

Use of Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) in Social Studies: Gifted and Talented Students' Conceptions

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Abstract

Problem Statement: There have been several studies that have investigated curricular interventions for gifted students to address their educational needs. For most courses and disciplines, a standard curriculum may not be sufficient for the majority of gifted students. Here, among other curricular efforts in the education of the gifted, an Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM)--which can be assumed to be responsive because of the interrelated dimensions of its structure and its dimensions such as an epistemological concept, advanced content, and the process-product--was assessed to address different aspects of gifted children. In literature, propositions of social studies curricula and instruction for gifted and talented learners indicate the necessity for the implementation of programs projected in the Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM). A review of the literature on social studies and gifted education also indicates that it may be important to study the lack of implementations for gifted and talented learners in the area of social studies by highlighting students' thoughts in an implemented curriculum unit.

Purpose of the Study: This study examines students' thoughts on a differentiated social studies unit based on the ICM and its instruction. The aim of the study is to identify gifted students' conceptions when the Integrated Curriculum Model is used in social studies.

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Method: This study aims to explore individual gifted and talented student views on a differentiated social studies curriculum unit, namely, *luckily it is present* (good to have it); thus, a qualitative research design was used to enable the incorporation of views, ideas, feelings, and perceptions. Following a two-month implementation of differentiated social studies instruction, twelve students were asked about their views regarding the social studies course. A written, open-ended questionnaire, which was developed by the researchers, was used to collect data. The data were analyzed via a content-analysis method.

Findings: The findings of the study identified positively changing student views on the differentiated social studies unit in terms of the Integrated Curriculum Model and its instruction.

Conclusion and Recommendations: In this study, the thoughts and experiences of gifted and talented students regarding the Integrated Curriculum Model's implementation were highlighted. An examination of gifted and talented students' thoughts in light of the ICM shed light on curricular and instructional considerations for creating a good social studies education for gifted and talented learners.

Keywords: Social Studies Education, Integrated Curriculum Model, Gifted and Talented Education

Introduction

In Turkey, social studies is broadly defined as "a curriculum which uses combined information of social sciences and humanities and aims educating effective citizens who can solve problems and make decisions in changing world and country in every respect" (Öztürk, 2007, p. 24). It is apparent in the literature that there is an emerging and overlapping concurrence of social studies and gifted and talented education; this concurrence has occurred since Delisle (1991) brilliantly speculated this conjunction by asking the following question: "If the gifted are to be our 'leaders of tomorrow', for what kinds of leadership should we be educating them? Is it sufficient for them to be creative, productive scientists, or should we be concerned with their morality, their ethics, and their social responsibility as well?" (Delisle, 1991, p. 181). According to VanTassel-Baska and Stambaugh (2006), social studies is an important area of specialization for gifted and talented students to study the social phenomena and aspects of societies and cultures. They add that "some gifted students have natural talents for study and growth in the social studies disciplines" (p. 141).

There have been several studies that have examined the curricular interventions that address the educational needs of gifted students (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2006). For most courses and disciplines, a standard curriculum may not be sufficient for the majority of gifted students (VanTassel-Baska, 2009). Composed of three significant curricular and instructional dimensions, the Integrated

Curriculum Model (ICM) is one program that can be used in the differentiation or program model for social studies. As Maker & Schiever (2010) stated, according to VanTassel-Baska, the dimensions of the ICM are responsive to the diverse specifications of gifted and talented students, such as "a) emphasizing advanced content in disciplines of study, b) providing higher order thinking and processes, and c) focusing learning experiences around real-world issues, themes, and ideas" (Maker & Schiever, 2010, p. 20).

Literature Review

Although there are research studies regarding the thoughts or views of social studies education, the services and implementation of social studies curricula for gifted and talented students are quite limited in Turkey. There are several research studies that have examined the effectiveness of instructional designs and student attitudes towards the course in regular school settings, which is not related to gifted and talented students. For example, Öztürk and Baysal (1999) identified a relationship between student achievements and attitudes; meaningful differences were identified regarding positive student attitudes when teachers preferred to use an instructional approach rather than a lecture or textbook-based instruction (Öztürk & Baysal, 1999). Öztürk and Baysal (1999) also stated that of the many factors that affect social studies education, one factor is the negative attitudes towards social studies in nearly every grade level. The authors state that according to research studies, students generally do not believe that social studies is an important course or that it should be a primary area of study (Öztürk & Baysal, 1999).

According to the Turkish Ministry of National Education, social studies carries importance throughout the history of education in the Turkish Republic; for example, social studies was one axis course together with science education in the 1998 curriculum similarly with antecedent social studies curricula. Social studies was given a similar level of importance by the Ministry of National Education regarding curricula (Öztürk, 2007). In another research study, Ada, Baysal, and Kadioglu (2009) demonstrated that project-based learning positively affects students' attitudes towards a social studies course. According to Karakus' (2009) experimental study on constructivist learning and student attitudes, constructivist learning has positive effects on student attitudes towards a social studies course. Similarly, Deveci (2002) demonstrated that problem-based learning has a positive effect on students' attitudes regarding social studies.

