

A Review of Elementary Education Curricula in Turkey: Values and Values Education

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Abstract: Affective domain, which includes values, ethics, preferences, emotions, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, morals is inevitable for the individual and social life. What is more, affective domain contributes a lot to cognitive domain. Affective characteristics have a great effect on individuals' success and performances. Values are phenomenon that has the effect of uniting people. Values are believed to satisfy community's needs and they are for their good as well. Values education is an important domain that has to be developed by the help of education. Values education is clearly mentioned and accepted as one of the most important goals in Turkish elementary education curricula which were renewed in 2005. The purpose of this study is to investigate elementary education curricula from the aspect of values and values education. This study is restricted with the elementary education 1-5. grades Turkish, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Social Studies and Science and Technology curricula. In order to achieve the goals of this study, the new curricula was examined to determine which values are included in the courses. In some curricula values education is explicit, while it is offered implicitly in others.

Key words: Elementary education curricula • Values • Values education

INTRODUCTION

Values have long been the subject of many disciplines from sociology to philosophy, from anthropology to psychology. In recent years it has become an important subject of education. Transferring the values is being done in a framework of a plan via educational curriculum which is formed for formal education institutes. Values have mostly been studied by social scientists. The reason for this is that values have a vital importance in explaining human behaviors and forming the social life. After social scientists and philosophers, values have become the subject for researches of educational scientists. Values education is becoming a very important issue in the changing and developing world.

Values can be categorized as family values, social values and individual values depending on the characteristics of the human community they belong to. A child learns his/her first social behavior by interacting with the family members and imitating them. If the children's knowledge, attitudes and values they gain in the family are well grounded and if they have a harmony with the other values, they will get along well with the others and will be more successful people in both school and society. However, if there is a conflict between family

values and the other values that the person has, he/she will be influenced by this in a negative way [1]. The social values category includes most of the traditions, customs and social rules. Via social values, display of common behaviors by the individuals is made to be possible and therefore, social conflicts can be reduced and the continuity of the society can be provided. Another dimension of values is individual values. These have a vital role in developing the character of the individual. If those values are underdeveloped there will be the risk of personality problems which can be faced with. This will influence the success of the students directly and it may even lead them to be out of formal education environment [2]. Although values are an important field which has to be developed and matured by education, it has not taken part and got the essential importance in education up to now. One of the reasons for this may be that values education has been left to the institutions out of schools to a certain level. For instance, families have taken important responsibility and have been charged with this issue. However, schools are also responsible for this issue. Johnson ve Immerwahr (1995) did a research with families, where results showed that 71% of the families think that teaching values at school is more important than teaching academic subjects [3].

In spite of the fact that it always takes place in the general objectives of education, since how to attain affective characteristics is not stated clearly in the curriculum, this area has always been neglected in formal education. The fact that how to attain values is not stated clearly and obviously does not mean that value education is not carried out at schools. In fact, the cultural environment that the teachers create at school and in class, what the teachers give importance to, what they perceive as “good” and “bad” form the value education in a hidden way for the students. Briefly, value education is always realized at school in any case. Nevertheless, this must be achieved by planned learning experiences as part of formal education.

There is a consensus among the educators and politicians in the necessity of value education, but when it comes to which values should be taught, their ideas vary. Values are actually a critical/sensitive issue. Some educators inquire whose values must be taken as reference. Whether values of religion or that of ruling class in the society, or universal values that are common references for everyone should be chosen. However much of this issue is controversial, it is also observed that there is a consensus around the core values which is formed in the framework of universal democratic values. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), stated the characteristics that must be found in a democratic person who has matured ethically as follows [3].

- **Respect for human values:** Respect for human rights and values, avoiding misleading and dishonesty, working to attain the equality among people, working with people who have different point of views.
- **Respect for Freedom of Conscience:** Avoiding prejudiced behaviors, considering others’ well being/benefit, accepting the inter-dependence between people, seeking for social justice, considering the welfare of his/her country, enjoying helping others, trying to help others’ maturation ethically.
- **Integration of Individual Benefit and Social Responsibilities:** Dealing with social life, carrying out their responsibilities in their social environment, giving importance to the values such as honesty, self-control, courtesy, hard-working in daily life, keeping his/her word.

