

Opinion of primary school teachers about the Culturally responsive education practices used in the life Studies Lessons: Implementation of the practices used in the US to Turkey

Emrullah AKCAN¹ Karen BLAHA²

Article Type

Original Research

*International Journal of
Modern Education Studies*

2023

Volume 7, No 1

Pages: 1-20

<http://www.ijonmes.net>
dergipark.gov.tr/ijonmes

Article Info:

Received : 21.07.2022

Accepted : 07.12.2022

Abstract:


Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) has been found to be an effective method of teaching because it focuses on academic success for all students, cultural competencies, sociopolitical aspects, and has been proven effective among school cultures that are diverse in demographics. The aim of this research is to reveal opinion of primary school teachers about the Culturally responsive education practices used in the life studies courses. Within the scope of this aim, culturally responsive practices used in the USA were implemented in classrooms in Turkey, and at the end of these practices, teachers' opinions on these applications were examined. In this study, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. This qualitative research design tries to explain what exactly the experiences of many people about a certain concept or event mean. The working group of this research consists of 14 primary school teachers. In order to collect the main data of the research, interviews were conducted with the teachers using a semi-structured interview form. These collected data were transferred to the computer and analyzed with the help of the MAXQDA 2020 software. In addition to the main data of the research, sociometry and sociogram techniques were used to collect additional data. According to the data obtained, it was determined that these practices had two main effects. One of these main effects is the effect on students and the other is the effect on teachers.

Keywords: Culturally responsive education; Life studies lesson; In-class practices


Citation:

Akcan, E. & Blaha, K. (2023). Opinion of primary school teachers about the Culturally responsive education practices used in the life Studies Lessons: Implementation of the practices used in the US to Turkey. *International Journal of Modern Education Studies*, 7(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.51383/ijonmes.2022.216>

¹ Assist. Prof. Dr., Gaziantep University, Faculty of Education, Gaziantep, Turkiye, emrullahakcan@gmail.com

 Orcid ID: 0000-0002-5492-4159

² Assist. Prof. Dr., University of St. Francis, College of Education Faculty, Joliet, Illinois-USA, kblaha@stfrancis.edu

 Orcid ID: 0000-0002-8273-773X

INTRODUCTION

Education is a very broad phenomena and it contains many purposes due to its comprehensive structure. However, to summarize, the most basic purpose of education can be considered as the best adaptation of the individual to the environment in which he/she lives. When the individual starts his/her school life, he/she enters a long process to reach this goal. A student who starts basic education in Turkey starts to acquire many skills and learn many behaviors that will adapt to his/her environment, especially with the life studies course. Kabapınar (2007) defines the life studies course as a lesson that focuses on the experiences of the child on how he/she makes sense of the world with his/her birth, helps him/her acquire knowledge, skills and values for his next life, and enables him/her to understand the environment socially and physically. Life studies course is a course that draws strength from social and natural sciences, was created in accordance with child pedagogy, includes information that will enable children to continue their lives as a part of the society they live in, and finally lays the groundwork for higher levels (Baysal, 2006). Sönmez (1998), on the other hand, defines the life studies course as the information obtained at the end of the process in which natural and sociological facts are conveyed through the proof of the individual. As can be understood from the definitions above, the life studies course focuses on social experiences. When the aims of the life studies course are examined, it can be listed as providing students with the basic skills and values related to life, enabling students to recognize and examine the social environment, and to solve the simple problems they encounter (Karasu-Avcı & Ketenoğlu-Kayacıbaşı, 2018; Şahin, 2009; Akcan, 2022a). Life Studies course is one of the most basic courses that will enable students to socialize and prepare for secondary education and daily life (Ekmen, 2019). From this point of view, it is seen that the Life studies course is an important lesson that prepares the individual for society.

Every society has different dynamic factors because societies have different perspectives, lifestyles, problems, etc. The basic notion that creates these differences is culture. Culture is the identity of societies. Culture is formed over time and individuals transfer the culture they have acquired from generation to generation in various ways. Education is one of these ways. From this point of view, education and culture are two phenomena that are very close to each other. While culture directs the society in every aspect, education wants to raise the individual that society needs (Erbaş, 2020). For this reason, it is important that education has a culturally responsive structure. Current research in brain science and education finds that successful comprehension occurs when learners' cultural background knowledge is connected to new learning; all learners successfully process new information when it is connected to what they already know and have experienced (Hammond, 2015). Culturally Responsive Education (CRE) has been found to be an effective method of teaching because it "focuses on academic success for all students, cultural competencies, and sociopolitical aspects and has been proven effective among

school cultures that are diverse in demographics” (Hernandez & Burrows, 2021, p. 338). CRE leverages this brain science by providing instructional and social opportunities for students to connect new learning to their background experiences, culture, and ethnicity. CRE also provides various opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of new learning. The result is an increase in student achievement.

CRE has been a topic of research for decades, and is considered one of the most effective methods of supporting the learning needs of culturally diverse learners (Powell, Cantrell, Malo-Juvera and Correll, 2016; Gay, 2010; Ford, 2010). Gay (2010) has defined CRE as “behavioral expressions of knowledge, beliefs, and values that recognize the importance of racial and cultural diversity in learning” (Gay, 2010, p. 31). CRE is an approach to teaching in which students’ culture is nurtured and background experiences are validated (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). In addition, work by Hammond (2014), states that cultural responsiveness develops students’ learning capacity by leveraging their cultural frameworks. Regardless of the slightly varied definitions, scholars all identify the core of culturally responsive teaching as the fostering of an inclusive classroom environment that validates students’ background experiences (Villegas & Lucas, 2007) and incorporates students’ cultures and experiences into the learning process (Blaha, 2019).