An examination of these studies indicates that in the Turkish context in general, research studies in school settings experimentally tested variables such as constructivist learning, problem-based learning, and project-based treatments on attitudes as the independent variables. Moreover, a review of the literature in Turkish school settings also indicates that the concept of differentiation for students with different needs was predominately not taken into account. It should be noted that even though there has been growing interest in gifted and talented education in Turkey, aside from fragmental efforts to facilitate some programs and services for gifted and talented learners, the programs and services are rather limited for these

students. As a result, despite some academic efforts to serve gifted and talented education, empirical evidence of specific social studies curricula or programs in the Turkish context for gifted and talented students could not be identified.

An outstanding study by Little, Feng, VanTassel-Baska, Rogers, and Avery (2007), which evaluates a differentiated social studies curriculum for gifted and talented students that was implemented in a heterogeneous research setting with both gifted and non-gifted students, identified important findings for discussion regarding social studies instruction for gifted and talented learners. The study demonstrated that the challenging and integrated curriculum they designed, as well as the instruction catered to gifted and talented students' needs, can promote the development of achievement for gifted and talented learners and for students who were not identified as gifted. This finding may be important for all heterogeneous classroom settings. The study also concludes that basic standards can be used as a framework for more multifaceted learning and teaching in social studies (Little et al., 2007). The study findings may be significant for the Turkish context because teachers may encounter mostly unidentified learners; at the same time, they may need to facilitate advanced dimensions of social studies in more depth with higher order thinking skills, which can be beneficial for all levels of learners.

Other studies mainly focus on the importance of differentiated curricula and modes of instruction to engage the goals of both social studies and gifted and talented education. Troxclair (1998) states that gifted students did not receive an education based exactly on their needs in regular classroom settings, because educational programs were not supportive of their educational needs. She advises teachers to implement differentiation strategies to meet gifted and talented learners' educational needs. For example, to build a challenging course for these students, she proposes a compact curriculum, conceptual thematic units, independent studies, and mentorship for differentiation in social studies. There have been some models and features with respect to differentiation for gifted and talented learners in a social studies curriculum. One main feature is the advanced content because of gifted and talented students' characteristics and learning needs, whereas the second feature is the complexity of the curriculum for the gifted and talented. The third feature is the differentiation of a social studies curriculum in consideration of the depth of engagement in problem-based learning activities. Another aspect can provide students with creative opportunities in social studies curricula and instruction methods. Finally, a social studies curriculum for gifted and talented learners should address an abstract level to introduce them to real-world problems (VanTassel-Baska, 2009). In summary, these propositions in literature regarding social studies curricula and instruction methods for gifted and talented learners indicate the necessity of implementing the programs projected in the Integrated Curriculum Model. A review of the literature also indicates that the lack of implementation for gifted and talented learners in the area of social studies may be important to study by highlighting students' thoughts in an implemented curriculum unit.

Purpose of the Research

The aim of the study is to identify gifted students' conceptions regarding a differentiated social studies unit in terms of the Integrated Curriculum Model. Among other curricular efforts in the education of the gifted, the Integrated Curriculum Model can be assumed to be responsive because of the interrelated dimensions of its structure, which comprises dimensions such as an epistemological concept, advanced content, and the process-product that may address different aspects of gifted children (VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh 2008; VanTassel-Baska, 2009; Renzulli et al., 2009). Thus, this study aims to explore students' thoughts on a differentiated social studies unit based on the ICM and its instruction methods.

Implementation of the Integrated Curriculum Model in a Social Studies Unit

The Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) is a curriculum model for gifted and talented students to integrate interdisciplinary concepts, advanced content, and critical reasoning in social studies (Little et al., 2007). In this study, the unit, which is referred to as *luckily it is present* (good to have it) [*iyi ki var*], was developed by researchers and implemented for approximately two months in accordance with the Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) created by VanTassel-Baska (2009). However, it should be noted that the social studies unit was developed in an authentic manner following the Turkish Ministry of Education's objectives and the Integrated Curriculum Model's framework. The social studies unit was specified as comprehensive for different relevant disciplines under a comprehensive theme entitled "change." The unit was designed with real-world problems and activities to be solved with higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, creativity, decision making, and problem solving. The unit also used structured activities and questions as a part of the interdisciplinary unit proposed by in the ICM to make students active learners. Because the Integrated Curriculum Model offers advanced content and a deep understanding of concepts, it makes it possible to develop an advanced content and course structure for gifted and talented students (Little, Feng, VanTassel-Baska, Rogers, & Avery, 2007).

In the development of the *luckily it is present* unit of social studies, these strands were followed: First, the objectives of the *luckily-it-is-present* unit were revised while abiding by the present objectives proposed by the Turkish Ministry of National Education and considering the general characteristics of gifted and talented learners and the new objectives developed in accordance with Benjamin Bloom's revised taxonomy of objectives (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). In the development of these new objectives, importance was placed on higher order thinking skills, especially regarding analysis, evaluation, and creation. Maker and Shiever (2005) suggest that higher order thinking carries importance in process implementation. In summary, the developed unit aimed to focus on higher order thinking skills, real-life problems, and higher level objectives.

