theory. Even though the design of the curriculum has changed over time, the teaching of the course has continued in the same way with a teacher-centered approach (Dönmez, 2006; Emiroğlu, 2005; Köstüklü, 2005; Metin, 2006; Öztürk, 2005; Öztaş, 2006; Akbaba, 2008; Akbaba, 2009; Göç, 2009; Bayram, 2016; Kahramanoğlu, 2014; Sever, 2017; Dönmez and Yazıcı, 2008). So, it is argued that the philosophical foundations of the course should be consistent with how it is taught in practice in school; that is, a constructivist approach to teaching should be practiced in classrooms (Ata, 2005; Dönmez, 2006; Öztürk, 2005). It is suggested that teaching strategies, methods, and techniques that will enable students to take an active role in learning be implemented such as discovery learning, learning by inquiry, discussion, cooperative learning, case study, simulation, brainstorming, problem-solving, drama, historical empathy, etc. (Demirel, 2005; Dilek, 2005; Emiroğlu, 2005; Köstüklü, 2005; Saray, 2005). Some scholars also advised that field trips to historical sites, observation-based activities, and supporting the lesson with visual elements be employed when teaching the course topics so that students can internalize the subject (Arslan, 2005; Dönmez, 2006; Dilek, 2005; Demirel, 2005; Emiroğlu, 2005; Eraslan and Kaşkaya, 2011; Safran, 2006b).

Without a doubt, the most important problem regarding the implementation of the course of Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism has been the evaluation of students' learning via traditional assessment and measurement methods. The studies showed that existing assessment methods used in the course of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism only examine what students have learned from what they have been told by their teachers and what they could memorize from the books, in the absence of any performance assessment (Öztürk, 2005). The Curriculum of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism was developed on the basis

of the constructivist approach in 2006. Still, assessment and evaluation are based on traditional measurement-evaluation instruments, instead of process-based methods (Kaya, 2016). It was found that the most frequently used measurement and evaluation instruments by teachers were written examinations, multiple choice, and true-false tests, and filling-the-blank practices (Çelebi, 2014; Candeğer, 2016; Pamuk, 2015). These findings show that it is necessary to evaluate the measurement-evaluation dimension of the curriculum comprehensively.

In 2018, the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum have been reconsidered and reevaluated. In the research conducted on the changes made in 2018, it was found that these changes in the curriculum were not sufficient. In the research conducted by Palaz, Kılcan, and Gülbudak (2019), it was found that the students find the Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course boring. In the research, it was emphasized that the Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course could be saved from being boring and monotonous by providing a variety of methods and techniques. In similar research conducted by Çelikkaya and Kürümlüoğlu (2018), it was found that the teachers had difficulties because the number of courses was too high, the course contents were too intense, and the course contents were not in accordance with the readiness of the students. The teachers mentioned that the duration of the courses should be longer, and the course contents should be simplified. In another similar research conducted by Tangülü and Süvari (2019), it was found that there wasn't a great change in the goals of the course, the number of learning outcomes was decreased, the duration of the course was not sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes and the constructivist approach was still prevalent in the curriculum.

The above review of the literature suggests that in order to develop and improve the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum more functionally, it is necessary to examine the views of the faculty members who carried out studies in this field and to examine the problems arising in the implementation of the curriculum. There are not enough studies on this research topic. Aimed at filling the gap in the literature, this study tries to document the academician opinions on how to improve the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum for elementary education. The reason for inquiring and considering the perspectives of the faculty members is that they play an important role in the creation and implementation of the curricula. This study seeks answers to the following research question. What are the opinions and suggestions of the social sciences faculty members on how to improve the goals, content, teaching-learning process, and evaluation dimensions of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum for elementary education?

## Method

### Study Group

This study's methodological framework is based on the Qualitative Research Design. The Purposive Sampling Method as one of the purposeful sampling methods was used in the selection of the participants of the study. When selecting the faculty members, criteria of having at least 5 years of experience, having carried out studies on teaching the Turkish History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum, having served in the Department of History Education or Social Studies Education, and being a lecturer with at least a Ph.D. were used. 15 social sciences faculty members serving in different universities and meeting these criteria were selected as study participants. In order to protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms P1 to P10 were given to the male participants, and pseudonyms P11 to P15 were given to the female participants. Pseudonyms were also given to the universities at which the participants work. Demographic information about the participants is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Information for the Research Participants

Participants	Gender	Title	Experience in years	University	Departments
Participant 1	Male	Professor	29 years	University A	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 2	Male	Professor	19 years	University B	History Education
Participant 3	Male	Assistant Professor	17 years	University A	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 4	Male	Assistant Professor	10 years	University C	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 5	Male	Assistant Professor	7 years	University C	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 6	Male	Assistant Professor	7 years	University C	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 7	Male	Assistant Professor	9 years	University D	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 8	Male	Doctor Lecturer	10 years	University E	Social Sciences Education
Participant 9	Male	Assistant Professor	7 years	University F	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 10	Male	Assistant Professor	10 years	University G	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 11	Female	Assistant Professor	10 years	University G	Social Studies Education
Participant 12	Female	Assistant Professor	10 years	University C	History Education Social Studies Education