Two important factors of culturally responsive instruction are the teacher, and the classroom environment:

CRE provides students with opportunities to represent their cultural backgrounds and build supportive relationships within the class. Additionally, scholars Teel and Obidah (2008), Gay (2010), and Farinde -Wu, Glover, & Williams (2017) identify the following characteristics of a culturally responsive teacher:

- Understands cultural differences are assets, not deficiencies.
- Holds and communicates high academic and behavioral expectations for all students, regardless of background.
- Fosters learning communities in which cultural heritage is respected and valued.
- Uses cultural knowledge to foster meaningful relationships with students, implement instructional strategies, and develop an inclusive environment.
- Utilizes cooperative learning activities.

Culturally responsive teachers also participate in reflective practices concerning their interactions, instruction, and their own cultural lens. According to Muniz (2020), culturally responsive teachers understand that without consistently participating in reflective practices, they run the risk of unwittingly internalizing biases that might impact their instruction, classroom activities, and interaction with their students and their families. Reflective practices help to ensure teachers are providing instruction and social activities that are inclusive and validate students’ cultural background.

The classroom environment plays a vital role in the success of students from different culture because diverse learners typically feel anxious and unwelcome in a new classroom

(Lucas, Villengas, and Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008). According to Gay (2002), a culturally responsive classroom demonstrates respect for each other, and displays coherent positive interactions where all students value each other and become a group of students. In addition, Gay (2010) determines two characteristics of a culturally responsive learning environment:

- A culturally environment that validates all students' life experiences and cultural backgrounds into the learning that occurs in the classroom.
- Connections between the school environment and the home culture are encouraged.

When students perceive a discouraging learning environment, such as unsafe conditions, lack of connection, low expectations, they will become disengaged and develop a lowered self-esteem (Claro, Panunesku, & Dweck, 2016; Akcan, 2022b). This, in turn, affects the students' resilience toward academic challenges and social interactions. This stresses the importance of the culturally responsive classroom environment. The culturally responsive classroom environment is as equally important as teacher presence and instructional practices. A culturally responsive classroom is a learning environment that is grounded in respect for student diversity, and emotional and cognitive safety. Simultaneously, students are presented with high expectations and given supports for academic and behavioral success (Gay, 2010, Teel & Obidah, 2008). At its core, the culturally responsive "learning environment is about relationships, communication, and expectations— focusing specifically on students' sense of membership and belonging" (Ford, 2010, p. 51). This sense of belonging and cultural validation is what fuels students' perseverance through challenging tasks and promotes information processing as students make connections between new content and previous knowledge (Hammond, 2014).

In terms of the content of the life studies course, it is a lesson convenient for CRE practices in many aspects such as recognizing, accepting and recognizing different cultures. For this reason, used the CRE practices in life studies courses are also considered important. When the literature was examined, no study was found that focused on life studies and CRE practices. The aim of this research is to reveal opinion of primary school teachers about the Culturally responsive education practices used in the life studies courses. Within the scope of this aim, culturally responsive practices used in the USA were implemented in classrooms in Turkey, and at the end of these practices, teachers' opinions on these applications were examined.

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. Phenomenology is a research design that uses experiences to analyze the information

individuals experience in life. This qualitative research design tries to explain the meaning of experiences many people have regarding a certain concept or event. In summary, in phenomenological research, the main point that the researcher focuses on is the experiences of all people participating in the research regarding the notion or event being investigated (Creswell, 2013, Finlay, 2009; Dukes, 1984). The purpose of phenomenological studies is expressed as ensuring that people's feelings and thoughts reach a conclusion depending on their experiences (Dowling, 2007). In short, if a notion, event or phenomenon is meaningful to those who experience it on people's feelings, thoughts and behaviors, a researcher conducting a phenomenological study can collect data from these experience holders. In this study, phenomenological design was preferred because it was aimed to examine the opinions of teachers about the use of culturally responsive educational practices in Turkey, which are frequently used in the USA. Because it is aimed to reveal the teachers' in-class experiences and feelings and thoughts about these educational practices.

Participants

The working group of this research consists of 14 primary school teachers. Detailed information about the participants is given in Table 1. While determining the working group, a 15-minute briefing explaining the purpose and process of the research was given to the primary school teachers working in 10 public primary schools randomly selected by the researchers in Gaziantep, and after this briefing, the teachers who wanted to participate voluntarily in the study were taken into the sample. All of the teachers in the sample have students from different cultures. Demographic data of the teachers participating in the research are given in the table below. At the same time, the participant teachers were given codes such as T1, T2, T3.....T14, and direct quotations were given in accordance with these codes.

Table 1

Participants' Judgements of the Order of Fear-type Emotion Verbs on the Scale

Code	Gender	Graduation degree	Age	Year of experiences
T1	Male	Graduate	26-30	6-10 year
T2	Female	Undergraduate	21-25	1-5 year
T3	Female	Graduate	26-30	6-10 year
T4	Male	Undergraduate	21-25	1-5 year
T5	Female	Undergraduate	21-25	1-5 year
T6	Female	Undergraduate	21-25	1-5 year
T7	Male	Graduate	21-25	1-5 year
T8	Male	Undergraduate	31-35	6-10 year
T9	Female	Graduate	21-25	1-5 year
T10	Female	Graduate	26-30	6-10 year
T11	Male	Graduate	21-25	1-5 year
T12	Female	Graduate	36-40	11-15 year
T13	Female	Graduate	26-30	6-10 year
T14	Female	Undergraduate	36-40	11-15 year

A total of 14 classroom teachers, 5 male and 9 female, participated in the research. At the same time, it is seen that teachers are between the ages of 21-40.