Second, the unit's content was developed in accordance with the change theme that uses enrichment activities and the engagement of discipline specialists in pursuance of the advanced content factor of the Integrated Curriculum Model. For example, connections with other disciplines were established--namely, the course of science and technology--via field specialist involvement regarding the use of radioactivity, cell phones, and health relations.

Third, the process of the unit was built to develop higher order thinking, independent research ability, and problem-solving skills as previously discussed. Structured real-life problem scenarios were prepared, and these classroom scenarios were planned to solve these problems and create alternative solutions to the ones provided in the lesson plans. In the real life problem solving components, problem based strategies were gradually used that could be used advisedly in the Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM). Most activities were planned as collaborative based to engage all students in the learning process.

As previously discussed, in addition to the three major characteristics planned or organized into a Turkish social studies unit, the curriculum unit is designed for Turkish gifted and talented students via enrichment of the content, engagement in higher order thinking skills, the use of flexible grouping, and problem based learning activities with real world issues as proposed in the Integrated Curriculum Model (VanTassel-Baska, 2003).

Social Studies for Gifted and Talented Children

As a subject matter, social studies education for all students offers the use of a knowledge base of social science disciplines and the opportunity to be active citizens of their world. One of the important roles of a social studies curriculum is to provide the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to educate students for active participation in civic life both at the national and worldwide levels (Banks & Banks, 1999).

Three traditions regarding social studies education are defined: (1) citizenship transmission, (2) social science approach, and (3) reflective inquiry (Barth & Shermis, 1970); citizenship education can be defined as a common thread alongside all of the disagreements on the definition (Cole & Schreyer, 2007).

According to VanTassel-Baska (2006), social studies can provide "excellent opportunities to engage gifted and talented students in complex, challenging cognitive activities... [they] can learn the skills of critical and creative thinking and the control functions of metacognition" (p. 142). Some gifted and talented learners may exhibit a special interest and talent for the subjects of social studies. This conjunction of giftedness and interest in social studies subjects may be incorporated to serve the aims of both social studies education and gifted and talented student educational needs.

In consideration of the educational institutions' changing roles at both the global and national levels, the fundamental roles of educational institutions are to educate effective citizens in changing roles; to realize this aim, students should be given the proposed knowledge, skills, and values. In Turkey, which is similar to the United States, the proposed knowledge, skills, and values can be learned through social studies. Furthermore, global issues such as environmental issues, economics, wars, hunger, poverty, and human rights are primarily social studies topics that coincide with other subject areas or courses. The similarities of the objectives of both social studies and gifted and talented education--such as the inquiry of primary sources or documents for social sciences, decision-making skills, creative and critical-thinking skills, and the investigation of real-life problems--provide an answer regarding social studies' appropriateness for the content focus for gifted and talented students (Steward, 1985; Delisle, 1991).

Method

Research Design

This study has been carried out according to qualitative research procedures and methods in order to examine the concern in line with its purpose. In the research, since it aims to highlight gifted and talented students' thoughts on an implemented social studies curriculum unit. This study was designed according to a phenomenological research design. This study aims to explore individual gifted and talented students' views on a differentiated social studies curriculum unit, namely, *luckily it is present*; thus, a qualitative research design was used to enable the incorporation of views, ideas, feelings, and perceptions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). Creswell (2008) highlighted some traditions regarding qualitative inquiry, and Denzin and Lincoln (2000) elucidated qualitative research designs under eight main headings. Furthermore, it is important to note that Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also cite that qualitative inquiry "does not belong to a single discipline. Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own" (p. 6).

While considering the traditions or applications of qualitative research in educational settings, the study may be referred to as phenomenological research. Bogdan and Biklen (1998), when describing phenomenological research, said "researchers in the phenomenological mode attempt to understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situation" (p. 23). Similarly, Johnson and Christensen (2004) explain phenomenological study attempts to understand "how people experience a phenomenon from the person's own perspectives" (p. 46). In this study, gifted and talented students' experiences on a developed social studies curriculum unit were highlighted as a phenomenon from their own perspectives. Taking into account Johnson and Christensen (2004) and Bogdan and Biklen's (1998) approach to qualitative research, this study aims to identify and understand students' views following the implementation of a social studies curriculum unit.

Research Sample

The study was conducted by the Ministry of National Education with the cooperation of Istanbul University in a primary school in which a unique state-based educational setting identified gifted and talented students. Children were identified via IQ tests, and they had the right to register with the school as gifted and talented based on the rank of their score. The study participants comprised nine (five boys, four girls) 4th grade gifted and talented students. While the participants of the study were being determined, it was considered that they should be willing to frankly explain their experiences and thoughts. Since the research context is a unique state elementary school serving gifted and talented students, it should be stated that a purposeful sampling method was applied among experienced differentiated curricula and instruction methods in accordance with the Integrated Curriculum Unit in social studies. All student participants were 10 years old. Following the implementation of a differentiated social studies unit/instruction, the gifted and talented students were asked about their views on the social studies course. As stated above, the participants were selected among volunteer students who experienced the instruction of the social studies unit; this approach is referred to as a purposive or purposeful sample by Merriam (2002). Merriam (2002) explains this participant selection, saying, "it is important to select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 12). In accordance with research ethics, participants' names were not used; instead, participants were referred to by numbers in the tables.

