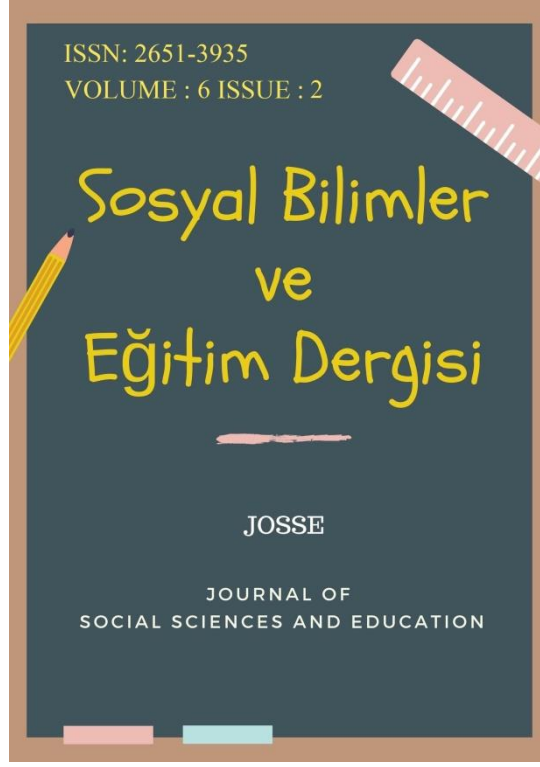


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**Integrating Philosophy with Children into the Social Studies Courses**

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## **Integrating Philosophy with Children into the Social Studies Courses**

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### **Abstract**

Philosophy with children aims to teach children to think for themselves and make informed choices. The objective here is to develop children's reasoning skills by enabling them to reflect on thinking while discussing concepts that are important to them. This study examines the act of philosophical thinking, the importance of children doing philosophy, and the implementation of philosophy in schools, especially its integration into the Social Studies course. This study also explains the benefits of philosophy with children for students and teachers and the facilitating effect of these benefits on the realisation of the objectives of the Social Studies course through sample applications. While some case studies were discussed with the students and sections of philosophical questioning were presented, a few of them were merely given as case studies. Thus, we believe that integrating children and philosophy with the Social Studies course will be effective in terms of the learning outcomes that students need.

**Keywords:** Social studies, philosophy with children, integration

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## **Introduction**

Many of us have taken philosophy courses during high school education. However, we have mostly been engaged in the history of philosophy rather than learning how to think philosophically. However, doing philosophy does not consist of memorizing the history of philosophy. What enables the creation of the history of philosophy lies in the potential of human beings to think philosophically, and this potential is one of the important qualities that distinguish human beings from other living beings. If human beings really see themselves as different from other living beings, they are obliged to demonstrate/prove this. As Socrates said, "an unexamined life is not worth living". Therefore, one of the primary goals for proving the privilege of being human should be to learn to think philosophically. Since, as a thinking and reasoning entity, human beings distinguish themselves from other living beings, and these qualities develop some potentials specific to human beings (such as creating artifacts, discovering the order of nature, reflecting on the meaning of life, making conscious choices, making right/wrong judgements about human behaviour). Therefore, in order to display these unique potentials, human beings must make an effort to realize the activity of thinking and reasoning that underlies them. Otherwise, these qualities that he considers himself privileged will cease to be part of him and he will become an ordinary creature. Undoubtedly, the way to realize these potentials begins with learning and applying thinking and reasoning. For this, the phenomenon of education, in which human beings have made material and spiritual investments since the beginning of their existence, comes to the fore. In other words, learning to think can only be realized through education.

Learning to think and reason, or in other words, learning to think philosophically, should begin in the early years of life. Preschool, primary and secondary school education levels are important stages for learning philosophical thinking. This is because thinking styles become habitual after a certain repetition and a way of thinking becomes mechanical for humans. In other words, after a certain period of time, thinking philosophically or not thinking philosophically turns into a self-operating mechanism. The aim of this study is to integrate philosophy with children into school lessons in order to encourage children to think philosophically. It is thought that the middle school Social Studies course provides a favourable environment for philosophical thinking due to its comprehensive content. Therefore, the problem of this research is "how do we integrate philosophy with children into the social studies course?". In this direction, the research will firstly talk about the act of

thinking and philosophical thinking, emphasise what philosophy is and its importance for children, present ways of integrating philosophical thinking with the achievements, skills and values of the social studies course, and try to illuminate these ways with sample activities.