- **Improving Self-confidence by Communication with Others:** Being honest, working neatly and patiently, obeying ethical principles, showing ethical boldness, thinking about ethical alternatives, applying ethical principles while judging ethically, considering/reasoning the results of decisions, trying to learn more about the ethical issues in the society and the world.
- **Seeking Peaceful Solutions for the Conflicts:** Seeking for fair solutions for personal and social conflicts, avoiding physical and verbal aggressiveness, listening to others actively and carefully, encouraging one for interaction with the others, working for peace.

The Meaning of Value: Value as a concept is a broad subject being mentioned in almost all sciences. Values are the standards, beliefs or moral principles accepted by an individual or a social group [4]. Values are those rigid standards found in cultures. Individuals in a community take them as a guide. However, there are no specific rules that tell us how to abide by them. Values, in general, are the facts that we use as a measure for our beliefs, desires and behaviors. Having first been introduced to social sciences by Znaniecki, the meaning of the concept of values comes from the Latin root “valere” which means “being valuable” or “being powerful” [5].

Values were first studied in philosophy and moral rules and later were introduced into psychology, sociology, administration and medical sciences. Allport (1937) first studied this concept; later Rokeach (1973) formulated the theory of values, from where the Rokeach Values Scale and Schwartz Values Scale were developed [6].

A value is defined as a tendency to choose something over another. Values are those conceptions to create and evaluate the behaviors. Also, by identifying what is important, values show those situations desired, preferred or not by individuals [7]. Dewey (1990) emphasized that character development must have a priority over the subject area. The purpose is not knowledge, but self-actualization. Teachers are not only responsible to train “knowledgeable” students, but also “good people”. This responsibility becomes more and more important as it functions to remove the violence in the society [8].

The problem of values comes up as a philosophical evaluation. Because, asking the questions “What is good/right/fine?” turns the evaluation into a problem.

Asking questions about the basics of interpersonal relationships like respect, honesty, equality, justice or studying the success of arts, sciences and morals makes it problematic [8].

Schwartz defines the concept of values as intellectual representations used to guide organization of needs between the individual behaviors and biological, social interactions or social institutions [9]. According to the theory of basic human values, they are the criteria or purposes that guide the social beings in life, the importance of which can change and can be attributed to other desired situations. Values work for the interests of some social beings, motivate them as they gain direction and emotional loads. They function as standards to judge and explain behaviors and they are acquired through learning experiences and socialization with dominant group values.

Values Education: While, in practice, the concept of values education emphasizes citizenship education and moral education, today this concept stresses the education of virtues, attitudes and individual characteristics and the character that involves the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [10].

Generally, character education is used as concept of moral judgment/individual growth, social and emotional learning, teaching of morals/virtues, life skills, citizenship, social responsibility, drug abuse/violence prevention, conflict resolution and similar educations [11]. Character education has been an approach discussed by parents, community members and school personnel as an education to help children become responsible individuals with principles. It is about the lives of students, their interests, attitudes, emotions and behaviors. Children can learn and develop the concepts of values and decide on their choices when the values are suitable to their levels. As they grow, they acquire more knowledge; they have broader choices and decide on them from complex alternatives.

Approaches for Values Teaching: It is believed that the teaching methods and techniques and value acquisition approaches that will be used to make student acquire values during the process of value teaching should be appropriate for students' development level. While teaching the term of morality and characteristic properties to primary school students, it should be provided that these students learn these values voluntarily instead of making them accept some values due to social

compulsion. It is because of the fact that individuals who have reached moral maturity want to guess the results of their actions such as being awarded or punished. If an individual adopts a value or moral rule, s/he will realize that value before someone tells her/him to do it.

There are different approaches of value teaching at schools. While some of these approaches exist as activities in course curriculum, some include the whole, open and hidden, school curriculum. Direct teaching of values (suggestion), value clarification, value analysis and moral dilemma (dilemma discussion) are approaches that are commonly accepted for value teaching.