Research Instrument and Procedure

A written, semi-structured, and open-ended questionnaire was developed by the researchers and used to collect the data. Open-ended questions were edited by two other scholars who counseled in the area of gifted and talented and social studies education. The readability of the questions was examined and edited by two Turkish language teachers as well. The study's core source of data was the open-ended questionnaire. The open-ended, written questionnaire was shaped into a final form after receiving these multiple evaluations from the field experts. Data were collected after the implementation of the whole social studies curriculum unit, dedicated a course hour upon request and availability of the participants. Participants were instructed to write down their views and experiences as the questions were asked. Moreover, students were asked to add whether they wanted to express their thoughts on the course and its implementation. It should be noted that, to provide a trustworthy atmosphere, it was made clear to students that these questions were not proposed to evaluate their course achievement.

Validity and Reliability

For the credibility of the research, interpretations from all of the responses were shared by the experts of the qualitative research and by experts in both social studies and gifted education. In order to preserve the objectivity of the research, all of the data elicited from participants were retained by the researchers to be submitted for examination by the related authorized persons. All answers to the questions are provided in tables in the framework of four focus questions.

Data Analysis

As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) stated, “there is no one single or correct way to analyze and present qualitative data” (p. 461). In the study, questions provided the framework for the themes of the data. This framework allowed researchers to see the whole picture from the pieces of information from each participant student’s thoughts and experiences. The data were analyzed via a content-analysis method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Mayring, 2000). Because programs and services for gifted and talented students in school settings are rather limited in Turkey, this research setting for gifted and talented studies is unique as a state school; thus, the number of participant students in this study at this grade level was rather small. Therefore, a phenomenological design is appropriate in such a study that is interpretive in nature. The questions served as a framework during the data analysis because the nature of the study is descriptive, as is the nature of phenomenological research studies.

In considering what Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) suggested when they said that “qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities” (p. 461), all answers of the gifted and talented students were presented. As noted earlier, each response of a single participant was presented, and then the presentation of a studied phenomenon moved to a new question of the research. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) put it, “this preserves the coherence and integrity of the individual’s response and enables a whole picture of that person to be presented” (p. 467).

Findings

The students were asked four questions: (1) What do you think about social studies? (2) What do you think about the social studies course during this term? (3) Would you please specify the points that you like and do not like regarding this social studies course? (4) What do you think about the differences between the social studies courses and the social studies courses during this term?

Table 1*Gifted and talented students' thoughts regarding regular social studies courses*

| Participant student | Question: What do you think about social studies? |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1(Male) | To me, it is absolutely boring. |
| 2 (Male) | I do not like social studies since it is boring, and especially memorizing times of important events is very boring. |
| 3 (Male) | I think social studies course subjects are very comprehensive. This makes the course unattractive. |
| 4 (Male) | It was boring until the social studies courses given this term. |
| 5 (Male) | I did not view this course as positive until this term. Although I do not like the regular social studies courses, I liked the courses given this term. |
| 6 (Female) | The most hated course to me was social studies. But it was funny with these different social studies courses. |
| 7 (Female) | I started to like this term. I hate social studies the most among the courses. |
| 8 (Female) | I do not want to lie. I hated this course until this term. |
| 9 (Female) | It was boring our regular social studies courses, but this term I started to like social studies. It was very exciting. |

As shown in Table 1, the students most frequently use the word "boring" to describe social studies. The gifted and talented students make no connection to social studies; as a result of this disconnection, "boring" became the most used adjective regarding social studies. Understanding the meaning of what students are attempting to convey can be represented by the answers provided by Participants 2 and 3. The answer of Participant 2 provides an idea regarding the curricular and instructional implementations. Instructional designs primarily depend on textbooks, and the order of topics in textbooks may be the cause of this answer.

The second preferred word the students most frequently used regarding their conceptions of social studies is "hate." However, it should be noted that this hate could easily be shifted to sympathy towards the social studies course. In the examination of the students' answers to the question, it is not asked; thus, they practically answered "I started to like social studies this term" (Participant 7). There may be another important point to explain some students' descriptions of why it is

boring. While most students did not prefer to explain why social studies is a boring school subject, some students explained it from their point of view. For example, one gifted and talented student explained that social studies is about “memorizing times of important events” (Participant 2). This answer can be explained by the instructional design of the course the student encountered. While the course’s aim is built simply on recitation, individual differences such as interest, learning style, and the type of giftedness or talent are ignored. Without taking into consideration the characteristics of the students and whether they are gifted or non-gifted, this finding can be explained as the mode of instruction with the term used by Tomlinson as “one size fits all” (Tomlinson, 2001, viii). Therefore, while the students simply were expected to recite the events and times, it is explained as being boring according to the students’ answers.

