

Evaluation of learning and teaching process in Turkish courses

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Abstract

A radical educational reform occurred in Turkey in 2005; and curriculum of primary education courses was renewed. New curriculum was prepared based on constructivist approach. In this scope, curriculum of Turkish course was also renewed. This study aims at evaluating applications and opinions of teachers and students about learning and teaching process prescribed in Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum. Within the scope of the study, semi-structured interview was made with 10 teachers and 12 students. In addition, process teaching a text was evaluated via structured observation method in 5 different classes. According to the results of the study, primary school teachers find some stages in learning – teaching process prescribed in the curriculum unnecessary and therefore do not apply them. Teachers mentioned that some texts are above the student level; and they sometimes experience time and material problems. It was seen in the present study that teachers do not have enough information about learning and teaching process in the new curriculum; they do not have high success levels in the applications; and they usually do not apply the forms for evaluating the process in the curriculum. It was found out that, in spite of these problems, courses are student-centred as prescribed in the curriculum; and students have positive opinions about stages of learning and teaching process.

Keywords: Turkish Course, Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Process

Introduction

A radical educational reform occurred in Turkey in 2005; and curriculum of primary education courses was renewed. New curriculum was prepared

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based on constructivist approach. In this scope, curriculum of Turkish course was also renewed. Learning and teaching process prescribed in the curriculum aims at turning students into active individuals who think, criticize, express themselves and construct the knowledge (MEB, 2005). Change of Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum led to an alteration also in learning and teaching process. Learning and teaching process was prepared in a more detailed way in this curriculum when compared to the previous ones. In this curriculum, learning and teaching process was dealt in five stages: “Preparation, Understanding, and Constructing in Mind, Self-expression, Measurement and Evaluation”

Table 1. Learning and teaching process according to Turkish (1st-5th grades) curriculum

Stage	Sub-stage
I. Preparation	1. Preliminary Preparation 2. Mental Preparation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Activating the foreknowledge b. Working with key words c. Recognizing and predicting the text d. Goal setting e. Determining types, methods and techniques
II. Understanding	1. Visual Reading, Listening and Reading <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Visual reading b. Listening c. Reading d. Working with unknown words 2. Examining the text 3. Developing the vocabulary
III. Constructing in Mind	1. Associating with Daily Life 2. Associating with Kemalism, Other Courses and Sub-disciplines 3. Research
IV. Self-expression	1. Preliminary Preparation 2. Mental Preparation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Activating the foreknowledge – determining topic b. Goal setting c. Determining methods and techniques ç. Determining type and presentation format 3. Applying the Rules 4. Speaking, Writing and Visual Presentation 5. Using the Vocabulary
V. Measurement and Evaluation	

Stages of learning and teaching process are explained below:

I. Preparation: Main target of preparation stage is to enable students to be prepared for the course physically and mentally. This stage comprises of preliminary preparation and mental preparation sub-stages. Preliminary preparation includes the actions such as student and teacher’s preparing equipments, choosing materials, bringing objects and models necessary for the presentation and determining the place to sit (Güneş, 2007; MEB, 2005). Mental preparation stage covers practices such as bringing out the

foreknowledge of students about the text to be covered in Turkish course and supporting this knowledge with various activities (MEB, 2005). According to Temur (2007), teacher should allocate enough time to preparation stage and take into consideration environmental conditions and social opportunities present in the preparation stage as well as personal characteristics, knowledge and experiences of students.

II. Understanding: Understanding refers to the way of thinking on information obtained via listening, reading and visual reading; searching the reasons of it; and making deductions and assessments about this information. Understanding stage in the curriculum comprises of activities such as visual reading, listening, and reading, working with unknown words, examining the text and developing the vocabulary (MEB, 2005: 163). The students use the ideas, which they form in their minds in mental preparation stage for understanding the text.

III. Constructing in Mind: This stage was called “Learning via Text” in original format of the curriculum (2005), but it was named as “Constructing in Mind” with the amendment in 2009. In the curriculum, it was required “to enable student to associate what is learnt with daily life, other courses and sub disciplines and to investigate a new topic based on the text” (MEB, 2005, p. 153) in order for students to construct the acquired knowledge in their minds. Practices relating to “thinking, questioning, conceptualizing, making decisions and solving problems” will be made in order to ensure constructing in mind. What is learnt will be associated with daily life, topics of Kemalism and other courses in order to ensure transfer and continuity of knowledge.