Direct Teaching of Values: In this approach, it is believed that adults have the duty and responsibility of teaching moral values to children in a direct method as well as shaping their behaviors and making them acquire good habits [10]. This approach aims to make the young individual acquire values through the adult's transferring her/his own experiences to the youngster. Adults transfer their experiences to the young individual directly in order to prevent the youngster from suffering while shaping his/her own values. The approach of suggestion/advising can only be valid if the desired values are transferred to the individual continually and constantly. The results of the studies made on this approach which is based on accepting the values without questioning, believing or thinking have shown that it does not work for teachers.

Value Clarification: This approach is based on how individuals determine what is important for their lives. In this approach, the individual decides freely on what is valuable or not for herself/himself after investigating alternatives and possible conclusions without the suggestions of others. When the teacher uses value clarification approach, s/he can use oral activities such as group discussion, effective listening, intercourse as well as writing activities such as opinion papers, autobiography, value papers [12].

Value Analysis: Another approach used in value teaching is value analysis. The main aim of this approach is to help students use the process of scientific research and logical thinking in order to decide on problems about values [3]. This approach includes attention, thinking and distinction. Thorough the sample events, students judge the event and state different possible results of the same event.

Moral Reasoning: In this approach developed by Kohlberg, by the help of the stories given including some moral dilemmas students' moral judgments are determined [13]. This approach can be used in all school levels. However, the activities should be appropriate for the students' level as the development properties of every level are different from the others. In moral dilemma, how students reach a certain solution is more important than the solution itself.

The Teacher's Role in the Teaching of Values:

Children begin to learn about values in the early stages of their lives. This learning process primarily starts within the family. In addition, visual and auditory communication tools, the values of children's friends and teachers, those who look after children, adults, local communities and other agents play a significant role in the learning process. There is evidence pertaining to the fact that children develop an ethical cognition within the first two years. Accordingly, children start schooling with varying values which they bring from pre-school experience. The school has two functions in this process:

- It constitutes and adds new ones to the values that children begin to develop by employing the existing series of values in the society (such as equality, respect for differences etc.).
- It aids children understand, apply and reflect the values that they formed themselves.

For this process to be completed successfully, it is important to review the teacher-student interaction. The teacher should share the power and authority with the student and have a researching position as well with the student. In addition, the degree to which students develop their skill of critical thinking is also important for the development of their ethical sensitivity.

Children are influenced by their school as well as their family and society and if there is a conflict between their school experience and daily-life-experience, it would be more difficult to internalize the values that the school tries to get the student gain; also, it would be more difficult to achieve the targets set by the program. Furthermore, it is even more difficult for schools to apply programs that include diametrically opposing values with the society's traditional characteristics and thus to be effective. Hence, for educational programs to be effective, social norms should be taken into consideration.

The role of the teacher in the teaching of values includes the power of influencing students [10]. Children are habitually influenced by their teacher that they admire most due to their personal qualities. As a result, being aware of this effect, teachers should take a good-role-model position. Every parent wants to provide their children with good education. By "good" it is meant a person who is on good terms with his/her family and society and a happy person with an acceptable social role. It is not always easy to achieve this expected goal. To be specific, as the values are constantly and rapidly changing today, families find it more difficult to adapt to changes. The values of the Turkish society are also influenced by this constant change. These changes do not always take a positive direction. What poses a threat to the social norms is the fact that different values of different societies are accepted without social consent. Changes primarily affect children and the youth. As a consequence, individuals with different perceptions of values emerge and their standard of value judgment is in contrast with their family. The old express the idea that children gradually begin to get away from such notions as respect, affection, responsibility, loyalty to the family and etc. If a society is deprived of its values and if it has no longer connections with its values, it will more difficult for that society to exist.

If values are so important for the existence or absence of a society, then the importance of the teaching of values should be taken for granted. In most countries, parents, educators, religious institutions and non-governmental organizations try to develop individuals' values and give them the appropriate education. Schools are places for a planned and programmed education/teaching. Consequently, they are one of the leading domains in the teaching of values. Teachers, who are the operators of the teaching programs in the teaching of values, take greater responsibilities. Teachers constitute models with their conduct in the teaching of values. Punctuality and being well-prepared for classes (responsibility), paying attention to appearance (cleanliness) and keeping promises (honesty) etc. will directly contribute to the development of such notions as cleanliness, honesty and responsibility on the students' side. In addition, teachers can be involved in the deliberate teaching of values through in-class activities and through the books that they recommend.