### **Thinking and The Philosophical Act of Thinking**

Thinking, as a condition of human existence, is an act of the mind that is naturally inherent in human beings. However, as mentioned, this is only a possibility. The realisation of this possibility comes to the agenda by acquiring a skill that is learned, taught and developed. "The condition for human beings to live humanely and to be in a humane world is primarily to learn to think correctly and to be able to think correctly" (İyi, 2018). Correct thinking, on the other hand, is an action that requires a certain effort and is acquired through learning beyond what is innate (İyi, 2018; İyi, 2003). As Aristotle states, thinking is the most basic quality that makes human beings human. Therefore, in terms of self-realisation, human beings should be careful about thinking and reach their best state as much as possible. In other words, human beings should give importance to developing quality rather than quantity in thinking. This can only be possible by learning the right ways of thinking and thinking about thinking. The main way that leads people to think correctly is possible through philosophical thinking education (Gündoğdu, 2009). Through philosophical thinking education, human beings can gain the ability to think in a connected and correct way and reach a sound and reliable mind structure. Thus, he/she can recognise the distinction between knowledge and non-knowledge, avoid losing himself/herself in the endless sea of imagination, and succeed in remaining objective in his/her behaviour. Through education in both philosophical and ethical thinking, it is possible for human beings to realize their existence as thinkers, creators and ethical beings rather than merely being intelligent beings. In short, it is possible to say that the necessary condition for human beings to realize their existence as human beings is the act of philosophical thinking (İyi, 2018). Before presenting ways to fulfil this necessary condition, it is important to dwell on the nature and quality of philosophical thinking.

Since the subjects of philosophy are very comprehensive, that is, everything that exists can be the subject of philosophy, it is necessary to start with philosophical questions when talking about the nature of philosophical thinking. What is a philosophical question? What is the structure of philosophical questions? Questions such as these facilitate the identification of the distinctive features of the act of philosophical thinking. Philosophical questions, when considered as a question, reveal an achievement even if a clear answer cannot be reached. Because each philosophical question opens a certain dimension. Thanks to these questions,

people turn their eyes in a new direction beyond everyday life and open new horizons for themselves; like the person in Plato's cave, they wonder the truth behind the reflections (Uygur, 2013). Philosophical questions turn towards the meaning of concepts and try to understand the concept with the question root "what is". In other words, questions with "what" are an endeavour to understand, and in this direction, we should note that answers are important as well as questions (Dinçer, 2012), since justification is an indispensable act when answering philosophical questions. Because an idea without adequate grounding/justification is neither accepted by others (Çotuksöken, 2013) nor satisfies the respondent. The opposite situation invites dogmatic thinking, which is the opposite of philosophical thinking. In other words, philosophical thinking reveals the activity of human understanding through questions and answers. In this way, man goes beyond the ordinary, tries to understand what is seen and what is behind what is seen, turns towards the source of existence with his questions, and necessarily grounds his answers.

Philosophical thinking is a reflexive act of thinking. In other words, a person does not just think about something, he/she thinks by returning to his/her thoughts about that thing or to his/her own mind again and again. Therefore, philosophical thinking is realized by starting philosophical analyses and learning reflexive thinking, which reveals the distinctive feature of philosophical thinking (Başara, 2008). The birth point of philosophy was realized when human beings, as a subject, turned towards themselves and their own minds (Çotuksöken, 2013). Thinking about thinking, man turned towards himself as a subject and started to think in the context of meaning and thus united various acts of thinking under the act of philosophical thinking. It is possible to list this combination as the basic qualities of philosophical thinking (Çotuksöken, 2006, cited in Gülenç, 2006, 71):

**Table 1**

*Basic Characteristics of Philosophical Thinking*

<b>Asking questions</b>	<b>Evaluating</b>
Keeping questioning always active; continuous questioning	Understanding
Focussing on the object of thinking	Making sense
Discussing the controversy	Conceptualisation
Criticising	Making judgements
Justifying criticism	Opening its judgement to discussion and criticism
Identifying similarities and differences in justification	Being creative

In sum, "through philosophical thinking, man turns towards himself, others, his sociality, culturality and historicity and tries to understand these structures in all their functioning" (Gülenç, 2006, 63).

### **Can Children Do Philosophy?**

With Socrates' contribution, man learned to question methodologically and to analyze universal themes such as truth, justice, beauty, and goodness. With Socrates' ironic questioning, knowledge is not transmitted by the adult as the knower, but rather discovered by the learner himself. In other words, Socrates did not teach philosophy, he taught how to philosophise. Because instead of spreading a theory, his own theory, he tried to spread the method of learning to think/reflect (Daniel & Auriac, 2011). Therefore, it is possible to see that the answer to the question "can children philosophise", which is still being discussed, is hidden in Socrates' philosophy.