IV. Self-expression: Most important target of mother tongue education is to develop understanding and explaining skills of the students (Yıldız, 2003; Güzel, 2010). Student’s explanation of information, which he/she learns from the text in learning and teaching process, in different situations in the class environment increases the continuity of what is learnt. Stage of self-expression stage was constituted in Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum in order for student to transfer the things, which he/she learns, in written or orally in the class environment. Self-expression stage includes explanation-based speaking, writing and visual presentation skills among language skills.

V. Measurement and Evaluation: Measurement and evaluation is an inseparable component of learning and teaching process (Balci & Tekkaya, 2000; Kutlu, 2005). New Turkish curriculum introduced important changes also in the topic of measurement and evaluation. Measurement and evaluation approach in the curriculum was prepared in order to guide the students and to determine what students know rather than what they do not know, based on directing the process so as to create most appropriate learning-teaching environment instead of giving marks to the students (Yangın, 2005; Göçer, 2007; Birgin & Gürbüz, 2009).

Measurement tools such as portfolio, rubric, project assignment, performance assignment, group evaluation, peer evaluation and self-evaluation forms, observation forms, concept map, attitude scale and control list intended for evaluating the process are used in new curriculum in addition to traditional measurement and evaluation methods such as written examination, oral examination, multiple choice test, true-false questions, short answered questions and matching questions. These measurement tools do not intend to evaluate only results, but also learning process as a whole (Coşkun, 2005)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate learning and teaching process in Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum via semi-structured interview and in-class observation conducted with teachers and students. Sub problems of the study are as follows:

1. What are the opinions of primary school teachers about learning and teaching process, prescribed in Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum?
2. According to structured observation results; to what degree can stages of learning and teaching process, prescribed in Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum, be applied?
3. What are the opinions of primary school students about learning and teaching process, prescribed in Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum?

Method

This research is a descriptive study in survey model implemented by benefiting qualitative data collection techniques. Semi-structured interview was conducted with teachers and students in the study. In addition, structured observation was conducted.

Participants

In the present study, semi-structured interview was conducted with 10 teachers (2 teachers from each grade) performing duty in 1st-5th grades in primary education and 12 students (4 students from 4th grade, 2 students from each of other grades). Interview is a mutual and interactive communication process conducted for a predetermined and serious purpose based on asking and answering questions (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). Interview provides in-depth knowledge about a particular research topic or question (Büyüköztürk, 2008).

Seven of the teachers participating in the study are female while 3 of them are male. 4 teachers are graduated from institute, 4 teachers are graduated education faculty graduates, and 2 teachers are graduated from other faculties. Almost all of the teachers (f=9) have professional experiences of more than 10 years. 8 of the teachers took in-service training about curriculum, but 2 of them did not take such training. Structured

observation was made in the classes of 5 teachers (1 teacher from each grade level). Semi-structured interview was made with 12 students of 5 teachers in whose class observation was made. 7 students are female, and 5 students are male.

Data Collection Instruments

In the study, “Teacher Interview Form” and “Student Interview Form” were constituted by utilizing the related literature (Collins, 2005; Coşkun, 2005; Bulut, 2006; Güven, 2008; Karadağ, 2008; Taşkaya, Muşt, 2008; Korkmaz, 2009) in order to determine opinions of teachers and students about learning and teaching process in the curriculum. 5 field experts were asked to evaluate content validity for interview questions based of indicator chart. Some amendments were made in measurement tools in accordance with the suggestions made by the experts. Final version of teacher interview form comprised of 8 open ended questions. One question was asked for each stage of learning ad teaching process, and 3 questions were asked for evaluating the whole process. In student interview form, one question was asked for each stage, and one question was asked for the whole process. That is, 6 open-ended questions were asked in student interview form. Interview forms were applied on 2 teachers and 2 students not included in the sample as a pilot study. It was seen in the pilot study that there was no unclear point in interview questions.

Another measurement tool used in the study is “Observation Form Relating to Turkish Course Learning and Teaching Process.” The purpose of this form is to evaluate how learning and teaching process is applied in Turkish courses through observation. “Positive” and “negative” aspects relating to application of each stage of learning and teaching process were noted by the researchers in the observation form. In addition, it was intended to give a mark to teachers in relation to each stage of learning and teaching process. A rubric relating to observation form was prepared in order to ensure objectivity and reliability of marking in the observation form (see Appendix). The rubric was prepared by taking into consideration “relation with the text, application of activities, student participation” aspects of learning and teaching process. According to these aspects, scores between 0 and 5 were given to the teachers. The score 0 was given for the stages never applied in the class, and the score 5 was given for the stages applied best in the class. Following the formation of draft of the observation form, expert opinions were taken; and some corrections were made in the measurement tool according to suggestions of the experts. The number of students in the classes where the observation was made is between 35 and 40. In each class, manner of teaching a text in the course book was observed from beginning to end. Observations lasted for 4-7 hours for each class.