Aim and Method: The aim of this study is to present the importance of values education and analyze elementary education curricula in Turkey in terms of values and

values education. In this study documentary search – a qualitative research method- was used. Document analysis involves analysis of written materials containing facts and knowledge about facts; and includes such procedures as reaching the documents, checking the originality of the texts reached, comprehending the documents, analyzing the data and using the results [14]. This study is restricted with the primary school 1-5. grades Turkish, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Social Studies and Science and Technology curricula.

FINDINGS

Values in Turkish Primary Curricula: The principles of constructivism, student-centeredness, theme approach and active learning were taken as basics in the primary education Mathematics, Turkish, Science and Technology, Life Sciences and Social Sciences curricula, which went into effect in 2005-2006 academic year. The new curricula are different from traditional ones as they put the students more in the center of education. Skills like critical thinking, creative thinking, communication, problem solving, research, decision making, using information technologies, entrepreneurship and giving importance to individual and social values are highlighted in every curriculum.

The vision of renewed curricula is to train happy citizens of the Turkish Republic who have internalized the principles and reforms of Atatürk, who have basic democratic values, who have developed questioning, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making and lifelong learning skills and who have respect for human rights. This notion in a way shows us the basics of values education found in the new curricula.

The general targets of the Turkish National Education were identified through the Basic Law of National Education Number 1739. A close examination of the general targets of the Turkish National Education reveals that it has been aimed to transfer values to students. These targets, which are intended for the primary-school stage, provide a general point of view concerning individual, economic and social lives and interpersonal relationships. Accordingly, it has been aimed to raise the welfare and prosperity of the Turkish citizens and the Turkish society on the one hand and to support and speed the social and cultural development up in terms of national unity and integrity on the other; and eventually to render the Turkish nation a constructive, creative and distinguished participant of the Modern World. The general targets of the Turkish National Education are privatized in educational programs [15].

Values in Mathematics Curriculum: The general aim of the curriculum is to make students learn the main concepts and skills related to mathematics, develop mathematical thinking, get students to comprehend general problem solving strategy, to develop positive attitude towards mathematics and make students appreciate the value of mathematics in real life". It is also stated in the curriculum that the problem solving, communication, making connections and reasoning skills of the students should also be improved. In addition to these skills affective characteristics, self-regulation competence and psychomotor skills also play an important role in the curriculum [16].

When the general aims of the Mathematics curriculum are examined, the emphasis put on the values can be seen in this expression "In this lesson, students can develop such skills as being systematic, careful, patient and responsible." There is not any part in the curriculum related to values and value education. However, under the heading of "affective features" some goals related to students' positive affective development are emphasized. Some of these goals are "to appreciate your power and beauty by the help of mathematics, to be patient while solving a problem, to believe in the fact that mathematics improves creativity, aesthetics and understanding of people, to use mathematical knowledge in real life".

In another part of the curriculum, under the heading of "self-regulation competency" which aims to contribute to the development of affective characteristics, the aim "appreciating the importance of respect, valuing, dignity and tolerance, cooperation, sharing, honesty and love in the relationships in mathematics lessons" is taking attention. It can be seen that by this way such values as respect, dignity, tolerance, cooperation, sharing, honesty and love are emphasized.

Values in Science and Technology Curriculum: The vision of Science and Technology curriculum is determined as "regardless of individual differences all students are going to be competent in science and technology."

When the values in Science and Technology curriculum are analyzed, it can be seen that among the course goals the following are mentioned: "to enable students to realize social, economic and moral values related to science and technology, to notice problems about individual health and environment, to make students take responsibility on these issues and take rational decisions" and "make students have such scientific values as to be enthusiastic about knowing and

understanding, asking, giving importance to logic, thinking about the consequences of one's actions and making students behave in line with these values in their relationship with the society and environment". Under the heading of "Attitudes and Values" in the curriculum, scientific attitudes and values are emphasized. In the Science and Technology curriculum, the scientific attitudes and values that are aimed to be achieved are grouped under five categories. These categories are graded from the easiest to the hardest as the following: "Students' perception of the events happening in their environment willingly, giving appropriate reactions, having positive values, organizing these values in their personality and the last one is developing a life style involving positive attitudes and values" [17].