Doing philosophy and criticising/evaluating systems of thought in the history of philosophy are two different things. The two basic motives for doing philosophy are curiosity and scepticism. Both of these motives are found in children. Children are naturally curious about everything that happens around them. They even ask questions that even adults do not ask. Asking questions brings scepticism, in other words, questioning. Most children ask questions such as; Who created the world? Why is it wrong to lie? Where do people go when they die? They have asked questions similar to the questions that have been widely discussed in the history of philosophy. However, not encouraging children to ask questions during the development process or directing them to more concrete goals creates an obstacle for them to be interested in these questions or their answers.

Similarly, McCall (2017) states that abstract ideas and ambiguous topics are mostly excluded from their education programmes because it is not thought that young children can neither think in abstract terms nor engage in logical reasoning about philosophical concepts; therefore, children who have no experience in abstract thinking fail when they are tested on this skill. However, children of all ages have the potential to do philosophy. Existing research provides ample evidence of young children's philosophical abilities (Lipman & Gazzard, 1988; Trickey & Topping, 2004 ; García-Moriyón, Rebolillo, & Colom, 2005; Collins, 2005; Lyle, 2008).

### **The Importance of Philosophy for Children**

Many teachers appear to expose students to a monologue-style approach rather than dialogic discussion (Caughlan, Juzwik, Borsheim-Black, Kelly, & Fine, 2013; Reznitskaya, 2012; Waring, 2014). Such a monological approach mainly encourages the recall of knowledge and other low-level cognitive activities rather than facilitating the development of thinking skills. Research shows the positive effects of philosophical discussion in the classroom on students' language development. For example, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2009) claims that helping students learn to philosophise can facilitate their mastery of language and speech. Cebas and Moriyon reviewed more than 50 empirical studies on philosophy in schools and found that philosophising with students helps them acquire language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening (Lam, 2019). Haynes (2000) argues that students' confidence increases when they are encouraged to question and deconstruct texts in depth and to use clearer definitions and present clear arguments during discussion. Research also suggests that teaching strategies routinely used in philosophical discussions (such as questioning, exploring, imagining, collaborating) help to create an environment that fosters creative thinking (Edgar et al., 2008).

Indeed, for centuries philosophy has been seen as an intellectual activity focussing on both the complex cognitive skills associated with critical thinking and the more holistic characteristics associated with creative thinking. Philosophy is still viewed as a subject that involves cultivating a critical mind and acting as a strong defense against any doctrinaire passions. (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2007). However, as many years of experience in philosophy for children have shown, philosophy develops creative and imaginative thinking that encourages students to think outside the box (Lam, 2013).

There is also evidence that integrating philosophy with children can have a positive impact on the achievement of all students, regardless of gender and ability (Haynes, 2008). On the other hand, philosophy in schools/philosophy with children offers opportunities to meet the professional development needs of teachers in terms of developing teachers' effective questioning techniques (Mak, 2010). Another important element is that philosophy with children programmes can play a key role in building a democratic society by nurturing the critical abilities and dispositions that students need to participate in democratic life. This contribution is particularly important for local governments as it involves striving for a democratisation process that requires the participation of a critical citizenry (Lam, 2019).

### **Philosophy with Children and Its Implementation in Schools**

Philosophy for children aims to teach children to think for themselves and make wise choices. The aim is to develop children's reasoning skills by enabling them to reflect on thinking while discussing concepts that are important to them. The philosophy for children programme assumes that even 6-7 year olds are capable of critical and reflective thinking. Children's novels/stories/fairy tales serve as a starting point for discussion in the programme, which covers a long period of time from six to sixteen years of age. The class acts as a community of enquiry, learning to solve problems through their reasoning powers. In general, the philosophical thinking process begins when the teachers of the philosophy with children programme share a short story, picture, poem, object or other stimulus with their students. The children are given a certain amount of time to think about their own questions related to the stimulus presented to them. Short discussions then turn into comprehensive discussions (Trickey & Topping, 2004).

Given that it can be incorporated into already-existing standard curriculum (Goering & Whittaker, 2007) and requires very little in the way of implementation expenditures, philosophy with children has a high administrative and financial viability (Topping & Trickey, 2007). Though many schools provide philosophy with children programs as extracurricular or supplemental activities (Hand & Winstanley, 2008), such activities are uncommon in Turkish schools and are mostly offered in private schools.

### **Integrating Philosophy with Children into The Social Studies Course**

Countries all over the world aim to raise young people as members of society. The countries see the task of socialising future generations in line with the orientations of the nation-state as very important, and centralised countries such as Turkey, in particular, place the responsibility on schools to fulfil this task. In general, social studies education offers a curriculum with the basic aim of preparing students for society.