Data Analysis

Sound records obtained from teacher and student interviews were decoded. Then, these decoded texts were evaluated via content analysis method.

Content analysis refers to gathering together similar data within the frame of particular concepts and themes, and interpreting them by arranging them in an understandable way (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). “Sentence” was taken as evaluation unit in the analysis. Opinions of teachers and students were written one under the other in the form of sentences. When sentences with the same meaning are repeated, frequency mark was put in the written sentence. Opinions, whose frequencies were determined, were presented via categorical analysis technique. Stages of learning and teaching process in the curriculum were taken into consideration in categorization of the opinions.

In the Observation Form, applications of teachers in learning and teaching process and problems emerging during these applications were determined via rubric prepared beforehand and notes taken during the observation. Data obtained in this way were classified according to the stages of learning and teaching process; and they were presented with frequency and average values.

Findings

Findings obtained in the study via teacher and student interview forms and observation form were classified and presented according to the stages of learning and teaching process.

Findings Relating to the Preparation Stage

For the question “What kind of problems do you have while applying preparation stage?” in the interview form, 4 teachers mentioned that they do not have any problem relating to the preparation stage, but 6 teachers mentioned the following problems:

- *I have problems with bringing equipments for the activities. (f=4)*
- *Text prediction activities may come to be functionless because students read the text beforehand. (f=2)*
- *If the teacher is prepared, he/she experiences no problem. If not, the subject is broached without attracting the attention of the students. (f=1)*

According to the observation results, teachers do preliminary preparation practices (telling students to open their books, making students ready for listening etc.) which are necessary to be done in the class in “preliminary preparation” which is the first stage of preparation practices. However, it was observed that 2 teachers do not make the activities such as preparing visuals relating to the text and bringing different texts to the class which must be done before the class. Accordingly, observation results support the finding that a problem is experienced in bringing materials relating to the text, mentioned also in teacher interviews.

According to observation results, the following problems are experiences in the mental preparation stage:

- *Teachers could not use time efficiently in the activities in mental preparation stage. While more than enough time was allocated to some*

activities, some activities were taken so short that they could not achieve their targets.

- No relationship could be established between some activities and the text in this stage.

- Some activities relating to this stage given in the guidebook were not applied.

- Some teachers (f=2) wrote the meanings of key words on the blackboard without allowing students to think of and discuss key words.

Observation scores of teachers (out of 5) pertaining to preparation stage in the evaluation based on rubric are showed in Table 2.

Table 2. Observation Scores Relating to Preparation Stage

No	Sub-stage	n*	\bar{X}
1.	Preliminary preparation	5	2.80
2.	Mental preparation	5	2.88
2.1	Activating the foreknowledge	5	3.40
2.2	Working with key words	5	3.60
2.3	Recognizing and predicting the text	1	3.00
2.4	Goal setting	3	0.67
2.5	Determining type, method and technique	2	0.50
	Total	5	2.67

* The number of classes in which stage exists in the guide book.

Table 2 indicates that highest success (3.60) is achieved in the stage of “working with key words”, and lowest success (0.50) is achieved in the stage of “determining type, method and technique” in preparation practices. Average success in the preparation stage is 2.67.

When students were asked the question “What do you do as preparation for the texts you cover in Turkish courses?” 9 students stated that preparation practices are definitely conducted in the class, 1 student mentioned that they are not conducted every time. Students mentioned the following activities as preliminary preparation practices:

- I take out my pencil and notebook for the purpose of preparation. (f=3)
- Our teacher checks whether or not we bring course books. (f=1)
- Students mentioned that the following activities are made as mental preparation practice:
 - Our teacher asks us questions about the text before starting to read the text. (f=7)
 - In every text we cover, our teacher tells us something about the text before reading the text. (f=2)
 - We examine the visuals for the purpose of examination for the text; and we try to find out or predict what is intended to be explained in the text. (f=2)
 - Our teacher reads something from the beginning, something from the middle and something from the end of the text, and makes us predict the content of the text. (f=2)