Some of the attitudes and value attainments stated in Science and Technology curriculum are the following (These are the qualifications that students are aimed to acquire.): "Students are open-minded, do not have any prejudices, try to fulfill their responsibilities, trust logic, science and technology, try to have a clean and healthy life and/or appreciate the people who have such kind of lifestyles, have self esteem and respect the others (they do not make a noise, do not give harm to the environment, do not deny other people's rights, they are just and honest, they think the possible consequences of their actions and behave accordingly) they are careful and they accept the consequences of their behaviors."

There is not any explanation in relation to values education in this curriculum, either. It is only stated that teachers should be models in the process of developing scientific attitudes and values of students.

Values in Turkish Curriculum: The Turkish curriculum is developed with the aim of having students develop listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual reading and visual presentation skills; by using these skills having students develop themselves cognitively, socially and emotionally; getting students to communicate effectively; to have a great love of Turkish and to form the habit of reading and writing. Among the aims of Turkish curriculum there exists such a statement which puts emphasis on values: "make students give importance to the national, moral, ethical, historical, cultural, social, aesthetical values, strengthen national emotions and thoughts." In the curriculum under the heading of "Main Skills" there is a statement "giving importance to the individual and social values" however, what exactly are these values are not mentioned. In the curriculum, there are some texts used in activities about love of nature, friendship, love of animals, responsibility, being

respectful, etc. Although these texts are the signs of the importance given to these values, there is no explanation about values education in the curriculum. Concerning speaking skills, by examining the expression of "speaks by following good manner rules and values (national, moral, cultural, ethical, etc.)", it can be said that there is a limited emphasis on values [18].

Among the obligatory themes in the Turkish curriculum, there exists a theme titled "Our Values". The contents of this theme are the following: "Turkish culture, Turkish language, our important values (Mevlana, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Yunus Emre, Mimar Sinan, Nasrettin Hoca, Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli), religious ceremonies, folksongs, folk dancing, motherland, heroism, flag, etc.

Values in Life Sciences Curriculum: The Life Sciences curriculum is designed for grades 1, 2 and 3. The vision of this curriculum is to raise individuals "who enjoy learning; who are in good terms with themselves and with their social environment and nature; who are protecting, developing and are aware of themselves, their nation, country and nature; who have the basic knowledge and survival skills needed for daily life and the essential qualifications for the contemporary world; who are open-minded and happy enough to adapt dynamically to changes" through activities that are initiated by students and monitored by teachers –rather than by transferring mere knowledge.

A section under the heading "Personal Qualifications" is included in the curriculum. It is stated that Life Sciences curriculum will hopefully contribute to the following qualities and values in students: "self-esteem, self-confidence, socialization, patience, tolerance, affection, respect, peace, benevolence, truthfulness, righteousness, justice, open-mindedness, patriotism and willingness to protect and develop cultural heritage". Some of the objectives expressing the target values and individual qualities in students are: "consciousness and appreciation of ethical values; acceptance of the worthiness of one's self and friends; pursuance of the positive values in both individual and group studies; an acceptance of the importance of the humankind; respecting the people on earth etc." No explanation is given concerning how to teach the values and personal qualities involved in this curriculum [19].

Values in Social Studies Curriculum: In Social Studies curriculum there are twenty values as; justice, caring family members, independence, peace, being scientific, being hardworking, solidarity, sensibility, honesty, aesthetics, tolerance, hospitality, freedom, care for health,

respect, love, responsibility, cleanliness, patriotism and charity. In Social Studies curriculum it is aimed to give values through a sample event or story by value inculcation, moral reasoning and value analysis.

The Characteristics of the Values Explained in Social Studies Curriculum Are as Follows:

- Values are connective phenomenon accepted by the individuals and the society.
- They are criteria believed to respond the needs of the society and they are for individuals' own good.
- They are judgments not only about consciousness but also about feelings and emotions.
- They are motives with in the consciousness of the individual and they manipulate behaviors.
- Being different from the norms and having a more general and abstract quality values are different. Values cover the norms.