Social Studies was first introduced as a stand-alone subject in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century and has gradually become established as a vehicle for citizenship education in the United States and many other countries that have followed. With changing emphases over time, Social Studies Education has been influenced by four main traditions. The first, social studies as citizenship transmission, focuses on students' learning outcomes of the knowledge, values and skills assumed to be necessary for sustaining a sustainable cultural life, including understanding and promoting a nation's history, traditions



and place in the world. Secondly, the tradition of social studies as social studies reflects the "new social studies movement", which is built from the knowledge compiled by the social science disciplines. This tradition emphasises the research methods used by the disciplines of social studies and aims to educate citizens with discipline-based knowledge, understanding and skills and the ability to think logically. The third tradition, social studies as reflective enquiry, is based on the idea of active citizens participating in social, political and economic decision-making and being effective in shaping their own lives. It is also influenced by the new social studies movement and focuses on developing critical and reflective thinking and decision-making skills in students. Knowledge is gained and utilised when students investigate and reflect on a range of social problems or issues (Hawe et al., 2010). Later, a fourth tradition was advocated based on the work of Marsh (1987), Hill (1994) and Gilbert (1996). This tradition is based on critical citizenship education. It aims to educate citizens for social and ethical development by raising students' personal consciousness and therefore takes the name social studies as individual, social. In this tradition, which includes value analysis and explanation as well as critical and reflective thinking skills, students deal with the problems they face in the process of holistic development of the individual and the learning outcomes of a positive self-concept. They are encouraged to question their social and cultural situation and to consider their personal beliefs and values. Thus, they can break free from the shackles of unrecognised dependencies such as social background, gender or class (Milligan & Beals, 2004; Hill, 1994).

It is widely acknowledged that the goal of social studies education is to generate "good citizens" or to raise people who are rational, accountable and able to assume their position as citizens in a democratic society (Hawe et al., 2010). Undoubtedly, each society's perception or expectation of "good citizen" may be different from each other. Religious, political, cultural, economic and similar contexts of societies have an important place in the construction of citizen identity. Therefore, how the concept of "good citizen" will be shaped varies from one society to another. However, achieving democracy is among the social goals of many countries. In this case, the expectation of "good citizen" has a structure that intersects with the characteristics of democratic citizens.

One of the main aims of Social Studies teaching is to teach the knowledge, processes and dispositions necessary for students to become active and engaged citizens in a democratic society. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) state that there are three visions of citizenship education. These are: the personal responsible citizen who is a law-abiding, honest,

responsible and law-abiding member of society with good character; the participatory citizen who actively participates in community institutions and the social life of society at the local, regional or national level; and the justice-oriented citizen who shares the vision of the participatory citizen, both reacting to social problems, addressing and criticising issues related to injustice, and participating in collaborative work related to the life and problems of society. An analysis of the specific aims of the Turkish Social Studies curriculum, the basic skills to be acquired, the targeted basic values and the achievements at each grade level reveals that the above-mentioned visions of citizenship overlap in many aspects. In fact, we can say that the kind of citizen that the Turkish Social Studies curriculum seeks to raise is someone who possesses abilities like critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and social participation; who has learned values like justice, peace, sensitivity, and responsibility; who is aware of their physical and emotional characteristics, interests, desires, and abilities as free individuals; who believes in the significance of social participation; and who is aware of their physical and emotional characteristics, interests, desires, and abilities as individuals. Therefore, Philosophy with Children offers important contributions to raise individuals with these qualities. In this direction, an integration approach was presented for the question "How can Philosophy with Children be integrated into the Social Studies course?". Below, the areas where philosophy with children practices can be carried out for the learning areas and outcomes of the Social Studies course are listed.

**Table 2**

*Learning Areas and Philosophy Areas*

<b>Learning area</b>	<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<b>Philosophy area</b>
Individual and society	All learning outcomes	Philosophy of the self, social philosophy, political philosophy
Culture and heritage	All learning outcomes	Philosophy of history and time, philosophy of religion, philosophy of art
People, places and environments	All learning outcomes	Moral philosophy, philosophy of the environment
Science, technology and society	All learning outcomes	Philosophy of technology, moral philosophy
Production, distribution and consumption	All learning outcomes	Philosophy of the self, philosophy of culture, philosophy of environment
Active citizenship	All learning outcomes	Social philosophy, political philosophy, moral philosophy
Global connections	All learning outcomes	Philosophy of culture, philosophy of man, philosophy of the self

A review of the Social Studies curriculum and Table 2 shows that philosophy with children can be implemented in all learning areas of the Social Studies course.

It is possible to list the areas of philosophy with children that can be applied in the dimension of the basic skills that students should acquire in the Social Studies curriculum as follows.