Findings Relating to the Understanding Stage

In the curriculum, understanding stage was phased as visual reading, listening, reading and working with unknown words, examining the text and developing the vocabulary. For the question “What kind of problems do you have in application of the understanding stage?” 3 teachers mentioned that they do not experience any problem. Opinions of teachers stating that they have problems in this stage are as follows:

- *Lack of questions to help understand the text in the stage of examining the text negatively impacts understanding. (f=4)*
- *Students have difficulty in understanding some texts. (f=2)*
- *Students cannot achieve adequate understanding in some texts. (f=2)*
- *I experience problems because students do not have enough reading habits. (f=1)*

According to the observation results, 2 teachers partly apply the activities mentioned in the guidebook in the stages of visual reading and working with unknown words; 3 teachers partly apply the activities mentioned in the guidebook in the stages of listening and reading and examining the text; and teachers have difficulty in focusing the attention of students on text and ensuring student participation.

Observation scores of teachers relating to the understanding stage are showed in Table 3.

Table 3. Observation Scores Relating to Understanding Stage

No	Sub-stage	n*	\bar{X}
1.	Visual reading	5	1.60
2.	Listening	5	3.20
3.	Reading	5	3.40
4.	Working with unknown words	5	4.40
5.	Examining the text	5	3.40
6.	Developing the vocabulary	5	3.60
	Total	5	3.27

* The number of classes in which stage exists in the guide book.

Table 3 indicates that highest success (4.4) in understanding practices is achieved in the stage of “working with unknown words” and lowest success (1.6) is achieved in the stage of “visual reading”. Average success in preparation stage is 3.27. This indicates that prospective teachers cannot succeed in applying a stage (visual reading) to which they are not accustomed.

For the question “Can you understand the texts given in the course books sufficiently?” 6 students mentioned that they understand texts sufficiently, but 6 students stated that they have difficulty in understanding some texts. Students mentioned the following opinions:

- *I encounter with some unknown words in the texts, but it does not prevent me from understanding the text. (f=3)*
- *I encounter with some unknown words in the texts, so I cannot understand some texts completely. (f=2)*
- *I understand poems more easily. (f=2)*
- *When there are many visuals relating to the text, I understand the text better. (f=1)*

Findings Relating to Stage of Constructing in Mind

In the curriculum, stage of “constructing in mind” was phased as associating with daily life, associating with Kemalism, other courses and sub-disciplines, and research. When teachers are asked the question “What kind of problems do you have while applying the stage of constructing in mind?” 3 teachers gave the answer “I experience no problem while applying this stage”. On the other hand, 7 teachers mentioned that they have difficulty in applying the activities given in the guidebook in the stages of “research” and “associating with other courses and sub-disciplines”. According to the teachers, problems experienced in this stage are as follows:

- *I have problems with associating with other courses and disciplines. (f=3)*
- *Research practices are difficult to apply as they are too hard for the students. (f=3)*
- *In the research section, students print papers and bring them. (f=2)*
- *Research topics in the guidebooks are not accessible topics. (f=1)*

According to the observation findings relating to sub stages of stage of constructing in mind, some teachers (1 teacher in the stage of associating with daily life; 3 teachers in the stage of associating with other courses and sub disciplines; 2 teachers in the stage of research) never applied the related stage in the class though it was present in the covered text. It was observed that, in the classes where stage of associating with daily life is applied, students are very eager for participating in the lesson and they want to share their experiences with the class. It was seen that teachers applying the stage of associating with other courses and sub disciplines have difficulty in guiding the students while conducting the activities stated in the guidebook. It was observed that 3 teachers applying the research stage do not establish any relationship between research homework they give and the covered text.

Table 4. Observation Scores Relating to the Stage of Constructing in Mind

No	Sub-stage	n*	\bar{X}
1.	Associating with daily life	5	3.2
2.	Associating with Kemalism, other courses and sub-disciplines	5	1.2
3.	Research	5	1.6
	Total	5	2.0

* The number of classes in which stage exists in the guide book.

Table 4 shows that even though teachers are relatively successful in the stage of associating with daily life, they are not successful in other stages.