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Participant 13	Female	Doctor Lecturer	7 years	University G	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 14	Female	Doctor Lecturer	8 years	University H	History Education Social Studies Education
Participant 15	Female	Doctor Lecturer	10 years	University B	Social Studies Education

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### **Data Collection Tools**

As one of the qualitative data collection tools, the Semi-Structured Interview Method was used in the study. By utilizing this method, the researcher prepares open-ended interview questions in advance but also asks different probing and follow-up questions to the participants on the basis of their answers to the questions (Patton, 2014). The interview protocol was prepared after the experts' opinions on those questions were elicited. Interviews with the participants were carried out in places where they would feel comfortable such as study offices and libraries. The participants were informed about the study's aims and procedure and their signed consent forms were obtained with their permission.

### **Interview Questions**

1. Which factors should be considered in the development of the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum, and which basic principles should it be based on?
2. What should be the general objectives of the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum?
3. What are your suggestions concerning the learning outcomes of the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum?
4. What strategies can you suggest for organizing the contents of the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum?
5. Which teaching methods should be included in the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum? And why should these methods be included?
6. What kinds of evaluation methods should be utilized in the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum?
7. How should historical characters be included in the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum?
8. What are your thoughts about the charges made in the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum in 2018?

## Analysis of Data

The Descriptive Analysis Method was used in the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews. The audio recordings of the interviews were first transcribed into the text verbatim. After that, all the interview transcripts were read thoroughly to gain a holistic understanding of the data. Words were selected as a unit of analysis and then formal coding of the data was done via line-by-line analysis. In qualitative research, it is important to focus on the words and expressions giving meanings in order to reveal the participants' views (Charmaz, 2006). By attaching importance to this point, firstly the words and expressions used by the participants were used in coding while coding the transcripts. When the appropriate words and concepts could not be deduced from the expressions of the participants in coding, different concepts and words were used as codes to express their views in the best way. Codes obtained were divided into categories based on the similarities and differences, and then the categories were compared to get at patterns and themes in the data. The findings were presented by making direct quotations from the opinions of the participants. To provide internal validity in the research, the units forming the codes, categories and themes were validated based on the opinions of the participants. The processes of the research have been presented clearly to ensure external validity. To provide internal reliability in the research, the contents have been detailed with direct quotations. During the data analysis process, by enabling more than one researcher to participate in the analysis process, the results have been compared.

## Findings

### The General Opinions of the Social Sciences Faculty Members on the Improvement of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum

The participants put forward many opinions for the improvement of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism curriculum. They suggested that the student-centered approach should be adapted, very recent history should be emphasized, the name of the curriculum should be changed, different perspectives on the past issues should be included, the course time should be re-allocated, a connection between the past and the present should be established, and economic and social-cultural developments should be taken into account in order to improve the curriculum. Participants' suggestions are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

The Opinions of the Participants on the Improvement of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum

Expressions	Participants
The curriculum must be student-centered	P3, P4, P10, P11, P12
Emphasis should be placed on very recent history	P2, P3, P7
The curriculum name should be changed	P2, P8, P15
Different perspectives should be included	P2, P9, P12
Class hours should be re-arranged	P4, P5

A connection with today's world should be made	P4, P8
Economic, social-cultural developments should be included	P2, P6
Historical thinking skills should be emphasized	P2, P14
Emphasis should be placed on the foundations of the idea of the republic	P2, P12
Change and continuity should be emphasized	P7, P9
An integrated content should be presented	P2
Emphasis should be placed on the conditions under which the country was established	P3
Ataturk love should be included	P13
It should be evidence-based	P14
The human-time and space element should be included.	P14
National historical awareness should be brought to the fore	P15

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When the findings presented in Table 2 are examined, it is clear that the faculty members emphasized that the course should be taught by means of a student-centered teaching approach. For example, Participant 11 stated that it is necessary to design a curriculum by which the student will have an active role by using the expression "I would reflect on the program that the student should be a researcher, reach certain things, and discuss in the classroom." Participant 12 suggested that the lesson should be taught with activities by saying that "First of all, I think that the curriculum should be a model for processing activities." Participant 4 stated to reconsider the course time and materials in addition to designing the course in accordance with the Active Learning Method by using the expression "I would have designed a program by adjusting the textbook and the lesson time, reconsidering the activity examples accordingly and making the lesson much more enjoyable based on active learning methods." Some of the faculty members especially emphasized the learning of very recent history in improving the curriculum. For example, Participant 7 stated that the teaching of very recent history should be considered in the development of the curriculum, saying "For two hours, then we should carry the course to the present day by being focused on main points... Students should have a knowledge level that they should be able to understand when they come across the news on the TV saying that it happened on 27 May 1960." Some of the faculty members emphasized that different perspectives should be included in improving the curriculum. Participant 9 emphasized that it is necessary to include different perspectives in the development of the curriculum by expressing the idea that "I pay attention to the fact that there may be different topics and different opinions in the learning outcomes of the programs. I would emphasize the understanding that there were negative perceptions as well as positive perceptions about Ataturk or the content of the program." Participant 6 stated that the understanding of social history was the most important factor in improving the curriculum, saying "I like the current structure of the course. I would revise the content and approach to the public. What was the public doing? What were the people doing? I would try to reflect a social history understanding."