**Table 3**

*Basic Skills and Areas of Philosophy*

<b>Basic Skills</b>	<b>Areas of Philosophy</b>
Critical thinking	All fields of philosophy
Environmental literacy	Philosophy of the environment
Empathy	Philosophy of man, philosophy of the self
Communication	Philosophy of communication
Recognising stereotypes and prejudice	Philosophy of culture, philosophy of man, philosophy of religion
Using evidence	All fields of philosophy
Problem solving	All fields of philosophy
Social inclusion	All fields of philosophy
Perceiving change and continuity	Philosophy of history
Decision making	All fields of philosophy
Political literacy	Philosophy of politics
Using Turkish correctly, well and effectively	All fields of philosophy

The areas of philosophy with children applicable with respect to the core values aimed to be acquired by students in the Social Studies curriculum are listed in the table below.

**Table 4**

*Core Values and Areas of Philosophy*

<b>Core Values</b>	<b>Areas of Philosophy</b>
Justice	Political philosophy, moral philosophy, social philosophy
Peace	Social philosophy, philosophy of the man
Sensitivity	Moral philosophy, philosophy of the self
Solidarity	Moral philosophy, political philosophy
Aesthetics	Philosophy of art
Giving importance to family unity	Social philosophy, Philosophy of the culture
Benevolence	Moral philosophy
Scientificity	Philosophy of science
Equality	Political philosophy, social philosophy
Freedom	Political philosophy, moral philosophy
Love	Moral philosophy, philosophy of the self
Respect	Moral philosophy, philosophy of the self
Responsibility	Moral philosophy, philosophy of the self
Honesty	Moral philosophy, philosophy of the self

It is thought that it is important to give a few examples of activities that we can benefit from the field of Philosophy with Children in order to realize the learning outcomes, skills and values in the Social Studies curriculum in order to concretize the subject and give direction to the practices. For example, the philosophy of the self is concerned with how one distinguishes oneself from others, how self-awareness provides insight into the nature of the self, how one constructs one's individual identity over time, and what kind of self-understanding is required for rational or free agency (Gertler, 2021). The learning area of the Social Studies course, especially the individual and society and global connections, provides an opportunity to do philosophy practices with children in the dimension of philosophy of the self, and at the same time, it can provide opportunities to realize the achievements of the course more effectively. It is possible to plan an activity in this area as follows:

**Activity 1. Who am I? (Tuncel, 2021)**

Area of Philosophy: Philosophy of the self

Social Studies Learning Area: Individual and Society

Basic skills: Critical thinking, communication, perception of change and continuity, correct, beautiful and effective use of Turkish

Core values: Respect, Love, Freedom

**Case Study**

*One evening I was sitting alone with my mother at home. My mother said, "Ozgur, come on son, bring the albums and let's remember the old days together. I took the albums from the cupboard and sat next to my mother. I was very interested in the pictures of my mother and father as children. It's a very strange thing to think that my mother and father were children. Was my mother who was a child and my mother who is with me now the same person? Then I looked at my photos. There were many photos of me from when I was a baby until I was 13 years old. First pictures of me crawling, then walking, running, jumping. I realized that at first I was a baby who couldn't speak, then I said the names of objects, and now I think and speak in a different way. So, was there a part of me that remained the same since I was a baby? What did I want to express when I say "me", the crawling me or the thinking me? Who am I? Am I my body or my mind? Am I memories?*

*Am I emotions? Am I likes or dislikes? Or am I a perfectly functioning machine?*

### **Philosophical Questioning**

- Do such questions come to your mind when you look at your childhood pictures like Özgür? What do you mean when you say "I"?
- How do you answer when you ask who am I?
- Are we memories?
- Are we the ones we like or dislike?
- Are we emotions?
- Are we thoughts?
- What distinguishes us from another living being or a robot?
- Would we still be us if we lost a part of ourselves? Or would we still be us if we grew up, for example, if our hair grew longer, our height grew taller, our age grew older? Would something remain unchanged in us as we change? What makes us who we are?
- Are you still the same you even though you are constantly changing over time? If you are the same person, what makes it so?

### **Sections from Philosophical Questioning**

*Trainer: Do such questions come to your mind when you look at your childhood pictures like Özgür? What do you mean when you say I? How do you answer when you ask who am I?*

*Utku: Maybe all our memories together make up who we are. So we have a lot of memories. I remember that I know how to ride a bicycle. I can solve a math problem thanks to what I remember. I remember the time of a train or a friend's birthday. Memories help me discover what I like and dislike. For example, I remember that I like the taste of chocolate.*

*Demir: But how do we remember our memories? For example, I remember how I met my best friend, because I feel happy when I remember her. I mean, don't our emotions help us remember something?*

*Ela: So when I ask who I am, do my emotions determine who I am? I mean, I feel happy when I do sports, but someone else wants to cry. It's the same thing but it feels different.*