Table 2

Gifted and talented students’ thoughts regarding differentiated social studies

| Participant student | Question: What do you think about the social studies course during this term? |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1 (Male) | It was like we were not in a course. It was amazing. |
| 2 (Male) | After these courses, I was totally satisfied. The courses were very funny. The course methods and materials used made us think it was great. I think the best side of the course was we tried to solve real-life problems. |
| 3 (Male) | My exam was 81, but it became 98. No need to say something more. |
| 4 (Male) | I can describe the social studies during this term as funny, enjoyable, informative, and nice. |
| 5 (Male) | My point average increased during this term from 73 to 100. It was an enjoyable course. |
| 6 (Female) | I do not want to turn back to our regular social studies courses. |
| 7 (Female) | We discussed everything, especially problems, and we tried to solve problems. It was intriguing. |
| 8 (Female) | I was waiting impatiently for the social studies course. I think the problems of our daily life made it possible to better understand social studies. |
| 9 (Female) | Even though some information given in the course I could not understand, it was useful to me. Some other information given in the course came in handy in my daily life. The most useful part of the course was making the connection to daily life with social studies. |

As shown in Table 2, more detailed accounts regarding the differentiated social studies unit were discussed by the students. For example, the answer of Participant 2 was very striking: “Methods and materials used made us think it was great. I think the best side of the course was we tried to solve real life problems.” As previously described, the designed unit was built in accordance with advanced content that had

higher level objectives of cognitive taxonomy and higher level thinking skills with problem-based learning under the umbrella of the three dimensions of the Integrated Curriculum Model. This differentiation of curriculum and instruction might be a trigger to activate student interests in social studies, which may have previously been present. It might also be argued that solving real-life problems is another important connection experienced with the new connection to social studies. Two participants simply explained their grade development in the course. According to these students, the development of course grades can be the best indicator of what they think about social studies. Because the social studies curriculum and instruction attracted them, they succeeded and demonstrated this success with better grades. Solving problems faced in real life is one of the significant subjects of social studies embedded in the course content and the process explained as “intriguing” by Participant 7. Issues regarding the incorporation of daily-life problems into the curriculum to attempt to solve them with higher order thinking-skill activities and ensuring student participation by enjoying the course were present in the responses of Participants 7 and 8.

Table 3

Gifted and talented students' thoughts on what they like in differentiated social studies

| <i>Participant student</i> | <i>Like</i> | <i>Did not like</i> |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1 (Male) | My grades got higher. | Sometimes the courses become detailed. |
| 2 (Male) | I learned to be creative. It was great for better thoughts to be expected from us. My friends and my teacher could understand when I presented my ideas. | Sometimes we needed more time to share more ideas. |
| 3 (Male) | Everything. | Our teacher talked in detail. |
| 4 (Male) | Everything. I developed my course grade. | Nothing. |
| 5 (Male) | Everything. | Nothing. |
| 6 (Female) | My social studies course grade got better. | We were expected to write too much. |
| 7 (Female) | Our teacher understood us. It was better with activities. | Sometimes activities took too long. I was bored. |
| 8 (Female) | Problems from daily life made me better understand social studies. | Sometimes it was boring while we were writing. |
| 9 (Female) | I like these courses' activities. I can explain the importance of social studies to me: it was 70, and now it is 98. | Sometimes some of my friends did not obey some classroom rules in group studies. But courses were great. |

As shown in Table 3, new dimensions were expressed on a differentiated social studies curriculum unit by the gifted and talented students. The "Like" column of answers is similar to the student answers to the prior questions. Praises were primarily expressed regarding the differentiated curriculum unit. Similarly, the specifications such as real-life problems and creative thinking were noted as positive ways in which the unit was implemented. The students expressed that writing was boring, which might explain gifted and talented student characteristics, because they might have viewed writing as an unnecessary task. One answer of a student may be important; thus, it intimates a satisfaction of the challenges in the course. This point should be addressed based on one student's thoughts that "It was great for better thoughts to be expected from us" (Participant 2). As previously discussed, this statement may prompt the question of challenging as an important consideration in educating an advanced level of learners. Two participant students expressed the same notion regarding the teacher's recognition of their thoughts. This factor highlights the notion of the teacher factor in the education of gifted and talented learners for both the levels of understanding and the communication skills to address these students' educational needs.

Table 4

Gifted and talented students' thoughts regarding regular and differentiated social studies

| <i>Participant student</i> | <i>Question: What do you think about the differences between the social studies courses and the social studies courses during this term?</i> |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1 (Male) | The social studies course was terrible before we experienced social studies this term. |
| 2 (Male) | This social studies course is more instructive, which is why it affected my social studies course grade. I should say that it was entertaining. |
| 3 (Male) | Regular social studies was boring. I could slightly speak. In this course, I could speak more and I had fun. |
| 4 (Male) | This social studies is more informative and entertaining. |
| 5 (Male) | The regular social studies was terrible; this one is much, much better. |
| 6 (Female) | Social studies is always boring. |
| 7 (Female) | There is a huge difference between the two courses. I got bored in normal social studies courses, but now it is funny. My grade is now better. |
| 8 (Female) | Social studies in this term is magnificent. I wish school to end early but not social studies. |
| 9 (Female) | I can describe social studies in this term as entertaining and informative; the normal social studies course is terribly boring. |

As shown in Table 4, the students stated their thoughts regarding the experience of the disparity between the regular and differentiated social studies. Similarly to previous questions, the students predominately stated that the regular social studies they practiced was boring. However, they use some instructive descriptors to explain their views regarding the differentiated social studies unit; entertaining; informative; much, much better; and magnificent. In summary, the gifted and talented students rated the differentiated social studies unit as ultimately better according to their answers to the questions.