## The Opinions of the Participants on the Improvement of the Goals of Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum

The participants stated that the course goals should be addressed in the context of gaining a sense of unity and solidarity, protecting the homeland and nation, enabling to have a different perspective towards events and comprehending how the Republic was founded. The opinions of the participants are provided in Table 3.

Table 3

The Opinions of the Participants on the Improvement of the Goals of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum

Opinions	Participants
Emphasis should be placed on national unity and solidarity	P6, P12, P13, P14
Emphasis should be placed on protecting the motherland and the nation	P11, P12, P13
A different perspective should be gained	P10, P2
The establishment of the Republic of Turkey should be ensured to be comprehended	P11, P2
The conditions of the period should be perceived	P4, P8
Very recent history should be addressed	P2, P3
Emphasis should be placed on Kemalism and reforms	P11
History awareness should be gained	P15

The findings in Table 3 show that the faculty members emphasized different issues regarding the course goals. For example, Participant 6 stated that the understanding of unity and solidarity should be provided for the goals by saying that “What I always repeat is that we established this homeland together, let's live it together. Let's love each other. That would be the message I wanted to give.” Similarly, Participant 14 stated that “To show the meticulousness demonstrated while teaching the student historical knowledge, to show what should be done and what should not be done... I would emphasize unity and solidarity as a common point”. Participant 12 stated that the course goals bring the understanding of unity and solidarity as well as love for the homeland by sharing the opinion of “Love for the homeland, unity, and solidarity. In other words, this country was not easily established, and a collective struggle was shown altogether, children also took part in this struggle, there are child heroes, there are women, there are men too, etc. This understanding should be given thoroughly...” Participant 11 stated that the consciousness of protecting the homeland and the nation should be given by saying “We witnessed a period when the national awareness and the awareness of patriotism were provided to children; however, some mistakes were made as well. Considering these mistakes, I would present the awareness of protecting the country, which is more harmonious with each other.” Participant 10 stated that the goals should be adjusted in a way to discuss the events through a more comprehensive perspective by saying, “Even though it has ideological origins in general, it is a history course after all. We would ensure students gain these: historical perspective

and the ability to interpret and approach historical events. I would organize my goals to discuss historical events through different perspectives.”

### **The Opinions of the Participants on the Improvement of the Learning Outcomes of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum**

The participants presented many suggestions for the development of the learning outcomes in the curriculum. Most of the participants stated that the learning outcomes should be simplified, organized based on behavior and life, and a balance should be established between the lesson time and the learning outcomes. Participants stated that the course should be designed so that students can internalize what they learn by reducing the learning outcomes and improving their style of expression, and to develop high-level thinking skills by focusing on the affective domain. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Opinions of the Participants on the Improvement of the Learning Outcomes of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Participants</b>
They should be simplified	P5, P6, P12, P14
They should be behavior-oriented	P1, P4, P2, P11
Balance should be established and maintained in the duration of the lesson	P5, P7
They should be presented in a way that students can internalize what they learn	P1, P13
Affective domain should be included	P6, P13
They should provide high-level thinking skills	P1, P14
They should be associated with today's world	P11, P15
They should be reduced in number	P10, P12
Expression style should be revised	P8, P14
They should focus on skills and values	P1

Participant 5 used the expression “I think the learning outcomes should be simplified” regarding the course outcomes. Participant 6 shared the opinion that “I think the learning outcomes should be simplified, the learning outcomes are already too many, and maybe that's why they cannot be achieved.” Similarly, Participant 14 stated that the structure of the learning outcomes should be plain and simple by saying that the learning outcomes should be in interconnected sentences. It should be absolutely clear and concise, and expressed by simple expressions, and when read, it should mean exactly what it's supposed to mean”. And Participant 7 emphasized that the lesson durations and learning outcomes should be balanced by saying that “When we think that the lesson durations are decreased from 3 hours to 2 hours, we can say that this change should be taken into consideration when updating the curriculum.” Some of the faculty members stated that the learning outcomes should be prepared in a way that students can internalize them. Participant 1 stated that the learning outcomes should become a lifestyle by expressing that “The acquisitions in the curriculum should be

internalized by the students and become a lifestyle” On the other hand, some of the faculty members emphasized that the learning outcomes should provide effective and high-level thinking skills. For example, Participant 1 stated that high-level thinking skills should be included in the learning outcomes by stating that "We think we achieve it when we ensure students gain knowledge only at their level of comprehension while keeping the classical memorized information without reaching the parts with high-level thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.” Participant 6 emphasized that we should attach importance to the affective area in addition to the cognitive field in the learning outcomes by stating that “We should move away from this kind of an approach to information. If we can, we should move towards the affective area, instead of the cognitive area.”