*Irmak: This is what you mean, isn't it? Our emotions make us happy, smiling, harmonious, calm or angry, unhappy people.*

*Talha: I think our likes and dislikes separate us from each other. I mean, I love playing soccer, so when I ask who I am, I say I'm a sports fan.*

*Duru: But we like a lot of things. We don't like a lot of things either. Are we going to make a definition for each of them? There are many things like I like sports, I like dancing, I like chocolate, I like music. I think these are not enough to say who I am.*

*Irmak: Maybe my thoughts make me who I am. Just like we don't feel the same when we do the same thing. Can the same be true for thoughts? We have different thoughts about everything. This separates us from others.*

*Talha: But many of our things are similar. It's like a toy robot set up. We do the same things every day. The way our bodies work is the same. To school in the morning, home or work in the evening. So everyone is like a robot with batteries. When the battery runs out, it goes back home.*

*Trainer: So can robots think like us?*

*Talha: Maybe they can.*

*Demir: No, he cannot think. He is like a computer, he only does what he is commanded to do.*

*Irmak: It's like a living thing, but it's not really alive. If it falls on the ground, nothing hurts. His feelings don't get hurt. We need to be able to think for our feelings to be hurt. Otherwise, how do we know when something bad is being said?*

*Aynur: But our feelings change, don't they? Do we change when our feelings change?*

*Demir: Yes, I think it changes. When we look at your old pictures, we already see that we have changed. But a robot doesn't change. It is how you program it.*

*Aynur: We have been changing since we were born, but at the same time it's like we are the same person. I mean, when Aynur is mentioned, people think of certain things about me.*

Philosophy of the environment examines our relationship as human beings to nature or our natural environment, our understanding of nature and our conception of its value. It explores through philosophy how and to what extent humans are a part of nature and how

they coexist with it. Philosophy of the environment , which encompasses all the basic disciplines of philosophy, questions how we know and understand nature in the epistemological dimension, how different epistemologies reveal different aspects of the natural world, deals with examples that can be taken to give meaning and value to nature in the aesthetic dimension, and examines the moral aspects of human behavior towards living things and systems in the ethical dimension (Mathew, 2014). The learning areas of the Social Studies course, especially the learning areas of people, places and environments and production, distribution and consumption, seem to be very suitable for realizing the learning outcomes based on philosophy of the environment . The following activity can provide students with an opportunity to both realize the outcomes of the Social Studies course and to engage in philosophy of the environment .

### **Activity 2. Natural Cycle**

Area of philosophy: Philosophy of the environment

Social Studies area: People Places and Environments, Production Distribution and Consumption

#### ***Case Study***

*Mr. Cemal, Hasan's father, got up early in the morning and went out to water the land he had planted in the garden. Mr. Cemal used to grow a variety of vegetables and then sell them in the market to make a living for the family. Just as he was about to start watering, he saw that there was no trace of the seeds he had planted, the soil was riddled with holes. Mr. Cemal immediately ran home. "Hasan, my son, wake up now! We have to go to the city and look for a cure at the pharmacy." Hasan got up in a panic. "What happened, father, what is this excitement?" he said. His father explained that the mice had eaten all the seeds and riddled the garden with holes and added, "We have to go and buy medicine right now, we have to take care of the mice." "What kind of medicine, dad, are you going to poison them?" Hasan asked in fear. Mr. Cemal replied, "What else can I do, otherwise we will starve." Father and son went into town together and bought a poisonous medicine for rats from the pharmacy. When they returned home, Mr. Cemal placed the poison all over the garden. Within a few days there were no more rats. Mr. Cemal was enjoying his days, when one morning*

*Hasan's mother went out into the garden to prepare breakfast. Then a frightened scream echoed. Hasan and his father heard the scream and ran into the garden. Hasan's mother was standing at the table and couldn't take her eyes off the snake on the table. Cemal Bey was wondering how to get the snake when Hasan shouted, "Dad, there are two snakes in the chicken coop and I see one next to the lamb." Unable to understand what was happening, Cemal Bey immediately called the Directorate of Agriculture and explained the situation.*

### **Philosophical Questioning**

- Was killing rats harmful? If harmful, who or what did it harm?
- What does it mean to do something harmful? How can you distinguish harmful things from non-harmful things?
- Was there any way for Mr. Cemal to save his crops without harming the mice? How?
- Is it more important that Mr. Cemal was harmed or that the mice were harmed? Why?
- What did killing the rats result in? Why?
- Is everything connected in the natural environment? How?
- What happens when we destroy a living thing in nature?
- What do you understand by natural balance or ecosystem?
- What can be done to maintain this balance in nature?