The definition of the value is identified in the curriculum as follows: "value is a basic moral principle or common belief which is accepted right or necessary by the most of the society to maintain permanency, presence, unity, functioning and carry on as a small group or society." The followings are given in the curriculum under the heading of "New approaches to value education": "There are different approaches in schools about how to give value education. In schools, the chosen values can be transferred by inculcation method as well as making students find out their own values by value clarification. Also, in order to understand the values of the student and analyze those values systematically, moral reasoning and value analysis approaches can be used". Some explanations about how values teaching should be done and sample activities are mentioned in Social Studies curriculum [20].

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Affective behaviors are about the feelings of an individual. Feelings, choices, values, moral rules, wishes and desires, motives, aptitudes, etc. that are desired to be acquired by people are all under the concept of affective behaviors. For especially affective education, it can be said to be reminiscent of moral education, value education, character education, peace education, democracy education, education of relationships among people or people relationships, social skills education and similar. Affective education is especially used for the personal and social development of an individual [21].

What is expected of education is beyond having them acquire knowledge and skills; it is educating individuals to keep up the progress of community's welfare, to keep up with the changing world and to make the desired changes. There is no universal answer as to which values to include and teach in educational institutions. That's why many educators suggest that local communities should be included in the decision as to which virtues are to be selected and identified in the educational objectives. It will be better to have solidarity and have the opinions of students, teachers, parents, parent-teacher associations and related community organizations in the development of necessary personality characteristics in the school environment. If a better world is aimed at, positive values should be placed at the heart of education. The children rarely acquire social skills and values where there are a lot of negative role models and increasing violence all around. When activities to increase awareness towards values are used, when students are guided to explore the values, more benefits are gained. So far, a variety of methods have been used on how values should be acquired. Some of these methods are based on teaching values directly thorough suggestion (advising) while others are based on acquiring them in a process of implication, questioning, reflective thinking and making a decision.

During the process of value teaching, the things that should be done by teachers may be listed as follows: The teacher should be a model, create a common social structure in class, should give a responsibility to every student in order to contribute to their moral development, encourage students, enable them to make decisions, enable them to share, should encourage them for team work and should transfer values to students according to the approaches of value teaching [22]. Having values teaching in elementary education curricula will help students consider humanely values while giving the right decisions. On the other hand, in a fast changing world, new values are transferred to new generations through the media without any arguments or debates. With values education, besides popular culture, those humanely values that have been accumulated through centuries are aimed to be presented to the students and have them give decisions using those values.

Program development is a systematic and dynamic process that rests upon the cooperative work of many different experts (area expert, teachers, curriculum development expert, testing-evaluation expert, educational psychologist, educational sociologist, etc.). Starting in 2003, in order to improve education system, the Turkish Ministry of National Education went into a curriculum

development process including the elementary education curricula. It was stated that the new curricula were developed through the principles of constructivism. In the elementary education curricula in Turkey, values and values education has its own place. In some curricula values education is explicit, while it is offered implicitly in others. In the literature investigation, it is seen that studies exist which prove that there are values defined in courses and study books although they do not take place in curricula [23]. According to the findings of this study, although it is not stated in the curriculum of Life Sciences, values such as obeying the rules, being clean, being a responsible person, being kind to people, being effective on others are mostly emphasized in activities and evaluations in course and study books. When these values are studied in terms of Schwartz's classification of values, benevolence, reliability, obeying and success are under value types [9]. When activities and evaluation studies in course and study books are investigated, it is found that there are studies in information level and especially about making suggestions within the concept of the course subjects relating to the mentioned values.

As a result, it can be said that in the elementary curricula of Turkey, values and value education is emphasized especially in Life Sciences and Social Studies curricula, in other courses it took place with in the hidden curriculum. Values are given under the heading of "Personal Characteristics" in Life Sciences curriculum. In Social Sciences curriculum, how values education should be done is presented with sample activities. The values emphasized most are love, respect, patriotism, tolerance, charity and hospitality.

Though schools are expected to teach for affective results, just as they are to teach for cognitive achievement, much less attention is given to affective education. Nevertheless affective education is gaining more importance in the elementary education curricula and in accordance with this, values and values education is gaining more importance in Turkey. As the performers of the curricula, how teachers make their students acquire values and how they assess their students should be observed and teachers' are being informed about values education through in-service training should be taken into account.

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