Data Collection Tools and Data Collection

In order to collect the main data of the research, interviews were conducted with the teachers using a semi-structured interview form. Interview is a process that is carried out through the interview form in order to examine the phenomenon focused on within the research framework in depth (Creswell, 2019; Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2016). Semi-structured interview forms, prepare for the purpose of obtaining in-depth information with different questions during the interview process, where some of the information and interview questions about the personal information of the participants are structured within the scope of the purpose of the research beforehand (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2016). The interview questions created by the researchers after the literature review were sent to 5 academicians to get expert opinion. The questions were finalized in line with the feedback from the academicians who offered expert opinions, and then grammar checks were made for the intelligibility of the questions.

In addition to the main data of the research, sociometry and sociogram techniques were used to collect additional data. The sociometry technique is based on the students' ranking of their friends who meet a certain criterion (Elias, Vasilis, Katerina, & Christine, 2016). Sociometry has been used in some studies (Mamas, 2009) aiming to reveal the positions and social interactions of individuals with differences in primary school classrooms. In this study, the reason for using sociometry is the same and it was used to reveal the interaction between students and their in-class positions.

It is possible to see the interaction between students and the position of students in the classroom with the sociometric technique, but there are also some limitations. Making direct observations of children's relationship patterns can help overcome the limitations of traditional sociometric techniques (Elias, Vasilis, Katerina, & Christine, 2016). In this research, photographs were used during in-class activities in order to overcome the limitations of sociometry. Some examples of these photographs are included in the findings section of the research.

The teachers who participated voluntarily in the study used the sociometry technique to reveal the interaction between the students and the sociometry technique before implementing the classroom practices. Afterwards, they used culturally responsive practices that are frequently used in the USA in their life studies courses for 8 weeks. During the process, teachers photographed the students during practices whenever they wanted. At the end of the practices, the sociometry technique was used again in order to determine whether there was a change in the interaction between the students. At the last stage of the study, one of the researchers interviewed the teachers one-on-one and got their opinions on these practices used in life studies courses. Teacher opinions were collected by voice recording from the teachers who gave permission, and through note-taking by the

researcher from the teachers who did not give permission. These collected data were transferred to the computer and analyzed with the help of the MAXQDA 2020 software.

Validity and Reliability

Various measures should be taken to ensure validity and reliability in qualitative studies in which the interview technique is used (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2016). In order to ensure the validity of this study, expert opinions were taken from 5 academicians and ideas were exchanged about the interview questions. The most convenient method was selected and explained after reviewed the literature. In addition, the data collection process is clearly explained in detail. Information was given about the determination process of the working group and the teachers who were excluded from the working group. Attention was paid to the consistency of the codes and themes formed during the analysis process with the conceptual framework. The obtained data from the participants are included to finding section in direct quotations. On the other hand, in order to ensure the reliability of the research, voice recordings were made with the knowledge of the participants during the interviews. The direct quotations are presented to the reader without researchers comment. By checking the consistency of the data obtained, it was argued in the discussion section with the support of the literature.

Ethical considerations

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were observed. None of the actions stated under the title "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics," which is the second part of the directive, was not taken.

Ethical review board name: Gaziantep University Social and Humanities Ethics Boards

Date of ethics review decision: 06.05.2022

Ethics assessment document issue number: 2022/06

RESULTS

Findings

Sociometry technique was used to the students before the practices within the scope of the research were carried out. In this way, in-class sociometric status of students from different cultures was revealed before the implementation. In addition, after the implementation, the sociometry technique was used again. Figure 1 below shows a sample

sociogram before the implementation and figure 2 shows a sample sociogram after the implementation. These representative sociograms reflect the data of a randomly selected class from the classes.

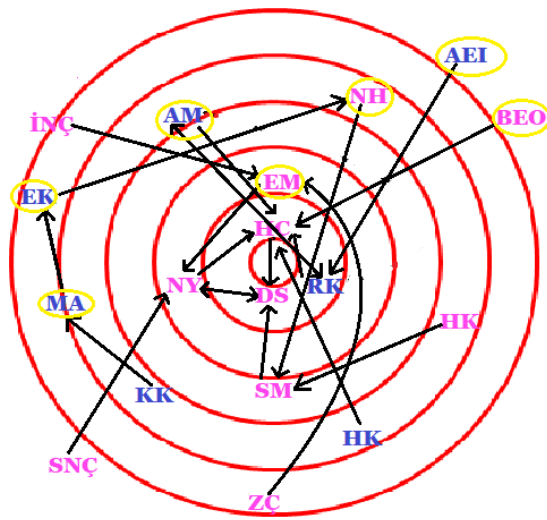


Figure 1: Sociogram before the implementation

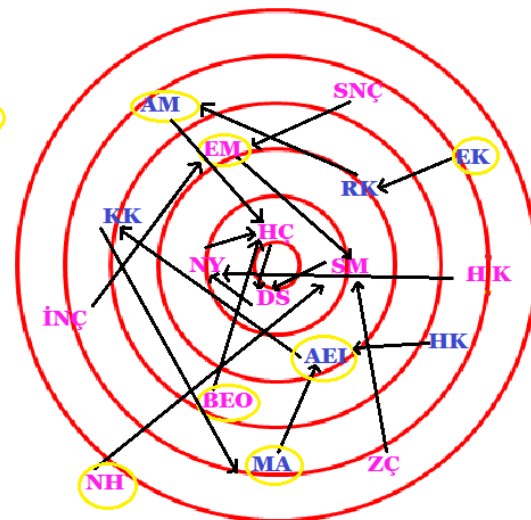


Figure 2: Sociogram after the implementation

In the above sociograms, the codes indicated in blue represent male students, the codes indicated in pink represent female students and the students in the yellow circle represent students from different cultures. Accordingly, when the sociograms are examined, it is seen that the interaction between the students increased after the practices. Especially, it can be said that the interaction between students from different cultures and other students in the class has increased. For example, a male student with AEL code from a different culture was isolated before the practices, but after the practices he found a place towards the center. A similar situation is seen in the female student with the code BEO. When analyzed in general, it is seen that the interaction is relatively low in the first sociogram, and the interaction is more intense in the second sociogram. This situation was determined in all the classes where the implementation was made in the research sample. This positive interaction between students was also supported by the opinions of the teachers. When teachers' opinions were analyzed, the following findings were obtained:

The data collected through semi-structured interviews in the research were analyzed via the MAXQDA qualitative analysis software. As a result of this analysis, two main themes, 7 sub-themes and 90 codes were reached. Detailed information is given below (Image 1).