For the question “Can you apply what you learn in Turkish courses in your life? Can you give example?” 10 students gave the answer “Yes, I can use” while 2 students said “I use them from time to time”. It was seen that students can give concrete examples in this topic. For instance, 2 students mentioned that, thanks to a text they covered, they have learnt how to do conscious consumption and necessary points to be paid attention during shopping. Accordingly, they pay attention to whether or not the product they buy is closed, and whether or not it is an expired product. Another student mentioned that they covered a text relating to traffic lights, so they know what to do when the light is red, yellow or green as explained in the text, and they pay attention to these lights while crossing.

Findings Relating to the Self-expression Stage

For the question “What kind of problems do you experience while applying self-expression stage?”, while 2 teachers mentioned that they do not have any problem in this stage, opinions of teachers stating that they have problems in this topic are as follows:

- *This stage was unnecessarily divided into sub-stages. We cannot apply all of the stages every time. We apply the stages collectively. (f=3)*
- *Since this stage is new for us, we do not know how to apply it. (f=2)*
- *In this stage, students cannot sometimes display the behavior expected from them.(f=2)*
- *We cannot sometimes enable student to speak; we just force him/her to speak. (f=2)*
- *I have so many problems. I think teachers should be trained with regard to this stage. (f=1)*
- *We have sometimes problems with conducting the topics relating to self-expression in the guidebook.(f=1)*

According to observation results relating to self-expression stage, some teachers did not do the activities in the related stage (1 teacher in the stages of activating the foreknowledge-determining topic and speaking, writing and visual presentation; 2 teachers in the stages of goal setting, determining method and techniques, type and presentation format and applying the rules; 3 teachers in the stage of using the vocabulary). Purpose in the activities in this stage is for student to express himself/herself in written, orally or visually. However, it was seen that teachers do not allocate enough time for students to express their ideas.

Table 5. *Observation Scores Relating to Self-expression Stage*

No	Sub-stage	n*	\bar{X}
1.	Mental preparation	5	2.05
1.1	Activating the foreknowledge-determining topic	5	2.60
1.2	Goal setting	3	0.67
1.3	Determining methods and techniques	2	0
1.4	Determining type and presentation format	5	1.20
2.	Applying the rules	5	2.20
3.	Speaking, writing and visual presentation	5	2.80
4.	Using the vocabulary	5	1.80
	Total	5	1.86

* The number of classes in which stage exists in the guide book.

According to Table 5, application success is low in all the sub-stages of self-expression practices. It is seen that some sub-stages are never applied or they are applied by very few teachers.

For the question “Can you express your ideas with writing, words or pictures in Turkish courses?” students mentioned the activities they do in speaking, writing and visual presentation practices within learning and teaching process as follows:

- a) Speaking
 - *Our teacher makes us speak about the text. (f=10)*
- b) Writing
 - *Our teacher makes us write about the text. (f=9)*
 - *The teacher gives some words, and we write (paragraphs or poems) about these words. (f=2)*
 - *Our teacher tells us to write something about the text at home. Then, he/she makes us tell what we wrote (f=1)*
 - *Our teacher makes us interpret and write about the visuals. (f=1)*
- c) Visual Presentation
 - *Our teacher makes us draw pictures about the text. (f=7)*
 - *Our teacher asks us what we understand from the visuals. (f=3)*
 - *Our teacher tells us to visualize what we understand from the text. (f=1)*

Findings Relating to Measurement and Evaluation Stage

For the question, “What kind of problems do you have while applying Measurement and Evaluation stage??” 6 teachers stated that they have time problems while 6 teachers mentioned that abundance of forms leads to paper waste and application difficulty. 3 teachers consider measurement and evaluation as the stage with lowest applicability of Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum. Teachers mentioned the following opinions about the problems they experience while applying measurement and evaluation stage:

- *I cannot apply the forms. (f=6)*
- *I want spend time with students rather than spending time with the forms. (f=4)*
- *Since we did not receive education about this stage, I have some problems with applying it. (f=2)*
- *I do not approve the application of observation forms as I cannot observe the students properly. (f=2)*

- *I apply just post-theme evaluations as I cannot find time. (f=1)*

According to observation results, 3 teachers conducted the activities mentioned in measurement and evaluation stage in the guidebook, but 2 teachers did not apply any of these practices. It was observed that teachers applying the stage just conduct the activities, but they do not use the forms regarding the evaluation of the process. Point averages of teachers in this stage were found 1.2 according to the result of scoring based on rubric.