Discussion and Conclusion

The research findings demonstrated that while the gifted and talented students' thoughts regarding social studies were not positive, what they experienced with the differentiated curriculum unit could shift their negative views about the course. The research findings also indicated that the differentiated curriculum unit based on the Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) met and exceeded the expectations of the gifted and talented students, according to their statements. The study findings reminded us of the significance of differentiation in the subject matters of social studies (Tomlinson, 2005; VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2006). Most gifted and talented students who participated in the study stated that their predominately negative views regarding social studies changed and that they started to like social studies subjects because of its relation to real-world problems; furthermore, they enjoyed being a part of the learning process.

The study supports the suggestions for gifted and talented students in social studies education proposed by VanTassel-Baska (2007). These considerations include the advanced content, the complexity of the topics that engage problem-based learning, the differentiation of social studies that engages depth, the creative opportunities provided to learners, and the more abstract level of engagement in real-world issues (VanTassel-Baska, 2007). The implementation of a social studies unit based on the Integrated Curriculum Model successfully changed or reshaped their thoughts on social studies.

An examination of the tables also indicates that there would be a connection between student responses and characteristics that can be found in the literature as general characteristics of gifted students. Although the concept of giftedness is multidimensional, Popham (1971) suggests that "no single criterion provides a valid measure of its presence in any individual" (Popham, 1971, p. 8); thus, some general characteristics of intellectual giftedness were stated for gifted and talented students in social studies:

- (1) facility in verbal and written expression;
 - (2) skill in reading for speed and comprehension;
 - (3) intellectual curiosity;
 - (4) capacity for generalization and perception of relationships;
 - (5) ability to understand and formulate abstract concepts;
 - (6) ability to think logically;
 - (7) retentive memory;
 - (8) capacity for self-direction; and
 - (9) resourcefulness in problem solving.
- The gifted student

learns rapidly. Because of his speed in learning, he will require less detailed, repeated instruction. He may exhibit an amazing degree of imagination, initiative, originality, resourcefulness, creativity, and inventiveness. He has superior powers of artistic self-expression and may demonstrate surprising skills with several art media (Popham, 1971, p. 9).

According to the student responses, we can conclude that social studies was perceived by students in accordance with their general academic characteristics. Thus, in the linkage, what is proposed regarding their general academic ability can be explained by the gifted and talented students' comments regarding social studies. For example, according to Popham (1971), gifted and talented students desire "less detailed and repeated instruction" (p. 9). Similarly, Cole and Schreyer (2007) explain the importance of connection with curriculum and instruction and the characteristics of gifted and talented learners:

Particularly within the gifted and talented student population, the young learner must be presented with opportunities to explore and to define his or her personal interests and to investigate material in an independent but supported manner. Natural curiosity especially prominent in the gifted learner should be fueled by a rigorous and diverse social studies curriculum (Cole & Schreyer, 2007, p. 814).

When we revisit what the students explained regarding why they did not like the social studies unit, the responses "sometimes the courses become detailed" (Participant 1) and "our teacher was talking in detail" (Participant 3) are consistent with the general academic characteristics stated in the literature (Popham, 1971; Cole & Schreyer, 2007; Delisle, 1991; Steward, 1985). Moreover, VanTassel-Baska (2008) argues there have been some lists of characteristics of gifted and talented learners for curriculum studies, and the three aspects of gifted and talented students are as follows: precocity, intensity, and complexity. These factors remain essential in the planning and implementation of the Integrated Curriculum Model in differentiated units of studies.

The study highlights students' views in an interpretive manner via the juxtaposition of dimensions, and it needs to be considered in social studies curriculum for gifted and talented learners, which are based on research evidence, suggestions in the literature, and the student responses provided in this study. Student responses regarding regular social studies were qualified as "boring," "hate," and "unattractive," might be found in the roots of the curricular and instructional implementations. However, the roots of the positive student responses such as "magnificent," "instructive," and "entertaining" similarly, but in a reverse direction, could depend on the potential success of research based offerings both in the curricular and instructional levels proposed in the Integrated Curriculum Model. Because the students' thoughts regarding social studies easily shifted to positive in the implemented unit, this finding may remind us of the need to reconsider social studies education for gifted and talented students. Furthermore, we should note that the main limitations of the study should be considered. For example, as Delisle (1991) stated regarding some empirical research evidence on social studies for the gifted

and talented, he explains that many studies focused on short-term gains in student attitudes and achievements. This issue is applicable to the current study in which the students were asked about their thoughts after a two-month implementation. This approach can be considered a limitation of the study; thus, there is a need for future longitudinal research studies.