Code System	90
Effect on Students	0
Positive interaction	25
Cultural awareness	21
Participate in lessons effectively	5
Negative or neutral effect	8
Personal improvement	8
Effect on teachers	0
Recognizing students better	9
Teachers' creativity	14

Image 1: Theme, sub-theme and codes

As seen in the image above, two main themes have been reached in the titles “Effect on students” and “Effect on teachers”. Depending on the main theme of “Effect on students”, sub-themes of positive interaction, cultural awareness, participate in lessons effectively, negative or neutral effect and personal improvement were reached. Depending on the second theme, “Effect on teachers”, two sub-themes were reached under the title of Recognizing students better and teachers' creativity. In order to make the findings more meaningful, code-subcode-segments system and visualization tools were used via MAXQDA.

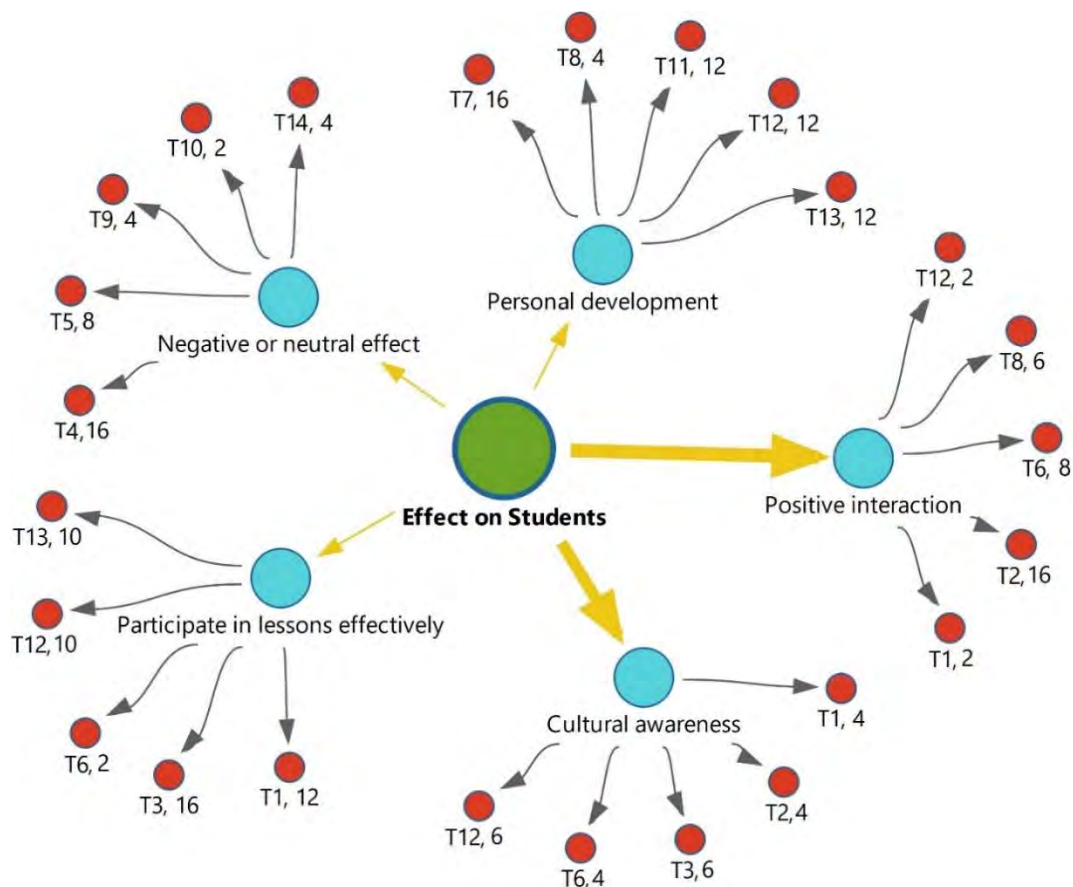


Figure 3: Effect on Students

When Figure 3 is examined, it is seen that the culturally responsive practices implemented in the classrooms are very effective among students, especially in the context of *positive interaction* and *cultural awareness*. In addition to these two sub-titles, it is seen that it also comes to the fore the titles of *participate in lessons effectively* and *personal development*. However, some of the teachers stated that the practices had a negative or neutral effect. The opinions of some of the teachers on the practices are given below in detail, using direct quotations.

In the interviews, it was emphasized that the positive interaction is the situation that has the most impact on the students after implementation. Some quotes emphasizing *positive interaction* are as follows:

“...students became more interested in each other, I saw them asking questions about their friends. After the My Name event, they wanted to ask each other’s names and birth stories again and listen to them a second time. Practices contributed positively to socialization, communication and self-expression. Similarly, they found a very good environment to share their thoughts in the “four corners” event. ...” (T1).

“...They developed a positive communication towards each other. Most of all, they gained respect for differences and effective listening skills...” (T6).