For the question “What does your teacher take into consideration while giving a mark to you in Turkish courses? Do you think what your teacher does is true?” students gave the following answers:

- *Our teacher makes us fill up self-evaluation and peer evaluation forms in the book. (f=7)*
- *He/she gives marks according to the beauty of italic handwritings. (f=5)*
- *Our teacher sometimes distributes forms to us and asks us to evaluate our friends or ourselves. (f=4)*
- *My teacher takes notes while we are speaking. (f=3)*
- *Our teacher gives us mark according to whether or not we do our homework. (f=2)*
- *Our teacher gives us mark according to participation in class activities. (f=1)*
- *Our teacher makes us fill up a form at the beginning of each theme. (f=1)*

Almost of all of the students (f=9) mentioned that they approve teachers’ way of giving marks.

Analyzing the findings relating to measurement and evaluation all together, it is seen that measurement and evaluation is the stage in which teachers have most difficulty in learning and teaching process. Difficulties in applying the measurement tools in crowded classes top the list of problems in this topic. In addition, it is seen that students are not knowledgeable enough in the topic of techniques for evaluating the process in new curriculum. According to the interviews conducted with the students, awareness was created among students in the topic of new measurement approaches.

Findings Relating to the Whole Learning and Teaching Process

For the question “Are students active in Turkish courses? Can you explain it?”, while 7 teachers mentioned that students come to be active in this learning and teaching process, 3 teachers stated that students sometimes come to be active, but they are not sometimes active in this learning and teaching process. Teachers mentioning that students come to be active stated that students, never wanting to talk in the class in the past, start to participate in the class in new learning and teaching process and start to make comments on the topics.

For the question “Do you think distribution of activities is balanced according to learning areas (reading, speaking, writing, listening, visual reading, and visual presentation)? If not, which ones are more intense? Which ones should be allocated more space? Can you explain it?” 5 teachers mentioned that there is a balanced distribution of activities according to learning areas. Other teachers mentioned the following opinions with regard to distribution of activities according to learning areas.

- *I think the activities given in the topic of grammar in learning and teaching process are inadequate. (f=4)*
- *Activities are unnecessarily intense in visual reading and presentation. (f=3)*
- *I think there are very few activities relating to writing skill. (f=1)*

For the question “Do you encounter with physical insufficiencies in the school and class while applying learning and teaching process prescribed in the curriculum and course book? Can you explain it?”, 6 teachers mentioned that they encounter with physical insufficiencies while 4 teachers stated that they do not encounter with this kind of insufficiencies. Opinions of teachers about this topic are as follows:

- *We do not have projection or computer. (f=4)*
- *Classes are too crowded; it is difficult to walk even between the desks. (f=2)*
- *There is no empty corner in the class in order to apply a drama practice (visual presentation, speaking) relating to the text. (f=1)*
- *We have a television, but it is functionless. (f=1)*

For the question “Do you think Turkish courses are enjoyable or boring? Why?” almost all of the students (f=11) mentioned that Turkish courses are enjoyable and they like expressing themselves by writing or speaking. However, 1 student thinks that Turkish courses are not enjoyable because he/she cannot sometimes give answers to the questions asked by the teacher in the class.

Table 6. Scores Relating to the Stages of Learning and Teaching Process in the Classes Where the Observation Was Made

No	Learning and Teaching Process Stages	n*	\bar{X}
1.	Preparation	5	2.67
2.	Understanding	5	3.27
3.	Constructing in mind	5	2.00
4.	Self-expression	5	1.86
5.	Measurement and evaluation	5	1.20
	Total	5	2.20

*.The number of classes in which stage exists in the guide book.

According to Table 6, highest success (3.27) relating to the application of stages of learning and teaching process in the class was achieved in “understanding”, but lowest success (1.20) was achieved in “measurement and evaluation”. Observation score average is 2.20 for all of the stages in learning and teaching process.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of this study, teachers have difficulty particularly in providing the material to be brought to the class for the purpose of preparation for the course. In also the study conducted by Anılan et al. (2008), teachers mentioned that they have problems like incapability of accessing the materials relating to the preparation and spending much time while preparing materials. Teachers stated that prediction activities come to be functionless as texts are read by students beforehand in the preparation stage.

Observation results indicate that many of the teachers do not apply the stages of “goal setting” and “determining type, method and technique” in preparation

practices. The study conducted by Akyol et al. (2008) reported that teachers do not adequately know and apply the practices relating to determining type, method and technique before the reading. On the other hand, it was determined that students are very conscious in the topic of application of preparation practices.