### **The Opinions of the Participants on the Improvement of the Content of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum**

Most of the participants stated that the course content should be brought up-to-date and taught with the inclusion of recent historical events. Participants stated that the course content should begin with the final period of the Ottoman Empire, by establishing a relationship between the past, the present, and the future. On the other hand, some participants stated that the social life of the society in the historical process should be included in the content (Table 5).

Table 5

The Opinions of the Participants on the Improvement of the Content of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Participants</b>
The content should be brought up-to-date	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P11, P12, P15
It should begin with the final period of the Ottoman Empire	P5, P8, P10, P11, P12, P15
The connection between the past, the present and the future should be established well	P4, P7, P9, P13, P14, P15
Socio-economic situations should be included	P2, P3, P4, P6
Historical continuity and change should be included	P13, P14, P15
Its content should end with the events of 1950	P10, P13
It should be simplified	P5, P7
The transition period from the Ottoman to the Republic should be presented well	P2, P3
It should not be focused on a single person	P8
Kemalism should be discussed through different perspectives	P2
Its content should end with the events of 1938	P14

The findings in Table 5 show that most participants emphasized that the course content should be brought up to the present day and that recent historical events should be taught in a more effective way. For example, Participant 1 stated, “The content should be brought to the present day, it should be brought to 2002, at least subjects up to 2002 should be taught on a historical basis.” Participant 3 shared the opinion that "If we have time, we should definitely bring the subjects from

1939 to 2015". Participant 3 stated that recent historical events should be taught by saying that "I am one of those who sincerely participate in bringing the content to the present day. I am not saying we should focus on this point, but we should not deprive children of the knowledge of very recent history." The participants stated that the course content should begin with the final period of the Ottoman Empire, especially the Tanzimat Period. For example, Participant 8 stated that It would be appropriate, to begin with, Tanzimat, the foundation of the Republic by expressing that "I would probably begin with the Tanzimat Period. Many of these practices have been applied or have been trying to be applied in the Republic by the central government and had actually been tried to be realized in the Tanzimat Period." Some of the faculty members stated that the social life of the society in the historical process should be included in the content. For example, Participant 3 stated that the subjects that are outside of political history should be emphasized by expressing that: "I am very bored to hear political history all the time. I want to learn the aspects as specified by Fergat Bloder for example." Participant 6 emphasized that the socio-economic lives of ordinary people should be included in the content by stating that: Especially the socio-economic situation during the War of Independence should be reflected more. It is mostly about the actions of generals, pashas, and statesmen. However, if there was a curriculum about the actions of Ahmet Aga, Mehmet Aga, or Serifebaci, and if these details were reflected in the content, it would be much better." Participant 4 stated that each subject should be brought to the present day by establishing the connection of the course with the present by expressing that: The subject of governmental institutions and organizations might be ensured to be comprehended by the students. Other subjects are the subjects that we have already known. I think that every subject in this curriculum should be connected with the present day. But it might not be possible with the current duration of lessons. I think it should be divided into a few years or the duration of the courses should be increased".

Some participants stated that the local heroes should also be included in the content and materials of the course, and more emphasis should be placed on people other than Mustafa Kemal (Table 6).

Table 6

The Opinions of the Participants on Using Historical Characters in the Content and Materials of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Participants</b>
More emphasis should be placed on characters other than Mustafa Kemal	P2, P4, P6, P9, P10, P11, P15
The local heroes should also be included	P3, P6, P8, P14
Historical characters should be included more	P4, P5, P6, P12
The life of Ataturk should not be presented as a unit	P11

The findings presented in Table 6 show that the faculty members think that historical characters are included in the content and materials of the course but at an inadequate level, which should be improved. For example, Participant 4 stated that historical characters are mentioned but

there are some deficiencies in this regard by stating that “There are deficiencies even though some characters are mentioned in the course. Ali Fuat Cebesoy wrote a book called 'My Classmate Atatürk', Kazım Karabekir wrote 'Our War of Independence', and Rauf Orbay wrote 'Hell Mill - My Political Maps'. Some information might be given about these books and characters.” Similarly, Participant 14 stated that in addition to those around Atatürk, local historical characters should also be emphasized by expressing that “I think we focus on Atatürk and those around him all the time. There are many characters that we memorize. There is a lot of work for the teacher. And local historical characters should be emphasized. The teacher should include the heroes of their own region.” Participant 11 stated that there is no need to present the life of Atatürk as a separate unit by saying that “I would start the content a little further back. I would spread the life of Atatürk within the process. There is no need to present the life of Atatürk as a separate unit.”