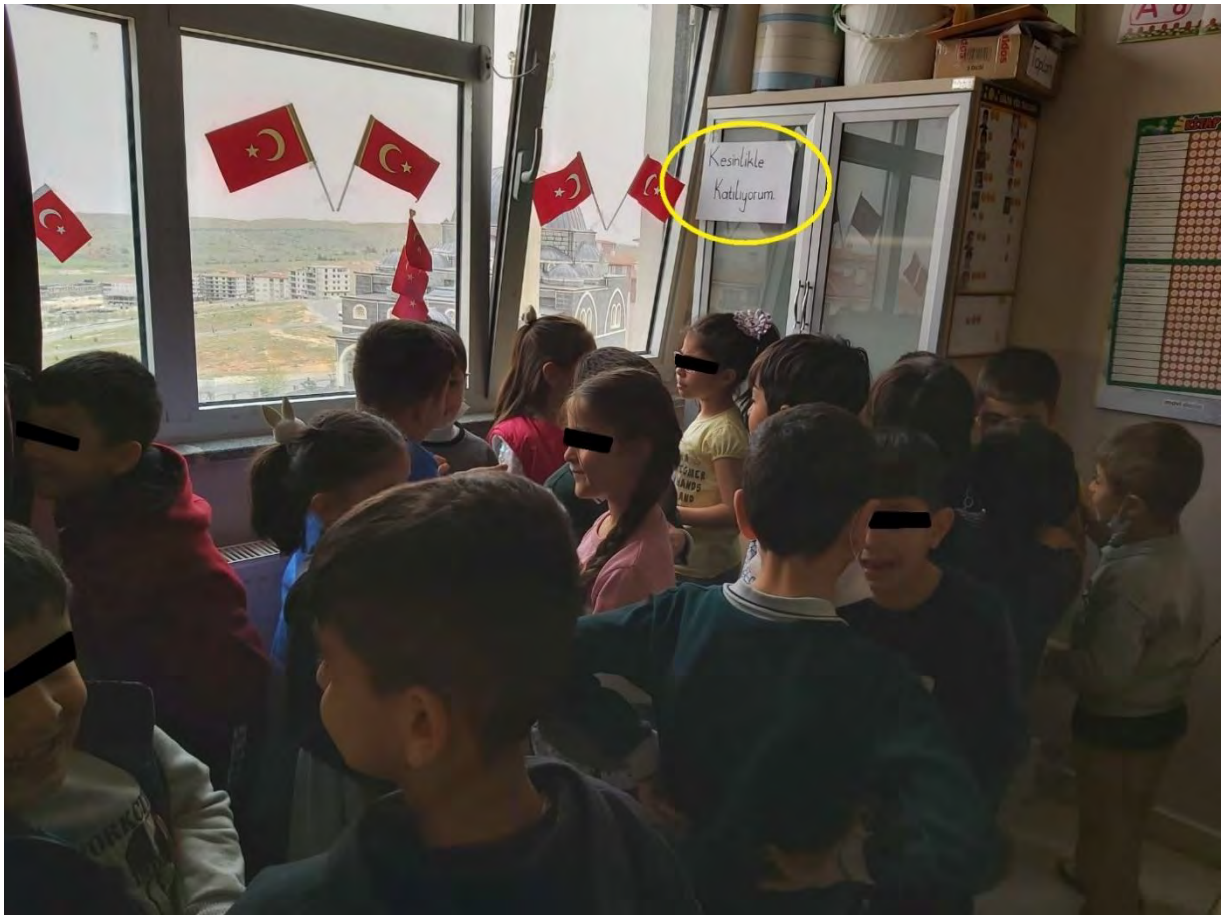


Image 2: positive interaction in “four corner” event

Image 2 is photographed during the four corner event, which increases positive interaction. As seen in the image 2, students share their thoughts about why they chose the option they chose with their peers.

It has been found that cultural awareness is one of the most important effects of these practices on students in classrooms where culturally responsive practices are held. Some teachers' opinions regarding this finding are as follows:

"...students got to know each other much better. Students learned about the cultural structure of families in the "My Family's treasure box" event, learned about their interests in the "interview student", gave extensive information about themselves in the "All about me" event, and had the opportunity to get to know their cultural backgrounds better with the origin of their names in the "My Name" event..." (T3).

"...they were able to get to know each other better. In addition, when they saw that some of their cultural characteristics were similar, their understanding of each other was greater. As they learned about the different characteristics of different cultures, their ability of research developed..." (T6).



Image 3: Step Forward event



Image 4: My family Treasure box event

Among the research findings, it has been determined that an important situation is Personal improvement. Some teacher opinions emphasizing this situation are given below:

"...Their skills such as expressing themselves and speaking in front of people have improved. I also noticed improvement in questioning skills..." (T7).

"...I think that students' sense of curiosity develops by asking more questions about each other. I think the step forward event and the four corners event teach respect for different opinions. One student was upset when he selected an option alone in the four corners event, but another student said "not everyone can be the same opinion". The same experience happened in the step forward event. I think that these practices also contribute to the ability of students to express their thoughts comfortably..." (T11).



Image 5: Interview student event

In the interviews with teachers, it was stated that these practices enabled more participation of the students in the lessons. According to this finding, the teachers stated that the students who did not participate in the lessons before implementing these practices participated in the lessons more after the practices. Some of these findings are as follows:

"...every diverse activity in the classroom increased the energy of the students, they became more active in the lessons throughout the day. ..." (T3).

"...my students became more active in the lessons, participation improved positively. friendships have changed and diversified. The number of close friends among students increased. I noticed that students who are passive and alone in the lessons are more active in the classroom and among their friends. Thanks to these activities, the all of the students got to know each other and developed friendships..." (T12).

Although the majority of the findings obtained from the interviews with the teachers were described as positive, it was also stated that these practices had negative or neutral results in some classrooms. Below are a few examples of negative or neutral status:

"...I don't think it was very effective because the students were a bit reluctant and could not completely participate..." (T10).