Evaluating findings relating to understanding stage all together, it is seen that teachers and students find some texts in the book above the student level; stage of examining the text should be supported with questions; teachers cannot apply the activities in understanding stage completely; and they are unsuccessful particularly in visual reading practices.

It is reported in many studies (Coşkun, 2005; Kuru, 2008; Balun, 2008; Odabaşı, 2007) that students are active in visual reading practices, and they like these activities. According to the observation results in the present study, teachers displayed the lowest success in understanding stage in the sub-stage of “visual reading”. Even though this is a stage conducted tastefully by students, it is seen that teachers cannot sufficiently recognize this stage included in the curriculum for the first time.

Evaluating the findings relating to the stage of constructing in mind all together, it is seen that there is no important problem in application of the stage of associating with daily life and this stage is considered very interesting and beneficial for the students. On the other hand, it is seen that teachers are not successful enough in the stage of associating with other courses and sub-disciplines, and research.

In the present study, it is seen that some of the activities in self-expression stage are not applied by the teachers; and some problems are experienced in the application, time problem being in the first place. In addition, some teachers stated that they do not have enough information about this stage. On the other hand, based on student opinions, it is understood that, in spite of the problems in application, this stage makes contribution to students’ expressing themselves orally, in written and visually.

Evaluating findings relating to measurement and evaluation in the study all together, it is seen that the stage in which teachers have most difficulty in learning and teaching process is measurement and evaluation. Difficulties of applying measurement tools in crowded classes are mentioned to top the list of difficulties in this topic. Findings of the studies conducted by Elvan (2007), Karadağ (2008) and Anılan et al. (2008) correspond to these results.

In addition, it is seen that teachers are not knowledgeable enough in the topic of techniques for evaluating the process in new curriculum. Many previous studies (Özpolat et al, 2007; Yapıcı, 2007; Yiğitoğlu, 2007; Gözütok, et al., 2005; Yaşar et al., 2005; Collins, 2005; Bulut, 2006; Damlapınar, 2008; Rençber, 2008; Tüfekçioğlu & Turgut, 2008; Korkmaz, 2009) report that teachers do not adequately know and use process-based evaluation methods. According to the interviews conducted with the students, awareness was created among students in the topic of new measurement approaches.

One of the basic principles of constructivist approach making up the core of new curriculum is student-centred education (Özer, 2007). In many studies aiming at evaluation of new curriculum (Collins, 2005; Coşkun, 2005; Bulut, 2006; Güven, 2008; Karadağ, 2008; Taşkaya, Muştı, 2008; Korkmaz, 2009) it was concluded that

students are more active compared to the previous system; and there is a more student-centred approach in teaching of new courses. Teachers in this study also mentioned that learning and teaching process in the curriculum makes students more active when compared to the past and this contributes to their developments. In their evaluations relating to the Turkish courses, students frequently used the sentences expressing that they are active in the classes. This indicates that, in spite of many problems in the application, new curriculum constitutes a student-centred education environment.

The most important problem revealed in this study is that teachers do not perceive stages of learning and teaching process as parts of a whole, and they apply them as independent activities. According to the instructions given in guidebooks, teachers do not adequately know or think of what to do and how and why they will do them in the classes. Observation results in this study indicate that teachers never do or superficially do many of the activities in the guidebooks in stages of learning and teaching process. In this case, application success of stages comes to be very low. In addition, since the relationship of applied stages with text cannot be established adequately, Turkish course which is supposed to be a text-centred course (Coşkun, 2005) may come to be a heap of independent activities.

In the present study, teachers mentioned that some texts are above the level of student level, time problem is experienced in some texts, and material problem is experienced in application of some activities. These results support the results of some previously conducted studies. It was concluded in the study conducted by Özoğul (2007) that teachers think that many texts are not suitable for the student level; and it was found out in the study conducted by Coşkun (2005: 421-476) that material problem is experienced from time to time.

One of the important amendments made in Turkish Course (1st-5th Grades) Curriculum is that grammar education is not handled as a separate learning area, but it is considered enough to teach it in other learning areas just via adumbration. In the present study, some teachers stated that non-existence of grammar education in learning and teaching process is a deficiency. In other studies (Coşkun, 2005; Bulut, 2006; Elvan, 2007; Yiğitoğlu, 2007) it was reported that teachers think grammar should be allocated space in the curriculum. Accordingly, it can be said that many of the teachers do not adopt the approach of curriculum in the topic of grammar education. This difference in approaches can be explained as some teachers have difficulty in accepting the situations which are “contrary” to the system they are “accustomed” to. In addition, it can be said that students’ dealing with test questions in central examinations as from early ages in the current education system leads to pressure on teachers in the topic of grammar education.