Another point that should be emphasized is that this study does not aim to evaluate current social studies curricula, programs, instructional practices, or implementations in Turkey or the research setting. The study, simply put, clearly highlights students' thoughts regarding what they experienced in a social studies course. Thus, social studies in Turkey was articulated to describe a setting in general while explaining students' thoughts.

The Social Studies curriculum in Turkey was restructured in 2004 in accordance with a constructivist approach and emphasizes higher order thinking skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, and decision making, which are also stressed in educational programs and models for gifted and talented education. In the 2004 social studies curriculum, which is currently in use, some basic skills that must be gained by students were stated as follows: (1) critical-thinking skills, (2) creative-thinking skills, (3) communication and empathy skills, (4) research skills, (5) problem-solving skills, (6) decision-making skills, and (7) use-of-information-technologies skills (Ministry of National Education, 2012). An investigation of the current curriculum in Turkey may raise the question previously proposed by Steward (1985) in consideration of the general structure of the current social studies curriculum for gifted and talented education. How should social studies for the gifted and talented be different from a good social studies education or from best practices in social studies? Steward's (1985) answers to this question are first to identify the link between the characteristics of the gifted and talented and then to determine our goals in the education of the gifted and talented. After he explains the common classroom practices' insufficiency to challenge gifted and talented students, he continues to describe what might be the vision of social studies for gifted and talented students:

Social studies for the gifted should focus on developing creative producers in the social sciences, persons who might add something new to a discipline or even change its direction. It should also encourage creative producers who can bridge social science disciplines, synthesize them, and gives us visionary leadership (Steward, 1985, p. 242).

Although somehow limited, the gifted and talented students' thoughts in this study, in a sense, corroborate previous research studies (Steward, 1985; Popham, 1971; Cole & Schreyer, 2007; Delisle, 1991; VanTassel-Baska, 2008; VanTassel-Baska & Stambaugh, 2006; VanTassel-Baska, 2009a, 2009b). Thus, social studies curricula and instruction methods may be planned and taught as a social science among three traditions, because this approach may provide students the opportunity for more creative opportunities and more research-based, discipline-based, problem-based, and advanced content. It may also demonstrate their talents in independent and

group studies that meet gifted and talented students' characteristics and expectations as stated in the student statements.

In this study, thoughts regarding the Integrated Curriculum Model's implementation were highlighted. An examination of gifted and talented students' thoughts in light of the ICM shed light on curricular and instructional considerations for creating a good social studies education for gifted and talented learners. Taking into account student characteristics, the curricular and instructional interventions that were developed in accordance with social studies and gifted education represent an important implication of the study. The students' thoughts clearly support the curricular dimensions of the ICM, the advanced content and strategies, problem-based learning, flexible grouping studies, and classroom discussions with field experts. The relatively short gifted and talented student answers can be considered a limitation of the study. However, these written responses provided frank and direct answers from students regarding what they thought in both regular and differentiated social studies in accordance with the Integrated Curriculum Model they experienced. Other research studies must be employed in different school settings, with different gifted and talented students, and with other models and programs in addition to the ICM to develop an understanding of how to better meet student needs in every content area, including social studies.

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Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretiminde Entegre Müfredat Modelinin (EMM) Kullanımı: Üstün Zekâlı ve Yetenekli Öğrencilerin Düşünceleri

Özet

Atıf:

Kahveci, N. G., & Atalay, Ö. (2015). Use of Integrated Curriculum Model (ICM) in Social Studies: Gifted and Talented Students' Conceptions. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 59, 91-112

Problem Durumu: Üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin eğitimsel ihtiyaçlarıyla ilgili alan yazında eğitim programlarına ve öğretime yönelik birçok araştırma bulunmaktadır. Farklı birçok disiplin ve derslerde öğrenciler için hazırlanan eğitim programları üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin eğitimsel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaktan oldukça uzaktır. Bu çalışmada, üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrenciler için önemli olduğu düşünülen birçok eğitim programı modeli içerisinde Entegre Müfredat Modeli (EMM) ne dayalı sosyal bilgiler dersi İyi ki var ünitesi Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Eğitim Programı kazanımları korunarak farklılaştırılmış ve yeniden düzenlenmiştir. Entegre Müfredat Modelinin üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrenciler için ünite planının geliştirilmesinde temel alınmasının en önemli nedeni yapısındaki disiplinler arası ilişkiler ağına önem vermesi ve yine yapısal olarak üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin özelliklerine uygun olarak Epistemolojik kavram, ileri içerik, süreç-ürün boyutlarının birbirleriyle ilintili bir biçimde kullanılması bulunmaktadır. Alan yazın incelendiğinde Entegre Müfredat Modeline yönelik araştırmaların gerekliliğine vurgu yapıldığı görülmektedir. Alan yazın incelendiğinde Entegre Müfredat Modeli ile ilgili deneysel araştırmaların varlığı söz konusu olmakla birlikte, üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrenciler için sosyal bilgiler öğretiminde bu konudaki araştırmalara ihtiyaç olduğu ifade edilmelidir. Bundan dolayı, Entegre Müfredat Modelinin uygulamasına yönelik öğrencilerin bu konudaki görüşlerini inceleyen bu araştırmanın bu konudaki araştırma çabaları açısından önemli bir adım olacağı düşünülmektedir. Bazı üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler dersine yönelik özel yeteneklerinin olabileceği alan yazında belirtilmiştir. Özellikle dünyada karşılaştığımız birçok tarihsel ve güncel sorun sosyal bilgiler dersi konu kapsamında incelenebilir. Üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin bu karmaşık olguların ve problemlerin çözümlenmesinde gelecekte önemli roller üstlenebilecek potansiyelleri göz önünde bulundurularak eğitim programlarının düzenlenmesi, bu öğrencilerin eğitim süreçlerinde düşünülmesi gereken önemli bir husustur. Alan yazında Üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin eğitimi ve sosyal bilgiler öğretimi ile ilgili eğitimsel önlemlerin birbirine benzer olduğu ve bu alanların doğal bir bağlantısı bulunduğu ifade edilebilir. Özellikle, üst düzey düşünme becerileri kapsamında ifade edilen eleştirel düşünme, yaratıcı düşünme, problem çözme, karar verme, birinci elden