"...I can't say that these practices are enough. Because students from different cultures have a big language problem. They are poor in communication. Turkish speaking level of the students coming this year is a little low. Although students from different cultures tried to communicate with each other they had difficulty in communicating. Therefore they got bored after a while and turned to their other friends. Unfortunately, this situation prevents them from learning the things of other cultures..." (T4).

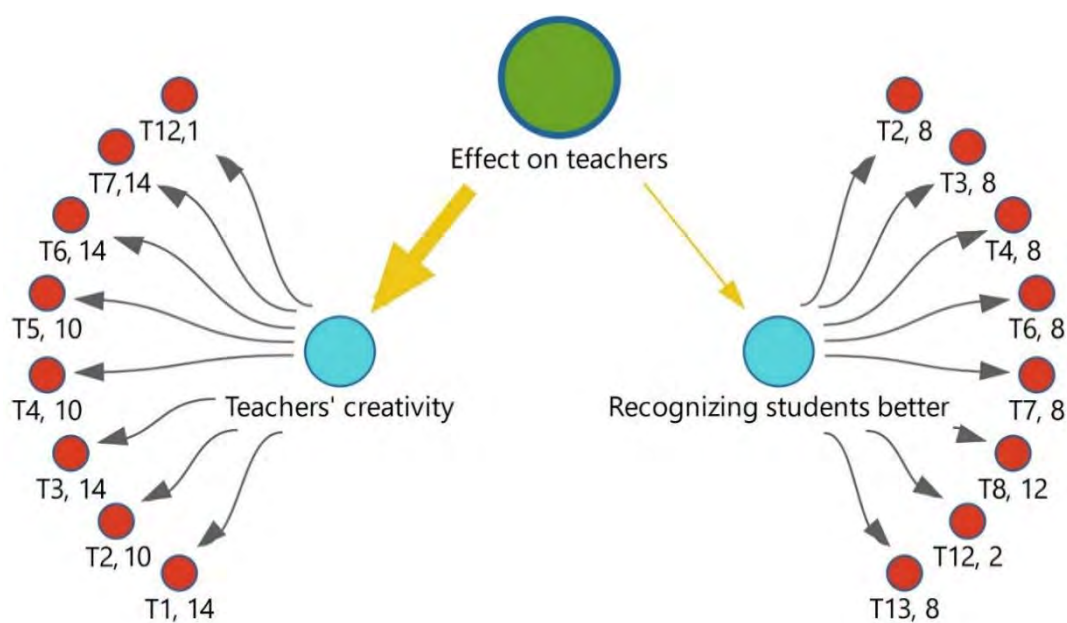


Figure 4: Effect on teachers

With the code-subcode-Segment model, the main theme and sub-themes were visualized and the views of the teachers on these themes are given below through direct quotations.

The second theme, which consists of the findings obtained within the focus of the research, was determined as the effects of the practices on the teachers. Accordingly, it has been revealed that culturally responsive educational practices are also effective on teachers. This main theme is shaped as two sub-themes. One of these sub-themes is that practices make teachers more creative. The other theme states that teachers get to know their students better thanks to these practices. Below are some representative teacher opinions on both sub-themes:

In the interviews, the teachers emphasized that the practices increased their creativity. Some quotations expressing these views are as follows:

"...gave me a new perspective. I think they are very useful especially the KWL Chart practice. In addition to Life Studies course, I planned to introduce the music of different cultures in the music lesson. I can make a presentation with costumes belonging to different cultures in the art lesson..." (T2).

"...I was able to develop new practices. For example, there is a magic button in the classroom. The students who presses this button ensures that the student they want gets information about their culture..." (T5).

"...There were practices that I thought I could change and use for lesson aims..." (T6).

"...In general, I adapted the practices interdisciplinary. I cannot say that I have developed new practices. But I tried to adapt them all to different lessons..." (T12).

Another effect of the practices on teachers was *Recognizing students better*. Some of the teachers' opinions expressing these findings are as follows:

"...Thanks to these practices I think recognized my own students better. For example, in the Four Corners and My Name events, I got interesting information about my students from different cultures. Knowing what they like and dislike will guide me in my behaviors in the following lessons..." (T4).

"...I recognized my students much better. I have learned a lot about them that I didn't know. For example, the treasure box or the my name events helped me learn about efficient information about my diverse students..." (T2).

"...These practices actually changed my perspective. At the same time, I learned more about the family structures of my diverse students. In this way, I had the

opportunity to get to know their cultures closely, and when I saw their family life, I could understand them better and be more responsive to them..." (T13).

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, the views of primary school teachers on the use of culturally responsive educational practices, which are frequently used in the USA, in Turkey were examined. In this context, interviews were conducted with primary school teachers who used these practices in life studies courses, and according to the data obtained, it was determined that these practices had two main effects. One of these main effects is the *effect on students* and the other is the *effect on teachers*.

As an alternative to traditional approaches, there is a very important issue that requires radical changes in schools and classrooms: Culture. Schools that reflect a dominant culture also put culturally diverse students at a disadvantage (Savage, Hindle, Meyer, Hynds, Penetito & Sleeter, 2011). Erickson (2010) provides a comprehensive overview of how culture in schools is reflected at many levels, visible and invisible, that has an impact on students. Lack of connectivity and low engagement between school and student have been related with the lack of culturally responsive practices (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Cothran & Ennis, 2000). As can be seen, it is stated that culturally responsive educational practices are very effective on students from different cultures in the classrooms. When the effects on students, which is the first finding of this research, are examined, it is seen that culturally responsive educational practices have very positive effects on all students. Therefore, it can be said that the results of the research are in parallel with the literature. When Figure 3 is examined, it is seen that culturally responsive education practices have positive effects on students such as personal development, positive interaction, cultural awareness and participation in lessons. Culturally responsive practices have been found to have a positive impact on students' self-image and provides them opportunities to feel connected to the learning environment (Wanless and Crawford, 2016). Furthermore, this teaching approach can increase student engagement, enrichment, and achievement (Ford & Russo, 2016) because "children's culture defines what they will focus their attention on, how they interpret the world to give it meaning, ...and how they will value that learning" (Tileston & Darling, 2008, p. 9). Studies by Ladson-Billings (2014) state that culturally responsive teaching "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p.20). This approach has been found to make students feel welcomed, supports the development of a positive self-image, and helps students feel connected to the learning environment (Wanless and Crawford, 2016). Furthermore, the approach can impact student engagement, enrichment, and achievement (Ford & Russo, 2016).