In many studies (Yaman, 2009; Uşun, 2008; Kumral et al., 2008) it is revealed that physical insufficiencies decrease student success and efficiency of the teachers. In the present study, teachers mentioned that class environment is insufficient for some activities in learning and teaching process, and there is a lack of technological instruments. In the study conducted by Güven (2008), primary school teachers stated that insufficiency of physical facilities in the school environment negatively impacts education.

In the present study, students mentioned that Turkish courses are enjoyable, and they can apply what they learn in their daily lives. Studies conducted by

Coşkun (2005), Bulut (2006), Elvan (2007) and Güven (2008) report that education given in Turkish courses via new curriculum has positive impacts on students, and students like Turkish courses.

In the present study, some problems emerging in Turkish course learning and teaching process were determined as a result of teacher and student interviews and observations. None of these problems is unimportant. On the other hand, it should be admitted that a program cannot be perfect by itself. Each curriculum can be applied efficiently only if stakeholders such as teacher, student, parents, school administration, Ministry are in harmony and support one another. Accordingly, problems revealed in the present study cannot be considered as problems just stemming from the curriculum. Necessary updates should be made in the curriculum according to the problems emerging in the application considering the fact that curriculum development is a dynamical and continuous process.

Suggestions

1. Stages of learning and teaching process in the curriculum should be decreased. It will be proper to give education relating to the stages of “goal setting” and “determining type, method and technique”, “associating with other courses and sub-disciplines” mentioned as functionless by teachers and relating to the stages of “goal setting”, “determining methods and techniques”, “determining type and presentation format” in self-expression practices just once in each theme.

2. Texts in the course books should be reviewed; long texts should be shortened; incomprehensible texts should be simplified.

3. The fact that some activities particularly in the preparation stage in learning and teaching process are based on materials difficult to be provided by teachers and students makes these activities inapplicable. This kind of activities should be rearranged by taking into consideration also the crowded classes.

4. One of the weakest stages of learning and teaching process in the curriculum and teacher guidebooks is the stage of “examining the text”. In this stage, questions which will enable text to be understood and interpreted better should be allocated space.

5. Text prediction practices should be limited to listening practices not present in student course books.

6. Purpose and usage of measurement and evaluation methods in learning and teaching process in the curriculum and course books should be explained better. In addition, it will be good to decrease the number of these tools considering the problems to emerge in application of these tools in crowded classes.

7. Teachers should learn new teaching approaches and course books introduced by the curriculum with all the details, increase their knowledge levels relating to learning and teaching process prescribed by the curriculum, and develop themselves in the topic of how learning and teaching process stages should be applied in the class environment.

8. It is not a right behaviour for teachers to skip the stage in which they have difficulty rather than solving the problems emerging in application of learning and teaching process and producing alternatives in this topic. Teachers should make use of group studies as an opportunity to discuss these problems and produce solutions to the emerging problems.

9. Teachers should read the text to be covered in the class before coming to the class together with the instructions in the guidebook, and make preliminary preparations rather than reading the text together with the class for the first time.

10. Teachers should adopt new approach brought in by curriculum in the topic of grammar education.



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Appendix

Rubric Relating to Turkish Course Learning and Teaching Process

Score	Qualities
0 (Not done)	Nothing relating to the stage was done in the process.
1 (Very bad)	No relationship was established with the covered text in operation of the stage. Activities relating to this stage given in the course book were applied very unsuccessfully. In this stage, participation of students in the applications could not be ensured.
2 (Bad)	Relationship with the covered text is weak in operation of the stage. Activities relating to this stage given in the course book could not be applied successfully. In this stage, participation of students in the applications was ensured just in a very limited level.
3 (Medium)	The relationship with the covered text could not be established adequately in operation of the stage. Activities relating to this stage given in the course book were applied, but it cannot be said that these activities are adequately successful. In this stage, participation of students in the applications could not be ensured adequately.
4 (Good)	The relationship with the covered text was established in operation of the stage. Activities relating to this stage given in the course book were applied successfully. In this stage, participation of students in the applications was ensured.
5 (Very good)	The relationship with the covered text was established very well in operation of the stage. Activities relating to this stage given in the course book were enriched and applied successfully. In this stage, participation of students in the applications was ensured very efficiently.