### **The Opinions of the Participants on the Instructional Process in the Improvement of the History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum**

All of the participants stated that student-centered methods and techniques should be included in the improvement of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum for elementary education. Participants emphasized the use of research analysis, discussion, question-answer, local and oral history, collaborative learning, case study, and drama methods in the teaching of the course. Some participants emphasized that evidence-based learning and materials should be used in lessons (Table 7).

Table 7

#### The Opinions of the Participants on the Instructional Process in the Improvement of the History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Evidence-based history learning	P2, P5, P8, P10, P11
Use of material	P3, P12, P13, P15
Research-examination	P1, P8, P12, P13
Discussion	P6, P9, P10, P11
Cinema, movies and documentaries	P2, P7, P15
Question-answer	P9, P10, P14
Local and oral history	P5, P13
Cooperative learning	P4, P12
Case study	P10, P12
Drama / role play	P9, P14
Six hat thinking	P4, P11
Station	P4
Jigsaw	P4
Problem solving	P1
Memories	P2
Critical thinking	P11
Project-based learning	P1

Findings in Table 7 show that most of the faculty members think that methods and techniques suitable for the Constructivist Approach should be preferred in the preparation of the curriculum. Participant 1 stated that student-centered methods and techniques should be included by saying that “We will prefer methods which will direct students to research and examine as much as possible. It can be project-based, problem-solving, etc.” Participant 4 stated that student-centered methods should be used by expressing that “Using a jigsaw, which is a team play and station, and active learning methods is very enjoyable. They enable students to focus on the lesson. All of these are methods that can be applied in all lessons. It would be very good if these methods are also applied in the history classes.” Participant 9 stated that active student methods such as group discussion, drama, debate, role play, and question-answer should be used by saying that “I believe that if the method-technique can be used, it should be used at least once. For example, group discussion, debate, drama, staging, animating, question and answer, and narration are methods that are used constantly.” Some participants stated that local history, oral history, and evidence-based history learning methods should be used. For example, Participant 5 stated that “There are three basic elements of teaching history in the best way. The first is local history, the second is oral history, and the third is evidence-based history teaching activities.” Some of the faculty members stated that films and documentaries should be used. For example, Participant 2 emphasized films and documentaries should be included by saying that “Historical films and documentaries should have a larger place in the course group to be called 'Modern Turkish History’”.

### **The Opinions of the Participants on the Improvement of the Assessment-Evaluation Methods in the History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum**

Most participants stated that both the process-based and the result-based assessment and evaluation instruments should be used in the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum. The findings obtained are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

The Opinions of the Participants on The Improvement of the Assessment-Evaluation Methods in the History of Revolution and Kemalism Curriculum

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Participants</b>
It should be based on both the process and the result	P1, P2, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P15
It should be based on the process	P3, P4, P6, P10, P13, P14
It should ensure students to make comments	P1, P2, P4, P8, P12, P15
Worksheets and concept maps should be used	P11, P15

If it is necessary to make explanations by direct quotations of the participants according to the findings in Table 8, Participant 8 stated that the evaluation should be both process and result based by expressing that “There should be an evaluation based on both the process and the result in the context of this course.”. Similarly, the Participant 5 said that “I would prefer to use measurement tools based on both the process and the results.” Participant 1 stated that classical evaluation

instruments should be used in addition to process-based measurement instruments by “Process-based measurement-evaluation methods should be used. The measurement can be made via classical measurement-evaluation instruments. Adapting more process-focused evaluation approaches should be preferred.” Participant 12 stated that classical measurement tools should be used in addition to process evaluation by stating that “Students take exams 3 times, and tests 2 times a year. Teachers include open-ended questions instead of multiple-choice questions to improve the writing skills of students.” Participant 3 stated that measurement should not have the traditional multiple-choice approach by stating that “We should make the evaluation process without taking the traditional multiple-choice approach. It should be about local historiography, oral historiography, skill-oriented works, drama, analysis of visuals.” Similarly, Participant 6 stated that product-based measurement should be utilized instead of classical measurement instruments by stating that “The essence of the subject matter is, it is necessary to avoid paper, pencil, test, etc. It would be useful to realize the process in a product-based manner instead of classical methods.”