kaynakları inceleme, gerçek yaşam problemlerine çözüm bulma gibi konular her iki alanın birbiriyle bağlantısını göstermesi açısından önemlidir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu araştırmanın amacı Entegre Müfredat Modelinin uygulanması ile ilgili öğrenci görüşlerini incelemektir. 8 hafta üzerinden Entegre Müfredat Modeli esas alınarak yapılandırılmış ve planlanmış olan İyi ki var ünitesi ifade edilen modelin temel özellikleri ve üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin genel ve bireysel özellikleri de göz önünde bulundurularak, bu modelin öngördüğü üst düzey düşünme becerileri ve problem temelli öğrenme gibi beceriler, öğretim yöntem teknikleri işe koşularak hem ünite planında hem de öğretimde önemli farklılaşmalar yapılmış ve bunun sonucunda öğrencilerden bu ders ve öğretim ile ilgili düşüncelerini ifade etmeleri istenmiştir. İstanbul ilinde Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'na bağlı bir birim olan Rehberlik ve Araştırma Merkezi tarafından çoklu değerlendirmelerle tanınan resmi devlet okuluna 1. Sınıftan itibaren kayıt yaptırmış ve eğitim görmekte olan, 4. Sınıf (10 yaş)12 üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrenci gönüllü olarak çalışmaya katılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Bu çalışma sosyal bilgiler dersinde Entegre Müfredat Modeli ne dayalı olarak geliştirilen iyi var ünitesi kapsamında öğrencilerin görüş, düşünce ve duygularını açıklamaya yönelik bir nitel çalışmadır. Öğrenci görüşlerini içeren veriler üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin eğitimi ile sosyal bilgiler alan uzmanları ve öğretmenlerinin görüşlerine başvurularak 4 açık uçlu sorudan oluşan bir yazılı veri toplama aracı araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Toplanan veriler içerik analizi tekniğine uygun bir şekilde analiz edilmiş ve sunulmuştur.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Araştırmanın bulguları Entegre Müfredat Modeline göre oluşturulmuş sosyal bilgiler dersinin üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin bu derse yönelik düşüncelerini olumlu yönde değiştirdiğini göstermektedir.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Bu çalışmada üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin Entegre Müfredat Modelinin sosyal bilgiler dersinde uygulamasına yönelik düşünceleri ve deneyimleri incelenmiştir. Bu araştırma üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin eğitimsel ihtiyaçları göz önünde bulundurularak yapılandırılmış bir ders ünitesinin ve buna uygun öğretimsel müdahalelerin öğrencilerin ders hakkında düşünce ve yaklaşımlarını olumlu yönde değiştirdiğine ilişkin sonuçlara varılabilir. Sosyal bilgiler öğretiminin önemi ve amacı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu ders ile üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrenci özellikleri arasında doğal bir ilişki olduğu ifade edilebilir. Üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli bireylerin toplumların ilerlemesinde, sosyal problemlerin çözümünde, demokratik yaşam kültürünün geliştirilmesinde ve sosyal bilgilerin içerisindeki sosyal bilimlerde önemli gelişmeleri ortaya koyabilecek potansiyelleri bulunmaktadır. Sosyal bilgiler dersi ve öğretiminin üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin eğitimsel ihtiyaçları üzerinde araştırma yapılarak gelişime sürekli açık olan eğitim program modellerinin araştırılması, geliştirilmesi, uygulanması ve değerlendirilmesinin önemi oldukça açıktır. Bu çalışma, sosyal bilgiler dersinde üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin bu düşünce ve deneyimlerini ortaya koyması açısından önem taşımaktadır. Bu

araştırma üstün zekâlı ve yetenekli öğrencilerin sosyal bilgiler derslerinde kendi eğitimsel ihtiyaçlarına yönelik müdahalelerin önemine vurgu yapması açısından da önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Bilgiler Eğitimi, Entegre Müfredat Modeli, Üstün Zekâlı ve Yeteneklilerin Eğitimi