Moral philosophy can be defined as the analysis of human actions in terms of good/bad or morally right/morally wrong. The German philosopher Kant characterized moral philosophy as thinking about the question "What should I do?" (Bartneck et al., 2021). More or less every subject of the Social Studies course is related to the question "what should I do?" of the individual in society. In particular, learning areas such as the individual and society, people, places and environments, active citizenship and global connections can be directly presented to students through moral philosophy practices. As can be seen in the activity example presented below, moral philosophy applications can provide a facilitating effect for topics that include concepts such as social solidarity, benevolence, and responsibility, which are among the cornerstones of the Social Studies course.



**Activity 3. Why Do We Help Someone?** (Tuncel, 2021; İcen, 2022)

Area of philosophy: Moral philosophy

Social Studies Area: Individual and Society

Basic skills: Critical thinking, communication, empathy, using Turkish correctly, well and effectively

Core values: Cooperation, solidarity, responsibility

**Case Study**

*On my way to school today I saw an old man walking slowly with a bag in one hand and a walking stick in the other. Suddenly he tripped and fell to the ground. When I first saw him, I thought he could get up on his own. Then I said to myself, "What if he can't get up?" I said to myself and ran to him. I said, "Let me help him, uncle," and grabbed his arm and helped him get up. I bent down to pick up his bag that had fallen on the ground. I said to myself, "How heavy it was. He was already walking with difficulty. Carrying this bag was making it even more difficult. I offered to carry his bag. He said yes. He lived near the school. My friends gathered in front of the school and were chatting. They called me to join them and I said I was coming to take the uncle home. After we passed by, I overheard their conversation. One of them said, "That Aegean thinks he is an angel of goodness. Another said, "Why is he going to help his father, grandfather or uncle? Another said, "I wonder what his purpose is, is he going to give him money? By this time we had arrived at the uncle's house, he thanked me and went in the door. So I went back to school, but I started thinking about what my friends had said, what did they mean? Why do we choose to help someone? Do we have to be close to someone to help them?*

**Philosophical Questioning**

- Why does Ege help the old man?
- What do his friends think when they see Ege helping the old man?
- Why do you think you should help a person?
- How would you act if you saw someone on the road who needed help?
- What kind of behavior is it to help? Is it good or bad?

- For what reasons does one person help another person?
- What are the purposes of helping behavior?

### **Sections from Philosophical Questioning**

*Trainer: Is it right to help an old man who falls down on the road? Why?*

*Utku: Of course it is right. If we help him, they will help us one day when we need it.*

*Duru: So if we are sure that one day we won't need help, then we won't need to help?*

*Demir: When you put it like that, it sounds a bit manipulative. Well, when we do good, we feel happy and peaceful. What do you think about that?*

*Irmak: It's nice to feel happy, of course, but sometimes we can put ourselves in a difficult situation when we help.*

*Demir: How do you mean?*

*Irmak: For example, if a very close friend of ours needs money for something important. We can give him the last money in our pocket and meet his need. But when we can't do some of the things we want to do with that money, we may not be very happy.*

*Talha: That sounds about right. But what if I say that if we help, we will do good deeds. Of course you will say again that it is manipulative. Because I'm still getting something in return, right?*

*Irmak: What would you say if I said that doing good is a human duty?*

*Utku: Yes, our teacher said this in Social Studies class about human rights. He said it was a human duty to defend human rights. In other words, it doesn't matter if our rights are violated, it is our duty to defend the rights of others. In the same way, I think that just as it is our duty as human beings to defend human rights, it is also our duty as human beings to help those who need help.*

*Talha: So it's not something that someone else tells us to do, it's something we have to do? I mean, there is no condition, there is no gain for us, such as benefit, such as being happy.*

*Irmak: I think so, if it brings us a gain in some way, it is not right. It is right when we do it because it is our duty, that is, when we do it without any gain.*

*Iron: For example, if we stop at a red light to avoid getting a ticket, this is not right, but if we stop because we have to stop, this is right. Because then, when there is no camera and nobody sees us, we can run a red light because we don't want to get a ticket.*

*Duru: I mean, goodness is not about calculating profit and loss, right? In Ege's case, the old uncle has nothing to do with him. Ege has no interest or expectation from the man. He doesn't say that if I help, maybe the man will give me money or candy or chocolate.*

*Talha: Or he doesn't think that I will do good deeds. I mean, at that moment he just thinks that the man needs help.*

As a branch of applied philosophy, social philosophy investigates questions regarding the origins, significance, and structure of society. Focusing on the relationship between the individual and society, social philosophy deals with issues such as democracy and human rights, gender, global justice, the consequences of globalization, the consequences of globalization, relations with modern technology, ecological problems by focusing on the social contexts of all the moral, cultural, legal and political problems it examines (Canatan, 2020), and examines questions about the foundations of social institutions, social behaviors and interpretations of society in terms of ethical values rather than empirical relations (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022). Philosophy of art, on the other hand, is a field of philosophy that investigates issues such as the process and purpose of the creation of a work of art. Philosophy of art analyzes both the conceptual structure and function of art from a philosophical point of view and deals with the existence, message and function of the work of art from different philosophical perspectives (Uludağ, 1993). In the Social Studies course, learning areas such as the individual and society, production, distribution and consumption, and the values that should be acquired can be covered in the context of both social philosophy and philosophy of art. In the activity presented below, values and skills are given with the outcomes that are thought to be directly related.