### **The Opinions of the Participants on the Renewed Elementary Education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism Course Curriculum**

In the study, most of the faculty members stated that the renewed curriculum did not change much, the number of learning outcomes was decreased due to some of them being merged and the contents remained roughly the same. Although some of the faculty members welcomed the inclusion of values, they emphasized that it was not specified in which context and how these values were going to be taught. While some of the faculty members regarded the exclusion of very recent history as a shortcoming, others welcomed it. The faculty members welcomed the merging of the “Modernizing Turkiye” and “Kemalism” units, and the emphasis on the topic of “Kut’ül-Amare”. The findings obtained are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

The Opinions of the Participants on the Renewed Elementary Education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism Course Curriculum

<b>Opinions</b>	<b>Participants</b>
The learning outcomes were merged and the contents remained roughly the same	P1, P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13
The renewed curriculum did not change much	P3, P7, P9, P11, P13, P15
The exclusion of very recent history is a shortcoming	P2, P3, P12, P15
The emphasis on values is welcomed	P2, P13, P15
The emphasis on the topic “Kut’ül Amare” is welcomed	P1, P3, P5
The merging of the units is welcomed	P12, P15
The exclusion of the methods is a shortcoming	P12, P14
Historical thinking abilities are disregarded	P3, P7
The exclusion of very recent history is welcomed	P8, P13
The changes in the goals are welcomed	P8, P10
The emphasis on the Ottoman Empire is welcomed	P14

According to the findings in Table 9, most of the faculty members stated that the renewed curriculum did not change much, the number of learning outcomes was decreased due to some of them being merged and the contents remained roughly the same. In this regard, Participant 9 emphasized that the renewed curriculum did not bring anything new with it by stating “I do not believe that the new curriculum brought anything with it. What we usually mean by a new curriculum is a curriculum simplified by decreasing the number of the learning outcomes of the older curriculum.” Similarly, Participant 3 stated, “There is a compressed, minimized curriculum structure behind the Social Sciences, Revolution History and Kemalism and other courses.” Participant 1 emphasized that the number of learning outcomes was not decreased at all by stating “The number of learning outcomes has been decreased but sub-outcomes have been added so it is still roughly the same.” Some of the faculty members welcomed the inclusion of values but mentioned that it was not specified in which context and how these values were going to be taught. In this regard, Participant 2 welcomed the emphasis on values by stating “To me, the inclusion of some values and skills with a bigger emphasis is correct.” Similarly, Participant 6 welcomed the inclusion of values but saw the disregarding of in which context and how the values were going to be taught as a problem by stating “The mention of values is welcomed but it is unclear. They say they are going to associate these implicitly, but can it be achieved? It would be better if these were written clearly.” While some of the faculty members regarded the exclusion of very recent history as a shortcoming, others welcomed it. In this regard, Participant 2 saw the absence of very recent history in the curriculum as an important shortcoming by stating “Honestly, I think ending the curriculum contents with the multi-party period is a big mistake. Because teaching recent history creates much more effective results than teaching distant history.” Similarly, Participant 15 mentioned that the contents should include a very recent history by stating “As I said, the contents must be brought to the present day.” Contrary to these opinions, Participant 8 welcomed the exclusion of very recent history by stating “I find it positive that the curriculum at hand does not come close to the very recent history.” Some of the faculty members regarded the merging of the “Modernizing Turkiye” and “Kemalism” units, and the emphasis on the topic of “Kut’ül-Amare” as positive changes. In this regard, Participant 5 stated “I welcome the inclusion of Kut’ül-Amare.” while Participant 15 stated, “I think the merging of Modernizing Turkiye and Kemalism is a positive change since Kemalism is already included within Modernizing Turkiye.” Participant 10 welcomed the changes in the goals of the curriculum by stating “Now when I look at the new goals, it seems the general goals of the renewed curriculum have been softened and there is a shift from the ideological structure.” Participant 14 emphasized that the absence of the methods in the new curriculum is an important shortcoming by stating “The exclusion of methods is very bad. Maybe they will do something more about it, I do not know. But I feel like something is missing in this.” Participant 14 also mentioned that the emphasis on the last period of the Ottoman Empire is welcomed by stating “I welcome the emphasis on the Ottoman Empire.”

## Conclusion

According to the opinions of the participants in the study, it was concluded that the curriculum of the Turkish Republic History of Revolution and Kemalism should be discussed in connection with the present. This result matches the results of the previous study stating that the course content should be discussed with a focus on the past, the present, and the future (Arslan, 2005; Eraslan and Kaşkaya, 2011; Yılmaz, 2004). In this study, it was concluded that the subjects in the curriculum should be discussed in connection with very recent history. This result is similar to the previous study results concluding that the course content should be prepared in connection with the recent political, social, and economical developments experienced in our country and in the rest of the world (Aybars, 2004; Aslan, 2004; Arslan, 2005; Akbaba, 2009; Baydur, 1997; Doğaner, 2005; Demirel, 2005; Öztürk, 2005; Pamuk, 2004; Toprak, 1997). In this study, the faculty members stated that the curriculum should be prepared by placing an emphasis on economic and socio-cultural developments. This result supports the suggestions in the course content specified in studies conducted by Aybars (1985), Dönmez and Yazıcı (2008), and Tokgöz (2004). They suggest taking the political, social, and economic conditions when the Turkish Republic was founded into consideration when redesigning the curriculum. Accordingly, the contents of the course should be reconsidered, and more emphasis should be placed on social and economic issues.