However, some teachers also stated that these practices did not provide any benefit. The reason for this negative or neutral effect may be the negative perceptions of teachers

towards students from different cultures in the classroom. Akcan (2022c) revealed in his research that some teachers are insufficient in terms of cultural responsiveness. In addition, some studies indicate that teachers have low expectations for students from different cultures (Marie, 2006; Cannella & Reiff, 1994). These findings emphasized how important it is for teachers to be responsive to different cultures. In relation to this important situation, when the effects forming the second main theme of the research (Figure 4) are examined, it was determined that the culturally responsive educational practices used in the classroom improved sufficiency in teachers. One of these sufficiency is to recognise students better, and the other is to develop teacher creativity. It is important that teachers “learn about the cultures represented in their classrooms, respect students’ values, make connections, and view differences as strengths, not deficits” (Orosco & O’Connor, p. 371, 2011). As culturally responsive teachers learn about their students’ cultural experiences, they are then able to validate those cultures in the classroom, and use them to implement instruction. According to Gay (2002), “explicit knowledge about cultural diversity is imperative to meeting the educational needs of ethnically diverse students” (p. 107).

As a result, the use of culturally responsive practices in Turkey has been found to be effective on both students and teachers. For this reason, the use of such culturally responsive educational practices in Turkey, which is hosting more and more cultures both with its own internal dynamics and external migration, brings out very important results. Based on the results of this research, the following recommendations can be represents:

- National and local initiatives are needed to improve teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards different cultures in a positive way.
- This qualitative study was conducted on a limited sample. Therefore, a larger sample can be studied to overcome this limitation.
- The sufficiency of teachers to develop culturally responsive educational practices should be increased.

REFERENCES

- Akcan, E. (2022a). An Analytical Overview of the Studies on the Life Studies Lesson: Bibliometric Analysis Based on Web of Science Database. *Journal of Educational Studies and Multidisciplinary Approaches*, 2 (2), 213-227. <https://doi.org/10.51383/jesma.2022.53>
- Akcan, E. (2022b). Primary school teachers' opinions on social justice in life studies lessons and in-class practices. *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists*, 10 (2), 265-278. <https://doi.org/10.17478/jegys.1116699>
- Akcan, E. (2022c). Culturally responsive education as a sustainable educational approach: Reflections from primary school teachers' practices. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 6(3), 88-102. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.202215416>
- Baysal, N. Z. (2006). Hayat Bilgisi: Toplumsal ve doğal yaşama bütüncül bir bakış [Life Studies: A holistic view of social and natural life]. C. Öztürk (ed.) *Hayat bilgisi ve sosyal bilgiler öğretimi [Life studies and social studies teaching]*. (pp. 1-19) in. Pegem Publishing.
- Blahu, K. (2019). *The Relationship Between Culturally Responsive Professional Development and Reading Achievement in Economically, Racially, and Linguistically Diverse Learners* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). St. Francis University College of Education, Chicago.
- Cannella, G. & Reiff, J. (1994). Teacher preparation for diversity. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 27(3), 28-33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1066568940270305>
- Castagno, A. E. & Brayboy, B. M. J. (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 941-993. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308323036>
- Claro, S., Paunesku, D. & Dweck, C. S. (2016). Growth mindset tempers the effects of poverty on academic achievement. *PNAS Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 113(31), 8664-8668. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1608207113>
- Cothran, D. & Ennis, C. (2000). Building bridges to student engagement: Communicating respect and care for students in urban high schools. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 33, 106-117. Retrieved from Researchgate, [Link](#)
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Pub.
- Creswell, J. W. (2019). *30 skills for qualitative researchers* (Trn. Hasan Özcan). Anı Publishing.
- Dowling, M. (2007). From Husserl to van Manen. A review of different phenomenological approaches. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 44(1), 131-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2005.11.026>
- Dukes, S. (1984). Phenomenological methodology in the human sciences. *Journal of religion and health*, 23(3), 197-203. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00990785>