#### **Activity 4. Philosophy Through Children's Literature**

Area of philosophy: Social philosophy, philosophy of art

Social Studies Area: Individual and Society, Production, Distribution and Consumption

Social Studies Outcomes: SS.5.1.3. As an individual who is aware of his/her rights, acts in accordance with the duties and responsibilities required by the roles he/she takes in the groups he/she participates in; SS.5.5.4. Analyzes the production, distribution and consumption network of products to meet basic needs; SB.5.5.5. Develops new ideas based on production, distribution and consumption by cooperating; SS.6.1.4. Participates in activities that support social cooperation and solidarity in the formation of social unity.

Basic skills: Critical thinking, communication, problem solving, using Turkish correctly, beautifully and effectively

Core values: Cooperation, solidarity, responsibility, justice, aesthetics.

### **Summary of the Story (Frederick: Leo Lionni)**

*This story is about a family of field mice preparing for winter. As winter approaches, the whole family is hard at work stocking up on food for the winter, while Frederick, a member of the family, sits in a corner and daydreams. When asked why he is not working, he replies that he is actually working, collecting sunlight for the cold and dark winter days. Another day he collects colors, another day words... The others continue to work. Winter comes and the snow comes. One day the mice run out of food, which was initially plentiful and enough to keep them happy. Will it be Frederick's gleaning that will keep them warm and alive? Frederick uses the art of poetry to help the days pass.*

### **Philosophical Questioning**

- What makes a society a society?
- Try to think about the society/communities you are part of. How do you know they are societies/communities?
- Do you think the goals of the individual or the goals of the community come first? Why?
- Which actions can be considered work? Why?
- Do you think Frederick is working?
- What makes a type of work important?
- If the mice had not run out of food, would Frederick have any use value? Why?

- If Frederick were a famous poet, would his work count? Or would his poetry be more valuable?
- Do people need poetry? Why?
- Is it important for people to have arts such as painting, poetry and music? Why?
- Does Frederick deserve to eat some of the food even though he did not collect it? Is this fair? Why is this fair?

### **Discussion and Results**

The goal of philosophy with children is to reclaim education for kids, create a forum for their ideas and questions, and make it possible for them to take an active role in their own education. Children learn better when they collaborate on ideas, share their ideas and views with others, and let others explore and occasionally challenge those ideas and beliefs (Garside, 2013). Philosophizing with children from an early age brings with it an open-mindedness that accommodates different views and opinions in their later years. A society that lacks critical citizenship can always be threatened if it cannot properly comprehend and evaluate policies and practices that require public deliberation and decision-making. Philosophy with children, which allows for open-mindedness as an epistemic virtue, is an important way to develop democratic citizenship at an early age (Ndofirepi, 2012). In particular, the inclusion of philosophy with children in the school curriculum is thought to contribute highly to improving the quality of education.

It is possible to mention countries where efforts to comprehensively introduce philosophy with children in the field of education have shown positive results. There are more than 25 states where philosophy with children is included in the school curriculum. One of these provinces is Ontario (Canada), which hypothesizes that teaching philosophy with children will bring a range of benefits not only to children, but also to teachers, the economy and society. Among these benefits are the learning outcomes of critical thinking, reasoning and good judgment skills, learning to approach written texts and arguments formulated by themselves or others in a more questioning way. In addition, through philosophy practices with children, students' logical thinking, analysis and summarization skills are developed. On the other hand, employers realize that through philosophy with children, young employees

become more open-minded, able to solve problems, offer alternative solutions and do not find it difficult to adapt to new technologies (Gruioniu, 2013).

Consequently, for philosophy with children to have a formative impact and thus significantly influence both the way individuals think and the character of their interests, it needs to be part of regular education throughout the school years. Since philosophy with children aims to help children think autonomously, critically and logically, it is also of great value for the promotion of democracy. In short, when philosophy with children is incorporated into school curricula, especially in the curricula of comprehensive courses such as Social Studies, it is thought that important qualitative steps will be taken in the dimension of the goals of education and training. In this regard, it is recommended that both program development studies and applications be carried out at each grade level and the effectiveness of the results examined.

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