The faculty members who participated in this study stated that the duration of the course should be changed. This result is in line with the previous studies suggesting that the duration of the lesson should be increased, or the intensity of the subject should be decreased (Bingöl, 2009, p.91-95; Demirel, 2005, p.258; Eraslan and Kaşkaya, 2011, p.349; Tangülü, Tosun & Kocabıyık, 2014, p.243; Saray, 2005, p.107). In our study, some of the faculty members stated that the course name should be changed. This result supports the suggestions in previous studies which have stated that the course name should be changed in a more comprehensive way to reflect the content of the course (Aslan, 2015, p.310; Arslan, 2005, p.271; Emiroğlu, 2005, p.161; Metin, 2006, p.54; Öztürk, 2006, p.208). The faculty members participating in our study emphasized that it is necessary to include different perspectives on historical events by focusing on the historical thinking ability in the curriculum. In the previous studies, it was stated that the topics should be discussed in comparison by including different views and students should be ensured to improve their critical thinking, analysis, and evaluation skills (Arslan, 2005, p.272; Tokgöz, 2004, S, 95; Safran, 2006b, p.123). In our study, the faculty members stated that the curriculum should be prepared through a student-centered approach. This result matches the previous study results which have stated that the philosophical background of the course should be organized according to a student-centered or constructivist approach (Ata, 2005, p.74; Dönmez, 2006, p.178; Öztürk, 2005, p.57). Accordingly, by reconsidering the duration of the course, reducing the subject density and the applicability of the curriculum in the context of the constructivist approach should be reviewed.

The faculty members participating in our study stated that the course goals should be handled in a way that students can gain a sense of unity and solidarity, to protect the country and the nation,

in a way that will help them examine the events from different perspectives and enable them to understand how the Republic was founded with an emphasis on very recent history. In the previous studies, it was stated that the course goals at the primary education level should be prepared in a way to create a positive attitude in students, help them gain national values, and improve their cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor characteristics (Dönmez, 2006, p.170; Emiroğlu, 2005, p.157; Safran, 2006a, p.109). In our study, the faculty members stated that a balance should be established between the course duration and learning outcomes, and expression styles of the learning outcomes should be revised, reduced, and designed in a way to enable students to internalize and improve their high-level thinking levels by focusing on the affective domain. It is seen that the curriculum should be created by focusing on effective learning goals in a way that will develop the high-level skills of the students.

In our study, most of the faculty members stated that the course content should be linked with the present, and recent historical events should be taught more effectively. This result supports the previous study results that have stated that course content should be revised in a way to include the developments during and after World War II, to establish a connection with the political, social, and economic developments in the world and in our country (Aybars, 2004, p.38; Aslan, 2004, p.108; Arslan, 2005, p.272; Akbaba, 2009, p.51; Baydur, 1997, p.99; Doğaner, 2005b, p.603; Demirel, 2005, p.258; Öztürk, 2005, p.57; Pamuk, 2004, p.28-29; Toprak, 1997, p.20). The faculty members stated that the content of the course should establish a relationship between the past, the present, and the future, especially starting from the final period of the Ottoman Empire. In the previous studies, it was stated that the reflections and impacts of the developments experienced in the final period of the Ottoman Empire during the Republic Period should be included in the course content and a connection should be formed between the past and the present (Arslan, 2005, p.271-272; Delen, 2007, p.95; Demirel, 2005, p.258; Eraslan & Kaşkaya, 2011, p.349-350; Kılıç ve Şam, 2012, p.167; Yılmaz, 2004, p. 104). Some of the faculty members stated that the course content should include the social lives of the society members in the historical process. This result matches the previous study results that have stated that the course content should be revised to include political, social, and economic conditions of the period when the Turkish Republic was founded so that the foundation of the Turkish Republic can be comprehended (Aybars, 1985, p.73; Dönmez and Yazıcı, 2008, p.42). Accordingly, it appears that the contents of the course need to be reconsidered. The faculty members stated that people other than Mustafa Kemal should be emphasized and local heroes should be included in the course content and materials. This result is similar to the one which concluded that building the course content around Atatürk and presenting Atatürk as an inaccessible character constitute an important problem (Arslan, 2005, p. 67) In the previous studies, it was stated that the heroism of people from different regions and groups taking a role in the War of Independence and the foundation of the Republic should have a larger place in the content of the course. (Arslan, 2005, p.70; Alperen, 2008, p.115; Saray, 2005, p.102).