- Ekmen, M. (2019). *The examination of 'life science teaching programs' gains'' according to the teachers' views* (Unpublishing master thesis). Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Institute of Educational Sciences, Çanakkale.
- Elias, A., Vasilis, S., Katerina, A. & Christine, K. T. (2017). Using sociometric techniques to assess the social impacts of inclusion: Some methodological considerations. *Educational Research Review*, (20), 68-80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2016.11.004>
- Erbaş, A. A. (2020). *A research concerning the values education in the context of life science course: expectations, practices and recommendations* (Unpublishing doctoral thesis). Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Institute for Graduate Studies. Istanbul.
- Erickson, F. (2010). Culture in society and in educational practices. J.A. Banks & C.A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural education: Issues and practices* (7th ed., pp. 33–56) in. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.
- Farinde-Wu, A., Glover, C. P. & Williams, N. N. (2017). It's not hard work; it's heart work: Strategies of effective, award-winning culturally responsive teachers. *The Urban Review*, 49(2), 279–299. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-017-0401-5>
- Finlay, L. (2009). Debating Phenomenological Research Methods. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 3(1), 6-25. <https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr19818>
- Ford, D. & Russo, C. (2016). Historical and legal overview of special education overrepresentation: Access and equity denied. *Exceptional Learners*, 16(1), 50-57. <https://doi.org/10.5555/2158-396X.16.1.50>
- Ford, D. Y. (2010). Multicultural issues: Culturally responsive classrooms: Affirming culturally different gifted students. *Gifted Child Today*, 33(1), 50–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107621751003300112>
- Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(2), 106-116. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487102053002003>
- Gay, G. (2010). *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. (2nd ed.). Multicultural Education Series. Teachers College pub.
- Hammond, Z. (2014). *Culturally responsive teaching and the brain: Promoting authentic engagement and rigor among culturally and linguistically diverse students*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin
- Hammond, Z. (2015). Is Implicit Bias Racist? Three things every teacher should know about implicit bias and the brain. *Learning for Justice*. Retrieved from [Is Implicit Bias Racist? | Learning for Justice](#)
- Hernandez, A. & Burrows, K. (2021) Implementing culturally relevant teaching in the classroom. *Open Journal of Leadership*, (10), 338-363. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojl.2021.104020>
- Kabapınar, Y. (2007). *İlköğretimde Hayat Bilgisi ve Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretimi [Life Studies and Social Studies Teaching in Primary Education]*. Maya Academy Publishing.

- Karasu-Avcı, E. & Ketenoğlu-Kayabaşı, Z. E. (2018). Content analysis of the values in the purposes of life science education curricula (1936- 2018). *Journal of Values Education*, 16 (35), 27-56. [515326 \(dergipark.org.tr\)](https://doi.org/10.15326/dergipark.org.tr)
- Ladson-Billings, G. J. (2014). Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 2.0: a.k.a. the Remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(1), 74-84. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.p2rj131485484751>
- Lucas, T., Villegas, A. M. & Freedson-Gonzalez, M. (2008). Linguistically responsive teacher education: Preparing classroom teachers to teach english language learners. *Journal of Teacher Education* 59(4), 361-73. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487108322110>
- Mamas, C. (2009). *Getting Along with Peers in Mainstream Primary Schools: An exploration of the social status of pupils identified as having special educational needs in Cyprus*. (Unpublished PhD thesis), University of Cambridge.
- Marie, A. R. (2006). The role of social foundations in preparing teachers for culturally relevant practice. *Multicultural Education*, 13(3), 10-13. Retrieved from [08ryan.indd \(ed.gov\)](http://08ryan.indd.ed.gov)
- Muniz, J. (2020). *Culturally responsive teaching: A reflection guide*. New America pub.
- Orosco, M. J. & O'Connor, R. (2011). Cultural aspects of teaching reading with Latino English language learners. R. O'Connor & P. Vadasy (Eds.), *Handbook of reading interventions* (pp. 356–379) in. Guilford pub.
- Powell, R., Cantrell, S. C., Malo-Juvera, V. & Correll, P. (2016). Operationalizing culturally responsive instruction: Preliminary findings of CRIOP research. *Teachers College Record*, 118(1), 1-46. <https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811611800107>
- Şahin, M. (2009). Evolution of the social studies curriculum from republic to present. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 2(8). 402-410 Retrieved from ([pdf_cumhuriyetin_kurulusundan_gunumuze_turkiye'de_hayat_bilgisi_dersi_programlarinin_gelismisi_researchgate.net](http://pdf.cumhuriyetin.kurulusundan.gunumuze.turkiye.de.hayat.bilgisi.dersi.programlarinin.gelismisi.researchgate.net))
- Savage, C., Hindle, R., Meyer, L. H., Hynds, A., Penetito, W. & Sleeter, E. C. (2011) Culturally responsive pedagogies in the classroom: indigenous student experiences across the curriculum, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(3), 183-198, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2011.588311>
- Şimşek, H. & Yıldırım, A. (2016). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri [Qualitative research methods in the social sciences]*. Seçkin Publishing.
- Sönmez, V. (1998). *Hayat Bilgisi Öğretimi ve Öğretmen Klavuzu [Life Studies Teaching and Teacher's Guide]*. Anı Publishing.
- Teel, K. M. & Obidah, J. E. (2008). *Building Racial and Cultural Competence in the Classroom: Strategies from Urban Educators*. Teachers College Press.
- Tileston, D. W. & Darling, S. K. (2008). *Why culture counts: Teaching children of poverty*. Solution Tree pub.

Villegas, A. M. & Lucas, T. (2002). *Educating culturally responsive teachers: A coherent approach*. State University of New York Press.

Wanless, S. & Crawford, P. (2016). Reading your way to a culturally responsive classroom. *Young Children*, 71(2), 8-15. Retrieved from ([PDF](#)) [Reading Your Way to a Culturally Responsive Classroom \(researchgate.net\)](#)

Biographical notes:

Dr. Emrullah AKCAN: Assistant Professor at Gaziantep University. He received his undergraduate, master and PhD degree in the Department of Primary Teacher Education from Istanbul University. He is study second PhD degree in the Department of Education Administrative from Kocaeli University. His main research interest in Inclusive education, Equity in Education, Diversities in Education, Culturally Responsive Education, Life Studies, educational movies in primary education.

Dr. Karen BLAHA: Karen Blaha is an Assistant Professor in the College of Education at the University of St. Francis. She instructs candidates in the Educational Leadership Program.

Copyright: © 2023 (Akcan & Blaha). Licensee Mevlut Aydogmus, Konya, Turkey. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original authors and source are credited.

Author(s)' statements on ethics and conflict of interest

Ethics statement: We hereby declare that research/publication ethics and citing principles have been considered in all the stages of the study. We take full responsibility for the content of the paper in case of dispute.

Statement of interest: We have no conflict of interest to declare.

Funding: None

Acknowledgements: None