The faculty members stated that the learning situations in the curriculum should be revised based on student-centered methods and techniques. Among these methods, it was emphasized that

research analysis, discussion, question-answer, local and oral history, cooperative learning, case study, and drama methods especially should be utilized. They also stated that evidence-based learning and materials should be utilized in the course. These results support the previous study results that have stated that teaching strategies, methods, and techniques that will enable students to have an active role in the classes such as learning through discovery, case studies, group work, simulation, discussion, collaborative learning, brainstorming, problem-solving, drama, empathy, resource review, and educational games should be included in the curriculum (Demirel, 2005, p.258-259; Dilek, 2005, p.90; Emirođlu, 2005, p.159; Köstüklü, 2005, p.48; Saray, 2005, p.102). In the previous studies, it was stated that the use of student-centered methods and techniques contributes to effective and efficient teaching (Altıkulaç and Akhan, 2010, p.241; Birişik, 2006, p.79-81; Demirezen and Akhan, 2011, p.22; Demirezen, 2014, p.76-77; Kaya, 2012, p.79; Yekrek, 2006, p.83). Accordingly, it is seen that it is necessary to review the suitability of the curriculum of the Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course for the use of student-centered methods and techniques. Most of the faculty members stated that both the process-based and the result-based measurement and evaluation instruments should be used in the curriculum and the measurement and evaluation instruments should be diversified in this regard. In the previous studies, it was stated that the assessment and evaluation instruments of the curriculum should be of a type that could measure high-level cognitive and affective skills through diversification (Dönmez ve Yazıcı, 2008, p.326; Dilek, 2005, p.90; Emirođlu, 2005, p.160; Kaya, 2016, p.148; Öztürk, 2005, p.56). It can be stated that the assessment and evaluation system of the course is applied mainly to results since the students attend the eighth grade. In addition, it is seen that it is necessary to reconsider the curriculum for the use of process-based approaches.

Regarding the changes made in the elementary education Turkish Republic Revolution History and Kemalism course curriculum in 2018, most of the faculty members stated that the renewed curriculum did not change much, the number of the learning outcomes was decreased due to some of them being merged and the contents remained roughly the same. Although some of the faculty members welcomed the inclusion of values, they emphasized that it was not specified in which context and how these values were going to be taught. While some of the faculty members regarded the exclusion of very recent history as a shortcoming, others welcomed it. The results obtained in the research conducted by Palaz, Kılcan, and Gülbudak (2019), Çelikkaya and Kürümlüođlu (2018), Tangülü and Süvari (2019) are parallel with the results of this study.

In the study, it was concluded that the curriculum should be prepared in a way to form a connection with the present by including very recent history in its contents, emphasizing economic and sociocultural developments, and including different perspectives on historical events. It was concluded that it is necessary to increase the duration of the lessons, change the name of the course and focus on the historical thinking skills of students. Therefore, the curriculum should be based on historical thinking skills, the duration of the lessons should be revised, and the name of the course should be changed. In the study, it was detected that course goals should be adjusted for the sense of unity and solidarity, love for homeland-nation, awareness of national struggle, and ability to gain

different perspectives on the process of founding the Republic. Besides, it was concluded that the course goals should be related to recent historical events. In this regard, the course goals should be reviewed and revised in a way to ensure students comprehend the foundation of the Republic and to include different perspectives and interpretations in explaining the historical events.

It was concluded that learning outcomes should be simplified, expression styles should be revised, numbers should be reduced, and affective domain should be focused on and balance should be established between the learning outcomes. Also, it was put forward that the learning outcomes should be designed in a way to ensure students learn the topics by internalizing them and to improve their high-level thinking skills by establishing a relationship with the present. Therefore, it is considered that learning outcomes should be handled in a simple, understandable, and accessible way and through a structure that will improve high-level thinking skills, in relation to today's and with an emphasis on the affective field.

In the study, it was concluded that the course content should be brought up-to-date, include recent historical events, and begin with the final period of the Ottoman Empire to form a connection between the past, the present, and the future, and include the social lives of the society members in the historical process. It was concluded that a larger place should be allocated for local heroes emphasizing people other than Mustafa Kemal in the content and materials of the course. In this regard, the course content should be revised placing more emphasis on the final period of the Ottoman Empire, bringing it up-to-date, emphasizing the socio-economic and cultural issues, giving more place to historical characters other than Mustafa Kemal, simplifying and decreasing the intensity of the content.

In the study, it was concluded that the curriculum should be handled through a student-centered approach and the teaching strategies and methods such as research-review, discussion, question-answer, local and oral history, cooperative learning, case study, and drama should be included in the teaching of the course. It was also concluded that evidence-based learning and materials should be utilized in the course. Therefore, the curriculum should be organized based on constructivist learning theory, and methods and techniques that will ensure students take an active role such as evidence-based learning, historical empathy, and historical research should be included. In the study, it was concluded that both the process-based and the result-based measurement and evaluation instruments should be utilized. Therefore, the measurement-evaluation instruments should be diversified, and assessment and evaluation instruments should be used for both the process and the result in a way to include both performance and authentic evaluation.

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